

## Isaiah 13

The next division of this book is made up of chapters 13-23. These chapters contain the oracles against the surrounding Gentile nations due to their negative treatment of the Jews.

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

The fall of *Babylon* toward the end of the Tribulation is dealt with in verses 1-22 of this chapter. *Babylon* is located in modern day south-central Iraq.

“Oracle” means “heavy” or “burden.” Therefore, Isaiah has a very “heavy” message (or prophecy) against *Babylon* as he prophesies concerning the Gentile nations addressed in chapters 13 through 23. We will find that Isaiah not only prophesied against the *Babylon* that was on the rise in his day, but also against the *Babylon* that will come on the scene in the last days. Isaiah deals with the *Babylon* of the last days in Isaiah 13-14, confirmed by Isaiah 13:6 and 9 (“*the day of the Lord*” in those verses pointing to the Tribulation).

*Is. 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.*

Verses 2-5 address the Gentile armies that will gather against Babylon in the last days, for a *standard* will be raised for the purpose of assembling these armies from the different nations. These armies will *enter the doors of the nobles*, meaning that they will enter the city of Babylon for the purpose of overthrowing it. Revelation 18:1-24, along with Jeremiah 50-51, also deals with the fall of Babylon in the last days.

*Is. 13:3 I have commanded My consecrated ones, I have even called My mighty warriors, My proudly exulting ones, To execute My anger.*

God's *consecrated ones* will *execute* God's *anger*. The word “consecrated” means “clean, holy, or sanctified.” Therefore, these *consecrated ones* are believers in Jesus Christ and enemies of the Antichrist. They are, evidently, the *sheep* Gentiles (the believing Gentiles) of Matthew 25:31-46—the Gentiles who support the Jews during the Tribulation. I can find no group of people in the Scriptures who could possibly be responsible for the destruction of the city of Babylon, the Antichrist's political and economic capital, other than the *sheep* Gentiles of Matthew 25:31-46. The *goat* Gentiles will support the Antichrist's agenda and, therefore, fail to support the Jews during the Tribulation (Matthew 25:31-46).

To properly interpret what is transpiring here, we must understand the different stages involved in The Campaign of Armageddon. The Campaign of Armageddon is not one single battle, but a series of battles that end in the Valley of Jehoshaphat just outside Jerusalem. Arnold Fruchtenbaum's book, *The Footsteps of the Messiah* (pp.314-363), describes this campaign in much detail. I agree with Arnold's view of these events and would encourage you to purchase his book. The eight different stages of this campaign are listed below:

## **The Eight Stages of The Campaign of Armageddon**

### **Stage 1. The Gathering of the Armies of the Antichrist**

The armies, or allies, of the Antichrist will be assembled at *Har-Magedon* (Revelation 16:12-16), which actually means “the Mountain of Magiddo.” Magiddo was a city located on a mount at the western end of the Valley of Jezreel from which the entire valley was visible. Therefore, the term “Armageddon,” which is used in some circles, cannot point to the Valley of Jezreel, but rather to the mount on the western end of the Valley of Jezreel on which Megiddo sits.

The gathering of the armies of the Antichrist in the Valley of Jezreel serves as the first stage of The Campaign of Armageddon. Joel 3:9-11, as well as Psalm 2:1-6, also make reference to this gathering of *the nations*. We will soon discover that they are assembled for the purpose of exterminating the Jews, beginning with the city of Jerusalem.

### **Stage 2. The Destruction of Babylon**

In order for the city of Babylon to be destroyed during the last half of the Tribulation, it must first be rebuilt. The *Babylon* of the Old Testament was overthrown by the Persians and the Medes in the days of *Daniel*, with the *king* of *Babylon*, *Belshazzar*, being the only casualty (Daniel 5). In fact, when the Persians and the Medes overthrew Babylon, it was done basically without resistance from the Babylonians. Why? They were feasting, leaving themselves ill-prepared for an invasion. After Babylon was overthrown, the city of Babylon slowly died out and eventually became nothing more than a pastureland for livestock. Therefore, if the wealth of prophecies relating to the Babylon of the future (the Babylon of the Tribulation) are to be fulfilled, the city of Babylon must be rebuilt.

As we cover this phase of The Campaign of Armageddon, we will use verses from Zechariah 5, Isaiah 13-14, Jeremiah 50-51, and Revelation 18 (other verses could be include, but we will limit ourselves for the sake of space and time). When studied in context, we discover several things about the Babylon that will exist during the end times, including when, why, and how it is destroyed. We will also discover the extent to which it is destroyed.

It is obvious that the city of Babylon will become the political capital of the world, the capital of the Antichrist. The fact that *the nations* (as well as *the kings of these nations*) are distraught over Babylon’s destruction (Jeremiah 50:45-46; Revelation 18:9-10) confirms that it is *Babylon* that serves as the political headquarters of the world.

Babylon will also become the economic headquarters of the world, in other words, the Wall Street of the end times (read Zechariah 5:5-11 and Revelation 18:3, 11-19). For certain, *Shinar* (Zechariah 5:11) is the same as *Babylonia* (read Genesis 10:10). Therefore, Zechariah is describing conditions that will exist within Babylon during the second half of the Tribulation when the Antichrist is ruling the world. Be careful to notice in Zechariah 5:5-11 that *the ephah*, the means by which items marketed within an economic system can be measured, will be corrupted. This tells us that Babylon will deal unjustly with its customers from throughout the world due to its fraudulent measuring system. This should not surprise us since the Antichrist, empowered by Satan, will be in charge of it all. He is just like his daddy, Satan, who told the first *lie* and has been doing the same ever since (John 8:44).

The next thing to consider is “when” Babylon is destroyed. Based on Isaiah 13:6-22, it will occur during *the day of the Lord*, meaning it will occur during the Tribulation. Isaiah 14:1-2 allows us to be more specific, for these two verses, sandwiched between verses in Isaiah 13 and Isaiah 14 that deal with the destruction of Babylon, confirm that this destruction is closely related to the redemption of *Israel* at the end of the Tribulation. Jeremiah 50:1-5, as well as Jeremiah 50:19-20, also confirms that the destruction of *Babylon* and the spiritual regeneration of the remnant of the Jews at the end of the Tribulation occur a short time apart. And finally, Revelation 18:1-3 proves even again that *Babylon* is destroyed toward the end of the Tribulation, especially since the events of Revelation 18 occur shortly before the Second Coming of Revelation 19. So as to “when” Babylon is destroyed is obvious. It occurs at the end of the last half of the Tribulation.

As to “why” Babylon will be destroyed is obvious. It is due to her negative influence on *the nations* (Jeremiah 51:7-9, 25-26) as well as her persecution of the Jews (Jeremiah 51:24, 35-36, 48-49).

As to “how” *Babylon* is destroyed, it will come about through an army of believers, or *consecrated ones*, based on Isaiah 13:1-5—the *sheep* Gentiles of Matthew 25:31-46. There are other verses confirming that an army comes *from the north* to destroy Babylon (read Jeremiah 50:9-10, 41-42; 51:48-49). Evidently this army from the north and the army of *consecrated ones* of Isaiah 13:1-5 are one and the same. Therefore, I conclude that it is the sheep Gentiles, due to their faith in Christ and resulting support of the Jews, who are responsible for destroying the city of Babylon, the political capital of the Antichrist. The *goat* Gentiles of Matthew 25:31-46 will be unredeemed Gentiles who will persecute the Jews during the Tribulation.

The extent to which Babylon is destroyed is obvious. The city will be totally annihilated, never to be *inhabited* again by anything other than demons (Isaiah 13:19-22; Jeremiah 50:1, 11-16, 21-27, 39-40; 51:29, 54-64; Revelation 18:1-8, 21-24). In fact, not even a remnant of the people will survive (Isaiah 14:22-23).

The Antichrist (*The king of Babylon*) will not be present in *Babylon* when the city is destroyed (Jeremiah 50:41-43; 51:31-32), for he will be in the Valley of Jezreel gathering his armies to come against the Jews (as was discussed earlier on). It is interesting that the Jews who *flee from the city of Babylon* before it is *destroyed* will report to *Jerusalem* concerning Babylon’s fall (Jeremiah 50:6-10, 28; 51:5-6, 10, 45, 50; Revelation 18:4-5).

### **Stage 3. The Fall of Jerusalem**

After the Antichrist realizes that Babylon is in ruins, instead of pursuing those who destroyed his capital, he will come against Jerusalem for the purpose of destroying the city. There he will meet resistance from two groups of Jews who have traveled from Bozrah, in ancient Edom (they will have been in hiding there since the middle of the Tribulation—Revelation 12:6). The first group will be made up of Jews who were previously citizens of Jerusalem. The second group will consist of members of the tribe of Judah who previously lived outside of Jerusalem.

Micah 4:11-5:1, Zechariah 12:1-9, and Zechariah 14:1-2 give us input concerning the details of the battle for *Jerusalem*. What we must understand is that the Jews who war against the armies of the Antichrist will have traveled from Bozrah, where the majority of the Jews will have been hiding since the middle of the Tribulation (Revelation 12:6). Initially, some of the Jews who had previously been citizens of *Jerusalem* will resist the armies of the Antichrist and temporarily regain control of the city (Micah 4:11-5:1a; Zechariah 12:6b). They will not take *Jerusalem* by themselves, for members of the tribe (*clans*) of *Judah* who had previously lived in *Judah*, who are

encouraged by the bravery and valor of the *Jerusalem* citizens, will leave Bozrah and assist them in battle (Zechariah 12:1-9). *Jerusalem* will eventually fall into the hand of the Antichrist and his armies (Micah 5:1b; Zechariah 14:1-2), and half of the citizens will be *exiled* while the other one-half will remain in *Jerusalem* (Zechariah 14:2). What happens to the Jews who remain in *Jerusalem* will be discussed later, along with the phrase, “*The Lord also will save the tents of Judah first*” (Zechariah 12:7).

#### **Stage 4. The Antichrist and His Armies Move Against Bozrah**

According to Daniel 11:41, *Edom*, along with *Moab* and *Ammon*, will not *fall* into the *hand* of the Antichrist during the second half of the Tribulation. It is for this reason that Israel will be able to seek refuge in Bozrah (located in Edom) while turmoil exists almost everywhere else. Because the majority of the unredeemed Jews and Jewish leaders will be located in this area of ancient Edom (Micah 2:12), the Antichrist will move toward *Bozrah* in an attempt to destroy them (Jeremiah 49:13-14). These Jews will have been in Bozrah since the middle of the Tribulation (Revelation 12:6; Matthew 24:15-16).

#### **Stage 5. The Entire Jewish Nation Accepts Christ as Messiah**

As we begin this section, it is important to realize the conditions under which every Jew who is alive at the end of the Tribulation comes to accept Christ as Messiah.

The pressure placed on the Jews at Bozrah, due to the presence of the Antichrist and his armies, will cause them to examine their hearts. The national sin of Israel (the *blasphemy* of the Holy Spirit) was the rejection of His Messiahship by the Jewish leaders during His First Coming by claiming that His miracles were preformed through the power of the devil (Matthew 12:24; 31). Based on Jesus’ words to the Jewish leaders of His day (Matthew 23:37-39), as well as what is stated in Leviticus 26:40-42, Jeremiah 3:11-18, Hosea 5:15 (the word “*guilt*” NAS can be interpreted “offense”), and Zechariah 12:10 (the phrase, “*on Me*,” can be interpreted, “unto Me”), Jesus will not return until the leaders of the nation, along with the nation itself, confess this national sin and plead for His return. It is interesting that Hosea 6:1-3 is the call issued by the Jewish leaders, just three days before the Second Coming, for the nation to confess this national sin. The confession itself is addressed in Isaiah 53:1-9 (along with verses such as Isaiah 63:7-64:12) and will last for *two days* (Hosea 6:2). It is as a result of this confession that every Jew on the earth will be spiritually regenerated (Romans 11:25-27; Isaiah 45:25; Jeremiah 31:31-34) on the next *day*, the *third day* of Hosea 6:2. It is on this day, *the third day* of Hosea 6:2, that Jesus will return at the Second Coming to physically deliver the nation from the armies of the Antichrist (we will address the Second Coming in the next section of The Campaign of Armageddon)

Not only will the Jews at Bozrah repent during the *two days* of confession addressed in Hosea 6:1-3, but the Jews at *Jerusalem* will repent as well (Zechariah 12:10-13:1). The Jews at Jerusalem will confess the national sin addressed in the preceding paragraph and, like the Jews at Bozrah, experience spiritual regeneration through the power of the Holy Spirit. In Joel 2:28-29, as well as Joel 2:32, we find the results of this outpouring of God’s Spirit. The Jewish *sons and daughters will prophesy*, *old men will dream dreams*, and *young men will see visions* (v.28). The Holy Spirit will also be poured out on their *male and female servants* (v.29). The result is the spiritual regeneration of the Jews in *Jerusalem* along with the remnant in Bozrah (described as “*survivors*”—v.32). Ezekiel 39:29 also deals with this same outpouring of the Spirit. Note: The events of Joel 2:30-31 (the *wonders in the sky and on the earth*, as well as the change in the *sun*

and moon), occur *Before the great and awesome day of the Lord* (before the Tribulation) as a sign that the Tribulation will soon begin.

Once these events transpire, Zechariah 13:7-9 will be fulfilled to the greatest degree possible. According to verse 7, the *Shepherd* (Jesus) was crucified (in 30 AD) and the nation of Israel was *scattered* throughout the world (by the Romans in 70 AD). During the Tribulation, *two-thirds* of the Jewish population will be killed (v.8), leaving the one *third* remaining to accept Jesus as Savior at the end of the Tribulation (v.9).

In Psalm 79:1-13, Psalm 80:1-19, and Isaiah 64:1-12, we find even more input concerning the nation's repentance and pleading for Jesus' return. This fits well with Daniel 12:5-7, where we discover that one of the major purposes of the Tribulation is to break the *power* (will) of the Jewish people (humble the nation) and bring them to repentance. All of this will be required for the nation to recognize her error and call Christ back.

We can conclude the following from this stage of The Campaign of Armageddon. For *two days* (Hosea 6:2) the individual Jews within the nation will confess their sin of rejecting the Messiahship of Jesus and, *on the third day* of Hosea 6:2, experience spiritual regeneration. Consequently, God will *remove the iniquity of the land in one day* (Zechariah 3:9), and the nation will *be born in one day* and *brought forth all at once* (Isaiah 66:8)—*on the third day* of Hosea 6:2, the *day* after the *two days* of national repentance. After this national spiritual regeneration of the Jews (also addressed in Isaiah 45:25, Jeremiah 31:31-34, and Romans 11:26), the next thing to occur is the physical salvation of the land and people in conjunction with the Second Coming (the topic of the next phase of The Campaign of Armageddon). The land, as well as the nation, will be saved physically when Jesus returns (He returns on the very day that the nation is spiritually regenerated, *on the third day* of Hosea 6:2, but subsequent to that wonderful event). It is interesting that the spiritual regeneration of the individual Jews is dealt with in the first portion of Ezekiel 37:14a: "*And I will put My Spirit within you, and you will come to life.*" The physical restoration of the nation and land that results from Christ's Second Coming, however, is addressed in Ezekiel 37:14b: "*and I will place you on your own land.*" The exactness of the Scriptures is nothing short of amazing.

Note: Based on Hosea 5:15, Jesus will *return* only after the Jews plead for Him to *return*. According to Isaiah 64:1, the Jews will begin to do so during the *two days* of repentance addressed in Hosea 6:2. This will continue until the day of His return, which occurs on the next *day*, the *third day* of Hosea 6:2, the day that all Jews on the earth are spiritually redeemed. Therefore, after the spiritual redemption of Israel, Jesus will be free to return, defeat the Antichrist and his armies, and usher in the Millennium. For more input, you can read the notes associated with Isaiah 64:1 and 66:8.)

Let's take what we have learned and address the Second Coming.

### **Stage 6. The Second Coming of Christ**

Some take Acts 1:9-12 and teach that Jesus will return to the Mount of Olives at the Second Coming. When these verses are examined closely, however, we find that it is the manner in which Jesus will return, and not the place of His return, that is addressed here. When Jesus ascended into heaven, He was taken *up in a cloud* (Acts 1:9), and the *cloud* was the glory of God.

When He returns, He will come *on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory* (Matthew 24:29-30)—*in just the same way as He left* (Acts 1:11). To determine the place of His return we must go elsewhere.

According to Isaiah 34:1-7 and Isaiah 63:1-6, the actual place of His return will be the city of *Bozrah, in the land of Edom* (modern day southern Jordan). Two other references, Micah 2:12-13 (“*the fold*” of verse 12 pointing to Bozrah), and Habakkuk 3:3 (*Teman* and *Mount Paran* of verse 3 are located in the vicinity of Bozrah), also pinpoint *Bozrah* as the location of the Second Coming.

Additional Scriptures relating to the Second Coming are Revelation 19:11-19, Revelation 19:21, Matthew 16:27, Jude 14-15, Psalm 18:8-16, and Habakkuk 3:3-19.

The phrase, “*The Lord also will save the tents of Judah first*” (Zechariah 12:7), should now come alive. It is obvious that Jesus will *save the* inhabitants of *Judah* temporarily living in Bozrah (who are being threatened by the Antichrist and his armies) before He saves the Jews living in Jerusalem. Therefore, the initial place of the Second Coming is not the Mount of Olives, located just east of Jerusalem, but rather Bozrah, located in ancient Edom (modern day southern Jordan).

### **Stage 7. The Battle From Bozrah to the Valley of Jehoshaphat**

One of the first casualties of the Second Coming (if not the first casualty) is the Antichrist (2Thessalonians 2:8). Isaiah 14:9-11 describes how the inhabitants of hell will taunt the soul of the Antichrist when he arrives. His body, which will never be buried, is discussed in Isaiah 14:16-21.

The armies of the Antichrist will be defeated by Christ as the conflict continues from *Bozrah* to *the valley of Jehoshaphat*, located just *outside Jerusalem* (Jeremiah 49:20-22; Revelation 14:19-20; Joel 3:12-13; Zechariah 14:12-15). Note: Jesus, according to Habakkuk 3:3, first goes to *Teman* after leaving Bozrah before turning toward Jerusalem. *Teman* is to the north of Bozrah, but some commentaries and maps place it to the south.

### **Stage 8. Jesus is Victor Upon the Mount of Olives**

After the fighting from Bozrah to the valley of Jehoshaphat has ended, Jesus *will stand* as victor *on the Mount of Olives* (Zechariah 14:4), located just east of the city of Jerusalem. An earthquake results, causing *the Mount of Olives* to *be split in its middle from east to west*, leaving a great valley (Zechariah 14:4). This results in *half of the mountain* being shifted to *the north* while *the other half* shifts *toward the south* (Zechariah 14:4). This earthquake, resulting from the *seventh...bowl* judgment of Revelation 16:17, also causes Jerusalem to be *split into three parts* (Revelation 16:18-19)—meaning that it will need to be rebuilt for the Millennium. *Every island*, along with all *the mountains* of the earth, will no longer be *found* (Revelation 16:20), and *hailstones* of approximately *one hundred pounds* will fall *upon men* (Revelation 16:21). The previously mentioned valley, passing through the Mount of Olives, will allow the Jews of Jerusalem to *flee* from the city as the nation *fled before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah* (Zechariah 14:5).

With The Campaign of Armageddon fresh on our minds, we will go back to a verse-by-verse study of Isaiah 13. We should now be equipped to place these events into their proper chronological sequence.

