Session 5 The Forerunner Message in Isaiah 13-14

I. BABYLON: A TYPE OF THE FINAL DAY-OF-THE-LORD JUDGMENT

Now, remember when you are going through this passage, I am urging you to do what I do: I always ask the Lord all the way through it, “Why do You want me to know this information? Why do You want me to talk about it? Why do You want me to tell people this information?” When you ask those questions—it is kind of the same questions, “Why do You want me to know it? Why do You want me to say it to people?”—you put yourself in the conversation, then you begin to get a little insight into some of the “why behind the what.” Because we just have the “what.” I say, “Lord, why do I need to know this?” Again, as I bring up that question to the Lord over and over, my understanding grows little by little. I know the same will happen to you, and I know it is already happening to you.

A. Isaiah prophesied the total and final destruction of Babylon and her king (Isa. 13-14). Ask the Lord why He wants us to know this information, and why He wants us to tell others about it. By asking this, we put ourselves in a conversation with Him that positions us to grow in understanding.

We are in Isaiah 13-14. It is the judgment on Babylon. Now, the judgment on Babylon in the ancient history is a type of the day-of-the-Lord final judgment at the end of the age. Isaiah prophesied. Even in Isaiah 13-14, it is the final judgment. The part I want you to understand—we are going to look at that—is that as you study different commentators, there is this kind of an intense energy in scholarship to take away the end-of-the-age drama, and to domesticate it, and neutralize it, and make it vanilla, and put it in the past. I have read all kinds of commentaries. So many of them in their scholarship want to anchor it in the past so it does not ever concern us in the future. Just as I have said over the last few weeks, do not be intimidated by that. Yes there were some partial fulfillments of these judgments in the past, but the totality of them are yet future. We will point that out as we go through this passage.

B. A type of the day-of-the-Lord judgments are seen in God’s historical judgments on Babylon which includes the times when the Assyrian King Sennacherib defeated Babylon in 689 BC and when the Persian King Cyrus conquered Babylon in 539 BC. However, the total and final destruction of the land (13:1-16) and its people (13:19-20) did not happen under Assyrian King Sennacherib or Persian King Cyrus.

1. Over a 1500-year period, the Middle East was dominated by one main empire. First, Assyria was the dominant empire in the Middle East (911-612 BC) during Isaiah’s ministry (740-700 BC).

2. The Babylonian Empire (606-539 BC) conquered and ruled over much of the same geographic area as the Assyrians, though not exactly the same. Babylon was replaced by the Persian Empire (539-331 BC). The Persians were defeated and replaced by the Greek Empire (331-146 BC) who also ruled over much of the same geographic area. The Romans defeated the Greeks. The Roman Empire had two divisions—its western (146 BC-AD 476) and eastern (AD 330-1453) divisions.

C. Historical overview: Babylon replaced the Assyrian Empire as the dominant empire in the Middle East (626-539 BC), about a century after Isaiah’s ministry (around 740-700 BC).
Just a snapshot here, a historical overview. I gave you a lot more information here in the handout than you need to know right now. Basically, Assyria was the primary dominant power in the Middle East. We have that down. After Assyria, Babylon took their place, nearly the same geographic area, not exactly, but mostly. They became the main dominant military power in the Middle East. Then after Babylon, in the same general area who ruled next? Persia. Persia, nearly the same area. Then after the Persians are defeated, who is next? Alexander the Great, the Greeks. Then after the Greeks rule in that same general area, then the Romans.

So my point is when you are reading the historical overview of these things, do not be tripped up. It is mostly the same area, just a new leader. If you get the order—Assyria, then Babylon, then Persia, the Media-Persian Empire—the Medes and the Persians together—then you got the Greeks, then you got the Romans—if you can memorize those four or five sequences you have over a thousand years of Old Testament history, it is the same basic geographic area.

The reason I say that is I talk to different folks about this, and I say, “Babylon.”

Their eyes do that “deer in the headlights, “I do not know.”

I say, “Wait, you know Assyria, right? Same area, just the next group over down the line.”

“Oh, that is not hard.”

There you have it. It is not hard. It really is not hard. So this is Isaiah; in his day it was Assyria. One hundred years later, it was Babylon. He is prophesying concerning down the road. He was saying this is coming. They knew who Babylon was, but it was not so powerful in Isaiah’s day. He said, “They are going to get big and strong, but there is going to come a judgment upon them.”

D. Outline for Isaiah 13-14

13:1-16 The day-of-the-Lord judgments
13:17-22 The total and final destruction of Babylon
14:1-2 The end-time restoration of Israel
14:3-23 A proverb against the king of Babylon
14:24-27 God’s judgment of Assyria
14:28-32 God’s judgment of Philistia.

This is just a snapshot outline of the two chapters that we are looking at tonight. Isaiah 13:1-16 is the main focus tonight, sixteen verses. It is the day-of-the-Lord judgments in the generation the Lord returns. These are the ultimate ones. Here it is talking about Babylon. Again, in ancient history a few of these happened, but there is yet a far more dramatic, global dimension of Babylon’s judgment. It will be a worldwide, dramatic shaking of the nations when God judges Babylon. That is verses 1-16. That is the main focus in terms of the forerunner message.

Then after that we find in a very specific way the judgment of Babylon itself, not just the end-of-the-age judgments. Verses 1-16 speak of judgment for all the nations in the Great Tribulation. Verses 17-22 is the end-of-the-age judgments focused on Babylon itself.

Then, right after that, by the spirit of prophecy Isaiah says, “Israel, do not worry. All of your promises are good, are true, yes and amen.” The other message is that even when the judgments and the shakings of God increase and escalate, even for individuals, the promises of God for His people always remain true. Now here He is talking to the nation of Israel, but the principle is true: wherever God promised to a geographic area or
an individual, the shakings of God do not threaten the promises of God if the people of God are saying yes to the Lord’s leadership. So he throws Israel in there and says, “Hey, do not worry! You are solid.”

We will see in a few moments the shaking is so severe that some of the folks are thinking, “Wow, if everything is shaking, where do I stand?” You stand secure; that is the message there.

Then Isaiah 14:3-23; it is really interesting that Isaiah speaks a proverb, but it is a really a taunt. He is taunting the future king of Babylon. We find out it is the Antichrist. He is declaring a taunt against him; a proverb is what it says. He is mocking him, saying, “You look powerful and mighty, but after a short time you will be dead and end up in the grave. You will be weak as other men.” So the message to Israel in context is not to trust powerful world leaders because God has judgment on them and they end up as weak as everyone else, but trust the Lord. That is the message that Isaiah is giving to Israel here.

E. Various views of commentators on the context of the judgment on Babylon described in Isaiah 13 include the time when Assyrian king Tiglath-pileser III defeated Babylon in 729 BC; when Assyria King Sargon II invaded Babylon in 710 BC; when Sennacherib defeated Babylon in 689 BC; and when Persian King Cyrus conquered Babylon in 539 BC.

1. When Assyrian king Tiglath-pileser III defeated Babylon in 729 BC
2. When Merodach-baladan usurped the Babylonian throne in 721 BC and reigned as king of Babylon 721-710 BC and for about one year in 703 BC
3. When Assyria King Sargon II took back control of Babylon in 710 BC. Sargon marched against Babylon in 710. Merodach-baladan fled, and the Babylon submitted to Sargon. After Sargon’s death in 705 BC, Merodach-baladan sent an embassy to Hezekiah seeking to persuade him to join an alliance to resist the new Assyrian King Sennacherib.
4. When Sennacherib defeated Babylon in 689 BC
5. When Persian King Cyrus conquered Babylon in 539 BC

I put this information here just for your viewing, if you really want to look at it. Most of you will not at this stage of the game. It is some different commentators’ views with which they are trying to remove this judgment from the future and put it in the past. I just want you to be aware of these because you will run into one or two of these in commentaries. You might think, “Oh no! He has a Ph.D., and he said it was in the past.” I am giving you the five or six main ways that different scholars try to dismiss all these judgments and put them in the past.

Some of them do say it is a little bit past and yet future. I really appreciate the scholars who say that. I wanted to put here a few of the judgments that happened in the past, so you are aware of them and you are not thrown off when you read a commentary and they say it. You say, “Yeah, yeah, right. We covered that a little bit. Yeah, I am familiar with that.” That past judgment does not fulfill all of the details and the scope of what Isaiah 13 prophesied. That is going to come in fullness at the end of the age.

F. Day-of-the-Lord: This is also referred to as “that day” or “the great day.” It is mentioned nearly 100 times in the Scripture. It is “His day” because He displays His power in an unusual measure for His people and against His enemies. God’s normal mode of leadership over the earth is to patiently restrain His greater judgments against sin (2 Pet. 3:9; Eccl. 8:11). God rarely intervenes into the affairs of the nations to pour out His Spirit in an historic way or to confront rebellion openly on a large scale. In day-of-the-Lord seasons, He manifests His zeal in visiting His people with unusual blessing or in calling nations to account for rebellion against Him.
G. There are two expressions of the day-of-the-Lord in history—on a global or on a local scale. In the Old Testament, there were a few times where God’s judgments were released in an unusual intensity on a local scale. The prophets referred to each as a “day of the Lord.” These local and lesser days of the Lord typify the global and final day of the Lord which involves worldwide revival and judgments. In the book of Joel, the “lesser days,” included a locust plague or a military invasion (Joel 1-2). They foreshadowed a global and final day of the Lord at the end of the age (Joel 2:31).

1. **Global and final day:** This occurs only once—in the end times related to Jesus’ return.

2. **Local and lesser day:** This has occurred various times through history.

H. Isaiah prophesied a global end-time shaking (13:1-16) that will be connected with God’s end-time judgment of the city of Babylon, which was foreshadowed God’s judgment on Babylon as seen in ancient history (13:17-22).


A. Isaiah prophesied of the final day-of-the-Lord judgments on Babylon in 13:1-23. Two other biblical oracles highlight the final day-of-the-Lord judgments on Babylon (Jer. 50-51; Rev. 16-18). Jeremiah prophesied about 100 years after Isaiah and John about 800 years after Isaiah. We can gain a greater picture of Babylon’s end-time judgment by comparing these three passages.

So the day-of-the-Lord judgments—this is verses 1-16. This is the main passage we are looking at; it is the main section of these two chapters. Now this prophecy is far bigger than Babylon. Isaiah introduces this passage as a burden, as an oracle against Babylon. When we read the details, though, it is global, far beyond Babylon. When Babylon is shaken at the end of the age, the whole earth is shaking at the end of the age. This is a snapshot of that shaking.

There are other biblical oracles that describe this same scenario of Babylon at the end of the age affecting the whole world being shaken at the end of the age. Here we have Isaiah 13-14. It is good to get these down because these are the main passages for Babylon at the end of the age, Isaiah 13-14, which is what we are on tonight.

You will notice Jeremiah 50-51 covers the same basic territory, but gives a little bit more detail and gives more nuances that Isaiah does not give. Jeremiah is about 100 years after Isaiah. He adds a little bit more to the global judgment of which Babylon is a center piece, in Jeremiah 50-51. The reason you want to know that is because we compare the two chapters together. Now we do not have time to do that tonight, but in six or nine months we will get to Jeremiah 50-51. We will cover the same territory. We will put a little bit more time on comparing it with Isaiah 13-14. Then you have Revelation 16-18 that brings Babylon again into focus in its end-time judgment. So you put those passages together, and you get the whole picture there.

B. The final day of the Lord affects the whole world (13:11), resulting in the death of many people (13:12; Rev. 6:8; 9:15) and includes the shaking the heaven and earth (13:10, 13; 24:18; 34:4; Ezek. 32:7; Joel 2:10, 30-31; 3:15-16; Zech. 14:6-7; Hag. 2:6-7; Mt. 24:19; Rev. 6:12; 16:18).

6Wail, for the day of the LORD is at hand!... 9He will destroy its sinners... 10For the stars of heaven…will not give their light; the sun will be darkened… 11“...I will punish the world for its evil... 12I will make a mortal more rare than gold... 13I will shake the heavens and the earth...” (Isa. 13:6-13)
When the Bible describes the end-time, final day-of-the-Lord judgments, we should remember that there are temporary, partial day-of-the-Lord judgments through history. A day-of-the-Lord judgment is when the Lord makes an unusual, severe, dramatic intervention into history, releasing His glory or releasing His judgments. That is considered a day of the Lord. There are several day-of-the-Lord judgments—partial ones—throughout history, but they all point to the final, ultimate, big one related to the second coming of Christ.

Look at verse 6. I will read the verses here, starting at verse 6. Here is some of the indicators of the day of the Lord. “Wail, for the day of the Lord is at hand,” verse 6. Verse 9, “He will destroy sinners.” Verse 10, “For the stars of heaven will not give their light.” In other words it has a cosmic aspect. It shakes the heavens. The sun and the moon will lose their light. That is the ultimate, final day of the Lord. More than that, verse 11, it is global. He punishes the whole world. The whole world is in the grip of the final, ultimate day of the Lord related to Jesus’ return.

Verse 12, this is really graphic. He says, “I will make a mortal more rare than gold.” In other words, there will be so much carnage and death at that time that Isaiah says that it will be rare to see people alive. Now I believe they will be hundreds of millions alive actually, but compared to billions the percentage will be small.

Then, in verse 13, Isaiah talks about it shaking the heavens. That is the sky, the weather, the sun, the moon. It is going to shake the earth. That is earthquakes, turbulences, natural disasters, all kinds of things shaking the earth. So this final day of the Lord has these components, these indicators.

C. The apostle John connected the judgment described here (13:1-16) to what will happen across the earth in the Great Tribulation (Rev 6-19). The military forces that will fight and the nations who are defeated are not identified in Isaiah 13:1-16 since there is partial fulfillment of this in history. The emphasis in Isaiah 13 is the global, final day of the Lord as seen in the Great Tribulation.

As I already mentioned, John in the book of Revelation describes the end-of-the-age, Great Tribulation judgments. They have all of these elements and components that are highlighted here in Isaiah 13.

D. We need the Spirit’s help to grasp and steward information about the day-of-the-Lord judgments. We need more than human resolve and dedication to carry these truths in our heart and mind. The Spirit will teach the Church about “things to come” and will guard our mind and heart (emotions). "...the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds... (Phil. 4:7)

E. Some biblical passages on the day of the Lord include a historical destruction of a nation in the near future (Israel and Judah), while giving a picture of a distant and final day (13:1-23; 24:1-23).

1. Amos 5:20-21 predicted a day-of-the-Lord judgment on Israel—it occurred when Assyria attacked the northern Kingdom of Israel in 721 BC.

2. Zephaniah 1:14-18 described a day-of-the-Lord judgment for Judah—it occurred when Babylon destroyed Jerusalem in 586 BC.

3. The final day of the Lord will take place when the Jesus returns and defeats all of His enemies and sets up His glorious millennial kingdom on the earth (Rev. 19:11-20:6). The final day of the Lord is also the theme of Isaiah 24-27.
F. The Lord will summon various armies (even evil ones) as instruments of His judgment (13:2-3). He describes the noise that occurs when a multitude of soldiers arrive to the battle scene (13:4-5). Although human armies attack the nation under judgment, it is God judging His enemies (13:9).

1 The burden against Babylon which Isaiah the son of Amoz saw. 2 "Lift up a banner on the high mountain, raise your voice to them; wave your hand..." 3 I have commanded My sanctified ones; I have also called My mighty ones for My anger..." 4 The noise of a multitude in the mountains, like that of many people! A tumultuous noise of the kingdoms of nations gathered together! The LORD of hosts musters the army for battle. 5 They come from a far country, from the end of heaven—the LORD and His weapons of indignation, to destroy the whole land. (Isa. 13:1-5)

Now the Lord—we are getting right into the passage now; Isaiah 13:1—the Lord is summoning armies around the earth to be instruments of His judgment. We covered this in Isaiah 10:5, where He said, “I choose Assyria,” this really evil, wicked nation, “I choose them to be My instrument to judge Israel.”

That was really troubling to Israel because Israel thought, “The Assyrians,” this big Middle East empire, “are more wicked than we are. How could you use them to judge us?”

The Lord said, “I will, but then I will judge them afterwards.”

1. **Burden against Babylon**: Babylon will be judged in context to global end-time judgments.

At the end of the age the Lord is going to do this in a number of different ways. Let’s read Isaiah 13:1, the burden of the Lord against Babylon. Isaiah highlights that Babylon is centered in what he is talking about. He makes it very clear it also has a global scope that is bigger than Babylon. When Babylon is ultimately shaken, the world will ultimately be shaken; the two of them go together. The global shaking at the end and the ultimate judgment on Babylon happens at the same time frame in context to proximity to Jesus’ return to the earth.

2. **Banner**: Raising a flag on a high mountain speaks of gaining visibility to rally many others.

He says, verse 2—here is the Lord—“Lift up a banner on the high mountains. Raise your voice to them. Wave your hands.” So God is telling whatever evil army He is going to use, in effect, “Make a big show; rally people to help you because I am going to use you to bring judgment to other nations. Then I am going to judge you for doing it. No, I do not mean judge you for judging the other nation. I am going to judge you because you deserve it, but I am going to use you between now and then.” So He says in verse 2, “Lift up a banner; make a big noise; rally the nations behind you.”

3. **My sanctified ones**: This does not refer to the character of the armies, but to their call to be used by the Lord as His instrument of judgment. The Assyrian king was God’s vessel (Isa. 10:5). It is an offensive doctrine to many that God chooses wicked nations as “His instrument” to punish other wicked nations. He uses them as a puppet in His hand to accomplish His purposes.

5 “Woe to Assyria, the rod of My anger and the staff in whose hand is My indignation.” (Isa. 10:5)

Verse 3, now this is the offensive part. “For I have commanded My sanctified ones, and I have called My mighty ones for My anger.” These sanctified ones, these are nations He is going to use to punish other nations. The word, sanctified, means holy. Now the Lord is not saying they are holy in their character. He is saying they are set apart as vessels, as instruments of His judgement against darkness in the earth, even though they
themselves are participating in darkness themselves. “I have separated them and I have called them, My mighty ones.” The Lord is going to use the Antichrist in this very way, and then He is going to destroy the Antichrist. He did this with Assyria, a very wicked nation. He used them as His vessel. He says, as it were, “They are Mine. They are My tool.” That, again, is a very offensive doctrine, that God would use the wicked to punish the wicked. He calls them His mighty ones.

He is not identifying any one nation or empire right now because He is going to use many different ones at the end of the age in different combinations. So He is leaving it undefined. Basically, He is saying that “I am going to do this effectively and My anger is going to be manifested through them.”

4. **Kingdoms of nations:** Ten kings in alliance with the Antichrist will destroy Harlot Babylon. The Lord will bring nations together (13:4) as a collective force to judge other nations. The ultimate gathering of evil nations as God’s weapon is seen in the 10-nation coalition that will serve the Antichrist (Rev. 17:16-17). These 10 end-time nations will be from the Middle East, North and East Africa, and various nations near to Russia. They will be the mightiest military force in history. They will hate and burn the great city of Babylon.

16**The ten horns [kings] which you saw on the beast [Antichrist], these will hate the harlot [Babylon], make her desolate… and burn her with fire.** 17**For God has put it into their hearts to fulfill His purpose… to give their kingdom to the beast [Antichrist]…** 18**And the woman [Babylon]… is that great city which reigns over the kings of the earth.** (Rev. 17:16-18)

Verse 4, he is describing a collection of armies recruited and rallying together. It is like a multitude on a mountain. They have a great noise, a tumultuous noise, as these armies are gathering. The ultimate example of this will be when all the armies of the earth gather around Jerusalem to destroy Jerusalem, although they will not destroy Jerusalem. That is what they want to do. God gathers them, and then God destroys them and disciplines Jerusalem at the same time.

So He is describing when there is this big momentum, this military movement, this massive amount of noise and activity. The whole earth is watching it, and it is like a banner on a mountain. They are making big claims and statements about victory and “This is what we are going to do…”

Verse 5, Isaiah says that they will come, verse 5, “from a far country, even from the ends of the earth.” So when these kinds of strategies of the Lord are unfolding—remember they have happened through history but we are pointing at the end of the age. That is where it comes to fullness. That is where we are. That is what we are locked in on—“They will come, verse 5, “from a far country, even from the ends of the earth.”

The Lord unashamedly says it again, “These are my weapons. These evil armies are My weapons, My instruments, to wake the nations up.” Though they are human armies, even evil ones, and they are attacking other nations, the Lord makes it clear that He is the One who is judging darkness. Now these armies might think it is them. The Lord would say, “No, I am only using them as a puppet in My hand. I am sovereign over it. My leadership is steady. I know exactly what I am doing. I am not too late. I am not too early. I am not too severe. I am not too lenient.” The Lord will use the least severe means to reach the greatest number of people at the deepest levels of love. That is what the Word of God makes clear. The Lord will use the least severe means. Though the means are very severe, they are the least severe as possible. The Lord could say, “If they were any less, they would not get the job done. I want to wake the nations up. I want to raise up people who will respond in righteousness.” He wants to purify the Church. He wants to bring Israel to salvation. He wants to drive the
wickedness off of the planet. He is doing all of these things together. He is going to destroy the whole land, He says. He is going to trouble the whole land, meaning here the whole earth.

Now the most graphic example of when the Lord says this is in verse 4—I am back in Isaiah 13:4—He says, “I am going to bring together the kingdoms of nations together.” The ultimate gathering of kingdoms of nations together as God’s weapon is the ten nations that are going to be in alliance, a coalition. They are going to give themselves to the Antichrist. These are ten powerful nations in the area of Russia, the Middle East, and north Africa. That is where those ten nations are. Those nations are identified in Ezekiel 38 and several other places. We will look at that at another time. They are Middle East nations, North Africa, a little bit East Africa, and around Russia and the surrounding nations around there. Those ten nations are going to come into a coalition into this military alliance and into unity with one another. we look at that area now and it looks pretty tenuous, as if they will never get unified, but they will. They will have the strongest military resources, the strongest army, the strongest economics, the best weapons, the best technology, the most money of any coalition ever.

Look what it says here in Revelation 17. These ten kings which you saw riding on the back of the Antichrist will hate the harlot Babylon. They will hate end-of-the-age Babylon. They will burn her with fire. Now here is the interesting thing in verse 7: God put it in their heart to be unified so they would fulfill His purpose. The Lord says, in effect, “You wicked nations! I am going to unify you and let you have a false sense of this amazing momentum, strength, and power. It is only going to last for a minute, because I am going to use you to destroy Babylon. Then I am going to destroy you when it is all said and done.”

So Revelation 17:18 makes it clear they are going to destroy the harlot that is the woman, Babylon, the great city, because Babylon is going to rise again and be established in the generation the Lord returns. Just like the Lord caused Jerusalem to come out of the ashes and become central in world news, Babylon, the ancient city of Babylon, is also going to be restored just like Jerusalem was.

Many Bible scholars look at that and say that is impossible. Well, that is what they said about Jerusalem for 2,000 years. Then you know in 1967 dramatic things began to happen. Now Jerusalem is at the center of the world drama. Babylon is going to be brought to that place too.

Redemptive history really is a story of two cities—Jerusalem and Babylon—in collision with one another. We are going to see the restoration of Babylon and then their full judgment at the end of the age. It is one big dramatic storyline that God is going to use it in order to awaken the earth in righteousness.

G. The people will experience melting hearts, terror, anguish, pain, shock, and feeling numb with limp hands, with sense of helplessness and lacking strength to act in response (13:6-8). Isaiah is describing the response of unbelievers to God’s judgments during the final 3½ years before Jesus returns. Jesus said that men’s hearts would fail them because of fear during this time (Lk. 21:26). Jesus and Jeremiah also compared the response of people to God’s judgments to birth pains (Jer. 30:6; Mt. 24:8).

6Wail, for the day of the LORD is at hand! It will come as destruction from the Almighty…
7All hands will be limp, every man’s heart will melt, and they will be afraid. Pangs and sorrows will take hold of them; they will be in pain as a woman in childbirth… (Isa. 13:6-8)

In Isaiah 13:6-8, he is describing what that global day of the Lord, that global judgment of all the nations, what it looks like. It is so graphic. You know, when I look at this, I ask, “Lord, why do You want me to know this? Why do You want me and others,”—I do not mean just me—“why do You want us to say this to people? This is so graphic!” I know, when I read this, it has a certain impact on my heart. I think it will have the same impact
on you. It is alarming, and when you get used to this storyline—I do not know we will ever get used to it—but when you get more and more familiar with it—because it is so surreal, it is just so out there it seems it is not even real—once it becomes a little more familiar and real, we conclude two things. There are two things that will always come to my mind. First, I have to have an eternal perspective. There is no other way. If this is where things are going ultimately, I have to be anchored in eternity. That is part of what this message is meant to do to the Body of Christ. It is said over and over, though much of it is neglected. I do not mean callously and with a bad heart. It is just so graphic and intense. Most of the Body of Christ in the earth is really not familiar with it. It is just again surreal. It is something way over there that really, it is not on anybody’s mind really.

1. The message of God’s global end-time judgments in 13:1-16 is repeated over and over in the prophets. Such passages are hard to grasp; they are surreal and burdensome. The body of Christ must become more familiar such biblical passages. The Lord is going to confront wickedness and oppression in an open way in all the nations. We must understand the negative elements of the future, not just the positive ones. As I read this more and more, —and I run into it in Jeremiah and Ezekiel and book of Revelation, and Jesus said it, and Amos said it, Joel said it over and over—little by little I began to say, “Lord, I have to adjust my view of the future.” It may not happen in my lifetime, but this is where human history is going. You are going to confront wickedness and oppression face to face in an open way in the nations. We are so used to 6,000 years of human history with You not doing this dramatically. You have done it here and there a few times over history, but not very often and not at the level you are going to do this once.” When I get familiar with this, it really shifts my paradigm. It really makes me think. There is nothing else to get anchored in besides eternity. Of course we all know that. These kinds of descriptions shift me. They act like a catalyst. They move me closer in that direction.

2. The only way to rightly interpret this passage is by being anchored in an eternal perspective. Next, meditating on such passages help us to settle if we really trust Jesus’ leadership. Can we trust a King who judges with such zeal? Do we believe He is doing this for love and without contradicting love? The Church must wrestle through this. By praying over such passages, we give ourselves the opportunity to realign our heart little by little to His word to gain a deeper trust in His leadership even in the midst of severe judgments.

Then the second thing that comes to mind when I study this is that it makes me question whether I really believe in Jesus’ leadership. Like, is this really the Jesus that I will love, worship, and die for, a Jesus who would do this? You know, a lot of believers have just never really landed that. They are like, “Jesus, like we love You. You are nice. You love us.” He is nice, and He loves us, but as far as they are concerned this judgment is not really on His mind, but it really is. It is not going to go away simply because we do not like it or understand it.

So I look at these passages and I get really sobered. I say, “I have to live for eternity because nothing is going to last really that is not anchored in eternity. Do I really trust Your leadership? Do I trust that a King who does this can really be doing it for love?” I have had to wrestle through that as I have studied these end-time chapters over and over. It is really a gift of God because it makes you realign, because you only realign in that direction little by little. I do not think that you make giant steps; I think you make baby steps forward.

3. If the body of Christ has no grid for Jesus judging nations, then they will be more vulnerable to fear and offense towards Him when judgment begin to escalate. Thus, the body of Christ must wrestle with these passages and not continue to ignore them.
As the years unfold, I am becoming more confident that a God of love could actually deal with darkness with this kind of zeal without contradicting love. If folks have no grid for the Messiah’s leadership involving this, when it begins to escalate they will be so troubled at His leadership. So I think it is critical that even now we wrestle with this. I mean, when I look at this, I do not have any glee in it at all. I have confidence He is doing it so that love would increase on the planet. I would rather, little by little, align my life and my heart and mind to these realities by studying these passages than just wait until things escalate and then take my best chance at figuring it out in the midst of the heat.

Again, I do not know that I will even see it in my day. I might; I might not. The Body of Christ must grapple with these passages and not just leave them back in the corner of the house, somewhere in the closet, tucked away where you never pay attention to it.

4. The Lord will hold the nations accountable for resisting His leadership and His word. The Lord will not continue to be silent—that is, to patiently restrain His judgments against wickedness.

   13 The LORD…shall stir up His zeal like a man of war…He shall prevail against His enemies. 14“I have held My peace a long time, I have been still [silent] and restrained Myself. Now I will…15lay waste the mountains and hills [release My judgment] …” (Isa. 42:13-15)

   Well, let’s look at this. “Wail,” verse 6, “for the day of the Lord is at hand.” It is talking about how globally He is going to hold the nations accountable for resisting His leadership. He has been silent for many, many years. When it says “silent” in the Scripture, when the prophets say, “God, You are silent,” it means He is not intervening with judgment that is appropriate. The judgment that is deserved—He is holding it back. He is silent. There will be a day when He will not be silent, and it is going to shock the ear.

   The Lord could say, “I was just being patient. You deserved this a long time ago, the way that you have cast off My leadership, the way that You have cast off who I am and My claims of love and My agenda” that His zeal made known here in these day of the Lord passages.

   So verse 6, “Wail, for the day of the Lord is at hand. It will come as destruction from the Almighty. All hands will be limp.” People will have such a sense of helplessness, people who are not connected to the King and the Messiah. They do not know the King; they do not know what He is doing. The description is that they will have such a sense of helplessness that they will lack strength even to respond.

   I mean, you have seen times, or you know or heard of them, or watched them on documentaries, or maybe experienced it a little bit in your life when a crisis happens and it is so jolting and alarming that people do not have strength even to respond or react. That is how Isaiah is describing this final three-and-a-half years of natural history before the Lord appears in the sky. The hands will be limp. Every man’s heart will melt. They will be afraid. Jesus even talked about that in Luke 21:26. He said that men will faint because of fear. Now they are talking about people who do not have a relationship with the King.

5. The people who trust His leadership and His promises and who seek to have an eternal perspective will be purified and learn righteousness and wisdom in times of persecution and judgment (Isa. 26:8; Dan. 11:33-35; 12:10).

   9 For when Your judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants…will learn righteousness. (Isa. 26:9)
And some of those of understanding shall fall [die as martyrs], to refine them, purify them, and make them white, until the time of the end; because it is still for the appointed time. (Dan. 11:35)

The people who trust His leadership, who believe His promises, are anchored in eternity and they know there is a reason for it, that love is being produced, righteousness is increasing. They have a very, very different perspective at this time.

Here Isaiah is describing people who are disconnected from the King and from information of what He is doing at that time of history. It says that pangs and sorrow will take hold of them. Now one of the reasons sorrow will take hold of them is because of the death of loved ones. More than that, but that will be the ultimate sorrow. They will be in pain as a woman in childbirth. Now this picture of the pain of a woman in childbirth—Jesus used that picture about the Great Tribulation. Jeremiah used it, and various other prophets used it as well. It is not an exaggeration. The globe will have this kind of traumatic moment for this three-and-a-half-year period.

Even as things are ratcheting up and escalating, as things are intensifying in a couple decades leading up to this time, I believe we are going to see more and more of this kind of severity, and people thrown off, and fear increasing. That is why the Body of Christ has got to be more anchored in relationship with knowledge of what He is doing, with why He is doing it. So that knowing what the result is, where it is going, and that love is going to triumph at the end, we are anchored in eternal values.

6. The Lord will use the least severe means to reach the greatest number of people at the deepest levels of love. Jesus’ leadership is perfect. His judgments are not too severe, nor too lenient. If they were less intense, they would not accomplish His purposes of removing all that hinders love, waking up the nations to righteousness, and driving wickedness off the planet.

7. The Scripture describes God’s end-time judgments so often because He wants His people to think on it; it’s not a peripheral theme. As we read such passages often, they emboldened us to stand with the Lord and His zeal to confront wickedness in the culture.

H. The global nature of the day-of-the-Lord judgments (13:9-13): These verses picture the horrors of war occurring in the 3½ years before Jesus returns. Isaiah described judgment on several billion people who will be in the Antichrist’s empire and embrace the wickedness and rebellion associated with it.

9 Behold, the day of the LORD comes…with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate; and He will destroy its sinners from it. 10 For the stars of heaven…will not give their light; the sun will be darkened…11“I will punish the world for its evil…I will halt the arrogance of the proud… 12 I will make a mortal more rare than fine gold…13 I will shake the heavens, and the earth will move out of her place…in the day of His fierce anger… (Isa. 13:9-13)

Let’s look at Isaiah 13:9-13. Here He gives the purpose and the worldwide nature of these judgments. Now in verse 9, it really picks up. I mean when you read this, ask yourself, “Does this offend you?” If this happened in your lifetime, would you be offended at the Messiah? Would you be offended at Jesus? In the midst of this could you with confident declare that His leadership was perfect?

So, again, I read this and that is right where I go. I want to line up. It is kind of like doing exercise. I want to realign my spiritual muscles, my spiritual perspective, little by little, by interfacing with Him according to these chapters even now.
Verse 9, “Behold the day of the Lord comes. It comes with wrath and fierce anger to lay the land desolate. He will destroy sinners from the land.” Now the sinners that are in view here—we have knowledge from the New Testament, the ultimate in Revelation 13 that it is the Antichrist empire, and it has billions of people participating. In the Antichrist empire they have covenanted themselves to worship him and to be archenemies of Jesus, the God of Israel, and the Word of God. Without knowing that context it is a little hard to really grasp why the severity and the zeal that the Lord has.

Picture several billion people, and look at the anger that is in our culture right now, and in the last two or three years that the anger is increasing. Look at that anger, take it to a hundred times more intense, with tremendous hatred of Jesus and everything related to Jesus. It is in a couple billion people, it is across the earth, and that is the context in which this is taking place. I mean, we are troubled by the anger already going on. This is like so intense.

I have talked to people. I feel the same way myself; I can’t hardly even watch the news. I am just tired of people yelling at people. It is like just I do not even want to do it. I will read some stuff, but I do not want to hear it. I have this whisper in my thinking, “It is only the beginning of the beginning of the beginning.” The Lord is not over-doing it. He gets the context of that hour in a way we do not. I am using these passages again to bring myself over there little by little, saying, “Lord what do You know that I do not know?” Well, there is a whole lot that He knows that I do not know! “What is it that You know about that context that I need to know?” is a better way to say it. “Why do You want me to know this severity of this? Why am I supposed to say it? What is the conversation among the redeemed related to the negative?” I mean, we know the conversation related to the positive: the glory of God, and the great harvest, and the perfection of the Church, the end-time Bride. I mean, that is fun! We need to know the whole counsel, the intensely negative and the intensely positive and how they work together.

Verse 9, “Behold, the day of the Lord comes with wrath and fierce anger to lay the land desolate. He will destroy sinners from it.” Again, that is several billion, I guess. I mean I do not know the real number in the Antichrist empire. It is a global empire; they have covenanted to worship him and therefore by default to declare war on Jesus, His purposes, and His kingdom.

Verse 10, “The stars of heaven will not give their light in this time.” The whole earth will be in the drama, even the created order. The sun will be darkened, the moon will be darkened, etc.

1. Make a mortal rare: There might be hundreds of millions of people alive after the Great Tribulation, but compared to 7 billion it is a small percentage, leaving only a few (Isa. 24:6). Isaiah also described this day-of-the-Lord judgment against the Antichrist’s empire (24:1-6).

1 Behold, the LORD makes the earth empty…distorts its surface and scatters…3 The land shall be entirely emptied and utterly plundered…5 The earth is also defiled under its inhabitants, because they have transgressed the laws…6 Therefore the curse has devoured the earth… therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men are left. (Isa. 24:1-6)

4 …And it [red horse] was granted…to take peace from the earth…8 A pale horse…and power was given to them over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword… (Rev. 6:4-8)

15 So the four angels…were released to kill a third of mankind. (Rev. 9:15)
21...there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world...

22 And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved... (Mt. 24:21-22)

2. **I will punish evil and halt arrogance:** The people in the Antichrist's empire will be deeply committed to do evil that is rooted in their arrogance which thinks God's authority does not matter. Billions of people will transgress the laws of God and stand against His Word (Isa. 24:5).

Verse 11, He will punish the earth, not for a casual, kind of lazy unrighteousness where they kind of overdo this a little, overdo that a little. No, there will be a determined wickedness among multitudes of people in the earth. Basically the Lord says verse 11, “I will halt their arrogance, because their confidence and wickedness is rooted in their arrogance that My Word does not matter. My authority is to be trembled before. Their arrogance is the root of their confidence.” You can see it in the culture already, even among believers who are joining that cultural dialogue of “We do not need the Word of God...I mean, look, there is no problem with it...Let's get free.” That confidence in sin is actually rooted, from God's point of view, in their arrogance.

It says in verse 12 that He says, “When I am done with it, I am going to make mortal people more rare than fine gold.” The reason for this is because so many hundreds of millions, even billions, are buying into that mindset and that posture of having a heart of wickedness.

3. **I will shake the heavens:** The Lord will shake the heavens, including weather patterns, and He will shake the earth with earthquakes, hurricanes, and natural disasters.

Verse 13, “I will shake the heavens.” Again, that is the weather patterns as well as the stars and the constellations, and the sun and the moon. “I will shake the earth.” That is earthquakes, natural disasters, all kinds of things. He says, “I am going to shake the earth so intensely at the very end that it will move the earth out of its place. I will do this in the day of My fierce anger.”

Now a couple chapters from now—we will get there in a few weeks—He says it again. Actually He says it over and over throughout the book of Isaiah. I ask, “Lord why are You saying this so often?”

I think the answer is, “I want you to grapple with it. I want My people to think on it. It is not a whisper. It is not a little, peripheral thought at the side. I have said it over and over throughout the prophets, in the Old and New Testaments. I want this: I want My people to begin to grapple with this and prepare themselves for My leadership that involves this kind of zealous intervention into human history.”

Look at Isaiah 24. “Behold the Lord will make the earth empty.” This is talking about the same timeframe. He will distort its surface. He will scatter its inhabitants. That is just natural disorder, natural disasters; that is the earthquakes and hurricanes, etc.

Verse 3, “The land,” or the earth—by the way in Hebrew the words for land and earth are the same word. So sometimes in a passage it is talking about the land, and other times using the very same word it is the earth. You have to know through the context which one he is talking about—here it is clear that when he says the land, he is talking about the earth. He is talking about the whole earth. He makes that clear throughout this context.
“The land,” or the earth, “shall be emptied and plundered.” I cannot say “entirely emptied and utterly plundered.” It is just that I am inching my way forward here, okay?

Why? Verse 5, “The earth is defiled under its inhabitants.” Billions of people, verse 5, are transgressing the laws of God. “Therefore the curse has devoured the earth.” Again, it is this concept that God’s Word does not really matter. Psalm 2:3, the kings of the earth want to drive the Word of God, verse 3, out of the culture. They see the Word of God as bondage. We are watching this dialogue increase in the nations in Psalms 2 where they want to drive the Word of God out of the culture. Psalm 2:5, David said that God is going to destress the nations in His deep displeasure. He is not okay with this conversation. Again, I have seen believers being coaxed into a really soft position to join a popular side of the dialogue. They do not realize the Lord is deeply distressed over this. The Lord would say, “I will deeply distress you in My deep displeasure.” He is describing it. God is not passive. He is patient, but He is not passive. He is not neutral concerning where the nations are going in this spirit of “liberty” that really is defying His Word. He is angry about it. He is not okay with it.

So the reason I say this as I read these passages is because it emboldens me to stand with the Lord’s side. He is more intense about it than people think. Because He is patient, and He is silent, meaning He is not manifesting His judgments, we assume He does not have deep displeasure, but He does—Psalm 2:5. Isaiah here is giving us a little bit of insight into that deep displeasure.

Verse 6, “The curse has devoured the earth. The inhabitants of the earth are burned. Few men are left.” I think that is percentage-wise. Few are left. The book of Revelation tells us at the beginning of the final three-and-a-half years there will be a world war. In that one world war, one-fourth of the earth will die at that time in a short period of time. Then in Revelation 9:15, another third die. I mean the thing intensifies. Again, we look at that, and we think, “Wow! This is like really real.” This is the Creator of the planet. This is the Redeemer of the kingdom of God. This is our Savior. This is His action. This is His leadership. Again, I read these and I say, “Lord, I just...hmmm.”

When He lifts His restraint off men—because some of these judgments the Lord is lifting His restraint—He is letting nations hit each other. He is using a nation as His own weapon of vengeance against another nation, even though He is against the nation that is bringing judgment to the other nation. He is going to lift His hand. He is going to allow nations in their wickedness to go back and forth even as vessels of His own wrath.

You say, “Man! This is pretty intense!” Well, we studied Isaiah 2. We saw the nations coming to Jerusalem. Isaiah 4, the Branch of the Lord is beautiful. We had Isaiah 9, the Prince of peace. Isaiah 11, all the redeemed brought back. We are here in Isaiah 13 now, and this is just where it is at. I am looking at this, and I am looking for some Isaiah 2, you know, Isaiah 9:4 stuff here. There is a little bit. Isaiah 14:1-2 has a high spot.

The Lord is saying, as it were, “No, I want you to grasp the details of this: the intensely negative and the intensely positive. Do not go for one or the other. Eat the scroll; take the whole counsel of God.”

1. Isaiah applied day-of-the-Lord principles to the judgment of Babylon in ancient times and at the end of the age (13:17-22). The Medes were united to the Persians in conquering Babylon (539 BC). Isaiah described a judgment on the city of Babylon that results in it “never being inhabited” (13:20).

   “Behold, I will stir up the Medes against them [Babylon]...” And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms...will be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It will never be inhabited, nor will it be settled from generation to generation...” (Isa. 13:17-20)

In verse 17, He is telling them, “Behold, I am going to stir up the Medes.” Now you know the term, the Medes and the Persians. The Medes and the Persians were unified together. The Persians became the dominant power.
So in some ways, here in verse 17, you could say the Persians are the ones who destroyed Babylon. Remember Assyria was the big world empire, then Babylon defeated them. Then the Medes and the Persians defeated Babylon. So He is saying in verse 17—this is over one hundred years ahead of time—“I am going to raise up the Medes,” or Persia, as again that is the nation right next to Persia, which is modern-day Iran by the way. The Medes and the Persians are our modern-day Iran—“I am going to use them to bring judgment to Babylon,” which is modern-day Iraq. It is Iran and Iraq, and that is the storyline that has continued to unfold.

Verse 19, He says He is going to bring down the glory of Babylon, as He is going to judge them. Verse 19, He takes it beyond. He says, “I am going to cause Babylon to be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah.” Then, in verse 20, He says this very intense statement that has actually never happened yet. You have to pay attention to verse 20. He said, “When I am done with Babylon and this judgment, Babylon,”—which again is Iraq—“will never be inhabited again.” Actually He is talking about the city of Babylon, just this one city, not the whole nation, “It will never be inhabited nor will it be settled from generation to generation.”

So we know from ancient history that these verses, verses 19-20, were not fulfilled, that Babylon was not destroyed like Sodom and Gomorrah. They were destroyed in some ways, but very minimally compared to this. It is not true that they were never inhabited again. These judgments are still pointing to the end of the age. These are judgments yet to unfold. So Isaiah is saying, “Yeah, there will be judgments in ancient history. A hundred years from now they are going to get a severe judgment, but it is not the totality, because Babylon is going to rise up again at the end of the age. They are going to be right in the center of the global judgments when the Lord distorts and shakes the whole earth.”

J. Isaiah and Jeremiah prophesied that the city of Babylon would be totally and permanently desolate and without inhabitants (Isa. 13:19-20; Jer. 50:3-4, 13, 23-24, 45-46; 51:29, 37, 41, 49, 64). This was not completely fulfilled in history as it will be in the generation that the Lord returns.

3...which shall make [Babylon] her land desolate, and no one shall dwell therein... 4In those days ...The children of Israel...with continual weeping they shall come, and seek the LORD their God. (Jer. 50:3-4)

37Babylon shall become a heap...without an inhabitant... 41How Babylon has become desolate among the nations!... 49at Babylon the slain of all the earth shall fall. (Jer. 51:37-49)

K. When the Persians conquered the city of Babylon in 539 BC, they did not totally destroy the city as Jeremiah and Isaiah had prophesied. This lack of fulfillment is used by critics to claim that Bible prophecy is not accurate. Babylon grew weaker slowly through the centuries. About 200 years after Babylon was conquered, Alexander the Great selected it to be his capital city. There is strong historical evidence of people living in Babylon even 1,000 years after Christ. The site of ancient Babylon is known today. People live there today—Hilla, has a population of over 5,000 people.

L. John described the city of Babylon in the end times (Rev. 17-18). Babylon will be rebuilt similar to Jerusalem. Zechariah 5 provides insights into the rebuilt city of Babylon in the end times.
III. THE END-TIME RESTORATION OF ISRAEL (ISA. 14:1-2)

A. Isaiah described the end-time salvation of Israel along with their evangelistic zeal to serve the God of Israel (14:1-3). This speaks of Israel’s end-time restoration, describing something far more glorious than the return of the Jewish people from Babylonian captivity under the leadership of Zerubbabel in 536 BC (as seen in Haggai, Zechariah, Ezra, and Nehemiah).

1 For the LORD will have mercy on Jacob, and will still choose Israel, and settle them in their own land. The strangers [Gentiles] will be joined with them, and they will cling to the house of Jacob. 2 Then…the house of Israel will possess them for servants and maids in the land of the LORD… (Isa. 14:1-2)


2. Choose: The Lord will choose Israel, or reaffirm His sovereign choice of Israel, at that time.

3. Cling: Many Gentiles will love Jesus in the Millennium, but some will also cling to or embrace the Jewish people and desire to live in the land of Israel.

Well, here are our positive verses, right in the middle of it. Verse 1, “For the Lord will have mercy on Jacob.” The Lord says that with all this carnage and disruption and attack, and nations against nations, even the Lord using evil nations against evil nations, He is going, verse 1, to have mercy on Jacob which is Israel. “I will choose Israel.” What He is saying there is “I am going to reaffirm and reassert My sovereign choice on Israel at that time. I will openly display My choice of Israel in the midst of the carnage and the shaking. I am going to settle them in their land. Gentiles will be joined with them.”

There will be Gentiles, or strangers as it is called, but it means Gentiles here, “They will cling to the house of Israel.” This is a very interesting idea. Verse 2, “Then the house of Israel will possess these Gentiles as servants and maids.” These servants and maids will live in the land of Israel. So what is happening here is that again the Lord is saying that when the shaking happens, His promise to rebellious Israel is that He is going to show Himself true and He is going to redeem Israel. He is saying, in effect, “O My beloved people”—individuals through history—“even though you have had hard times, even though you have found yourself in compromise and sin, I am not giving up on you. I am going to come after you just like I did Israel. My promises are real and sure and true.”

So there is a personal application we can find right in the midst of this although there is a national application for Israel as well. He gives this unusual point that we do not hear about much: “Gentiles will cling to the house of Jacob.” It does not say they will cling to the Messiah though the Gentiles will love the Messiah all through the Millennium. That is repeated over and over and over by the prophets. Here they are hugging Israel, the nation of Israel. They are clinging; that means with an embrace.

B. Servants and maids: There will not be a vindictive or oppressive attitude in Israelis toward Gentiles. Jesus will be reigning in Jerusalem, and the city will be filled with the glory of God and mature love.

Here is my theory on it; you can read that later if you want. I think that there is so little land, geographical land mass in Israel, and all the Jews from the earth that survived the Great Tribulation are going to be brought back to the land, I mean all of them. The land is going to be full. It says the population of Jewish heritage is going to
multiply greatly. There is not going to be much room for Gentiles to be there, I mean just by the land mass I mean just practical math.

Here is my theory because it looks like this is an oppressive attitude of Israel. Like, “Hey Gentiles, hey...I will make you my servants.” You know, get in the back of the line and serve. I do not think that is really the attitude that is going on here.

C. **Gratitude:** Some Gentiles who “cling to Israel” will desperately want to live in the land. The land mass in Israel is limited, so there will be limited space after all the Jewish people on the earth move to the land. They may be invited to move to Israel on the condition that they will serve God’s purpose for Israel. It is possible that the “litmus test” is that they gladly accept menial tasks.

I think there are some Gentiles who are so in love with what is happening that they say, “Can I be one of the few that can live in the land? You know what? I am so grateful to do this, I will take the menial tasks because it will be such an honor for me to do this to be in the land with you.” That is what I think is the attitude and the posture of this. I do not think it is a downer against the nations. I think there is only a very small amount of room for the Gentiles. Israel has just become unified, the north and the south. The tribes of Israel, unified. They only want Gentiles there—I am just speculating now—who are grateful and serving and helping in the unity that is happening in the nation. That is just kind of a little, little personal view of that, okay?

**IV. A PROVERB AGAINST THE KING OF BABYLON (ISA. 14:3-23)**

A. Isaiah described the judgment of the king of Babylon (14:4-23). This was fulfilled in part in ancient history, but its ultimate fulfillment will be at the end of the age in the demise of the Antichrist.

3 ...*in the day the LORD gives you rest from your sorrow, and from your fear and the hard bondage in which you were made to serve,* 4 *that you will take up this proverb against the king of Babylon, and say: “How the oppressor has ceased, the golden city ceased!”* (Isa. 14:3-4)

18 *And the woman [harlot Babylon] ... is that great city which reigns over the kings of the earth.*” (Rev. 17:18)

Now look at Isaiah 14:3. Isaiah switches gears from end-time Babylon to the king of end-time Babylon. There is a proverb—other translations say a taunt, a mocking song, or a poem—against him. This is after Isaiah has described the judgment of the city of Babylon that is going to be raised up again before the Lord returns. When the city of Babylon gets raised up again, it will be a sign and a wonder.

A lot of Bible scholars think that cannot happen. For 2,000 years they said the same thing about Jerusalem. Both cities will have a recovery in the generation the Lord returns. They will be at odds with one another. They will be at the center of world drama. So there is a lot on that. We will look at that in some of the other chapters in the days to come. There is quite a bit of clarity about that in the Bible if you take the prophecies at face value, which we do.

So when Babylon gets reestablished, I think it will be a Dubai-plus-one. It will be a city born like in the desert. It will be a modern city that will eclipse anything that Dubai is, and it will become a world economic and religious center. Of the most modern state of the art, everything will be there. The Antichrist will have his designs on that city just like he will have his designs on the city of Jerusalem as well. He will be playing back and forth between those two cities. There is a lot more to say about that at another time.
Let’s look at this taunt about the king of Babylon. Now the Antichrist is the final king of Babylon. The king of Babylon through history is a type of the Antichrist. The Antichrist at the end of the age will really be the king of Babylon. He will be more than the king of Babylon, as he will be kind of a number of things. He will be the premiere authority over Babylon. So that is who I believe Isaiah is talking about here.

It says in verse 3, “It shall come to pass in that day”—he is talking to Israel, verse 3—“when the Lord gives you rest from all of your oppression”—that is again when the Lord returns—“when the Lord gives you rest from your fear and your hard bondage in which you have been serving the Gentile oppressors,” verse 4, “in that day you are going to take up this proverb.”

B. After Israel is restored to the Lord and resting in the land, then she will take up “this proverb against the king of Babylon” (14:3-4). A taunt mocking the king of Babylon. The king of Babylon had died and the oppressor has ceased and the golden city of Rev 17-18 will cease to exist.

So when is the day when Israel is at rest and free from all of their hard labor? That is related to the Lord’s return. So that is still yet future. In that future day Israel is to take up this proverb against the king of Babylon. Well, again, there needs to be a Babylon to be a king of Babylon. There will be a Babylon, and there will be a king, and it will be the Antichrist.

Here is what they will say, “How the oppressor has ceased!” or he has died. How the golden city—the Revelation 17-18, glorious, great city which reigns over the kings of the earth. It says in Revelation 17-18 that Babylon is the glorious city—“how that golden city is going to cease!”

C. The setting for this lament depends on which king is described and whether the lament refers to an ancient or future king of Babylon, or both. No king of Babylon nor Assyrian king in Isaiah’s day fits this description. Commentators do not agree on the historical figure who fulfills the details of this passage. Each paragraph includes words that people will say about this king (14:8b, 10-11, 13-14, 16, 22-23).

D. Isaiah described the death of the king of Babylon (14:4-8). The ancient king(s) of Babylon was a type of the Antichrist, and the Antichrist will be king over Babylon in the end times. At the time when Israel is saved (14:1), the Antichrist will be exposed as the oppressor of the nations (14:4), as the one who struck them continually (14:6), and who ruled them in anger—the whole earth will rest and sing after his demise (14:7) and after the golden city of Babylon has ceased (14:4; Rev. 17-18).

4…say: “How the oppressor has ceased, the golden city ceased! 5 The LORD has broken the staff of the wicked…6 he who struck the people in wrath with a continual stroke, he who ruled the nations in anger…7 The whole earth is at rest and quiet; they break forth into singing. (Isa. 14:4-7)

Let’s pick up the text again. “Oh, how the oppressor has ceased!” That is the Antichrist. “How the golden city has ceased!” That is Babylon. Verse 5, “The Lord has broken the staff of this wicked man.” Verse 6, “He is the man who struck the people with a continual stroke.” He is the one man that, when he struck the nations, he never backed down. He struck and struck and struck again. So Isaiah is describing who this king of Babylon is.

“He ruled the nations in his anger.” When he was finally judged and defeated, the whole earth was brought to rest at his demise. A matter of fact, not only will the whole earth be brought to rest when this king meets his demise, the whole earth will break into singing! Now there is no king of Babylon in history where this took place.
V. ISAIAH PROPHESIES THE FATE OF THE ANTICHRIST (ISA. 14:9-20)

A. The king of Babylon (Isa. 14:9-20) is a personification/type of the Antichrist and Satan. Ezekiel’s prophecy of the king of Tyre (Ezek. 28) has parallels to 14:9-20. The story of Satan and the Antichrist is told through these kings with very limited fulfillment related to ancient kings.

B. There is astonishment in hell when the Antichrist descends there under God’s judgment (14:9-11). The purpose of this proverb or taunt against the king of Babylon (Antichrist) is to show the Israelite audience the foolishness of trusting such a king who is destined for judgment and weakness.

9 Hell from beneath is excited about you, to meet you at your coming; it stirs up the dead for you, all the chief ones of the earth…all the kings of the nations. 10 They all shall speak and say to you: “Have you also become as weak as we?...” 11 Your pomp is brought down to Sheol [hell], and the sound of your stringed instruments; the maggot is spread under you, and worms cover you.” (Isa. 14:9-11)

They are astonished, the other leaders down in hell. This is the taunt. It says verse 9, “Hell from beneath is excited about you, Antichrist, when you are judged by Jesus and cast down. Hell beneath is excited to meet you at your coming.” A matter of fact, all the other dead wicked leaders, all the chief leaders of the earth, are stirred up. Verse 10, “They will speak and will say to you”—now this is pretty intense—“O mighty Antichrist! You are as weak and pathetic as we are down here. Your pomp and your arrogance which you seemed invincible when you were on the earth”—in Revelation 13, it says that he will seem invincible; it will seem nobody can stop him—“that pomp and that arrogance brought you down. The actions that your arrogance took you to, they brought you down to hell. The maggots are spread under you and the worms cover you.”

In other words, a victorious king is victorious in battle. The Antichrist will have more military victories than any military leader in history. A lot of the great military or the famous military—I do not know if any of them are great; when I think about them, they were all pretty mean dudes—whenever the famous military of history die, they have these very elaborate tombs and very elaborate honor and all this stuff. They are telling him down in hell, “When you get down here, there is no tomb, there is no stone, no memorial. The maggots, you are going to lie down on them! You are going to take your rest on the worms. That is where you are. There is no honor for you. The nations are not going to sing your praises. The nations hate you, and now we see how weak and pathetic you are without demonic power in empowering you like you had when you were on the earth.” I mean this is quite a time!

1. To meet you: The spirits of former kings of the earth and all the chief leaders of the earth express their excitement about meeting the Antichrist in hell after he is judged by Jesus.

2. Become as weak as we are: The Antichrist’s reputation as being mighty was based ruling with Satan’s power resting on him, but in hell he will be seen as weak and pathetic just as the other kings who died and were stripped of their power and prestige.

3. Your pomp is brought down: The Antichrist will have great military victories surpassing any than any other military leader in history. However, the body of Christ must not be intimidated nor enthralled by the temporary power and seeming invincibility of the Antichrist (Rev. 13:4)

4 So they worshiped the dragon [Satan] who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, “Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?” (Rev. 13:4)
4. Isaiah’s point is that no one should honor this man who has power for only 3½ years.

Now the reason God is telling Israel this is because, through a Jewish prophet, God is saying, “Do you dare accept that man when he looks like he is strutting across the earth in power?” Because many Jews will, just like many Gentiles will. “Do not dare accept him! He is coming to nothing. When that demonic power has lifted off of him after three-and-a-half years, he will be weak. He will be a weak and worthless, skinny, little man down in hell like all the other little ones, just weak and without any power whatsoever.”

C. This fallen king is identified as Lucifer. This is a double reference to Satan’s fall reflected in the Antichrist’s fall. The Latin Vulgate used the word Lucifer to translate “the daystar.” Lucifer is applied to Satan since Jesus described him as falling from heaven like lightning (Lk 10:18; Rev. 12:8-9).

12How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, you who weakened the nations! 13For you have said in your heart: “I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God [angels]; I will sit on the mount of the congregation… 14I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.” (Isa. 14:12-14)

Now it goes on and talks a little bit more about him. It says, verse 12, “How you have fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning.” This fallen king, this king of Babylon that they are going to taunt, is identified here as Lucifer. Now of course we know the double reference here is to Satan’s fall from heaven and as it is reflected in the Antichrist fall from prominence when he was sent down to hell.

The real point is we are not going to buy the Antichrist’s power and his persuasion because he is nothing at the end. We see this taunt. We can see through all of the genuine, demonic power that is on him. It is real power, but it is very temporary. When that power lifts off him, he will be weak and pathetic just like all the other men down in hell.

“How you have fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!” It is talking about the Antichrist now as well as Satan. It is the both/and. It is the double reference. “How you are cut down to the ground, you who weaken the nations!” Verse 13, “For you said in your heart”—and there is the famous five I will’s—“I will ascend into heaven. I will exalt my throne above the stars. I will sit in the mount of the congregation. I will ascend above. I will be like God.”

1. The daystar is a title for Jesus—the bright and morning star (Rev. 22:16).

16“I, Jesus...am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star.” (Rev. 22:16)

I have written here in the notes that in the Latin Vulgate the word used there is actually “the day star.” They translated it through Latin into the word, lucifer, but it is really the word “day star.” Day star is really the title of Jesus. He is the bright and morning star. The Antichrist is the false bright and morning star. The Latin word there is lucifer. That is not his technical name or his Hebrew name or whatever. It is just a Latin translation.

2. Paul referenced Isaiah 14:12-14 describing that Antichrist as one who “exalts himself above all that is related to God, who “sits as God,” and “shows himself to be God.” (2 Thes. 2:3-4)
...the man of sin [Antichrist] is revealed... who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God... so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. (2 Thes. 2:3-4)

Now Paul picks up on this very language when he is describing the Antichrist. Look here in 2 Thessalonians. He says that the Antichrist is a man of sin. He “exalts himself above everything related to God. He sits as God.”

This is the very language of Isaiah 14. “He shows himself that he is God.” I mean Paul is purposefully quoting Isaiah 14 describing the Antichrist.

So the point of this is that, when we see the whole drama unfold, we see the end of the story. We are not nearly so intimidated and captured by the momentary power, and threats, and prominence that emerges in the world, the unity—the unholy momentum that will seem like the world is in unity and it is going in one direction. They are casting off the Word of God, saying, “The earth does not need God and we are winning.”

God would say, “You wait and see. I am angry. I am about to break into history. I am going to expose the whole thing as false. Those who are loyal to me, those who have stood with me, those who have taken their side together with me, they will see through all of it as it is unfolding.”

These prophetic scriptures kind of pull the veil back and give us a sneak peak, just a little bit, but enough to embolden us so we are not offended by the judgments, so we are not captured by the false hype of the ungodly narrative. We see through it and we say, “Worthy is the Lamb! Worthy is the Lamb! We are with You until the end!”

D. The humiliation of the Antichrist includes not receiving any honor after his death (14:15-21).

The scene of this proverb returns to earth where the unburied corpse of the king is dishonored. Isaiah gives insight into “hell’s perspective” of the Antichrist.

Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol... Those who see you will gaze at you, and consider you, saying: “Is this the man who made the earth tremble... who made the world as a wilderness and destroyed its cities...?” All the kings of the nations...sleep in glory, everyone in his own house [elaborate memorial tombs]; but you are cast out of your grave like an abominable branch... You will not be joined with them in burial, because you have destroyed your land and slain your people. (Isa. 14:15-20)

1. **In burial:** Kings throughout history who have won great military battles are often honored with elaborate tombs to memorialize their many victories won for benefit of their nation. However, the Antichrist will have no such memorial tomb to honor him.

2. **Destroyed your land:** History will consider him a reproach much like Germany sees Hitler.

3. Ezekiel prophesied of the king of Tyre with several significant similarities to Isaiah 14:9-20.

Son of man, say to the prince of Tyre... “Because your heart is lifted up, and you say, ‘I am a god, I sit in the seat of gods’... You were the seal of perfection... You were in Eden, the garden of God... The workmanship of your timbrels and pipes was prepared for you on the day you were created. You were the anointed cherub...you were on the holy mountain of God; you walked back and forth in the midst of fiery stones.” (Ezek. 28:2-14)

You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created, till iniquity was found in you... You became filled with violence...therefore I cast you...out of the mountain of
God; and I destroyed you, O covering cherub… 17 Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty…I cast you to the ground… 18 I turned you to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all who saw you. 19 All who knew you among the peoples are astonished at you; you have become a horror, and shall be no more forever. (Ezek. 28:15-19)

E. God’s judgment of the brood of evil leaders who served under this oppressive king (14:20-23):
This had a partial fulfillment in ancient history with its ultimate fulfillment related to the Antichrist.

…because you have destroyed your land and slain your people. The brood of evildoers shall never be named. 21 Prepare slaughter for his children because of the iniquity of their fathers, lest they rise up and possess the land, and fill the face of the world with cities. 22 “For I will rise up against them,” says the LORD of hosts, “And cut off from Babylon the name and remnant, and offspring and posterity,” says the LORD. 23 “…I will sweep it with the broom of destruction…” (Isa. 14:20-23)

19 And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies…to make war against Him… 20 Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet…These two were cast alive into the lake of fire… 21 The rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from…Him… (Rev. 19:19-21)

VI. GOD’S JUDGMENT ON ASSYRIA (14:24-27)
A. The Lord swore that He would destroy the mighty Assyrian empire in the land of Israel (14:24-25). Judah was in a military alliance with Babylon against Assyria (Isa. 39:1-8).

24 The LORD of hosts has sworn, saying, “…as I have purposed…” 25 I will break the Assyrian in My land and on My mountains tread him underfoot. Then his yoke shall be removed from them, and his burden removed from their shoulders. 26 This is the purpose that is purposed against the whole earth, and this is the hand that is stretched out over all the nations.” (Isa. 14:24-26)

B. I will break the Assyrian: This judgment on the Assyrian was partially fulfilled in 701 BC, when Sennacherib’s army was destroyed by the angel of Lord who killed 185,000 soldiers (Isa. 37:36). The fall of the Assyrian Empire occurred almost 100 years later during the reign of Josiah in 612 BC. The ultimate fulfillment of this will occur when Jesus defeats “the end-time Assyria”—the Antichrist.

1. There are parallels in this prophecy (14:25) and Isaiah’s earlier prophecy about defeating Assyrians in chapter 10:24, 27.

2. Isaiah’s point was that the Lord would save Judah, not a military alliance with Babylon.

3. If Isaiah delivered the prophecies in 13:1-14:27 before Sennacherib’s attack on Jerusalem in 701 BC, the information about the judgment of Babylon (13:17-22), the salvation of Israel (14:1-2) and judgment of Assyria (14:24-27) was to convince the leaders in Jerusalem to refuse to look to Babylon (39:1-8) for protection instead of the Lord.
C. **My land**: The Antichrist will establish a palace near Jerusalem (Dan. 11:45). The “glorious holy mountain” speaks of the temple site in Jerusalem. The seas on the sides of Jerusalem are the Mediterranean Sea (west) and the Dead Sea (east). The Antichrist will come to his end or will be defeated (Dan. 11:45). Jesus will destroy him (2 Thes. 2:8; Rev. 16:16; 19:20).

45 And he [Antichrist] shall plant the tents of his palace between the seas [Mediterranean Sea and the Dead Sea] and the glorious holy mountain [temple site in Jerusalem] yet, he shall come to his end, and no one will help him. (Dan. 11:45)

1. The Antichrist’s armies will be destroyed on the mountains of Israel (Ezek. 39:4, 17).

4 You [the Antichrist] shall fall upon the mountains of Israel, you and all your troops…
5 So I will make My holy name known in the midst of My people Israel…Then the nations shall know that I am the LORD, the Holy One in Israel. (Ezek. 39:4-7)

2. Jesus will destroy the Antichrist’s armies surrounding Jerusalem (Zech. 14:1-5).

1 Behold, the day of the LORD is coming… 2 “For I will gather all the nations to battle against Jerusalem…” 3 Then the LORD will…fight against those nations, as He fights in the day of battle. “…His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives… [it] shall be split… 5 “Then you shall flee through My mountain valley”…the LORD my God will come, and all the saints with You. (Zech. 14:1-5)

D. **The whole earth**: The judgment of the Assyrian army represented what the Lord would do to the whole world in the day-of-the-Lord judgments (14:26; cf. 13:1-16).

VII. GOD’S JUDGMENT OF PHILISTIA (14:28-32)

A. Isaiah’s purpose here was to convince the new king Hezekiah not to join the Philistines in revolting against Assyria, but instead to trust in the Lord for protection. This prophetic word came to Isaiah in the year that King Ahaz died—in 715 BC (14:28). King Ahaz’s son Hezekiah reigned in his place. It is possible that Isaiah spoke this word in Hezekiah’s royal court while a few Philistine ambassadors were there to present their proposal of an alliance with them against Assyria — “all you of Philistia” (14:31) and “messengers” (14:32).

28 This is the burden which came in the year that King Ahaz died [715 BC]. 29 “Do not rejoice, all you of Philistia, because the rod that struck you is broken; for out of the serpent’s roots will come forth a viper, and its offspring will be a fiery flying serpent. 30 The firstborn of the poor will feed, and the needy will lie down in safety; I will kill your roots with famine…” (Isa. 14:28-30)

B. **Do not rejoice**: The Philistines were rejoicing because “the rod that struck them” was broken. Isaiah had earlier referred to the Assyrian king and his army as “the rod of the Lord” (10:9). “The rod” is associated with an Assyrian king who died in proximity to the death of King Ahaz. The best option is to see “the broken rod” as being associated with the death of King Shalmaneser V in 722 BC followed by several years of instability and infighting within the royal court related to the succession to the throne of his younger brother Sargon II (722-705 BC). This turmoil in the Assyrian court occurred in proximity to Ahaz’s death in 715 BC and the beginning of a Philistine revolt against Assyria. Thus, the time of this prophecy coincides with the Philistine plan to revolt against Assyria (Isa. 20:16).
C. **Out of the serpent’s roots:** Isaiah warned them that other kings would emerge from Assyria (14:29) who will cause even more trouble that the “broken rod”— King Shalmaneser V. The Assyrian King Sargon invaded Philistia in 712 BC, and his son King Sennacherib attacked Philistia again in 701 BC.

1. Isaiah warned them that though the serpent was gone, the trouble would continue. In fact, its offspring will be more dangerous. Assyria became more aggressive and dangerous to Philistia under the attacks of King Sargon (the viper) and King Sennacherib (the flying serpent).

2. The “root” or source refers to the lineage of a family. The deceased Assyrian king was both a rod and a “serpent” who was replaced by a poisonous viper, and his son was even more dangerous, being compared to a “fiery flying serpent.”

D. **Firstborn of the poor:** The poorest Philistine people are referred to here as the “firstborn of the poor” (expressing the superlative). Only these poorest people would survive the coming military attack from Assyria. Most of the Philistines were killed by starvation or in battle (14:30).

1. The only people left after the fall of Philistia were the poorest of the poor. The poor who represented the “root” or the lineage of the Philistines nation died of famine (14:30).

2. The evil, viperous Assyrian kings (14:29) killed or exiled the prominent and wealthy Philistines.

E. Isaiah promised doom on the Philistines and protection for Judah (14:31-32).

**31**Wail, O gate! Cry, O city! All you of Philistia are dissolved; for smoke will come from the north [caused by the approaching Assyrian army]…” **32**What will they answer the messengers of the nation? That the LORD has founded Zion, and the poor of His people shall take refuge in it. (Isa. 14:31-32)

1. **The north:** Philistia’s destruction came from the Assyrians who approached from the north.

2. **Wail:** Isaiah called the Philistines to wail as they witnessed or received news of cities burning just north of Philistia. Some Philistines saw the Assyrian army approach, burning city after city.

3. **Messengers:** Political envoys or messengers from Philistia were seeking an alliance with Judea to stand against the Assyrian army. They wanted Judah to make a commitment to them. Since the Philistines were to be judged by God through the Assyrian army, Isaiah’ message to the Philistine envoys was that the God who founded Zion was Zion’s only sure protection.

4. Isaiah was urging Hezekiah and his court in Judah to trust in God rather than in an alliance with Philistia (14:32). Isaiah gave a series of prophetic oracles against the nations to whom Judah might be tempted to look for help against the seemingly invincible Assyrian Empire (Isa. 14-23). Isaiah warned Judah that those neighboring nations were also under a sentence of God’s judgment, so their deliverance must only come from the Lord.
F. Isaiah asked the royal court in Judah a rhetorical question. What should the leaders of Judah say to the envoys from Philistia who want Judah to join their coalition against Assyria?

G. Isaiah emphasized to King Hezekiah and the royal court of Judah that God promised to “found” His kingdom in Zion (2:1-5; 4:2-6; 9:1-7; cf. Ps 46:6-10; 48:5-8; 74:2-10), so it only makes sense to trust the Lord protect them instead of Philistia. The poor in spirit seek refuge in Zion, the place where God dwells. The poor of Judah who trust in the God of Israel are contrasted to the armies of Philistia.

Amen and amen! I will just end with that. Well, let’s stand before the Lord here. I just want to urge you: there are so many descriptions that are this graphic, yet it is still almost completely unfamiliar in the Church’s conversation, it is almost absent in the conversation of the Church. There is so many descriptions! I have asked the Lord, “Why so many?” I think it is because the hesitancy and the neglect in the Body of Christ is so great against these passages. The Lord just piled them up to show that He really means us to understand them so that we are not thrown off when they really happen, for He is really going to show Himself to be this zealous against darkness and this committed to love and righteousness.

Father, we come before You even now. Lord, we say that we want to learn. Lord. I want the next generation to be anchored in the true, biblical narrative to see through the hype, to see through the smoke, to get anchored in eternity under the leadership of the Lamb. So, Lord, I ask You even now that You would raise up messengers, that You would raise up men and women who can see more clearly even now.

We are just going to worship for a few moments, and then we are going to open up the altar for those who would like any type of prayer and ministry.

Jesus, we trust Your leadership. Lord, shift our paradigm. Let us see the future—the glory and the trouble—more clearly. Let us see like You see. Give us revelation of Your zeal for love. Father, we say all is for Your glory, Lord Jesus, all is for Your glory. Jesus, we love Your leadership. We want to see what You see and feel what Your feel, Holy Spirit, Lord, even now we ask.