

2 Nephi 23 — Isaiah 13 — The Burden of Babylon, the Day of the Lord, the Sanctified Ones

First foreign-nation oracle, the cosmic Day of the Lord, the Medes against Babylon, c. 700–680 BC.

The chapter begins Isaiah's foreign-nation oracle block (chs. 13–23). Babylon falls in 539 BC under the Medes — Isaiah's prophecy comes 150+ years before the fulfillment. Dual-horizon throughout — literal Babylon AND eschatological Babylon-the-world-system (Rev. 17–18 cites this chapter). Three load-bearing texts: v. 6's *day of the Lord is at hand*; v. 12's *I will make a man more precious than fine gold* (worth of souls); vv. 17–22's Medes' destruction of Babylon as type of eschatological-Babylon-fall.

Ten Insights

- 1. Burden of Babylon (v. 1).** *Massa* — prophetic-oracle of weight. The prophet bears the burden; judgment-prophecies are not lightly delivered.
- 2. Lift a banner (v. 2).** *Nes* — same noun as ch. 11:10's ensign. Same sign that gathers also summons judgment-executors.
- 3. Sanctified ones (v. 3).** *M'qudashai* — the Medes consecrated as judicial-instruments. Being used is not being approved (cf. Assyrian in ch. 10).
- 4. Lord of Hosts musters the host (v. 4).** *Paqad*-root — same root as 1 Ne. 1:20's tender mercies. The paqad operates from tender mercy to mustered host.
- 5. Day of the Lord (v. 6).** *Yom YHWH* — OT's master-eschatological category. *K'shod mi-Shaddai* = the patriarchal-covenant-God brings the Day.
- 6. Pangs as travail (v. 8).** Christ uses the same metaphor in Matt. 24:8 — beginning of birth-pangs. Paul develops in Rom. 8:22. Day-pains are productive.
- 7. Stars, sun, moon dark (v. 10).** Fixed cosmic-signs across dispensations — Joel 2:31; Matt. 24:29; Acts 2:20; Rev. 6:12; D&C 29:14; 45:42.
- 8. Punish the proud (v. 11).** Day's wrath concentrated on pride. BoM's chronic indictment (Jacob 2; Alma 4; Hel. 3, 12; 4 Ne. 1; Morm. 8).
- 9. Man more precious than gold (v. 12).** *Oqir enosh mi-paz*. Dual horizon — demographic rarity AND intrinsic-divine-valuation. D&C 18:10 — worth of souls is great.
- 10. Babylon as Sodom (v. 19).** Typological pairing. Rev. 18:21 picks up the typology — Babylon thrown down with violence.

Cross-References

Gen. 11:1–9 (original Babel); Gen. 19 (Sodom and Gomorrah); Ex. 6:3 (Shaddai); Lev. 18:24–28 (land vomits); Deut. 28 (curses); Judg. 5 (Song of Deborah); 2 Kgs. 17 (fall of Samaria); Ps. 2 (kings); Ps. 9:17 (wicked to hell); Ps. 18:7–15 (earth shakes); Ps. 76 (Lord of Hosts); Ps. 137:8–9 (Babylon, daughter of destruction); Isa. 2:11–22 (haughtiness brought low); Isa. 10 (Assyrian rod); Isa. 14 (king of Babylon — paired chapter); Isa. 24 (earth utterly broken); Isa. 34 (Lord's indignation); Isa. 44:28 (Cyrus named); Isa. 45:1 (Cyrus my anointed); Isa. 47 (daughter of Babylon); Isa. 63:1–6 (Lord's vintage); Jer. 25:15–38 (cup of wrath); Jer. 50–51 (Babylon's fall); Ezek. 38–39 (Gog and Magog); Dan. 5 (Belshazzar's feast); Dan. 7 (four beasts); Joel 1:15; 2:1–11; 3:14 (Day of the Lord); Amos 5:18–20; Obad. 1:15; Zeph. 1:14–18; Zech. 12–14; Mal. 4:1–6 (Day of the Lord); Matt. 24:8 (beginning of sorrows — direct citation of v. 8); Matt. 24:29 (sun darkened — direct citation of v. 10); Mk. 13 (Olivet); Lk. 21:25–26 (hearts failing); Acts 2:19–21 (Joel cited); Rom. 8:22 (creation groans); 1 Thes. 5:2 (Day cometh as thief); 2 Pet. 3:10 (Day as thief); Heb. 12:26–27 (yet once I shake); Rev. 6:12–17 (sixth seal — direct expansion of vv. 10–13); Rev. 17–18 (Babylon the Great — direct expansion of vv. 19–22); 1 Ne. 13:5–9 (great-and-abominable — Babylon-typology); 1 Ne. 14 (two churches); 1 Ne. 22:13–17 (Babylon falls by own sword); 2 Ne. 14 (Branch); 2 Ne. 24 (Babylon's king — paired); 2 Ne. 27 (sealed book); 2 Ne. 28 (false churches); Jacob 5–6 (olive tree); Hel. 12 (Nephite pride); 3 Ne. 8–10 (cataclysm at Christ's death — direct enactment); 3 Ne. 21 (sign of gathering); 3 Ne. 25 (Christ cites Malachi); Morm. 8:35–41 (latter-day pride); D&C 1:8–17 (Lord's wrath); D&C 18:10 (worth of souls — direct expansion of v. 12); D&C 29:14–21 (Second Coming signs); D&C 34:9 (sun darkened); D&C 45:42 (sun darkened); D&C 88:87–91 (signs); D&C 101 (Zion redeemed); D&C 133:14 (come out from Babylon); D&C 133:39–53 (Second Coming); JS—M 1; Articles of Faith 10.

Apocryphal Correlations

Joel 1:15; 2:1–11. Day of the Lord prophecy — *howl ye + day of darkness* — closest canonical Day parallel.

Zephaniah 1:14–18. *The great day of the Lord is near* — direct *qarov yom YHWH* parallel.

1 Enoch 1:3–9. *The Great Holy One shall come forth* — direct cosmic-Day parallel.

1 Enoch 100:1–4. *Day of judgment* with cosmic upheaval — direct vv. 6–13 parallel.

2 Baruch 27–30. Twelve woes preceding Messianic kingdom — direct birth-pang Day-of-the-Lord parallel.

4 Ezra 5:1–13; 6:18–28. Signs of the Day — sun-darkening, blood-moon — direct cosmic-signs parallel.

Wisdom of Solomon 5:14–23. *The hope of the ungodly is like dust* — direct pride-judgment parallel to v. 11.

1QM (Qumran War Scroll). Sons of Light gathered for the eschatological Day-of-Battle — direct sanctified-ones parallel.

Hebrew Word Studies

massa (מַשָּׂא, **burden / prophetic oracle of weight**) — v. 1. The technical noun for prophetic-oracle of judgment. The prophet bears the weight.

m'qudashai (מִקְדָּשַׁי, **my sanctified ones**) — v. 3. *Kadosh*-root, holy-set-apart. The Medes consecrated as judicial-instruments without their awareness.

yom YHWH (יוֹם יְהוָה, **Day of the LORD**) — vv. 6, 9. OT's master-eschatological category. Day of Christ's Second Coming; repeatable in historical-installments.

oqir enosh mi-paz (אֶפְרָא שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר רִיקוּא, **I will make a man rarer than gold**) — v. 12. Dual horizon — demographic-rarity and intrinsic-worth. D&C 18:10 — worth of souls is great.

k'shod mi-Shaddai (כִּשְׁד מִשְׁדַּי, **as devastation from Shaddai**) — v. 6. Shaddai = patriarchal-divine-name. Abrahamic-covenant-God brings the eschatological judgment.

se'irim (סְעִירִים, **satyrs / hairy-demonic-creatures**) — v. 21. Abandoned cult-sites become haunts for unclean spirits (Rev. 18:2).

Personal Application

Three practices. First, cultivate Day-readiness in the daily. Each evening, ask: would I have been prepared for the Day if it had come today? D&C 38:30 — if ye are prepared ye shall not fear. Second, honor the worth of a single soul. Each day, name one soul you have under-valued and act on the valuation. Worth of souls is great — even the difficult souls. Third, come out of Babylon. Name one Babylon-attachment and take one concrete step to come out — financial, media-consumption, ambition-pattern, identity-marker. D&C 133:14 — go ye out from Babylon.