

## ISAIAH\_9

### Isaiah's Message of Redemption and Judgment

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Isaiah begins his prophecy with an amazing description of the devastation of sin upon a people. The nation is sick from head to foot with wounds, bruises, and putrefying sores. Along with the promise of judgment on sin, Isaiah gives God's people the promise of redemption for a remnant.

It would come through the supernatural intervention of Immanuel, the Messiah. He would be conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of a virgin and thus be "God with us." Ultimately, he would reign in righteousness over the entire world from the city of Jerusalem.

In order to proclaim this message of judgment and salvation, Isaiah would need to have an encounter with God. That encounter happened in the year that king Uzziah died. Anyone proclaiming the message of judgment and salvation needs to have their lips cleansed and heart changed so they can properly represent Almighty God.

#### I. Redemption results in praise.

Isaiah's name means "Jehovah is salvation," and "salvation" is the theme in this song.

**Isaiah 12:1-6** – "In that day you will sing: 'I will praise you, O Lord! You were angry with me, but not any more. Now you comfort me. See, God has come to save me. I will trust in him and not be afraid. The Lord God is my strength and my song; he has given me victory.' With joy you will drink deeply from the fountain of salvation! In that wonderful day you will sing: 'Thank the Lord! Praise his name!' Tell the nations what he has done. Let them know how mighty he is! Sing to the Lord, for he has done wonderful things. Make known his praise around the world. Let all the people of Jerusalem shout his praise with joy! For great is the Holy One of Israel who lives among you." (NLT)

Once again the phrase "In that day" looks to the future and refers to the redemptive day of Messiah, when Israel is restored to faith in God and judgment is poured out on the wicked. God was angry with Israel because God is angry with sin. And Israel was sinning against God.

Here's the important truth we must never forget. God's anger against sin is never passed over. God's wrath must be visited upon sin. "The soul who sins shall die" (Ezekiel 18:20).

God's character demands justice against sin. So, sinful behavior is never avoided by God; but He is also a God of loving-kindness and tender mercy.

That's why when God shows mercy to us and He seemingly passes over our sin, it is because He has diverted His wrath and judgment from us and laid our punishment on Jesus Christ.

Hallelujah! He is our **propitiation**! That's a big word; do you know what it means?

**1 John 2:1-2** – "My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And He Himself is the **propitiation** for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world." (NKJV)

**1 John 4:10** – "In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the **propitiation** for our sins." (NKJV)

**Propitiation** = "The act of appeasing wrath and conciliating the favor of an offended person."

God is offended by the sin of mankind and the death of Jesus, the innocent for the guilty, is the act that appeases God's wrath against our sin. And Christ's resurrection confirms the fact that the sacrifice of Jesus, the Lamb of God, was an acceptable sacrifice on our behalf.

Now, just as the nation of Israel sang the praises of Almighty God for the deliverance they experienced from slavery in Egypt; so in the future, when the remnant returns and Messiah comes again, the people, as one man, will praise the Lord for His wondrous redemption.

This song was originally sung at the Exodus when God delivered the Jews from slavery in Egypt. It was sung again at the rededication of the second Temple under the leadership of Ezra the priest. And it will be sung again when the Jewish nation accepts Jesus Christ as its King. They will recognize Him as “the Holy One of Israel” and they will joyfully obey His holy law.

**Exodus 15:1-3** – “Then Moses and the people of Israel sang this song to the Lord: ‘I will sing to the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously; he has hurled both horse and rider into the sea. The Lord is my strength and my song; he has given me victory. This is my God, and I will praise him— my father’s God, and I will exalt him!’ The Lord is a warrior; Yahweh is his name!” (NLT)

**Psalms 118:13-16** – “My enemies did their best to kill me, but the Lord rescued me. The Lord is my strength and my song; he has given me victory. Songs of joy and victory are sung in the camp of the godly. The strong right arm of the Lord has done glorious things! The strong right arm of the Lord is raised in triumph. The strong right arm of the Lord has done glorious things!” (NLT)

Paul gives us a picture of this united praise when he wrote to the church at Rome.

**Rom. 15:4-6** – “Such things were written in the Scriptures long ago to teach us. And the Scriptures give us hope and encouragement as we wait patiently for God’s promises to be fulfilled. May God, who gives this patience and encouragement, help you live in complete harmony with each other, as is fitting for followers of Christ Jesus. Then all of you can join together with one voice, giving praise and glory to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (NLT)

This joyful song closes this section of Isaiah in which the prophet used four significant names to tell the people what God had planned for them.

- (1) **Immanuel:** Gives us a message of hope.
- (2) **Maher-shalal-hash-baz:** Gives us a warning of the impending judgment for sin.
- (3) **Shear-jashub:** speaks of God’s promised mercy for His people.
- (4) **Isaiah:** Gives a song of joy as the people discover that Yahweh is indeed their salvation.

The Lord will never forsake His people, no matter how difficult the days may be, or how long the nights; as the people of God, we need to know that the best is yet to come.

Beginning with this 13th chapter we are given **God’s Word for the nations**. God’s Word to the nations is grouped together by Isaiah just as it is with Jeremiah 46-51; and Ezekiel 25-32.

Isaiah prophesies concerning Babylon, Assyria, Philistia, Moab, Damascus, Ethiopia, Egypt, Elam, Media, Arabia, Tyre, and then concludes these prophecies with a description of the judgment of the world and of the last things in chapters 24-27.

## **II. The Prophet’s Message for Babylon**

Interestingly, his prophecy for Babylon speaks to the immediate future as well as to the distant future. It speaks concerning the earthly kingdom and also concerning the spiritual kingdom.

**Isaiah 13:1-22** – “Isaiah son of Amoz received this message concerning the **destruction of Babylon**: ‘Raise a signal flag on a bare hilltop. Call up an army against Babylon. Wave your hand to encourage

them as they march into the palaces of the high and mighty. I, the Lord, have dedicated these soldiers for this task. Yes, I have called mighty warriors to express my anger, and they will rejoice when I am exalted.’ Hear the noise on the mountains! Listen, as the vast armies march! It is the noise and shouting of many nations. **The Lord** of Heaven’s Armies has **called this army together**. They come from distant countries, from beyond the farthest horizons. They are the Lord’s weapons to carry out his anger. With them he will destroy the whole land. Scream in terror, for the day of the Lord has arrived—the time for the Almighty to destroy. Every arm is paralyzed with fear. Every heart melts, and people are terrified. Pangs of anguish grip them, **like those of a woman in labor**. They look helplessly at one another, their faces aflame with fear. For see, **the day of the Lord** is coming—the terrible day of his fury and fierce anger. The land will be made desolate, and all the sinners destroyed with it. The heavens will be black above them; the stars will give no light. The sun will be dark when it rises, and the moon will provide no light. ‘I, the Lord, will punish the world for its evil and the wicked for their sin. I will crush the arrogance of the proud and humble the pride of the mighty. I will make people scarcer than gold—more rare than the fine gold of Ophir. For I will shake the heavens. The earth will move from its place when the Lord of Heaven’s Armies displays his wrath in the day of his fierce anger.’

Everyone in Babylon will run about like a hunted gazelle, like sheep without a shepherd. They will try to find their own people and flee to their own land. Anyone who is captured will be cut down—run through with a sword. Their little children will be dashed to death before their eyes. Their homes will be sacked, and their wives will be raped. ‘Look, I will stir up the Medes against Babylon. They cannot be tempted by silver or bribed with gold. The attacking armies will shoot down the young men with arrows. They will have no mercy on helpless babies and will show no compassion for children.’ Babylon, the most glorious of kingdoms, the flower of Chaldean pride, will be devastated like Sodom and Gomorrah when God destroyed them. Babylon will never be inhabited again. It will remain empty for generation after generation. Nomads will refuse to camp there, and shepherds will not bed down their sheep. Desert animals will move into the ruined city, and the houses will be haunted by howling creatures. Owls will live among the ruins, and wild goats will go there to dance. Hyenas will howl in its fortresses, and jackals will make dens in its luxurious palaces. Babylon’s days are numbered; its time of destruction will soon arrive.” (NLT)

The word “Babel” means “gateway to a god” and sounds like the Hebrew word balal, which means “confusion.” In Scripture, Babylon symbolizes the world system man has built in defiance of God. In addition, Jerusalem and Babylon are contrasting cities: Jerusalem is the chosen city of God, and Babylon is the wicked city of man.

Babylon had its shining moments, but after the death of Alexander the Great, the city declined and soon was no longer inhabited by people. Isaiah’s prophecy was fulfilled, for the city was not rebuilt.

However, Isaiah’s prophecy describes something beyond the ups and downs of the ancient city. His message focuses on something greater. In the fall of Babylon, Isaiah saw beyond his locality. He saw a picture of “the Day of the Lord,” a time in which God would pour out His wrath on the whole world. And the pain will be like that of a woman in labor.

Isaiah was allowed by God to see beyond his own day to the day when the Babylonian world system would be destroyed.

**Rev. 17:1-6** – “One of the seven angels who had poured out the seven bowls came over and spoke to me. ‘Come with me,’ he said, ‘and I will show you the judgment that is going to come on the great prostitute, who rules over many waters. The kings of the world have committed adultery with her, and the people who belong to this world have been made drunk by the wine of her immorality.’”

So the angel took me in the Spirit into the wilderness. There I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast that had seven heads and ten horns, and blasphemies against God were written all over it. The woman wore purple and scarlet clothing and beautiful jewelry made of gold and precious gems and pearls. In her hand she held a gold goblet full of obscenities and the impurities of her immorality. A mysterious name was written on her forehead: “Babylon the Great, Mother of All Prostitutes and Obscenities in the World.” I could see that she was drunk—drunk with the blood of God’s holy people who were witnesses for Jesus. I stared at her in complete amazement.” (NLT)

**Rev. 18:1-3** – “After all this I saw another angel come down from heaven with great authority, and the earth grew bright with his splendor. He gave a mighty shout: ‘Babylon is fallen—that great city is fallen! She has become a home for demons. She is a hideout for every foul spirit, a hideout for every foul vulture and every foul and dreadful animal. For all the nations have fallen because of the wine of her passionate immorality. The kings of the world have committed adultery with her. Because of her desires for extravagant luxury, the merchants of the world have grown rich.’ ” (NLT)

Through Isaiah, God warned Judah that they would be taken into captivity by Babylon and this happened in 586 B.C. Jeremiah prophesied that the captivity would last for seventy years. Then Babylon would be judged and the Jews permitted to go home.

So the capture of Babylon by Darius would be good news to the Jews; because it would mean the end of their exile and bondage.

## II. God’s Message of Deliverance

**Isaiah 14:1-23** - But the Lord will have mercy on the descendants of Jacob. He will choose Israel as his special people once again. He will bring them back to settle once again in their own land. And people from many different nations will come and join them there and unite with the people of Israel. The nations of the world will help the Lord’s people to return, and those who come to live in their land will serve them. Those who captured Israel will themselves be captured, and Israel will rule over its enemies.

**In that wonderful day** when the Lord gives his people rest from sorrow and fear, from slavery and chains, you will taunt the king of Babylon. You will say, ‘The mighty man has been destroyed. Yes, your insolence is ended. For the Lord has crushed your wicked power and broken your evil rule. You struck the people with endless blows of rage and held the nations in your angry grip with unrelenting tyranny. But finally the earth is at rest and quiet. Now it can sing again! Even the trees of the forest—the cypress trees and the cedars of Lebanon— sing out this joyous song: ‘Since you have been cut down, no one will come now to cut us down!’

‘In the place of the dead there is excitement over your arrival. The spirits of world leaders and mighty kings long dead stand up to see you. With one voice they all cry out, ‘Now you are as weak as we are! Your might and power were buried with you. The sound of the harp in your palace has ceased. Now maggots are your sheet, and worms your blanket.’

How you are **fallen from heaven, O shining star, son of the morning!** You have been thrown down to the earth, you who destroyed the nations of the world. For you said to yourself, ‘I will ascend to heaven and set my throne above God’s stars. I will preside on the mountain of the gods far away in the north. I will climb to the highest heavens and be like the Most High.’ Instead, you will be brought down to the place of the dead, down to its lowest depths.

Everyone there will stare at you and ask, ‘Can this be the one who shook the earth and made the kingdoms of the world tremble? Is this the one who destroyed the world and made it into a wasteland? Is this the king who demolished the world’s greatest cities and had no mercy on his prisoners?’ ‘

The kings of the nations lie in stately glory, each in his own tomb, but you will be thrown out of your grave like a worthless branch. Like a corpse trampled underfoot, you will be dumped into a mass grave

with those killed in battle. You will descend to the pit. You will not be given a proper burial, for you have destroyed your nation and slaughtered your people. The descendants of such an evil person will never again receive honor. Kill this man's children! Let them die because of their father's sins! They must not rise and conquer the earth, filling the world with their cities.' This is what the Lord of Heaven's Armies says: 'I, myself, have risen against Babylon! I will destroy its children and its children's children,' says the Lord. 'I will make Babylon a desolate place of owls, filled with swamps and marshes. I will sweep the land with the broom of destruction. I, the Lord of Heaven's Armies, have spoken!' ” (NLT) The picture Isaiah gives us here in chapter 14 is that of a mighty monarch whose pride brought him to destruction. On the local level, this is what happened to Belshazzar when Darius the Mede captured Babylon in 539 B.C.

Nebuchadnezzar's daughter married Nabunaid, who was the son of a nobleman and his mother was the high priestess of the moon god, Allah. Belshazzar was then Nebuchadnezzar's grandson.

Isaiah described the king's arrival in sheol, the world of the dead, where the king's wealth, glory, and power vanished. The dead kings who were already in sheol stood in tribute to him, but it was all a mockery. Death is the great leveler; there are no kings in hell.

Then in verse 12, Isaiah begins to prophesy concerning “Lucifer”, the “morning star”, also known as the Devil. He is the fallen, corrupt mind behind the Babylonian world-system. He is the “god of this world” as described by Paul in Eph. 2:1-2; and in 2 Cor. 4:4.

**Eph. 2:1-2** – “Once you were dead because of your disobedience and your many sins. You used to live in sin, just like the rest of the world, obeying the devil—the commander of the powers in the unseen world. He is the spirit at work in the hearts of those who refuse to obey God.” (NLT)

**2 Cor. 4:4** – “Satan, who is the god of this world, has blinded the minds of those who don't believe. They are unable to see the glorious light of the Good News. They don't understand this message about the glory of Christ, who is the exact likeness of God.” (NLT)

Isaiah saw this event as something far deeper than the defeat of an empire. In the fall of the king of Babylon, he saw the defeat of Satan, the “prince of this world-system,” who seeks to energize and motivate the leaders of nations.

Daniel 10:20 helps us understand that Satan has assigned “princes” or fallen angels to rule over various nations so that he can influence leaders to act contrary to the will of God.

Lucifer was an archangel, along with Gabriel and Michael, and thus was one of God's highest angels. He tried to usurp the throne of God and capture for himself the worship that belongs to God alone.

**Five times** he asserts his rebellious, independent will stating:

- I will ascend into heaven.
- I will raise my throne above the stars of God
- I will sit enthroned on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain.
- I will ascend above the tops of the clouds.
- I will be like the Most High.

Choosing to be like the Most High, or a god unto himself, reveals Satan's basic strategy. That's the lie Satan fed Eve in the garden: “If you eat of the fruit you will be like God, knowing good

and evil.” And how many in this world have bought his lie thinking they can be their own god – the determiner of their own destiny?

The world-system promotes it and our sin nature craves the freedom we think our independence will bring us, but the reality is we are all conformists. We are either conforming to the image of Christ or we are conforming to the image of this world.

**Rom. 12:2** – “Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will.” (NIV)

**James 4:4** – “Unfaithful people! Don't you know that to be the world's friend means to be God's enemy? If you want to be the world’s friend, you make yourself God’s enemy. (TEV)

By virtue of osmosis, just living in this world every day, we are already conformed to the world-system in ways we are not aware of, thus it is a battle to become conformed to Christ. The war goes on in our mind as we ask ourselves: “Am I going to believe what the educators and philosophers of this world say is reality, or am I going to believe what God’s Word says is reality?”

This is why we need to be constantly working on developing a Biblical worldview. If you haven’t seen “The Truth Project” you need to watch it in order to get yourself on the right track in developing your Biblical Worldview. Read Christian Overman’s book “Assumptions that Affect our Lives” or Watchman Nee’s book, “Love Not the World.”

In the end, like the king of Babylon, Satan will one day be humiliated and defeated. He will be cast out of heaven and finally cast into the lake of fire.

So, whether God is dealing with men or with angels, His Word is still true: “Pride goes before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall.”

