

ISAIAH 13 AND THE
NEO-ASSYRIAN PERIOD

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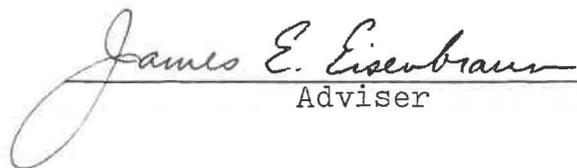
Two major alternatives exist with regard to Isaiah 13. The first is that Isaiah 13 was fulfilled when Cyrus conquered the city in 536 B.C. The second viewpoint, which grows out of the weaknesses of the first viewpoint, is that Isaiah 13 is tribulational, fulfilled in the Babylon of Revelation 17 and 18. However, a strong alternative to the above viewpoints emerged with Seth Erlandsson's book, The Burden of Babylon. His arguments, along with others, suggest that perhaps Isaiah 13 finds its background, as well as fulfillment, in the Neo-Assyrian period.

There are three major lines of argument to establish that Isaiah 13 is to be referred to the Neo-Assyrian period. First, the historical material is best interpreted in light of an eighth century context. Therefore, the fulfillment of the destruction of Babylon was accomplished with great vitality by Sennacherib in 689 B.C., or early in the seventh century. Second, a strong theological perspective in the Oracles Against the Nations that the nation of Israel was to trust in Yahweh rather than those nations forming anti-Assyrian alliances. Those anti-Assyrian alliances were part and parcel of the eighth century, early seventh century, to the fall of Babylon, when the alliances actually at that time declined, because Babylon was the central instigator of the rebellions. Sennacherib finally realized this and totally demolished the city. Third, the context of Isaiah 13 argues in favor of a Neo-Assyrian date because quite simply the bulk of the material in Isaiah 1-39 refers historically to the Assyrian period. Isaiah 39 forms an appropriate transition between the two sections of Isaiah.

The main exegetical arguments for a Neo-Assyrian period background are: first, that "Day of the Lord" may refer to material from our own perspective with a past fulfillment; second, that "Medes" best reflects an eighth century understanding because they are part of the Assyrian army which destroyed the city in 689; and third, that the word מִשָּׁךְ found in verse 22 will simply not allow for a long period of time between the prophet and the fulfillment of the prophecy.

The above arguments suggest the possibility that Isaiah 13 was fulfilled when Sennacherib destroyed the city in 689 B.C., rather than by Cyrus in 539 B.C., or in a yet-to-be-destroyed Babylon in the future.

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Adviser


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ABBREVIATIONS

<u>ANET</u>	James Pritchard, <u>Ancient Near Eastern Texts</u>
<u>ARAB</u>	D. D. Luckenbill, <u>Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylon</u>
<u>AUSS</u>	<u>Andrews University Seminary Studies</u>
<u>BASOR</u>	<u>Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research</u>
BDB	Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, C. A. Briggs, <u>Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament</u>
<u>BHS</u>	<u>Biblia hebraica stuttgartensia</u>
<u>BSac</u>	<u>Bibliotheca Sacra</u>
<u>CAH</u>	<u>The Cambridge Ancient History</u>
<u>CBQ</u>	<u>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</u>
<u>CTM</u>	<u>Concordia Theological Monthly</u>
GKC	E. Kautzsch, tr. A. E. Cowley, <u>Gesenius Hebrew Grammar</u>
<u>HTR</u>	<u>Harvard Theological Review</u>
<u>HUCA</u>	<u>Hebrew Union College Annual</u>
ICC	The International Critical Commentary
Jastrow	Marcus Jastrow, <u>A Dictionary of the Targumim, The Talmud Babli, and Yerushalm, and the Midrashic Literature</u>
<u>JBL</u>	<u>Journal of Biblical Literature</u>
<u>JCS</u>	<u>Journal of Cuneiform Studies</u>
<u>JETS</u>	<u>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</u>
<u>JNES</u>	<u>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</u>
<u>JQR</u>	<u>Jewish Quarterly Review</u>

KD C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, Commentary on the Old Testament

MBA Yohanan Aharoni and Michael Avi-Yonah, The Macmillan Bible Atlas

NICOT R. K. Harrison, ed., New International Commentary on the Old Testament

OIP D. D. Luckenbill, The Annals of Sennacherib, Vol. 2

TDNT G. Kittel and G. Friedrich, eds., Theological Dictionary of the New Testament

TOT Walter Eichrodt, Theology of the Old Testament

TWOT R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, Jr., and Bruce K. Waltke, Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament

VT Vetus Testamentum

ZAW Zeitschrift Für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft

INTRODUCTION

The problem of Isaiah 13 is not a manufactured scholastic endeavor. Quite simply, the problem is a hermeneutical one which arises out of the nature of the language of the Old Testament.¹ Is the prophecy to be taken in a literal manner? Yes, if by "literal" one means a recognition of all natural figures of speech inherent in the language of the prophet.² Those who over-literalize often accuse the prophets of error.³ Hermeneutics in the prophets continues to contribute to the specific tension of Isaiah 13 because of widespread disagreement over what is to be considered a cliché (symbolic?) and what is not a symbol or a figure of speech.⁴ The solution proposed here to this

¹In western culture language is often used in a "philosophic" manner. However, Hebrew poetry is much more "imagery conscious" than what is normal in western society. See James Sire, How to Read Slowly (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1978), pp. 56-57.

²This has not always been done. See Harry Goehring, "The Fall of Babylon--Historical or Future," Grace Journal 2:1 (1961):23-34, where the term "Medes" in Isa 13:17 becomes "angels" and "saints" because of over-literalizing.

³See Gerhard Herm, The Phoenicians (New York: William Morrow & Co., 1975), p. 152. Herm states with regard to Ezekiel: "It was a precise description by a precise author of that which was meant to come to pass; and yet it did not happen." Cf. Dewey M. Beegle, Prophecy and Prediction (Ann Arbor, MI: Pryor Pettengill, 1978), pp. 47-63.

⁴A recognition of the poetical nature of Isa 13 and all of the figures of speech used by the writer is probably

problem is two-fold: first, a recognition of all of the cliches, symbols, and figures of speech of the prophet in order not to literalize beyond what the original author intended; and, second, an allowance of the historical-grammatical¹ interpretation to limit constantly the tendency to allegorize.

Interpretive Problems in Isaiah 13

The prophecy concerning Babylon in Isaiah 13 is fast becoming one of the most controversial, problematic passages in all of the Old Testament. To whom do the prophecies refer? One might think that the heading provided in verse 1 which signifies that Isaiah wrote concerning Babylon would greatly simplify the matter. But, it doesn't. Does the prophecy refer to a city? Or does it refer to the entire world? Or both a city and the world? Some feel that at least part of the prophecy of Isaiah refers to tribulation

the most significant factor to be grasped in order to interpret the poem correctly. Some examples of this poetical nature of the poem are: 1) Similes denoted by the preposition כ in vv 4, 6, 8, 14, and 19; 2) Figurative usages of such words as רפה, אנוש, and ימס from the verbal root נמס, all in 7; 3) There is a dominant parallelism throughout the chapter in vv 4a, 4b, 5a, 7, 12, 13, 15, 20a and 20b; 4) Paronomasia in v 6 in the words כשך משרי and in v 12 with אוקיר and אופיר; 5) Alliteration is illustrated in vv 4 and 5 where מ is repeated 17 times in only two verses; 6) Metaphors are used in vv 8, 12 and 10; 7) Hyperbole appears in v 20; and 8) "Medes" may be interpreted as synecdoche in v 17. See below, p. 26ff.

¹For the importance of historical interpretation see George E. Mendenhall, The Tenth Generation: The Origins of the Biblical Tradition (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University, 1973), pp. ix-xv. Cf. TOT, 1:25-35.

Babylon mentioned by John in the book of Revelation.¹ Is the army in verses 1-5 the Babylonians,² Medes,³ Assyrians,⁴ angels,⁵ or some combination of the above and angels?⁶

Furthermore, Seth Erlandsson has challenged the consensus of scholarship and has produced strong evidence that the background of Isaiah 13 is to be found in the Assyrian period,⁷ rather than the assumed Neo-Babylonian period by the majority of commentators.⁸

Failure to interpret in view of the significance of the city of Babylon in the Assyrian Period, its revolt and subsequent sudden destruction by Sennacherib in 689 B.C.,

¹C. I. Scofield, ed., The New Scofield Reference Bible (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 724.

²R. E. Clements, Isaiah 1-39, eds. Ronald E. Clements and Matthew Black in The New Century Bible Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), p. 133. This, of course, assumes that the passage refers to the fall of Jerusalem in 586.

³The normal viewpoint of commentators is that this is the army of Cyrus which destroyed Babylon in 539 B.C.

⁴Seth Erlandsson, The Burden of Babylon: A Study of Isaiah 13:2-14:23 (Lund, Sweden: C. W. K. Gleerup, 1970), pp. 160-66.

⁵Goehring, "Babylon," p. 32. Here he understands the army to "refer to that great host that follows the Lord from heaven to earth when his kingdom is established."

⁶See Patrick Miller, The Divine Warrior in Early Israel (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1973), p. 137, where he suggests the possibility.

⁷Roughly from Tiglathpileser III in 745 B.C. to the fall of Nineveh in 612 B.C.

⁸Erlandsson, The Burden of Babylon, pp. 160-66.

has caused abundant problems for commentators, ranging from those who suggest Isaiah was simply in error,¹ to the solution that the passage was never fulfilled historically in any manner, but awaits a future fulfillment in the eschatological Babylon of Revelation.²

To add to the problem of manifold interpretations and lack of historical perspective, the prophecy itself is quite general. For example, the מל of verse 2 is actually never given explicit reference, that is, of course, unless it is fifteen verses later in the "Medes." In verse 17 the עליהם is no less ambiguous and its actual antecedent is the "sinners" (רעה) of verse 11. Or is it? Again, most commentators assume that the antecedent looks forward or is to be explained as Babylon in verse 19.³

The above problem is simplified for most by the assumption that the "sinners" in verse 11 are equal to "Babylon" in verse 19. However, those that assume that verse 11 is tribulational are faced with the possibility of double reference in the pronoun.⁴

¹Beegle (Prophecy and Prediction, p. 28) states that Israel's anticipation of the "Day of the Lord" was "false optimism."

²Kenneth W. Allen, "The Rebuilding and Destruction of Babylon," BSac 133 (January 1976):19-27.

³See Chapter I, note 4, p. 9.

⁴Goehring uses this "contradiction," attempting to prove that the entirety refers to tribulational Babylon.

So it may be seen that interpreters face several difficulties in Isaiah 13. Not only do interpreters labor under the problems of lack of consistent delineation of time details in the text itself, manifold interpretations, and clear disagreement as to the historical background of the passage, but they also labor under the most extreme handicap of all: the biases of the interpreter himself.

Erlandsson correctly remarks:

I have tried to give a clear and concise picture of the risks involved and to show the need for greater objectivity on the part of scholars in the application of these criteria. The numerous views of scholars concerning the stages in the history of Isaiah 1-39 are so divergent that they cannot be used as a basis for any further analysis of Babylon's context. Our analysis of the burden of Babylon must start from the text as it is before us, in other words, in the final version.¹

While Erlandsson has specifically pointed out the subjectivity of interpreters regarding the sources of Isaiah, his remark is appropriate to apply to the subjectivity involved in any interpretation, and his suggested solution is commendable.

The purpose of this paper shall be to examine the text of Isaiah 13 in order to determine its historical background and hence produce a credible exegesis of the passage in light of this background.

The basic thesis of this paper is that Isaiah 13 is a prophecy which historically, theologically, and contextually concerns the Neo-Assyrian period, rather than the

¹Erlandsson, The Burden of Babylon, p. 59.

Neo-Babylonian period, as normally assumed. Before the attempt is actually made to prove this thesis, a background in the eighth century shall be discussed so as to show the international situation which gave rise to the international prophecies of the oracles against the nations in Isaiah 13-23. The second chapter contains the basic argumentation for viewing the predicted event of Isaiah 13 as fulfilled in the Neo-Assyrian period.

The limits of the exegesis in Isaiah 13 shall be determined by that which contributes to the thesis that Isaiah 13 concerns the Assyrian period. Therefore, in chapter three the primary concern is to indicate that verses 1-5 may, without great difficulty, refer to an Assyrian army.

In chapter four, the basic idea of the exegesis shall be to show that "Day of the Lord" may indeed refer to events future to the prophet, but not necessarily eschatological.¹ Hence, "Day of the Lord" may refer to that destruction enacted by Sennacherib in 689 B.C.

In chapter five, the thrust of the exegesis shall be to show that verses 19-22 deal primarily with the city of Babylon and that the total destruction of the city

¹There are several definitions of eschatology which ought to be recognized: 1) Eschatology may refer to the future of the community; 2) Eschatology may refer to that which has been fulfilled with reference to the present day; and 3) In its technical sense, eschatology may refer to endtime events in the tribulation period. That is the meaning here.

depicted by Isaiah most naturally parallels the total destruction of Babylon in 689 B.C.

CHAPTER I

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The complications of deriving the historical background from the text of Isaiah 13 are numerous. These complications arise from the amalgamation of several factors, not the least of which is the generic nature of Isaiah 13.¹ This general tenor of the poem which borders on ambiguity presents a stringent challenge to the historical verification of an original milieu of the text.² The probable reason for the generic nature of Isaiah 13 is to be discovered in the function of the text itself; that is, its theological function³ as part of a basic kind of collection,

¹What is meant by the generic nature of Isa 13 shall be more fully discussed in the exegesis of such formulaic phrases as "It shall never be inhabited" or "As when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah."

²This ambiguity has already been discussed in the Introduction, but it bears emphasizing here.

³The theological function of the OAN material is to present the Divine Warrior Yahweh as judge of His enemies, hence producing salvation for Israel. See Barry Baruch Margulis, "Studies in the Oracles Against the Nations" (Ph.D. dissertation, Brandeis University, 1966), p. 80. Three basic war motifs are derived: 1) "Fire," 2) "Captivity," and 3) "Exile." Cf. John H. Hayes, "The Usage of Oracles Against the Nations in Ancient Israel," *JBL* 87 (1968):81-92, and Charles F. Fensham, "Common Trends in Curses of the Ancient Near Eastern Treaties and Kudurru Inscriptions Compared with Maledictions of Amos and Isaiah," *ZAW* 75 (1963):155-75, where his conclusion is that the treaty

namely, oracles against the nations; and its placement in the scheme of Isaiah.¹

Another major dilemma which has obstructed scholars from viewing this prophecy as being from the Assyrian Period is the importance of the fall of Babylon in secular,² as well as biblical, history in the Neo-Babylonian period.³ Most commentators, therefore, see the background of Isaiah 13 as the Neo-Babylonian period and the fall of Babylon herein pictured as the fulfillment or beginning fulfillment of the content of the chapter.⁴ Seth Erlandsson has

background and form are prominent in the OAN material. Erlandsson (The Burden of Babylon, pp. 65-66) maintains that the OAN are to be viewed as salvation oracles intended for the people of Israel.

¹Another clue to the generic nature of this poem is found in the fact that Isaiah refers it to the Assyrians, Jeremiah refers it to the Neo-Babylonian Period (Jer 50 & 51), and John refers to a yet to be fulfilled Babylon in Rev 17 & 18.

²There are major differences existing in the political and religious environment of the world between the Assyrian and Persian empires.

³See chart on biblical importance of the fall of Babylon in 539 B.C. (cf. Isa 13:19).

⁴The authors who consider Isa 13 as referring to the Neo-Babylonian period are: Joseph Alexander, Commentaries on the Prophecies of Isaiah (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1953), pp. 279-80; Gleason Archer, A Survey of Old Testament Introduction (Chicago: Moody, 1977), p. 334; Albert Barnes, Notes on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1950), p. 245; T. R. Biaks, Commentary on the Book of Isaiah (London: Rivingtons, 1871), p. 77; Victor Buksbazen, The Prophet Isaiah (Collingswood, NJ: Spearhead, 1971), p. 193; B. B. Edwards, "Translation of the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Chapters of Isaiah, with Explanatory Notes," BSac 6 (1849): 769; G. B. Grey, Commentary on Isaiah, ICC (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1930), p. 233; John Calvin, Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Isaiah, 4 vols. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans,

challenged the scholarly consensus on the matter of Isaianic authorship of chapters 13:2-14:23.¹ Furthermore, Erlandsson shows the entire context from chapters 13-22 to deal primarily with Assyria, particularly involving the Assyrian monarch Sennacherib.² His conclusion is:

Our examination of the oracles in chapters 13-23 which follow the Burden of Babylon shows that these refer to

1948), 2:410-11; E. Henderson, The Book of the Prophet Isaiah (London: Hamilton, Adams & Co., 1840), p. 118; Fredrick C. Jennings, Studies in the Book of Isaiah (New York: Loizeaux Brothers, 1950), pp. 169-70, who mentions the desolateness of Babylon in the time of Strabo (60 B.C.), as do many others. John Mauchline (Isaiah 1-39: Introduction and Commentary [New York: Macmillan, 1962], p. 137) gives two reasons against the authenticity of vv 17-22 (i.e., the Assyrian Period): 1) Mention of Medes alone in v 17; and 2) the description of Babylon as the glory of the kingdoms, the splendor and pride of the Chaldeans is "too grandiose for the Babylon of Merodach-Baladin." J. Skinner ("The Book of the Prophet Isaiah 1-39," The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges [Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1877], p. 104) gives the following against the Assyrian period: 1) Babylon was subject to or in revolt against Assyria; 2) While he may have foreseen this event, the event would not be generally known; 3) His historical scheme is overthrow of Assyrians, then the Messianic Kingdom; and 4) The style and language are foreign to Isaiah. See also E. J. Young, The Book of Isaiah, 3 vols. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965-72), 2:427. Even the writers who argue for a tribulational Babylon do so on the basis that most commentaries are committed to the Neo-Babylonian period as a starting point. Cf. Allen, "Destruction of Babylon," pp. 19-27, and Goehring, "Babylon," pp. 23-34.

¹Erlandsson (The Burden of Babylon, p. 164) states that the "question of historical background must, therefore, be posed again." Cf. B. S. Childs, Isaiah and the Assyrian Crisis (Naperville, IL: Alec R. Allenson, 1967), pp. 20-63, for the importance of the Assyrian Crisis in Isaiah's oracles.

²See Erlandsson, The Burden of Babylon, pp. 102-5, for the conclusion to the historical background for chapters 13-22 of Isaiah.

just those people who had either already encountered the Assyrians or who would do so, and who in one way or the other would take part in coalitions against them.¹

So, one of the basic propositions that Erlandsson has demonstrated is that the fall of Babylon pictured in Isaiah 13 is contextually in the Assyrian period.²

The International Situation in the Eighth Century

In many ways the international situation of the eighth century B.C. was unique. Having faced a period of decline, roughly from the death of Adad-rirari III (811-784) to the rise of Tiglathpileser III (745), Assyria embarked on that perilous experiment called empire building, which the Romans later perfected.³ It was this expansion of the Assyrian empire which set the stage for the series of events which transpired during this period of rapid change and fluid international shifts of power.

The Assyrian policy of imperialism⁴ produced two basic points of tension. First, with regard to the nations,

¹Erlandsson, The Burden of Babylon, p. 162.

²Ibid., p. 163. He has demonstrated this not only by reference to the oracles against the nations (13-23), but by reference to chapters 1-12 as well.

³The definition of "empire" here is adopted from Larsen and contains the elements of expansion through military domination and exploitation. See Mogens Trolle Larsen, "The Tradition of Empires," in Power and Propaganda, ed. Mogens Trolle Larsen, A Symposium on Ancient Empires, Mesopotamia (Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag, 1979), pp. 90-92.

⁴See Morton Cogan, Imperialism and Religion (Missoula, MT: Scholars, 1974), pp. 42-60.

this policy engendered resistance in the form of anti-Assyrian alliances.¹ Second, with regard to the nation of Israel, which had presumed upon God to the extent that He was bound to protect Zion and the Davidic throne,² the Assyrian expansion represented a serious threat. Furthermore, Assyrian religion was imposed upon the vassals of the Assyrian state.³ Hezekiah's revolt⁴ against Assyria (2 Kgs 18:1-7), which was inextricably linked with his cultic reform, created a temptation to which he succumbed. The success of his anti-Assyrian policy was largely dependent upon his gaining military support through alliances with other nations (Isaiah 39), but this military dependence was clearly a violation of the covenant (see Deut 17, Isa 20, 30:1-7, 31:1-3). So the end did not justify the means according to Isaiah!!

When one adds to the above the genius and wealth of Merodach-Baladan and his constant attempt to maintain an

¹The relevance of the anti-Assyrian alliances with regard to Isa 13 shall be discussed later.

²See John H. Hayes, "The Tradition of Zion's Inviolability," JBL 82 (1963):419-26. Cf. John Bright, A History of Israel (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1981), pp. 294-95.

³Cogan, Imperialism and Religion, pp. 72-88, cf. Bright, A History of Israel, p. 282. Bright notes that a repudiation of the Assyrian gods was an act of treason. However, Cogan calls for caution concerning the degree to which Assyria imposed its religion on conquered vassals.

⁴For the preparation of Hezekiah to revolt against Assyria, see MBA, 152, and Leon Wood, A Survey of Israel's History (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1970), p. 359.

international system of alliances, one can immediately perceive that the situation is not one of peaceful tranquility.

Now that a general picture has been created, it is proper to consider the more specific details which pertain to the fall of Babylon in 689 B.C., hence Isaiah 13.

An Historical Background for Isaiah 13

As noted earlier, the significance of the city of Babylon during the Assyrian period has been largely overlooked by scholars, especially with regard to Isaiah 13.

Erlandsson states:

If one peruses the available material relating to Babylon's history during the Assyrian period, it is striking how dominant a position Babylon occupies and how she is involved in most of the recorded events of the latter half of the eighth century and up to her fall in 689.¹

Erlandsson proceeds to demonstrate that Babylon exercised great hegemony even in times of Assyrian domination.² It was also essential for the Assyrian monarch to proclaim himself king of Babylon, because of the great prominence of the god Marduk and the power of the Babylonian priests.³

¹Erlandsson, The Burden of Babylon, p. 87.

²Ibid., p. 88. The example of the Chaldean Marduk-apal-iddina, who held the city for twelve years during the reign of Sargon II, is noteworthy. Cf. H. W. F. Saggs (Greatness that was Babylon [New York: Hawthorn Books, 1962], p. 120. See also J. A. Brinkman, "Babylonia Under the Assyrian Empire, 745-627 B.C.," in Power and Propaganda, ed. Mogens Trolle Larsen, A Symposium on Ancient Empires, Mesopotamia 7 (Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag, 1979), pp. 228-29. The people in northwest Babylonia evidently were given a tax-exempt status.

³Erlandsson, The Burden of Babylon, p. 88.

Major Events Leading to the Fall of
Babylon in 689 B.C.

Rebellions against the Assyrian empire played a leading role in the eighth century. The political intrigue on the international level against the Assyrian empire in the formation of military alliances to break the Assyrian rule should also be observed.¹

Sennacherib inherited a kingdom of relative security whose boundaries extended from Egypt to the mountain boundaries in the north, to the Persian gulf.² Babylon was an essential city in the empire because it was the key for domination of the Persian gulf, which provided access to the east for trade. The aggressive policies of Sennacherib led to frequent revolts throughout the empire, but especially in the sealand area.³ Before an interpretation of Sennacherib's policies is attempted, it is necessary to explain some of the major events and parties involved in the revolts and alliances of this period.

¹This idea in relationship to the message of Isaiah against alliances shall be discussed later.

²See MBA, map 146, p. 93.

³George Roux, Ancient Iraq (Baltimore: Penguin, 1969), p. 287, cf. J. A. Brinkman, "Elamite Aid to Merodach-Baladan," JNES 24 (July 1965):161-66.

Major Events

- 1) 703 B.C. -- Babylonia revolted under Merodach-Baladan. The Chaldean, Aramean, and Elamite tribes.¹
- 2) 703 B.C. -- The Battle of Kish.² Babylon was taken.³
- 3) 703 B.C. -- One might place the visit of Merodach-Baladan to Hezekiah at this point.⁴
- 4) 701 B.C. -- The rebellion of Hezekiah and Sennacherib's invasion of Palestine (2 Kgs 18, 19; Isa 36-39; 2 Chron 32:1-23).⁵
- 5) 700 B.C. -- Uprisings in Babylon initiated by Merodach-Baladan again forced the Assyrian army into Babylonia.
- 6) 700 B.C. -- The son of Sennacherib, Ashur-nadin-shum, was placed on the throne of Babylon and relative peace followed for about six years.⁶

¹Saggs, Greatness that was Babylon, p. 128, cf. ARAB, 2, 234, p. 116. The biblical name Merodach-Baladan is to be equated with Marduk-apal-iddina. Cf. Roux, Ancient Iraq, p. 290, and Erlandsson's regular usage of the latter name (Burden of Babylon, pp. 90-91); OIP, 2, col. 1, p. 24, l. 20.

²Ibid., col. 1, p. 24, ll. 20-22.

³Ibid., col. 1, p. 24, l. 28; cf. CAH, 3, p. 64.

⁴See Bright, A History of Israel, p. 285.

⁵For evidence of two campaigns by Sennacherib, see Siegfried Horn, "Did Sennacherib Campaign Once or Twice Against Hezekiah?" AUSS 4 (1966):1-28; Bright, A History of Israel, pp. 298-309; W. F. Albright, "New Light From Egypt on the Chronology and History of Israel and Judah," BASOR 130 (April, 1953):4-11; CAH, 3, pp. 73-75. Contra see K. A. Kitchen, The Ancient Orient and Old Testament (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1966), pp. 82-84. For archaeological evidence of two simultaneous campaigns in 701 see N. Na'aman, "Sennacherib's Campaign to Judah and the Date of the LMLK Stamps," VT 29 (January, 1979):61-86.

⁶ARAB, 2, 241, p. 121; OIP, 2, col. 3, pp. 34-35, ll. 50-74; CAH, 3, p. 65, calls him the "most successful ruler" of the period.

- 7) 699 B.C. -- The death of Merodach-Baladan shortly after the accession of Ashur-nadin-shum.¹
- 8) 694 B.C. -- Sennacherib raided Elamite territories to secure the Bit-Iakin tribe.²
- 9) 693 B.C. -- The battle of Nippur with the forces of Nergal-ushezib resulted in a victory for the Assyrians.³
- 10) 692 B.C. -- An Assyrian attack made against Elam from the province of Der with the result that Elamite territories were annexed.⁴
- 11) 690 B.C. -- The king of Elam, Chaldeans, and many disaffected vassals met the Assyrian army at Hulule on the Diyala.⁵
- 12) 689 B.C. -- The sack of Babylon: because of the sacred esteem which Sennacherib held for Babylon, the city in all the previous rebellion essentially had been preserved. Here he departed from his policy of leniency and totally destroyed the city.⁶

¹Saggs, Greatness that was Babylon, p. 129.

²OIP, col. 4, pp. 38-39, ll. 32-53; ARAB, 2, 246, p. 123; CAH, 3, p. 66. The interpretation found in CAH is that the Elamites were actually supporting Chaldean revolution; hence, to force the Elamites to battle, Sennacherib attacked the sealand.

³Saggs, Greatness that was Babylon, p. 129; Erlandsson, The Burden of Babylon, p. 91; CAH, 3, p. 67.

⁴ARAB, 2, 248, p. 124. See also 251, p. 125 for the death of Kudur-Nahundu, the King of Elam, which is a turning point in the rebellions to the Assyrian favor.

⁵Ibid., 252, p. 125. See OIP, 2, col. 5, p. 41, l. 17 to col. 6, p. 47, l. 35. The eighth campaign of Sennacherib. Luckenbill's interpretation in OIP, p. 17 is interesting: "It is also the finest rhetorical smoke-screen that has ever been thrown around a monarch retiring with dignity from a situation that had proved too much for him. Its only serious competitor for first prize is the Egyptian account of the victory of Ramases II at Kadesh on the Orontes."

⁶Joan Oates, Babylon (London: Thames & Hudson, 1979), pp. 118-19; cf. ARAB, 2, 340-41, p. 152, OIP, 2,

One might ask, and with reason, why Sennacherib decided to destroy Babylon, which represented the religious, cultural, educational heritage of the Assyrian empire. To this question, as well as to a brief description of the events that proceeded the annihilation of the city, this study now turns.

An Interpretation of the Sack of Babylon

The situation in Babylonia was unique. The Assyrian empire normally governed the conquered territories in two ways: first, by incorporating them into the Assyrian empire proper; or, second, by allowing them to continue as a vassal state.¹ Neither of these policies was applied to Babylonia.²

Sennacherib pursued three different policies in Babylonia in an attempt to allow an independent status

p. 83, l. 40 to p. 85, l. 60.

It is most interesting that the first person runs throughout this narrative, except on p. 83, l. 48, where it is stated: "The gods dwelling therein,--the hands of my people took them, and they smashed them" (emphasis added). Sennacherib's attempt to divorce himself from the overthrow of the Babylonian gods indicates at least some respect on his part for those gods. Cf. J. A. Brinkman, "Sennacherib's Babylonian Problem: An Interpretation," JCS 25 (April, 1973): 94-95.

¹Brinkman, "Sennacherib's Babylonian Problem," p. 90.

²The reason for this is established by Larsen in Power and Propaganda, p. 85: "The imperialist ideology which formed the basis for Assyria's relations with the world could not simply be applied in the case of Babylonia. Many of the cities had in their midst millennia-old sanctuaries for gods who were worshipped by the Assyrians, and they preferred to view themselves as protectors of the cities rather than conquerors."

there, but at the same time maintain stability and hegemony.¹ The first policy that Sennacherib followed was a personal rule simply by virtue of his being the Assyrian king.² His rule was disrupted by the Babylonians, who placed Marduk-zakir-shum on the throne, possibly to discourage the Chaldean Merodach-Baladan from taking the throne.³ After a rule of one month, Marduk-zakir-shum was deposed by Merodach-Baladan.⁴ Sennacherib met the Elamite army at Cuthah and on the plain of Kish and defeated them soundly.⁵ Bel-ibni, a native Babylonian, was left to govern Babylonia, but three years later was evicted by the ruler of the Bit-dakkuri tribe Mushezib-Marduk.⁶ Ashur-nadin-shum, the younger son

¹Brinkman, "Sennacherib's Babylonian Problem," p. 90.

²Ibid., pp. 90-91. Contra. CAH, 3, 60-61 because Sennacherib did not "take the hands of Bel."

³CAH, 3, p. 63. Cf. also Leo Oppenheim, Ancient Mesopotamia (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1964), p. 341, for a list of the Babylonian kings of the period.

⁴Sennacherib blames his first campaign on Merodach-Baladan (cf. OIP, 2, col. 1, p. 24, ll. 20-22).

⁵Sennacherib's defeat of Merodach-Baladan's allied forces demonstrates the ingenuity of this man as a military strategist. The main Assyrian army marched to Cuthah to lay siege to the city and Sennacherib sent a strong advance guard to Kish to check the advance of the Elamite army from the rear. This move was to prevent an attack during the siege operations at Cuthah, which no doubt would have proved disadvantageous. When he took Cuthah, where the cavalry and bow troops of the Elamite army of Kudur-Nahundu were stationed, he gained the check-mate position. Cf. CAH, 3, p. 64; OIP, 2, col. 1, pp. 24-26, ll. 20-64; and ARAB, 2, 234-35, p. 116.

⁶J. A. Brinkman, "Merodach-Baladan II," in Studies Presented to A. Leo Oppenheim (Chicago: The Oriental Institute, 1964), p. 27. In n. 151 sa-su-zu-bi Kal-da-ai (Shuzibi, the Chaldean) is to be distinguished from

of the king, then took control with a minor campaign around 700 B.C.¹ This man was probably the most successful ruler during this first part of the seventh century, but unrest in the Elamite tribes provoked Sennacherib into undertaking what is described in his sixth campaign.² So Sennacherib had now attempted to rule himself, to place a native Babylonian on the throne (Bel-ibni), and to rule through his own son Ashur-nadin-shum, but all of these political measures failed. The political alternatives had been exhausted, as well as Sennacherib's patience, and the fall of the city was the inevitable result of the constant turmoil and rebellion that it had engendered in the Assyrian Empire. It is no wonder that Sennacherib abandoned his policy of leniency against the city of Babylon and destroyed it totally in 689 B.C.³

Actually, the above historical discussions may seem somewhat premature, because the Assyrian background for

su-zu-bu mar Babili (Shuzubi, the Babylonian). According to Brinkman both CAH (Marduk-ushezib) and Olmstead (Nergal-ushezib) should be corrected to Mushezib-Marduk. The context for the above is found in ARAB, 2, 241, p. 121 and OIP, col. 3, pp. 34-35, ll. 50-74. See specifically, OIP, col. 3, p. 34, ll. 53-54 where Shuzubi, the Chaldean is mentioned and later in the six-campaign where Shuzubi, the Babylonian, ARAB, 2, 246, p. 123 is mentioned. Brinkman is correct because Shuzubi, the Babylonian, is in prison in Assyria (OIP, col. 4, p. 38, ll. 46-47), while Shuzubi, the Chaldean revolts (OIP, col. 5, p. 41, ll. 17-20). Hereafter referred to as Studies to Oppenheim.

¹CAH, 3, p. 65.

²ARAB, 2, 246, p. 123, cf. OIP, col. 4, ll. 32-53.

³This is essentially the interpretation presented by Brinkman, "Sennacherib's Babylonian Problem," pp. 89-95.

Isaiah 13 has not yet been proven. Though these discussions be out of place logically in the scheme of the thesis, however, they are actually quite necessary for the preparation of subsequent arguments. Now that this background has been covered, a thorough discussion as to why this background is necessary for Isaiah 13 will occupy the content of the next chapter.

CHAPTER II

ARGUMENTS FOR A NEO-ASSYRIAN BACKGROUND FOR ISAIAH 13

A Neo-Babylonian background has normally been assumed for Isaiah 13.¹ Some dispensationalists, because of the incongruency of the language with the peaceful conquest of Babylon by Cyrus in 539, have proposed that the entire prophecy is future.² It is remarkable to this writer that no strong alternative to either the Neo-Babylonian viewpoint or the futuristic viewpoint of Isaiah 13 emerged until Seth Erlandsson's book, The Burden of Babylon, was published.

The main line of argument here shall be that Isaiah 13 fits the Neo-Assyrian period historically, contextually, and theologically. The first argument deals with the historical material in Isaiah concerning Babylon and attempts to prove that Isaiah's prophecy is best seen as fulfilled by Sennacherib's destruction. The second argument deals with the context of the OAN pointing to the nation of Israel's involvement in alliances with those nations mentioned in the context. The third argument proceeds to demonstrate the

¹See Chapter I, p. 9, note 4.

²Allen, "Destruction of Babylon," pp. 19-27.

primacy of the theme of trusting in Yahweh, rather than alliances, in the first section of Isaiah. The connection then of Isaiah's material to the eighth century historically, contextually, and theologically should provide a basis for viewing Isaiah 13 as fulfilled in the destruction by Sennacherib.

The Fulfillment of Isaiah 13

Isaiah 13 may be shown to have its fulfillment or, at least, its beginning fulfillment in the Neo-Assyrian period by certain historical correspondences with the Assyrian records. The first correspondence is a general one, the second is quite specific in a related prophecy to Isaiah 13 (chapter 21). The third correspondence is found in the latter part of the *SWD* concerning Babylon in Isaiah 14:23. These correspondences all concern Isaiah's historical allusions to the fall of Babylon in chapters 1-39.

Historical Correspondences

The first historical correspondence that one encounters is of a rather general nature--one which is often recognized, but the significance of which has been ignored--namely, that the details of the destruction fit the Neo-Assyrian period better than the Neo-Babylonian period.

¹Allen, "Destruction of Babylon," pp. 19-27. Allen proposes a tribulational understanding because this did not occur. One wonders why the equally plausible alternative of trying to ascertain the event prophesied about in another point in history never was seriously considered or discussed.

Those commentators who have stressed a more literal understanding of the thirteenth chapter are aware that problems abound in identifying this chapter with the fall of Babylon in 539 B.C.¹ The Cyrus Cylinder states:

All the inhabitants of Babylon as well as the entire country of Sumar and Akkad, princes and governors bowed to him and kissed his feet, jubilant that he had received the kingship, and with shining faces. When I entered Babylon as a friend and when I established the seat of the government in the palace of the great ruler under jubilation and rejoicing, Marduk, the great lord, (induced) the magnanimous inhabitants of Babylon (to love me), and I was daily endeavoring to worship him.²

Now, granted that this account may be something like the Kremlin might produce of its invasion of Afghanistan, nonetheless, the account itself is still totally incongruent with Isaiah 13.³ However, the account of the destruction ordered by Sennacherib in 689 B.C. generally coincides with the account of Isaiah. Notice how Sennacherib described his conquest of the city:

I completely invested that city, with mines and engines my hands (took the city). The plunder . . . his powerful . . . whether small or great I left none. With

¹ANET, pp. 315-16.

²See William W. Hallo and William K. Simpson, The Ancient Near East: A History (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1971), p. 149; Siegfried J. Schwantes, A Short History of the Ancient Near East (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979), p. 139. Schwantes states: "There was no general pillage, and the temples were especially protected." Cf. Saggs, Greatness that was Babylon, pp. 156-57, and Roux, Ancient Iraq, pp. 352-53. All of these sources agree that there was no battle in 539.

³ARAB, 2, 340-41, p. 152. Sennacherib left the account of the destruction of Babylon out of his annals. This account is found in the Bavian Inscription, OIP, 2, p. 83, ll. 44-46 and p. 84, ll. 50-52.

their corpses I filled the city squares (wide places) The city and (its) houses, from its foundation to its top, I destroyed, I devastated, I burned with fire. The walls and outer walls, temples and gods, temple towers of brick and earth, as many as there were I razed and dumped them into the Arahtu canal.¹

The description given by Isaiah corresponds generally to the Assyrian account of the destruction. Isaiah records:

Like hunted antelope, like sheep without a shepherd, each will return to his own people, each will flee to his native land.² Whoever is captured will be thrust through; all who are caught will fall by the sword.³ Their infants will be dashed to pieces before their eyes; their houses will be looted and their wives ravished (NIV).⁴

So the first historical correspondence is rather general, but it substantiates the possibility that Isaiah is referring to an Assyrian conquest of Babylon.

The second correspondence of the Assyrian account of the destruction of Babylon with Isaiah is found in the following:

The gods dwelling therein,--the hands of my people took them, and they smashed them. Their property and goods they seized. Adad and Shala, the gods of Ekallate (a city), whom Marduk-nadin-ahe, king of Babylon, in

¹Ibid.

²This statement fits well the cosmopolitan character of Babylon in the Assyrian period.

³This statement fits well with the Assyrian accounts. See ARAB, 2, 340, p. 152; OIP, 2, p. 83, l. 45; ARAB, 2, 246, p. 123: "The people of Bit Iakin, together with their gods, I carried off--not a rebel (sinner) escaped." Cf. OIP, 2, col. 4, l. 42. One wonders if Isaiah is not being ironical in that Sennacherib claimed to punish the "rebels" (lit. "sinners") (ARAB, 2, 234, p. 116), but God Almighty is said to be the one who will exterminate sinners (Isa 13:9).

⁴See ARAB, 2, 340, p. 152. There is no direct statement of the latter action, but certainly this did not happen in 539 B.C. with Cyrus.

the reign of Tiglath-pileser, king of Assyria, had seized and carried off to Babylon.¹

This action by the army of Sennacherib finds its fulfillment in Isaiah 21:9 which reads: וְכַל פְּסִילֵי אֱלֹהֵיהָ שָׁבַר לְאָרֶץ.² In fact, it is almost impossible that this action would have taken place in 539 B.C. with Cyrus. According to the Nabonidus Chronicle, lines 15-19, the following occurred in 539 B.C.:

On the sixteenth day Ugbacu, governor of the Guti, and the army of Cyrus (II) . . . entered Babylon without a battle. Afterwards, after Nabonidus retreated, he was captured in Babylon. Until the end of the month the shield (bearing troops) of the Guti surrounded the gates of Esagili. (But) there was no interruption (of rites) in Esagili or the (other) temples and no date (for a performance) was missed. On the third day of the month Marchesvan Cyrus (II) entered Babylon . . . were filled before him. There was peace in the city while Cyrus (II).³

It seems that when Cyrus entered the city there was no interruption of the religious rites of the temples, but when Sennacherib entered Babylon all of the temples and gods, for that matter, were smashed.

¹OIP, 2, p. 83, ll. 48-49.

²This correspondence is strengthened by the fact that the Assyrian word in the accounts, u-sab-bi-ru-ma (they smashed) is parallel to the word in the Hebrew text, שָׁבַר. Furthermore, BHS suggests on the evidence of the versions and the LXX translation συνετετριβησαν a 3 common plural. While this writer does not agree with the idea that Cyrus is spoken of here, one must agree with Julian Obermann ("Yahweh's Victory over the Babylonian Pantheon," JBL 48 [1929]:307-28) that the primary thrust of the passage is theological.

³A. K. Grayson, Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles, vol. 5 in Texts From Cuneiform Sources, ed. A. Leo Oppenheim (Locust Valley, NY: J. J. Augustin, 1975), pp. 109-10.

There is another correspondence between the Assyrian accounts and the description of the fall of Babylon in Isaiah concerning the specific manner in which the city was destroyed. Notice what Sennacherib does in order to completely level the city:

The wall and outer wall, temples and gods, temple-tower of brick and earth, as many as there were, I razed and dumped them into the Arahtu-canal. Through the midst of that city I dug canals, I flooded its site (lit. ground) with water and the very foundations thereof (lit. the structure of its foundation) I destroyed.¹

But this is exactly how Isaiah predicts the city will be destroyed. Notice in Isaiah 14:23 the prediction that Babylon will become "a possession for the hedge-hog" and *וְאִגְמֵי-מַיִם*,² which the NASV translates "swamps of water." This parallel is striking in that it describes exactly the manner in which Sennacherib destroyed the city in 689 B.C.

Perhaps none of these correspondences between the Assyrian records of the fall of Babylon in 689 B.C. and the prophecies of Isaiah concerning Babylon (excluding chapter 47) would, in and of themselves, be compelling. However, all of them taken together do seem to represent a formidable body of evidence that Isaiah predicted the imminent fall of Babylon in 689 B.C.

The Problem of the Medes

The historical problem engendered by understanding Isaiah 13 to refer to the fall of Assyrian Babylon in 689

¹OIP, 2, p. 84, ll. 51-53.

²BDB, p. 8. The Assyrian word agammu is not used here. (Cf. OIP, 2, p. 84, l. 54)

is, How is one to interpret the word "Medes" in verse 17? Two basic proposals have been suggested and both are entirely plausible: first, the suggestion of Seth Erlandsson that while the mention of the "Medes" reflects an eighth century background, the Medes in verse 17 are not coming against the city, but the Assyrian army;¹ and second, the proposal that "Medes" is actually a designation for the entire Assyrian army.²

The suggestion of Seth Erlandsson has its merits, especially if one were inclined to the viewpoint that the Medes were involved in the anti-Assyrian coalitions. Adoption of his viewpoint also involves seeing a disunity in the chapter in that the Medes are not coming against the city of Babylon, but are allies of the city, protecting against Assyrian conquest.

By contrast, the second viewpoint, which is proposed here, views Isaiah 13 as a literary unity with the resulting idea that the "Medes" are indeed coming against the city of Babylon. Two basic avenues of approach substantiate the possibility that the "Medes" are a poetical designation by Isaiah to represent the Assyrian army coming against

¹Erlandsson, The Burden of Babylon, p. 160. His viewpoint is that vv 19-22 have been essentially dropped into the narrative. So the chapter has not been viewed as an original literary unity (cf. p. 92 which gives conclusion on Isa 21).

²William Henry Cobb, "An Examination of Isaiah 13," BSac 49 (July 1892):493.

Babylon.¹

The first suggestion as to how the Medes can possibly represent the Assyrian army is that substantial numbers of Medes were in the Assyrian army at this particular time. This is established by the fact that the Medes had been in constant subjection to the Assyrian empire, especially under Sargon II.² The most significant reference in the Assyrian documents about the subjugation of the Medes is found in ARAB, 58 (p. 30), where Sargon evidently brought thirty-four districts of the Medes into Assyria proper.³

The alliances of those Medes who might have been rebellious seem to be in the direction to the north⁴ with the Mannai and Cimmerians. Saggs records the following with regard to Sargon and his successes in the north:

Its king, Mita (Midas to classical authors), sent a present and sought to make a treaty of friendship with Assyria. Sargon was delighted and in a letter written

¹By poetical designation, synecdoche, a part for the whole, is meant. The prophet may also intend a bit of irony in that the Medes are coming against the city of Babylon.

²The following references in ARAB describe subjugation of the Medes during the reign of Sargon: ARAB, 2, 15, 19, 23, 24, 58, 79, 82.

³This is significant because if the Medes were part of the empire, then it is unlikely that they participated in any united way in the anti-Assyrian coalitions. See J. N. Postgate, Taxation and Conscription in the Assyrian Army (Rome: Biblical Institute, 1974), pp. 59-60, where he states that there is little evidence for the levying of men for bitqu. He deals with military service on pp. 218-29. The passage in ARAB also gives clear indication that horses were levied.

⁴Roux, Ancient Iraq, p. 288.

by him to his emissary in charge of negotiations, almost certainly his son Sennacherib, he asked that Mita should be informed of his pleasure.¹

Also Sennacherib, in a long list of those who had rebelled with Merodach-Baladan does not mention the Medes.² He does mention, however, that "on my return march I received heavy tribute of the distant Medes."³ The above would tend to eliminate the "Medes" from being viewed as in the anti-Assyrian coalitions, though it is impossible to be dogmatic.

The second avenue of approach which yields some evidence that the term "Medes" may designate the Assyrian army is its biblical usage, especially in Isaiah. In Isaiah 21,⁴ which previous discussion shows should refer to the fall of Babylon in 689, the army is designated by the words:

Isaiah 21:2c	עלי עילם	Rise-up!	0 Elam
	צורי מדי	Lay siege!	0 Medes

It should be noted that the context of Isaiah 21 is primarily regarding Assyrian operations against revolts (Ashdod, chapter 20; Babylon, chapter 21; Jerusalem, chapter 22). Perhaps more significant than Isaiah 21 is the usage of

¹Saggs, Greatness that was Babylon, p. 126.

²ARAB, 2, 234, p. 116.

³ARAB, 2, 238, p. 118.

⁴Erlandsson (The Burden of Babylon, p. 92) would say that Elam and Media are coming against "the treacherous one who still deals treacherously." Erlandsson's view is especially tempting, but Isa 22:6 refers to עילם as part of the Assyrian army. Cf. Gottwald, All the Kingdoms of the Earth, p. 194, note 124.

in Isaiah 22:6 to refer to the Assyrian siege operations against Jerusalem. This usage of מַלְאִימָה undoubtedly gives us an indication of the international make-up of the Assyrian army.¹

In the above discussion two views of "Medes" in Isaiah 13:17 were seen to be plausible. The first is that "Medes" is a designation which may be left essentially unexplained and that the term designates in Isaiah 13:17 and Isaiah 21:2 an army of Medes coming against Assyria, who is coming against Babylon. The second viewpoint, which this writer favors only slightly over Erlandsson's viewpoint, is that מַלְאִימָה refers to the Assyrian army in a poetical way, namely as synecdoche.

Military Alliances and their Significance for Isaiah 13

The second major argument of this study is that Isaiah 13 in the Neo-Assyrian period fits the theological concern (a major one in chapters 1-39) of Isaiah, namely, that his people trust in Yahweh rather than in military alliances.

The first point of interest in this discussion is the relationship of Isaiah 39 to the prophecies concerning

¹KD (Isaiah, p. 392) states: "Of the nations composing the Assyrian army, the two mentioned are Elam . . . and kin." The explanation given for their usage is that they represent "the whole extent of the Assyrian empire from south to north." Isaiah 22 most probably is to refer to Sennacherib's invasion. The destruction of the city is predicted, but it never happened. Perhaps Jer 26:18, 19, which states that the people repented at the preaching of Micah, gives the reason why God stayed His hand of judgment.

the fall of Babylon (Isaiah 13, 21) in Isaiah 1-39.¹ As noted earlier, the placement of Isaiah 39 is taken to be before the campaign of Sennacherib in 701 B.C.²

The importance of Isaiah 39 is that it establishes the attempt of Merodach-Baladan to form a military alliance with Hezekiah and others in the west in order to insure the success of his revolt in Babylonia.³ This interpretation is substantiated by the fact that Hezekiah increased his efforts significantly, probably enlisting alliances with Egypt and Philistia to further secure his own military position.⁴

¹Many commentators have missed the point, placing the reason for the Babylonian captivity as given here on Hezekiah's pride. While this certainly could be the explanation, it seems better to understand the actions of Hezekiah as confirmation that he has made an alliance in support of Merodach-Baladan against Assyria. This alliance would contradict the whole message of Isaiah that the king is to trust in Yahweh alone for deliverance (Isa 30, 31) and the emphasis of the OAN on God's sovereignty over the affairs of the world. Hence, the failure is significant, because the whole nation then has sinned through Hezekiah in their alliance with Babylon. Therefore, the whole nation will go into captivity, Isaiah predicts. This understanding is supported by the fact that God's judgment is severe, and Hezekiah's assurance that "there will be peace in my lifetime."

²The fact that this assignment of the chapter to earlier than 701 throws the historical section of Isa 36-39 out of chronological sequence is no particular problem. One might notice the fitting transition that Isa 39 forms to the Neo-Babylonian material in the latter chapters (40-66) of Isaiah.

³Bright, A History of Israel, pp. 284-85; CAH, 3, p. 63; and Brinkman, Studies to Oppenheim, p. 33.

⁴Bright, A History of Israel, p. 285.

Isaiah insisted on a consistent application of the concept of God as יהוה צבאות, even in the political realm where Hezekiah was most tempted to violate the covenant, and insure peace and prosperity through military alliances against Assyria, instead of trusting in God as the Divine Warrior of Israel. To be sure, the prohibition of "multiplying horses and wives" (Deut 17:17) was probably instituted to forestall the inevitable consequences of religious syncretism, as well as its implicit recognition of God as the military deliverer of Israel, not the state.¹

The message of Isaiah 1-39 is replete with the theme that the nation of Israel is to trust in Yahweh, not military alliances. A few examples shall be given here. First, in Isaiah 7:4-7 the context deals with the Syro-Ephraimitic alliance against Judah. Isaiah was to encourage Ahaz with the following message: "Say to him, 'be careful, keep calm and don't be afraid. Do not lose heart because of these two smoldering stubs of firewood, because of the fierce anger of Rezin and Aram and of the son of Remaliah. Aram, Ephraim and Remaliah's son have plotted your ruin saying, "Let us invade Judah; let us tear it apart and divide it

¹Millard C. Lind, Yahweh Is a Warrior: The Theology of Warfare in Ancient Israel (Scottsdale, PA: Herald, 1980), p. 34. On page 151 he gives his conclusion with regard to the prohibition to multiply horses: "Reliance on a well-equipped, professional army was regarded as a denial of trust in Yahweh and his miracle." Cf. P. C. Craigie, The Book of Deuteronomy, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), p. 255.

among ourselves, and make the son of Tabeel king over it." Yet, this is what the sovereign Lord says: "It will not take place, it will not happen." The main thrust of this passage is the attempt of Isaiah to persuade Ahaz not to fear the alliance of Rezin and Pekah, so as to prevent Ahaz from making a military alliance with Tiglathpileser III of Assyria against them. Ahaz was to trust in Yahweh.¹

Second, in Isaiah 14:28-32 the oracle is dated "the year that King Ahaz died."² It foreshadows or predicts the downfall of Philistia and its invasion by an army from the north כִּי צָפוֹן. The language of Holy War is used in verse 31 in the word נִמְוָה to express the great horror that will seize the land of Philistia.³ Isaiah concludes this short oracle with the following in verse 32: "How then will one answer the messengers⁴ of the nation? That the Lord has found Zion, and in her the afflicted of His people will seek refuge." The implication here is that the עֲנֵי עַמּוֹ

¹J. T. Willis, "The Meaning of Isaiah 7:14 and Its Application in Matthew 1:23," Restoration Quarterly 21 (1978):1-17. Cf. Norman K. Gottwald, All the Kingdoms of the Earth (New York: Harper and Row, 1964), pp. 150-52, 155.

²BHS suggests the pointing נִרְאָה, giving the translation, "then I saw." Cf. Clements, Isaiah 1-39, p. 148.

³Otto Kaiser, Isaiah 13-39, trans. R. A. Wilson, in the Old Testament Library (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1974), p. 54. See subsequent discussion on Isa 13:6-16.

⁴The מְלָאךְ are significant because they are the ambassadors who correspond among the nations and may be involved in the discussions about military alliances (cf. 18:2; 30:4; 33:7). In Isa 30:4 the מְלָאךְ are definitely implicated in the alliance with Egypt.

are not to seek refuge in alliances, but in צִיּוֹן.¹

A third example is Isaiah 20:1-6, dated approximately 714 B.C., when Ashdod rebelled against the king of Assyria.² The purpose of picturing the defeat of Egypt in chapter 20 is almost certainly theological. Isaiah's conclusion in verse 6 is to demonstrate the foolishness of trusting in Egypt for deliverance from Assyria.

A fourth example of this admonition to Israel is Isaiah 30:1-5. In this הַלְּוִי proclamation³ the language and purpose of the writer are self-explanatory. The words וְלִנְסֵךְ מִסִּכָּה, both from the root נָסַךְ, are figurative for the making of a covenant. The word עֲצָה is probably political consultation.⁴ The purpose of Isaiah in this proclamation is to warn Hezekiah of the futility of his anti-Assyrian policy, especially if it depends upon a military alliance with Egypt.⁵ Isaiah sternly warns that the result of such

¹Otto Eissfeldt, The Old Testament: An Introduction (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), p. 313. He suggests the purpose of the הַלְּוִי here is "to persuade Judah to break away from Assyria." If Ahaz in verse 1 stands, then this suggestion is quite plausible because Ahaz was pro-Assyrian.

²See Bright, A History of Israel, p. 281; ARAB, 2, 62, p. 31; Hayim Tadmor, "The Campaigns of Sargon II of Assur: A Chronological-Historical Study," JCS 12 (1958): 79-80; and H. L. Ginsberg, "Reflexes of Sargon in Isaiah After 715 B.C.E.," JAOS 88 (1968):47-53.

³Waldemar Janzen, Mourning Cry and Woe Oracle (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1972), p. 81.

⁴BDB, p. 420 gives political consultation for the meaning of the word in Isa 47:13.

⁵Clements, Isaiah 1-39, p. 243.

a procedure will be "shame."¹

It should be noted that all of the above references relate to the Neo-Assyrian period and to the prominence of alliances formed against Assyria during this period.² The theology involved with the OAN is not one in which Isaiah is predicting the sporadic, random judgment of God upon nations of widely differing periods in the future, but the judgment of God upon the nations for their religious and political infiltration through alliances with the people of God. Such judgment, although not necessarily fulfilled in the seventh or eighth century, is inextricably linked with the alliances and international situation of the eighth century. The fact that Isaiah's message deals consistently with the subject of alliances, taken together with the implication of almost all the nations in the נשנ oracles in the anti-Assyrian revolution, produces a significant argument for the entire context (Isa 13-23) being in the Neo-Assyrian period.

Also, it is in Isaiah 39 that one begins to understand the tremendous significance of Babylon in the time of Isaiah's ministry. Merodach-Baladan's alliance with Hezekiah underlies Babylon's significance in the anti-Assyrian coalitions. In view of Isaiah's constant preaching against

¹See לנשנ in vv 3, 5.

²See Chart of Nations, pp. 36-37. Cf. also Isa 18:1-7; 28:14-22; 29:13-16; 31:1-3 for other references to the impropriety in God's eyes of alliances with pagan nations.

alliances, the fall of Babylon in Isaiah 13 gains a theological perspective. The fall of Babylon and its destruction is preached so that the nation, rather than trusting in military alliances for עֲלֵיָם, might trust in Yahweh their God and sole Deliverer.

The Context of Isaiah 13

The third major argument for a Neo-Assyrian Isaiah 13 is that this understanding fits the context. As shown above, one of the major themes of Isaiah in the OAN material is a polemic against the anti-Assyrian monarchy. Implicit in this polemic are the alliances that Hezekiah was initiating. Therefore, we begin with attempting to show that Isaiah is primarily addressing those nations which have revolted against Assyrian authority directly or are involved in relations against Assyria.

The OAN concerns the following nations:¹

- | | |
|---------------------------|------------|
| 1. Babylon ² | 13:1-14:27 |
| 2. Philistia ³ | 14:28-32 |
| 3. Moab ⁴ | 15:1-16:14 |

¹Archer, Old Testament Introduction, pp. 326-27; cf. Eissfeldt, The Old Testament: An Introduction, pp. 312-15.

²OIP, 2, col. 3, pp. 34-35, ll. 53-73; the fall of Babylon is given p. 82, l. 40 to p. 85, l. 60.

³ARAB, 2, 239, p. 118; OIP, 2, col. 2, pp. 3-31, ll. 60-75.

⁴OIP, 2, col. 2, p. 30, l. 56.

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------|
| 4. Damascus and Samaria ¹ | 17:1-14 |
| 5. Ethiopia ² | 18:1-7 |
| 6. Egypt ³ | 19:1-20:1-6 |
| 7. Babylon ⁴ | 21:1-10 |
| 8. Edom ⁵ | 21:11, 12 |
| 9. Arabia ⁶ | 21:13-17 |
| 10. Jerusalem ⁷ | 22:1-25 |
| 11. Tyre ⁸ | 23:1-18 |

That all of these nations were involved in the international situation, reflecting Assyrian domination and retreat, is not coincidence.

One notices immediately that some of the nations were in alliance against Assyria in the revolt of Ashdod in 712.⁹ In the Assyrian records Ashdod and Syria are pictured as

¹OIP, 2, col. 2, p. 29, l. 37. Cf. Gottwald, All the Kingdoms of the Earth, p. 162. Samaria was part of the revolt in 720 led by Iaubidi of Hamath.

²ARAB, 2, 240, p. 119; OIP, 2, col. 2, p. 31, l. 80.

³ARAB, 2, 240, p. 119.

⁴OIP, 2, pp. 83-85.

⁵OIP, 2, col. 2, p. 30, l. 57.

⁶CAH, 3, p. 63. Evidently allied with Merodach-Baladan.

⁷ARAB, 2, 240, p. 119; OIP, 2, p. 31ff, ll. 76 ff.

⁸Ibid., 2, 309, p. 142.

⁹Tadmor, "The Campaigns of Sargon II," pp. 79-84. He conjectures that the stability in Palestine during the remaining years of Sargon's reign was due to the peace between the Assyrian king and the Egyptian Pharaoh Shabakah.

rebellious, and in chapter 20 of Isaiah there is indication that Judah and Egypt may have been involved, or considering involvement.¹

In the revolt of the satellite nations which led to Sennacherib's campaign in 701, almost all of the above nations are involved against Assyria.²

Babylon played the leading role in the latter part of the eighth century in anti-Assyrian alliances for two principal reasons: 1) the statesmanship and economic wealth of Merodach-Baladan, and 2) the Assyrian policy of allowing Babylonia to exist as an independent part of the empire. The above factors created a power struggle in which Assyria was clearly dominant, but constant pressure was required. The incohesiveness of the peoples which Assyria attempted to mold into an empire was simply too much, even to be overcome by a vastly superior military machine. In the opinion of this writer it is this historical context which is clearly reflected in Isaiah 13-23. Babylon was prominent by virtue

¹Bright (A History of Israel, p. 281) indicates that Isa 14:28-32 is to be seen as the prophet's answer to the Philistine envoys. It is interesting that Isaiah 18 probably deals with Ethiopian ambassadors who are seeking an alliance with Judah. The Ethiopians, though, hesitated at the last minute, and handed over Tamini to the Assyrians (ARAB, 2, 63, p. 32).

²Probably the only exceptions are Samaria and perhaps Ashdod mentioned in chapter 20 in connection with the earlier revolt. Cf. Gottwald's conclusion in All the Kingdoms of the Earth, pp. 162-63. See R. E. Clements, Isaiah and the Deliverance of Jerusalem, JSOT Supplement Series, 13, ed. by D. J. A. Clines, et al. (Sheffield: JSOT press, 1980), pp. 28-51. Clements relates a number of passages in Isa 1-39 to the Assyrian crisis.

of her constant rebellion against Assyria and attempt to gain military support to counter-balance Assyrian hegemony. The city of Babylon was the center of the anti-Assyrian coalitions. Sennacherib, despite his patience and veneration for the city, realized that Babylon was the leading proponent of rebellion and, against all that he had been taught, finally resorted to the last option, namely, the total destruction of the city of Babylon. This destruction, Isaiah had predicted would "shortly come to pass."

At this point, it might be proper to introduce a basic outline of some of the tenets of the thesis of Erlandsson, since he has done the major portion of work necessary to show that Isaiah 13 and 14 fit into the Assyrian period, rather than the Neo-Babylonian period.

The Arguments of Seth Erlandsson for an
Assyrian Period Background for Isaiah 13

- 1A. Linguistic parallels with the Assyrian material in chapters 1-12 are predominant.¹
- 2A. Historical material from the Assyrian period fits the interpretation of Isaiah 14:24-23:18.²
- 3A. The theological threads running through the entire sections are:
 - 1B. "Assyrian havoc"

¹Erlandsson, The Burden of Babylon, pp. 129-53. These are simply an attempt by Erlandsson to demonstrate that Isa 13 is genuinely Isaianic and by the early date establish the possibility of an early reference.

²Ibid., pp. 64-105.

- 2B. "The attempts through a policy of alliances to crush Assyria"
- 3B. "The proclamation that it is Yahweh who will crush Assyria and guarantee Zion's security"¹
- 4A. The importance of the city of Babylon during the Assyrian period.²

With this background, an understanding that Isaiah may be predicting the fall of the important city of Babylon in the Assyrian period emerges. The purpose of this has been to introduce the major points of Erlandsson as a background to subsequent arguments. In the previous discussions the context of Isaiah 13 with the nations, subsequently mentioned in the book, has been emphasized. However, Seth Erlandsson has demonstrated by linguistic parallels the connection of Isaiah 13 with some of Isaiah's beginning oracles concerning Assyria.

Linguistic Parallels Between Chapter 13 and Chapter 10

The following linguistic parallels between chapters 13 and 10 are taken from the basic data given by Erlandsson to demonstrate in this thesis the linguistic connection of chapter 13 to the preceding chapters which concern Assyria.³

¹Erlandsson, The Burden of Babylon, pp. 64-105.

²Ibid., p. 87, with historical analysis.

³Erlandsson's over-all purpose for these parallels is to demonstrate to critical scholarship that Isaiah actually wrote the 13th-14th chapters. Since he views the fulfillment of Isaiah 13 in the Neo-Assyrian period, he must prove that Isaiah wrote the pertinent chapters.

Notice the following data:

גבר	--	13:3	--	10:21
אפי	--	13:3	--	10:5, 25
ממלכות	--	13:4	--	10:10
פקד	--	13:4	--	10:12; 13:11
כלי	--	13:5	--	10:28
חבל	--	13:5	--	10:27
נוס	--	13:4	--	10:3
עור	--	13:17	--	10:26
חשב	--	13:17	--	10:7, 29
נער	--	13:18	--	10:19; 11:6
הניפו יד	--	13:2	--	10:32; 10:15
מרחק	--	13:5	--	10:3
זעם	--	13:5	--	10:5, 25
מסס	--	13:7	--	10:18
עברה	--	13:9	--	10:6
שמד	--	13:9	--	10:7
שפל	--	13:11	--	10:33 ¹

These linguistic parallels do not "prove" that Assyria is referred to in chapter 13; however, the number of them is striking. In fact, they are so convincing that Liebreich suggests that this is the reason why 13:1-14:23 was placed at the head of the series of the oracles against the nations.² While this conjecture is plausible, it is

¹Erlandsson, The Burden of Babylon, pp. 129-38.

²Leon J. Liebreich, "The Compilation of the Book of Isaiah," JQR 47 (1956-57):119. Cf. Leon Leibreich, "The Compilation of the Book of Isaiah," JQR 46 (1955):265.

also unprovable. It seems that basic links of content with chapter 10 do provide some basis for its placement early in the מִשָּׁח section of Isaiah.¹

One of the major themes which is carried over from chapters 1-12 to Isaiah 13 is that of "God's anger" denoted by the term אָף. In 10:5, the Assyrians are designated in apposition as שְׂבַט אַפִּי. This anger is designated as being against Israel (9:12; 10:25). Could it be that those who are summoned in 13:3 to execute אַפִּי are the Assyrians?

Notice that the כָּל-הָאָרֶץ in Isaiah 13:5 could be interpreted in view of the Assyrian's purpose given by Isaiah in 10:7 as לְהַשְׁמִיד and וּלְהַכְרִיחַ גּוֹיִם. Important for the interpretation of "the whole earth" in v 5 is the fact that God's purpose for the Assyrians is His plan upon כָּל-הָאָרֶץ and כָּל-הַגּוֹיִם.²

Erlandsson has pointed to a striking comparison between Isaiah 5:26 and Isaiah 13:2-5. He gives the following data:³

¹Otto Eissfeldt, The Old Testament: An Introduction, p. 312. "With the threat to Assyria in x, 5-15, 24-34, there begin the oracles against foreign nations."

²This viewpoint limits the understanding of אָרֶץ to the Assyrian world empire, an interpretation which gives proper emphasis to what God is communicating through Isaiah to his listeners and/or readers (although in v 5 the translation "the whole land" may be in order). The above concept actually applies more directly to the word in v 11.

³The strength of the comparison is based upon interpreting Isa 5:25, 26 to refer to the Assyrian army. Cf. KD, Isaiah, p. 182, and Erlandsson, The Burden of Babylon, p. 139.

5:26	13:2-5	
ונשא־נס	שא־נס	13:2
לגרים	גרים נאספים	13:4
מרחוק	מארץ מרחק	13:5
מקצה הארץ	מקצה השמים	13:5

The contexts of these passages are similar in that both explain the gathering of an army whose leader is Yahweh. In 5:26 the army is to be led against Israel (cf. 9:8-17; 10:4), but in Isaiah 13 the army is directed against Babylon (cf. 13:1, 19; 14:24-28).

Exactly what conclusions can be drawn from the linguistic data? First, the similar language of Isaiah 10 and 13 proves a similarity in material and perhaps the conclusion of Eissfeldt is justified that the oracles against the nations begin in chapter 10.¹ Second, it is not impossible, due to the structure of the משא oracles, that the material dealing with the Assyrians themselves ends in 14:27, rather than at the end of 10.²

From the above information, the possibility affords itself that Isaiah 13 is actually part of the Assyrian material.

¹Eissfeldt, The Old Testament: An Introduction, p. 312.

²Exactly Erlandsson's conclusion on the matter (pp. 160-61). In his view, the Medes are coming against the Assyrians, not the city of Babylon.

CHAPTER III

THE EXEGETICAL FEATURES OF ISAIAH 13:1-5

The מִשָּׁב of Isaiah

The inclusion of verse 1 in the text is extremely important, not only to eradicate the notion that Isaiah did not pen this oracle, but also to establish that this burden does in fact refer to Babylon.¹

Isaiah 13 occurs in a section of Isaiah, defined by chapters 13-23, characterized by a series of מִשָּׁב oracles. The word מִשָּׁב or "burden" (from נָשָׂא) occurs eleven times in Isaiah (13:1; 14:28; 15:1; 17:1; 19:1; 21:11, 13; 22:1; 23:1; 30:6).² Delitzsch has a good discussion of this word, stating that it denotes "perhaps always the judicial sentence of God" and includes also some possible exceptions.³ On this point Nagelsbach follows:

On account of this ambiguity it is almost exclusively used of such divine utterances, as impose upon men the burden of judicial visitation.⁴

¹Erlandsson (The Burden of Babylon, pp. 160-66) takes the position that the Assyrians are referred to.

²Ibid., p. 64.

³KD, Isaiah, p. 64.

⁴Carl Nagelsbach, The Prophet Isaiah, Vol. 6 of Lange's Commentary, edited by J. P. Lange (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, reprint, 1960), p. 175.

Therefore, the context here clearly denotes the judgment of God and, in view of the word's repetition in this section, alerts one to the subject matter. Specifically, Babylon leads the list of the nations, thereby designating its prominence historically in the eighth century. The Targum gives the word מַטְל for מִשָּׁא. The word מַטְל means "imposed destiny."¹ This paraphrase of verse 1 leaves no doubt about how the Jews understood מִשָּׁא in this context.²

There is one other aspect of verse 1 which is significant: This burden is "seen." This reflects the idea of מִשָּׁא as revelation from God. A parallel usage is found in other introductory formulas such as Amos 1:1 which states: "The words which Amos envisioned." Since one does not see words, this usage in a phrase implies that מִשָּׁא can mean simply a revelation from God and does not always specify the exact manner of reception.

The Summoning of the Host of Yahweh

Patrick Miller gives three possible interpretations of לָהֶם in the following:

There are several problems in the text. The nature of the persons addressed in verse 2 is unclear. Is the verse a call to Yahweh's warriors to prepare for battle, or is it an address to the enemy? It is even possible to interpret the commands as an address to the divine council, though that is not necessarily the best choice.³

¹Jastrow, 1:767.

²Ibid., 1:696. Notice that the word הָרַט means "curse."

³Miller, The Divine Warrior in Early Israel, p. 136.

The imperatives in verse 2 are quite consistent with the style of the poem and its initial ambiguity.¹ The impressionistic style of Isaiah is heightened by the fact that the הָלַל in verse 2 remains ambiguous, although it is probably to be interpreted in view of verse 17 where the "Medes" are mentioned.

The LXX translates the Hebrew word הָלַל with παρακαλιεστε .² In the hiphil and piel the word הָלַל is normally translated in this manner. Some have suggested the possibility that הָלַל is used with ל to indicate a threat.³ This understanding would favor the הָלַל as being the recipients of a threat, and hence Babylon of verse 1. There are two arguments however, which militate somewhat against this viewpoint, though it is tempting because of the common idea of curse before a battle (cf. 1 Sam 16:44-46). First, in contexts where הָלַל is used negatively, it normally has with it the preposition ל , in order to indicate syntactically, the word "against." The preposition ל would function as in the phrase $\text{ל} \text{אָשָׁם}$ (he sinned against). Second, all the negative (curse) meanings involve a figurative usage of "the hand" of God, but here the command to wave is from God for someone else to wave his hands as a signal.

¹The three imperatives are שִׁאֵר , הָרִימוּ , and הִנִּיפוּ , which according to A. B. Davidson (Hebrew Syntax [Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1976], p. 87) are used when "no definite subject is addressed." That is precisely the case here.

²Alfred Rahlfs, ed., Septuaginta, 2 vols. (Stuttgart: Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1935), 2:582.

³See TDNT, "παρακαλιεστε," by Otto Schimtz, 5:776.

It seems that this text is best interpreted as describing the "issuing of a military command."¹ The actual location of the "signal" is said to be על־הר־נשפה, and the visibility of the נס is clearly the purpose for the choice of this location. While the raising of the hand may be related to the Ancient Near Eastern curse-motif, the most logical emphasis here is that the waving of the hand is the signal for mobilization of the army.² If this is the signal, then perhaps the נס or "banner" designates the assembling of the host in preparation for the battle.³ In the final clause of verse 2, after he has given a description of the place of the summoning for battle and the manner of the summoning for battle, Isaiah turns his attention to the specific purpose of the summoning for battle.⁴ The phrase פתחי־נדבנים has several variant readings in the ancient versions.⁵ The LXX translates פתחי as ανοιξαιε and does

¹Otto Kaiser, Isaiah 13-39 A Commentary, trans. R. A. Wilson, The Old Testament Library (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1974), p. 13.

²Ibid.

³The word נס itself may have several nuances of meaning according to the context. In Isa 5:26, in highly poetical language, God as Warrior is said to נשפא־נס for the distant nations, where Assyria seems to be in view. In Jer 51:12 the word refers to an actual battle or at least mobilization. So the word itself does not always mean simply the assembling aspect of preparation for war.

⁴See Ronald J. Williams, Hebrew Syntax: An Outline (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1978), p. 35, cf. pp. 86-87, where the imperfect and waw-connective yield the purpose clause translation: "to enter the gates of the nobles" (NIV).

⁵See BHS for the note in the apparatus.

not have any word corresponding to the verb וַיִּבְאֵר. No good reasons exist for not following the MT on this point.¹ The ambiguous character of verse 2 is shown in the indefinite plural imperatives and the הָלֵךְ, both of which are never given any precise reference in the text.

The content of verse 2 summarizes the place, manner, and purpose of the summoning of the host of Yahweh in poetical language. This general, impressionistic language makes it most difficult for the reader to identify the specific historical referent. It is significant, though, that the terminology in verse 2 probably relates to an earthly army.² Although one cannot be dogmatic, the language in the summoning of the army seems to relate to an army which could be gathered (mustered) by the procedure given in verse 2, namely, that of "raise a banner on a bare hilltop, shout to them, beckon to them" (NIV).³

¹Erlandsson, The Burden of Babylon, p. 18, cf. Miller (The Divine Warrior in Early Israel, p. 244), who seems to agree with the omission of וַיִּבְאֵר in the LXX.

²See my chapter 2 where I have attempted to show that the historical reference here is to the Assyrians.

³E. J. Young, The Book of Isaiah, 3 vols., NICOT, ed. R. K. Harrison (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981), 1:416, provides the fine comment: "Likely they were warriors or soldiers rather than angels. Because it may be easily seen, a mountain is chosen, one that is to be bare, and hence suited for visibility." The conclusion of most commentators is that this summoning is somewhat normal and there is nothing suprahistorical about this at all. Miller (Divine Warrior in Early Israel, p. 65) would simply reply that cosmic elements and mundane elements of warfare are often combined (for example, in Judges 5). It seems that the cosmic elements are lacking in verse 2; however, even if they were present, historical reference would not be precluded.

The following observations would seem to indicate that the summoning of an army is in view in verse 2. First, the לָהֶם most naturally corresponds to the "they" of וַיִּבְאוּ . This idea seems correct because the purpose of the final clause in verse 2 would be initiated by the consistent parallel commands to assemble for war. Second, as shown above, the commands are easily interpreted as parallel and indicating the action of the summoning of an army.

Phrases Describing the Host of Yahweh (vv 3-5)

Several words in verses 3-5 describe the character of the army which Yahweh is "mustering for battle."¹ These words give special insight into the nature of the host of Yahweh and will be listed in the order of their occurrence in the text.

My Holy Ones

The army which God musters for battle is said to be קִדְשׁ . Two basic interpretations can be formulated from the basic designation of this word. The lexicon gives "consecrated, or dedicated" as the meaning. An understanding of this word is essential in understanding the basic nature of the host of Yahweh. If the nature of the word itself designates a qualitative relationship of a moral nature to

¹This is in anticipation of verse 4, where Isaiah finally describes the leader of the army as יְהוָה-צְבָאוֹת , which is one of the primary designations for God in chapters 1-39. The title is used only six times in the latter section of the book (40-66).

God, then any reference to a heathen army is excluded. However, if the essential nature of שְׂדֵה in this passage merely points to the fact of relationship in some manner to Yahweh, even if that means being used for His purposes without positive morality being present (i.e., in the case of the Medes), then שְׂדֵה could refer to any historic army. Goehring gives the following interpretation based upon the moral connotations of שְׂדֵה:

There are two phrases in verse 3 which are particularly interesting in relation to this interpretation. The first is the opening phrase of the verse, "I have commanded to my consecrated ones." The pual participle "my consecrated one," is from the root qadesh which primarily means "to be separate" and thus in relation to separation from sin, "to be holy." When used in relating to a people or nation, the primary meaning seems to be "separateness unto God."¹

This interpretation of the qualitative nature of שְׂדֵה excludes the possibility of the army being an earthly one, such as the Assyrians, and implies that it must be angels.²

The problem with this viewpoint is that the context does not define the quality of the relationship (neither does the word שְׂדֵה itself), but only relates it to an action performed for God.³ A parallel passage is found in Jeremiah

¹Goehring, "Babylon," p. 32.

²Miller (The Divine Warrior in Early Israel, p. 136) suggests that the heavenly hosts of Yahweh are in view but states that it is impossible to tell whether these are earthly or heavenly or both. McComiskly advocates a qualitative meaning for שְׂדֵה in TWOT, "שְׂדֵה," 2:786-89.

³Calvin states the case eloquently: "He calls the Medes and Persians sanctified ones, that is, those whom he has prepared. The verb שְׂדֵה is used in various senses; for sometimes it refers to the spirit of regeneration, and this

51:28, which states that the Medes (cf. Isa 13:17) are to be "sanctified" against Babylon.¹

The translation of holy ones in verse 3 by the Targumim is germane to the discussion here because the word קדש is used to translate קדש in this context.² It is interesting that the Targum translators did not use קדיש (Aramaic) for קדש (Heb.) but chose to translate with a word whose root meanings are given as "arrange" or "designate."³ There are several passages which deal with war and exemplify special usage of קדש. These usages show that the Targum translation of this word is excellent and also establishes the meaning "prepare" in certain contexts. Notice the following verses:

1) Joel 4:9 קדשו מלחמה

belongs peculiarly to the elect of God. But sometimes it means to wish or prepare, and that is more appropriate to this passage. . . . He therefore calls them sanctified ones, 'set apart and prepared to execute his will,' though they had no such intention."

¹The Hebrew is קדשו עליה where the NIV translates קדש as "preparation for battle." The עליה is Babylon.

²Jastrow, 1:404. Cf. also "קדש" Jastrow, 2:1319ff.

³The meaning given under the pual passive participle is "prepared." This word translates the Hebrew ינוף of Psa 72:17. This follows the gere and BDB (p. 630) gives the meaning of this word as "to establish or endure." All of this material establishes the relationship between the word קדש and those words meaning "prepare, establish, designate, etc." The LXX translation has paraphrased ינוף with εγω αγω αυτους, "I lead them." Walter Kaiser translates Zeph 1:7 and the קדיש there as "invited ones" in his Toward an Old Testament Theology (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978), p. 223.

- 2) Jeremiah 6:4 קדשו עליה
 "Prepare for battle against her" (NIV).¹
- 3) Jeremiah 51:27 קדשו עליה גוים
 "Prepare the nations for battle against her" (NIV).
- 4) Jeremiah 51:28 קדשו עליה גוים
 "Prepare the nations for battle" (NIV).²

These contexts deal with preparation for war. In Jeremiah 51:28 the word קדש is used of the preparation of the Medes for war against Babylon. Could it be that God has also "prepared" an army against Babylon in Isaiah 13:3, especially since verse 2 deals with God's "summoning" and "preparation" of an army for battle? The context seems to argue quite strongly for the accuracy of the Targum translation of קדש by זמך.

The impact of the exegesis to this point is simply to eliminate any quandary that one might have over the possibility that the "holy ones" called by God may not refer to the historic army of the Medes. The designation most certainly could refer to this army. On the other hand, the possibility that angels are referred to here is not at all eliminated by the translation of "holy ones" as "prepared ones." The proper conclusion of this juncture of the exegesis is that both are still possible on the basis of information given so far in the text.

¹Eichrodt (TOT, 1:273) gives the meaning as "to declare a holy war." Cf. Micah 3:5.

²It is interesting that מלכי-מדי stands in apposition to גוים.

Von Rad has emphasized the preparation for warfare in Holy War and uses the word למקדש as a reference to the fact that in Holy War sanctified warriors "subjected themselves to certain rites and a certain asceticism."¹ Although his overall argument that the word שׁוֹרֵט proves allusion to Holy War may be doubted, the context definitely moves in the direction of war and God's making ready an army for His own use.²

¹Gerhard von Rad, "The Origin of the Concept of the Day of the Lord," JSS (1959):99. For arguments to the contrary see Meir Weiss, "The Origin of the Day of the Lord Reconsidered," HUCA 37 (1966):32-35. His arguments are directed against von Rad's overall contention that the origin of the Day of the Lord is to be found in Holy War. Weiss is correct that the word למקדש does not necessarily prove that the origin of the Day of the Lord is to be found in Holy War. However, in this context the שׁוֹרֵט does refer to preparation for war.

²Meir Weiss, "The Day of the Lord Reconsidered," pp. 32ff. The word שׁוֹרֵט , as Weiss points out, does not "prove" existence of Holy War or that the warriors were subject to strict adherence to rules in accordance with the nature of holy war. Hence, Weiss gives the following conclusion: "Hence to take שׁוֹרֵט in Isaiah 13:2 as a reference to Holy War discipline is groundless. Such discipline is simply not in evidence." Weiss has good exegetical arguments in doubting that שׁוֹרֵט refers to the holy-war institution in Isa 13:2. However, his attempt to eliminate holy war as an institution betrays his argument. The institution of Holy War in the ANE can hardly be doubted. See Norman K. Gottwald, "Holy War," IDB Supplementary Volume (Nashville: Abingdon, 1976), p. 942. Gottwald remarks with regard to Holy War: "What is in question, therefore, is not the existence but the frequency, scope, and degree of standardization of Holy War practices, as well as their sociopolitical basis and rationale." Gottwald assigns the "schematic formulations" in Deuteronomy as late. The assignment of these regulations in the book of Deut as late is significant. It perhaps explains the reason why scholars in general have discounted von Rad's emphasis upon Holy War in the Day of the Lord. Cf. von Rad's seeming admission of being mistaken in TDNT, "ἡμερα," by Gerhard von Rad, 2:943-47. However, Deut 20, which provides the connection of the cult

My Proudly Exulting Ones

The phrase "my proudly exulting ones" is one of the most significant qualifiers in this passage. The basic questions involved with this phrase are two: 1) What is the meaning of the words עליוני-גאוהי, and 2) What kind of genitive relationship exists between the words in the construct and absolute states?

The meaning of גאוה is given as "majesty or pride."¹ The basic root meaning of the verb is given as "rising up," which then easily comes to denote either "majesty or pride."² If this is an objective genitive then the translation would be "those who rejoice at my highness," "those rejoicing at my majesty," or even "those who rejoice in my triumph."³

On the other hand, the relationship of the genitive may be an adjectival one producing the translation "my proud

with war and provides a list of regulations, if early, would provide ample support for von Rad's viewpoint of Holy War as an institution. The early institution of Holy War then allows for the possibility that the prophets have used this motif with regard to the Day of the Lord. Von Rad's viewpoint cannot be dismissed simply because he has changed his own mind! Cf. Richard Mayhue, "The Prophet's Watchword: Day of the Lord" (Th.D. Thesis, Grace Theological Seminary, 1980), p. 54. See below for details concerning the background for the יום יהוה in Isaiah.

¹BDB, p. 144. Cf. Jastrow, 1:202; TDOT, s.v. "גאוה," by Diether Kellerman, 2:344-50.

²Ibid. See the connection of this word in Douglas Stuart, "The Sovereign's Day of Conquest," BASOR 221 (1976): 160, n. 7. Cf. Mendenhall, The Tenth Generation, pp. 48-66. See Leo Oppenheim, "Akkadian pul(u)htu and melammu," JAOS 63 (1943):31-34.

³The NIV translation refers the word to God's rising up in victory (Exod 15:1, 2).

exulter," or "my proudly exulting one."¹

Four basic interpretations resulting from the above translations are: 1) angels who exult at God's majesty;² 2) the Medes who represent the Assyrian army, since they comprise a part of that army;³ 3) a Babylonian army in the first of a series of five prophecies in the chapter;⁴ and 4) the Medes here are a sixth century army who brought about the fall of Babylon under Darius the Mede.⁵

Whether one accepts the translation "my proudly exulting ones," or the NIV translation, "those who rejoice in my triumph," the interpretation of this phrase (and the entire section for that matter) depends upon the historical background argued for by the interpreter.

It is probably best to accept the normal rule of grammar which would take the pronoun suffixed to the free form to refer or belong to the preceding word in the context.⁶ Second, the Assyrian army, or other ancient armies, cannot be excluded because this phrase may indeed refer to

¹GKC, p. 440. See the modern translations where Gesenius, Williams Syntax, BDB, and the LXX all agree on the translation of _____ as pride.

²Goehring, "Babylon," p. 32.

³The view presented in Chapter 2 of this thesis. Cf. Erlandsson's viewpoint that the Medes are coming against the Assyrians.

⁴Clements, Isaiah 1-39, p. 33.

⁵E. J. Young, Isaiah, 1:417.

⁶GKC, p. 440.

sinners. Zephaniah 3:11 states, "I will turn from your gathering your proudly exulting ones."¹

At this point it might be proper to emphasize the importance of determining a correct historical background to this text. In part 1 it was shown that a Neo-Assyrian period background is probably best, but exegesis of the text depends upon this prior understanding to the extent that it, at this juncture at least, cannot possibly substantiate such a viewpoint in and of itself. The text can only be said to consistently agree with the prior understanding argued for. All of the above is to say that our reasoning is somewhat circular. But the poem is sufficiently vague that one cannot totally escape such a charge.²

Before attention is given to the following phrases which describe further the host of Yahweh, one notices a preponderance of lc.s. suffixes to designate God's possession in verse 3. אֲנִי is in the emphatic position; then there are four dispersed possessive pronouns: לְמִקְדָּשִׁי, גְּבוּרָי, לְאִפִּי, and עֲלֵיזֵי-גְאוּחֵי, along with the verbal action also designation in the first person. The גַּם-קְרָאחֵי in verse 3 may be rhetorical,³ translated "yea." Dahood has

¹My own translation.

²For a prime example of reading the supposed historical background into the text see Clements, Isaiah 1-39, pp. 133-39.

³Williams, Hebrew Syntax, p. 380.

suggested, "loudly have I called."¹

The possessive pronouns indicate that God is the leader of the army. His function as the leader of the army indicates in general fashion his sovereignty and kingship because the king in the ANE was to function as military leader. Here God is pictured as the Divine Warrior and that motif clearly relates to kingship.²

My Warriors

The next word which describes the nature of the host of Yahweh is גבורי. The word גבור is an adjective derived from the root גבר.³ The word has several usages in Scripture. It may refer to military leaders such as were with David.⁴ Also, it may refer to angels,⁵ and even to God Himself as an appellative.⁶

¹Mitchell Dahood, "Ugaritic Studies and the Bible," Greg 43 (1962):70.

²This idea is made clear in several texts of the Bible such as Exod 15:1-3, 18 and Isa 33:22. In the literature of Ugarit, Yassib in the story of Keret challenges the kingship of Keret with three basic deficiencies in his rule: 1) "You will be driven out" (lack of military function); 2) "You do not judge the cases of widows" (lack of social or economic function); and 3) "You do not preside over the hearings of the oppressed" (lack of judicial function). Therefore, "come down from the kingship." Cf. ANET, p. 159 and Mendenhall, The Tenth Generation, p. 29.

³BDB, p. 149.

⁴TDOT, "גבר," by H. Kosmola, 1:374.

⁵Ibid., p. 375. Cf. Psa 103:20.

⁶Ibid., p. 376. Cf. Isa 10:21 where God is referred to as אֱלֹהֵי-גִבּוֹר.

It is significant for the interpretation of this word that one realize that גבור did not emphasize spirituality to any degree as did גבור.¹ The emphasis of גבור continued to fall upon mighty acts usually with regard to military exploits.

A Host for Battle

The next word which describes the character of the army mentioned here is צבא or "host" (v 4). Miller summarizes the information concerning

The host of heaven, s^eba hassamayin, also function as a part of the divine assembly. Micaiah ben Imlah in his vision of the divine council sees standing about Yahweh 'all the host of heaven' (2 Kgs 22:19). This host includes the sun, the moon, and the stars (Deut 4:19 and 17:3) and is identified with the angelic host (Psa 103:20-21; Psa 148:2-3).²

So it is important to recognize that the צבא may include angelic hosts which form the army of God, as well as the host of heaven, which in this context is particularly significant, because in verse 10 the "stars" and "their constellations" along with the "sun" and "moon" are involved in the Day of Yahweh as an integral part of His accomplishing victory on His "Day of conquest."

In Isaiah 40:26, in a context where the sovereignty of God dominates as a theme, North has pointed out the

¹Hans Kosmala, "The Term Geber in the Old Testament and in the Scrolls," VT Supplement 17 (Leiden: Brill, 1968): 159-69.

²Miller, The Divine Warrior in Early Israel, p. 67. Cf. M. H. Woudstra, The Book of Joshua, NICOT, ed. R. K. Harrison (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981), p. 105.

military aspects of this magnificent verse:

Yahweh leads them out as a commander leads an army (saba, host). For this sense of the Hiph. of yasa cf. xliiii 17; 2 Sam v 2, x. 16. The military figure is continued in by number (cf. 2 Sam ii. 15, and 14 times in Num 1). Only God knows the number of the stars (Gen xv. 5), let alone their names (Psa cxl vii. 4; cf. ANET, p. 429).¹

It is evident that God is viewed in certain texts as the Divine Warrior over the host of heaven.²

It is significant that the plural never refers to the heavenly host. It should also be noted that the phrase צבא מלחמה which occurs in Isaiah 13:4 occurs only in Numbers 31:14, 1 Chronicles 7:4, and 12:37. In these cases the phrase refers to an earthly army.³

The Lord of Hosts

It is interesting to note that the term יהוה צבאות is used fifty-six times in chapters 1-39 and only six times in chapters 40-66.⁴ Kenneth L. Barker has proposed a solution to this difference. Since the dominant theme of the first thirty-nine chapters of Isaiah is that of judgment,

¹Christopher R. North, The Second Isaiah (Oxford: Clarendon, reprint 1977), p. 88.

²Isaiah intends this picture of God as a polemic against the Babylonians, who worshipped the very host over which God was totally sovereign.

³TOT, 1:192. Cf. Erlandsson, The Burden of Babylon, p. 130.

⁴According to George V. Wigram, The Englishman's Hebrew and Chaldaic Concordance (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1970), pp. 1058-59. Cf. Kenneth L. Barker, "Hebrew Exegesis of Isaiah 40-53," Unpublished Class Notes, Grace Theological Seminary, 1980, Hand-out on "Toward a Theology of Isaiah," p. 6.

Barker suggests that one aspect of the Divine Warrior is being emphasized, namely, that function of the Divine Warrior as an executor of judgment.¹

BDB gives the following meanings for צבא: "army, host, warfare, service."² These connotations are all clearly linked to war. Therefore, the Divine title also, even in the prophetic usage, implies God as the Divine Warrior.³ However, Eichrodt has argued convincingly that the name יהוה צבאות must have designated more to the ancient Israelite than just leader of the army, specifically the Israelite army.⁴ The prophetic usage to designate the exaltedness and sovereignty of God would then be in curious contradiction to the earlier usage (if only referring to God as the leader of the army).⁵ Eichrodt then elaborates upon the above argument and concludes, "then the only remaining possibility is to assume that צבאות does not refer to any particular 'hosts,' but to all bodies,

¹Miller (The Divine Warrior in Early Israel, pp. 170-75) discusses three basic ideas associated with the Divine Warrior Motif in Israel. They are: 1) salvation, 2) judgment, and 3) kingship. The comment "Yahweh fights for Israel quite simply to save them from destruction and to give the people life and home," is a significant statement of the salvation theme with respect to God as Warrior.

²BDB, pp. 838-39.

³See Lind, Yahweh is a Warrior, for an explanation of the theology of Israel's warfare as derived from the character of God as the Divine Warrior.

⁴TOT, 1:193.

⁵Ibid.

multitudes, masses in general, the content of all that exists in heaven and earth."¹

Consequently, the divine title יהוה צבאות designates the sovereignty of God. The tension noticed by Eichrodt is relieved somewhat when one recognizes that often the manifestation of the sovereignty of God concurs precisely with the function of God as Divine Warrior. This idea is especially prominent in the Day of the Lord.

Some of the following examples illustrate the way Isaiah uses the divine title יהוה צבאות. Isaiah states in a context which emphasizes the holiness and exaltedness of God in 6:4: כי את-המלך יהוה צבאות ראו עיני. The Lord of Host stands in apposition to "king."

In Isaiah 2:12 the sovereignty of God is demonstrated not only by the bold contrast between the words גאה and ישפל, but also by the fact that God's judgment in the Day of the Lord is linked with the Divine Warrior motif in verses 19-21.²

In Isaiah 13:4 one wonders if the verb פקד and the noun מלחמה do not make clear the understanding of the term יהוה צבאות as "the Lord of (all) armies is mustering an

¹TOT, 1:193. Cf. also TWOT, "צבא," by John E. Hartley, 2:750-51; J. Barton Payne, The Theology of the Older Testament (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1962), p. 150.

²Stuart's excellent article, "The Sovereign's Day of Conquest," has contributed to the military understanding of the Day of the Lord. Cf. Erlandsson, The Burden of Babylon, pp. 147-51.

army for war."¹ The understanding of Yahweh as mustering a foreign army for His judgment is not at all unique in Scripture. The Lord as Divine Warrior uses Assyria for His purposes like a "rod" and "club" but will also judge them for their pride.² The Lord's judgment upon Assyria is said to be "on a single-day."³

Therefore the divine title יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת underscores in Isaiah 13 the significance of the sovereignty of God in war. The reader is immediately introduced to this idea for preparation of the manifestation of God as the Divine Warrior on the Day of the Lord (vv 6-13).

The Purposes and Origin of the Host of Yahweh

Three basic purposes are given throughout the first five verses to indicate God's intention for the army He has summoned. These purposes shall simply be listed: 1) the purpose of victory indicated in verse 1 by the phrase "so that they may enter the gates"; 2) the purpose of executing God's anger; and 3) the purpose of destruction designated by לחבל. All of these purposes are consistent with God's purpose to judge the intended enemy.

The parallelism in verse 5 gives some indication of the origin of the army of God. In the translation "they are

¹My own translation.

²Isa 10:12-19.

³This concept of victory as being "on a single-day" will be developed with regard to the exegesis of יוֹם יְהוָה in Isa 13:6-18.

coming from a distant land, from the ends of the heavens," support for the historic army of the "Medes" or "angels" could be derived by emphasizing either "land" or "heaven" respectively. The following is given by Erlandsson as an explanation of the phrases:

The expression *מקצה השמים*, instead of the more usual *מקצה הארץ*, seems due to *ארץ* already used in the parallelism. The LXX has *ἀπ ἀρκου θεμελιου του ουρανου* where *θεμελιου* was probably added to avoid giving the impression that the army came from heaven itself.¹

So the parallelism in verse 5 indicates, not as Miller assumes,² that the army is both earthly and heavenly, but the universal character of the army. The army may be composed of angels, but it may also be exclusively an earthly army. The contrast of *ארץ* and *השמים* is a merism³ to indicate the universal nature of the army. The interpretation that seems most natural is that *מקצה הארץ* indicates the distance of the army, and *מקצה השמים* balances this to indicate the international constituency of the army.

Exegetical Conclusions Concerning the Host of Yahweh

1) One's derived historical background for the entire poem upon Babylon will be decisive in the interpretation

¹Erlandsson, The Burden of Babylon, p. 19. Cf. Miller, The Divine Warrior in Early Israel, p. 244, n. 217.

²Miller, The Divine Warrior in Early Israel, p. 244.

³Some examples of merism, where opposites such as heaven and earth indicate a universal idea, are Gen 1:1 and Psa 139:8.

of verses 1-5. The text is sufficiently vague that one can hardly avoid circular reasoning to some extent.

2) Therefore, extreme caution must be exercised about identifying the host of Yahweh on the basis of this description alone.

3) The "holy ones" may be taken to be angels; however, the term *למקדשי* may simply mean "prepared ones."

4) The term *צבא-מלחמה* normally indicates an earthly army.

5) The parallelism of the opposites "heaven and earth" was found to indicate the universality of the army.

It has been demonstrated in the above that manifold difficulties exist in all the various interpretations of the army in verses 1-5. These difficulties are due to the general nature of the poem and its contrived vagueness. One wonders if Isaiah intended the poem to be read on only one level. It is no small wonder that the data of the text in Isaiah 13 is often sacrificed to the issue of hermeneutics.

In the above exegesis, the date has been interpreted in view of the proposed Neo-Assyrian background. The cosmic elements in the poem need not be ignored because the Assyrian army is in view. However, even in verses 1-5 there is indication that a surplus of meaning is intended by Isaiah beyond the primary interpretation of relating the entire poem to the destruction by Sennacherib of Babylon in 689. Although the primary interpretation in time seems to relate

to the Neo-Assyrian period, there are certain elements in the poem which transcend time.

CHAPTER IV

TEXTUAL OBSERVATIONS IN ISAIAH 13:6-18

Isaiah 13 is a poetical expression of the sovereignty of God which was manifested in the judgment upon Babylon. While we have argued that the fulfillment of this poem is best paralleled to the destruction enacted upon the city in 689 by Sennacherib, there is a "timelessness" to the poem which enables it, for example, to be applied by Jeremiah to an entirely different situation.¹

In verses 2-5 God is pictured as the Divine Warrior. He assembles an army for battle. Immediately, in verse 6 the Day of the Lord is introduced. The logical connection between verses 2-5 and verse 6 is discovered when one recognizes that the "Day of the Lord" is the Divine Warrior's Day of Conquest.²

¹Erlandsson, The Burden of Babylon, p. 159. Some of the "timeless" aspects of this poem are: 1) its contrived ambiguity; 2) such timeless motifs as the pride motif (cf. Erlandsson, The Burden of Babylon, pp. 148-49); 3) the Divine Warrior motif which expresses the sovereignty of God; 4) the Day of the Lord motif (cf. Stuart, "The Sovereign's Day of Conquest," p. 159). The city of Babylon evolves to represent pride and wickedness. This symbolic representation of Babylon is not connected to any one historical period or event, but is her character.

²The connection to our historical material is evident. Israel sought the aid of Babylon against Assyria. The theology of the prophet is that Israel is to trust in Yahweh as Divine Warrior for deliverance. Since Babylon is to be judged, trusting in Babylon is futile.

In the exegesis below, verses 7 and 8 are taken as the psychological preparation by God for the defeat of the enemy in warfare. To be sure, these effects mentioned are produced when God's judgment is realized (Isa 9:34). Since, however, the context shows the relation of war to the "Day of the Lord"¹ and in this context the "Day of the Lord" occurs at the brink of battle, such words as מָסַח, רָפָה, בָּהֶל, and חָמָה must be seen in this context as related the fear which God places in the hearts of His enemies in holy war.² First, this treatment of the material will consider certain words in Isaiah 13:6-18 which indicate this psychological effect.

Words Indicating God's Psychological Defeat
of the Enemy in War

1) The words מָסַח and רָפָה are used in parallelism to indicate in a figurative way the fear which shall come upon כָּל-לִבְבֵי אֲנָשִׁים.³ רָפָה means "to sink or relax" but in its figurative usage means "to lose heat or energy."⁴ The Hebrew word יָמַס, from the root מָסַח, here in the Niphal, is also used in its figurative sense of "grow fearful."

¹See Chart II where the context of war in the "Day of the Lord" is demonstrated.

²For a summary of the relationship of the vocabulary to the Divine Warrior motif and God's victory in war, see Chart I and the comparison of vocabulary in Isa 13 with Exod 15. In the Exod account the "terror and dread" is said to be "by the power of your arm." It is attributed to God's miracle.

³BDB, p. 60 as figurative in this passage.

⁴Ibid., p. 951.

Rahab uses the word **חָסַד** in her confession to the two spies in Joshua 2:11 after she states that the inhabitants of the land have heard what the Lord God has done. She said, "When we heard that, our heart dissolved (**חָסַד**)."¹ The reference here indicates God's preparation of the enemy for the defeat by His people in their conquest of the land. It cannot be denied that this is part of the judgment upon the inhabitants which God had in His mercy delayed for 400 years (see Gen 15:13, 14).

2) **בָּהַל** can also express the psychological fear which God places into those whom Yahweh battles. Elmer Martens suggests the following with regard to this word:

God disturbs nations, sometimes to the point of panic. Thus Edom was alarmed when she heard how God intervened in Israel's behalf at the sea of reeds (Ex 15:15). The Psalmist anticipates the panic which will descend on his enemies as God moves against them (Psa 6:10 H. 11, Psa 83:17 H. 18). The Day of the Lord especially will be marked by nations such as Babylon being alarmed (Isa 13:8). With the appearing of the chosen king, God will address the conspiring nations and "terrify (**bahal**) them in His fury" (Psa 2:5). Thus, the preliminary psychological defeat is part of God's action in that war.²

So Martens draws the conclusion that **בָּהַל** expresses God's psychological defeat of the enemy in the battle of "the Day of the Lord."³

¹See Woudstra, The Book of Joshua, p. 72. Cf. D. J. McCarthy, "Some Holy War Vocabulary in Joshua 2," CBQ 33 (1971):228-30.

²TWOT, s.v. "**בָּהַל**," by Elmer A. Martens, 1:92-93.

³See Chart I. Lind (Yahweh is a Warrior, p. 50) states of Exod 15:18, "Yahweh will reign forever and ever," the following: "Yahweh the warrior, becomes Yahweh the King. The close relationship of these two institutions is suggested by the form of the poem." Cf. Ralph W. Klein, "The Day of the Lord," CTM 39 (1968):521.

Although the vocabulary of Isaiah 31:8, 9 is different, these verses also indicate God's psychological preparation of the enemy.¹ The main point made in Isaiah 31 is that Israel is not to trust in conventional military strength, but to trust in God alone. Some examples which refer to this miraculous work of God are Exodus 15:15; 23:27f (אמחי), and in Joshua 2:9, 24 (אמה, מרג), Joshua 5:1 (מסס), and Joshua 7:5 (מסס).

While it would be a mistake to limit the above concepts to holy war alone, it seems best to place the words in Isaiah 13 which refer to fear in the context of war.

Therefore, my understanding of verses 7 and 8 in Isaiah 13 is that the fear and panic produced in the hearts of men is that same terror which God placed in the hearts of His enemies in war. As demonstrated in the texts above, it may be a miraculous work of God, or it may be that fear which comes upon men when they recognize the judgment of a Holy, Righteous, Almighty God. Here it is primarily the fear produced by the judgment of God upon Babylon through the destruction of the city by Sennacherib in 689. As Jeremiah shows the judgment here expressed may also refer to the Neo-Babylonians,² and John's usage of the poem reflects its general character and applies it to that fear which men will experience in the great tribulation.

¹See BDB, p. 369.

²See Jeremiah 50, 51.

Exegesis of Verses 10 and 11

Verses 10 and 11 formulate what this writer believes to be the two most difficult verses in the poem. Isaiah states: "For the stars of heaven and their constellations shall not give their light; when the sun rises it shall be darkened and the moon shall not shine its light."¹ There are four basic interpretations of this verse, depending upon the specific context and background to the Day of the Lord that one understands to underlie the passage. The four basic viewpoints are: 1) The metaphorical viewpoint² discussed by Weiss, namely, that the passage is not to be understood literally, but in a figurative sense "implying distress and disaster."³ E. J. Young takes a similar point of view stating: "We are not to understand these upheavals in the realm of nature as necessarily demanding literal fulfillment."⁴ 2) The holy war tradition viewpoint of von Rad⁵ which sees the language as referring to a battle and the "horrifying changes" which occur in the realm of nature: "clouds, thunder, earthquake, darkening of the stars."⁶

¹Translation is mine. Noteworthy is the "prophetic perfect" $\gamma\psi\pi$ translated in a stative sense.

²Meir Weiss, "The Day of the Lord Reconsidered," pp. 35-36.

³Ibid., p. 52.

⁴E. J. Young, Isaiah, 1:424.

⁵Von Rad, "The Origin of the Day of the Lord," p. 104.

⁶Ibid.

3) The literal viewpoint that during the tribulation period the astronomical phenomena of the heavens will be literally fulfilled.¹ This viewpoint understands the context to be tribulational. 4) The viewpoint that the emphasis of the verses are polemical, against the worshipping of stars. Furthermore, the sovereignty of God is emphasized because He is sovereign over the Assyrian and Babylonian deities.²

There are strengths and weaknesses in each of the above viewpoints. This writer considers the viewpoint of von Rad the weakest even though it would continue the war idea prominent in the context.³ Von Rad states of Isaiah 13: "Here, too, traditional motifs are echoed, for already on occasion of the ancient wars of Yahweh such changes in Nature have been reported."⁴ Weiss has pointed out that the problem with von Rad's thesis is in his indiscriminate use of proof texts where a literal upheaval of nature is not the intention of the text.⁵

¹Alva J. McClain (The Greatness of the Kingdom [Winona Lake, IN: BMH Books, 1974], p. 189) places these verses in the tribulation period.

²North, The Second Isaiah, p. 88. North does not espouse this viewpoint for the verses in Isa 13, but for Isa 40:26.

³This viewpoint also has in its favor the direct implication that God as "Yahweh of hosts" is leader of all the host of heaven, and they do battle for their Commander. This idea would be consistent with the nature of the poem. One could also combine point 4 with this idea.

⁴Von Rad, "The Origin of the Day of the Lord," p. 100.

⁵Weiss, "The Day of the Lord Reconsidered," p. 34. Cf. The proof texts of von Rad on p. 104 of his article.

Since the context is now describing the nature of the "Day of the Lord" perhaps it is better to consider the viewpoint of Weiss as a possibility.¹ The viewpoint of Weiss is that sometimes the language of nature phenomena is to be taken metaphorically.² He states the following:

The motif of darkness is applied in the DL prophecies in two different ways. We have to do with the physical darkening of the celestial bodies, in one late prophecy (Joel 3:4) while elsewhere this darkening is to be taken metaphorically, implying distress and disaster.³

This viewpoint in my judgment has much in its favor. One might consider the language of 1 Samuel 14:15 where it states: "And there was trembling in the host, in the field, and among all the people: the garrison and the spoilers they also trembled, and the earth quaked." Is it possible that the "earth quaked" represents the panic in the camp?⁴

Furthermore, the language of Isaiah 13 as Weiss demonstrates is used in theophany contexts.⁵ One might see 2 Samuel 22 and Psalm 18 where David describes the Lord as Divine Warrior in past deliverances in language that was not literally fulfilled. Some of the same words are used in 2 Samuel 22 to describe these past deliverances of David as are used in the context of Isaiah 13 to indicate what will

¹Weiss, "The Day of the Lord Reconsidered," p. 29.

²Ibid., pp. 34-35.

³Ibid. See Isa 5:30 and 8:22 for the meanings of darkness as "distress." In both of these passages the adversity resulting from Assyrian Conquest is pictured as darkness.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid. See his Chart A.

occur at the judgment of God upon Babylon.

Those who argue that the disturbances in the heavenly bodies here are to be taken literally, usually do so on the basis of viewing the context as tribulational.¹ Some of the arguments for this viewpoint are: First, the word חֹל is normally used to designate the entire globe.² Second, the entire context because of its involvement in the "Day of the Lord" is to be taken as tribulational.³ Since there is indication that in the New Testament there is to be a literal darkening of astronomical bodies, a comparison is made⁴ with the context here. Further, some passages on the "Day of the Lord" in the Old Testament speak of a literal darkening of the stars (Joel 3:4).

The essential grammatical problem with taking the natural phenomena literally in verse 10 is that the כִּי clause gives the purpose of the desolation described in verse 9. However, the literal darkness of the heavenly bodies in verse 10 may accompany the desolation in verse 9.⁵ The metaphorical viewpoint then, that the language of

¹Allen, "The Rebuilding of Babylon," p. 20.

²See BDB, p. 385. Many commentators mention this as designating the globe, or at least many nations. However, BDB gives passages where חֹל is parallel to אָרֶץ, the most significant being Isa 14:21.

³Allen, "The Rebuilding of Babylon," p. 20.

⁴See Mark 13:24, 25 for a quotation of Isa 13:10 by our Lord.

⁵The logic behind that statement is that the text is describing judgment by God--Assyrians--calamity--desolation. One could imagine that the darkness could produce repercussions

the text is describing calamity in a figurative sense, is the most probable viewpoint.¹

The universal nature of the poem is quite consistent with the proposed Neo-Assyrian background. Similar language is used with regard to Assyria. First, notice the conclusion of the poem in 14:24-27 where the judgment upon Assyria is said to be "against the whole earth" and "against all the nations." This usage of the phrase "the whole land" is parallel to that of Isaiah 13:5. Second, the word נָכַח is not necessarily universal, and the primary emphasis upon the usage of this word is upon "the wicked" as the parallelism shows.

Verses 10 and 11 have been seen to be the crux interpretum of this passage. Despite the fact that several viewpoints present possible solution to the interpretive problems in this passage, it was demonstrated that a metaphorical understanding of verse 10 is highly probable.² Verse 11 is more fluid and although its primary application

on earth, but a long series of natural disasters produced by the literal darkening of the stars and sun is hardly in view here. The understanding here is that this darkening is describing in some manner the desolation produced by the Day of the Lord in verse 9. Perhaps it is cause, as suggested above.

¹Weiss, "The Day of the Lord Reconsidered," p. 53. Cf. BDB, p. 473.

²A metaphorical understanding of verse 10 does not mean that one is not understanding the poem literally. A consistent literal interpretation recognizes all figures of speech in a given context.

in this context was seen to be consistent with the proposed Assyrian understanding of the context, its generality gives it a universal application. In fact, the whole poem tends in this direction. This general nature, as an oracle, which the poem exhibits underlies Christ's quotation and application of verse 10 to a time after the great tribulation, just prior to His second coming.¹

Relationship of the Term
יָוֹם יְהוָה to War

It is not without significance that the term יָוֹם יְהוָה has a direct relationship to the idea of war.² Even though the previous discussion of verses 10 and 11 discounted much of the argumentation of von Rad, his essential idea that war forms the background for the "Day of the Lord" forms a circle of ideas which aid in exegesis.³

That the terminology of the "Day of the Lord" derives from the concept of holy war is shown by the following arguments:

- 1) The term יָוֹם x may stand for a day of battle (Isa 9:3).

¹Mark 13:24. The problem of this quotation involves the issue of the New Testament's use of the Old Testament and is beyond the scope of our study.

²See Chart II where all of the contexts of the occurrence of the "Day of the Lord" are examined in their relationship to the concept of war.

³Exegesis is never carried out in a vacuum. Ideas and their relationships to the historical background form a basis for exegesis, but the exegesis determines or ought to determine the historical referent. It is indeed a circle.

2) Stuart's suggestion that a sovereign's day of conquest is related to the "Day of the Lord" is a valid comparison.

3) Two examples, both in the context of war, which refer to Yahweh's victory on a single day are: a) Isaiah 9:14--"So the Lord will cut off from Israel both head and tail, both palm and branch in a single day." b) Isaiah 10:17--"The light of Israel will become a fire, their holy one a flame; in a single day it will burn and consume."

4) Notice the close connection of terminology between *יום יהוה* and "day of battle." In Zechariah 14:1-3 the term *יום־בא ליהוה* is interchangeable with *ביום קרב* in verse 3. In some instances the "day of battle" is qualified by *יום יהוה* as in Ezekiel 13:5 because not every *מלחמה* is a *יום יהוה*.¹

5) If the term "day" does not refer to battle, it is difficult to explain why the term *יום* is used at all because of two considerations. First, *עם־יהוה* which indicates a definite occasion could have been used to indicate the time²

¹Meir Weiss ("The Day of the Lord Reconsidered," p. 31) questions: "What then distinguishes the prophecies on the DL from those on punishment brought about by war"? It is the prophets themselves which view the Day of the Lord as catastrophic judgment by Yahweh, sometimes in past historical events (cf. the fall of Jerusalem in Ezek 13:5; Lam 2:1, 21). They use it in this manner, sparingly, for major events and emphasize its eschatological significance. Cf. Everson, "The Days of Yahweh," p. 335.

²See John Wilch, Time and Event (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1969), p. 95. For a significant review of passages and their relationship to holy war, see Gerhard von Rad, Der Heilige Krieg im Alten Israel (Gottingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1965), pp. 6-14.

(cf. Isa 13:22). Second, the two most plausible explanations for the use of יְהוָה with יוֹם both involve deriving the term "day" from battle. a) Stuart's suggestion that the term derives from a common motif, namely, that a truly great monarch could complete a campaign in "a single day."

b) John Wilch's suggestion that the term "day" derives from "the character of the Day of Yahweh as an occasion of battle, devastation and victory."¹ He states:

When such an event took place, it always occurred on a certain day, and never on more than one day, for with the sunset came the end of the fighting. Thus it was important for Joshua that the day of the battle with the Amorites be prolonged, to enable the Israelites to complete their bout (10:12-14, 20). Each battle had its own day; it was this temporal characteristic that made both unique and an historical reality.²

One might notice also that there is nothing mutually exclusive about the two suggestions. In fact, the boast of the king may have arisen out of the difficult nature in history of completing battle in one day, although Stuart's original suggestion calls for the even more difficult task of completing an entire war in a single day.³

The argument becomes especially strong when one realizes that language of war is prominent⁴ in the texts, the historical background for יוֹם יְהוָה is war, and the term

¹Wilch, Time and Event, p. 95.

²Ibid., p. 95.

³Douglas Stuart, "A Sovereign's Day of Conquest," p. 163.

⁴See von Rad, "The Origin of the Concept of the Day of the Lord," p. 104. Cf. Chart II.

itself can designate military victory. These ideas together are irresistible, it seems to me.

Origin of the Day of the Lord

Some have not been clear on the value of ascertaining the origin of the Day of the Lord.¹ The negative connotations of the word "origin" are evident to those who realize the ultimate origin of the idea is God. However, to deny the source of words, ideas, and themes which God used to communicate His revelation would be to deny the historical context of the original listeners. If holy war language comprises a significant amount of the Day of the Lord material, then its validity for historical-grammatical exegesis ought to be self-evident, unless one ideally imagines that all presuppositions about the Day of the Lord can be safely avoided. So the basic value of determining the source/ideas involved in the Day of the Lord is that a historical context for the prophet's spontaneous introduction is provided.

The Day of the Lord

The concept of the Day of Yahweh is one of the most challenging in eschatology as well as a topic in which a great diversity of opinion exists.² It is the opinion of

¹Richard Mayhue, "The Prophet's Watchword, Day of the Lord" (Th.D. Dissertation, Grace Theological Seminary, 1980), pp. 50-51.

²A cursory reading of the material in the Grace Library will establish this fact. See Mitchell F. Book,

this writer that "Day of the Lord" is not expressly an eschatological technical term. Therefore, the context must govern its interpretation in any given instance. While this concept itself is not based per se on any origin theory of the Day of the Lord, it does agree with Stuart's idea.¹ This article is highly significant in providing a cultural understanding and background for the concept of the Day of the Lord. One of the most significant aspects of Stuart's article is that "the motifs of sovereign, warfare, and a single day of conquest" all characterize this tradition in the non-biblical texts.² It might be well to introduce at this particular point the texts to which Stuart refers in his article. They are as follows:

The Old Testament Concept of the Day of the Lord (Master of Divinity Thesis, Grace Theological Seminary, 1979); Otis R. Stone, The Day of the Lord (Th.M. Thesis, Grace Theological Seminary, 1974); J. David Schmid, The Precursors to the Day of the Lord (Th.M. Thesis, Grace Theological Seminary, 1974); and the significant article by Stuart, "A Sovereign's Day of Conquest," pp. 159-64. Compare with A. J. Everson's statement ("Days of Yahweh," p. 329): "There has been widespread disagreement, however, about the precise nature or character of the Day of Yahweh." Some of the major works are: Ladislau Cerney, The Day of Yahweh and Some Relevant Problems (Prague: Nakladem Filosofickej Fakulty University Karlovy, 1948); Victor Efsteyn, "The Day of Yahweh in Jeremiah 4:23-28," JBL 87 (1968):93-97; Ralph W. Klein, "The Day of the Lord," CTM 39:8 (September 1968):517-25; H. H. Rowley, The Faith of Israel (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1956), 177-201; G. von Rad, "The Origin of the Concept of the Day of the Lord," pp. 97-108; Meir Weiss, "The Day of the Lord Reconsidered," pp. 29-60. Many other references could be given here, but see the Bibliography.

¹Douglas Stuart, "The Sovereign's Day of Conquest," pp. 159-64.

²Ibid., p. 159.

1. From a Hymn to Nergal, probably of the Ur III period, perhaps during the reign of Shulgi(r) (2042-1995 B.C.). The underworld goddess Ninsubur praises Nergal's military exploits:

You are the Lord who brought down
 here to the underworld the sagaz people
 (Hapiru)
 . . . The Hero, who in a single day (UD. 1.
KAM) threw the enemies of Enlil into the dust.

2. From the Sumerian King of Ur, Shulgi(r), ca. 2000 B.C., the date formula for Shulgi(r)'s 42nd year:

(The year that) Harsi, Kimas, Humurti and their territory were destroyed within one day (U₄-I-a).

3. From the Sumerian King of Ur, Ibbsin, ca. 1960 B.C., the name for Ibbsin's year "K":

(The year that) he flooded like a tempest over the lands of Susa, Amandum, and Awan, humbled them in one day (U₄-I-a) and took prisoner . . . etc.

4. From the Assyrian King, Šamši-Afād I, in a letter to his son, Yasmah-Adad, ca. 1710 B.C., Samsi-Adad boasts of his expectation that the country of Zalmaqum will rise in support of him once he arrives with his forces:

When I go up to that country, all of that country in one day (i-na UD.1.KAM) will revolt to my side.

5. From the Syrian King of Alalah, Idrimi, ca. 1475 B.C., describing his military return from exile and reconquest of his dynasty's traditional domain:

And in a single day (i-na UD.1.KAM) as one man, the land of Ni', the land of Ama'e, the land of Mukishi, and the city of Alalah, my (capitol) city, turned back to me.

6. From the Hittite King Mursilis II, ca. 1340 B.C., describing the conquest of Carchemish by his father, Suppiluliuma:

na-an-kan I-NA UD.7.KAM an-da wa-ah-nu-wa-an har-ta
nu-uš-ši I-NA UD.8.KAM I-NA UD.1.KAM za-aḥ-ḥi-in
pa-iš na-an-kan ha-tu-ga-ia-az ME-az I-NA UD.8.KAM I-NA
UD(.1.) K(A)M x(-. . . .) nu-za ma-aḥ-ḥa-an

He had besieged it for seven days, and on the eighth day he fought a battle against it for one day and (took) it in a terrific battle on the eighth day, in (one) day.

7. From a letter of the Hittite King Suppiluliuma, to Niqmaddu II (1365-1325 B.C.) of Ugarit:

. . . and afterwards, you shall see the kings of Nuhasse and the king of Mukiš who let go the covenant and peace agreement with Hatti and have become enemies of the great king your lord, in what manner he will deal with them. And you, Niqmaddu, after one day (EGIR UD.1.KAM) you will be faithful to the words of the great king your lord (11.21-29).

. . . and if it happens that in the following day (ina ilki UD-me) the great king prevails over these kings, then the great king will give you a sealed tablet of contract (11.49-52).

The following four references are from Rib-Addi, Phoenician King of Byblos, to the Pharaoh at Amarna, probably Amon-hotep III, ca. 1413-1377 B.C. The letters date from ca. 1380 B.C.

8. In EA 117, 60-64, we have a request for Pharaoh's indirect military intervention against Rib-Addi's troublers:

. . . let (the king) write to Yanhamu and Bihura: "Go with your regents and take Amurru! You will take it in a day"! (i-na UD KAN).

9. In EA 137:49-51 Rib-Addi asks for Egyptian archers to help him retake Byblos from the Hapiru (SA.GAZ):

(If) archers march out, and they hear it, on the day (a-na u-mi) of their arrival the city will return to the king my lord.

10. A somewhat later text, from Rib-Addi to Amen-hotep IV, repeats information written earlier (EA 132:10-16):

Formerly Abdi-Asirta opposed me and I wrote to thy father, "Send royal archers and the whole land will be taken in days (or: a matter of days)" (i-na UD KAN MES).

This reference with the plural calls for comment. It may imply that a series of campaigns is contemplated, or that some time is being allowed by Rib-Addi for the troops to arrive. More likely, such a usage of the plural, which appears also in EA 70:27-30 and EA 108:56-58, reflects a degree of fluidity in the cliché itself.

11. Our last Amarna reference displays the one-day feature in some ways more dramatically than any of the others (EA 109:15-17):

They (the sons of Abdi-Asirta) have taken Ullaza. I said: "In days/a matter of days (UD KAN MES) the king will hear it. In a matter of days (UD KAN MES) he will take them. Even if he should hear it at night then at night he will take them" (u summa musa yismu u musa yiltiku suma).

12. From a stele erected by Pharaoh Seti I (1313-1292) in the first year of his reign, at Beth-Shean in Palestine:

Then his majesty sent the first army of Amon ("Mighty of Bows") to the city of Hamath, the first army of Ra ("Plentiful of Valor") to the city of Beth-Shean, and the first army of Sutekh ("Strong of Bows") to the city of Yenoam, and it happened that in the space of a day they were overthrown by the will of his majesty . . . (lines 8-22).

13. A final non-Israelite text, close both in time and place to the classical prophets who introduced the Day of Yahweh into Old Testament literature, is found in the Moabite Stone (ca. 830 B.C.) lines 14-16, where King Mesha boasts:

And Chemosh said to me, "Go, take Nebo from Israel"! So I went by night and fought against it from the break of dawn until noon, taking it and slaying all . . .¹

One must be careful about drawing overly-reactionary conclusions from such evidence, but evidence that the Sovereign's Day of Conquest was a well-established Near Eastern tradition is mounting. Further, it seems that the prophets have used this concept with regard to the Day of the Lord in their writings. At least the notion seems to be reasonable.

¹Stuart, "The Sovereign's Day of Conquest," pp. 161-63.

In regard to Isaiah 13 it is significant that the "Day of the Lord" may refer to historically fulfilled prophecy or that prophecy which was future to the prophet but whose fulfillment is past with regard to the present. It is possible that the "Day of the Lord" in verses 6 and 9 may refer to the Assyrian army and their conquest of Babylon. However, before that assumption is made, the fact that יום יהוה may refer to events with historical fulfillment must be proven. The evidence seemingly points to the conclusion that יום יהוה is not necessarily a tribulational phrase.¹ There are basically three passages which will be used in this particular study to attempt to prove the thesis that יום יהוה is not a technical term for the end-time events. These three passages are: Ezekiel 13:5, 30:3, and Jeremiah 46:10.

Ezekiel 13:5

Ezekiel in the first twenty-four chapters of his book prophesied from Babylon the destruction of Jerusalem and the captivity of the nation in view of their sins against God (Ezek 1:1; 2:3; 3:7). In chapters 8-11 Ezekiel saw in a vision the departure of the glory of God from the

¹Contra Jacobs, The Eschatological Significance of Babylon, p. 126. He concludes: "After a careful study of the nineteen times the term 'day of the Lord' is found in the Old Testament (Obad 15; Joel 1:15; 2:1, 11; 3:1; 3:14; Amos 5:18 twice, 20; Isa 2:2; 13:6, 9; Ezek 13:5; 30:3; Zeph 1:7, 14 twice; Zech 14:1; Mal 4:5) . . . in each of these cases they are terms which involve the tribulation, the second advent, or the kingdom age."

temple which ultimately marked the end of the theocracy for Israel.¹ Chapter 8 is dated to approximately 591-90. This forms the background to chapter 13, but it ought to be mentioned that God answered a proverb in the latter part of chapter 12 where the people were saying that the prophets predicted latter day (far-off) events. But God stated that "my words shall not be prolonged."²

God's indictment of the false prophets who are the cause of Israel's sins of the people is for their failure to proclaim the truth of God. One must formulate the conclusion of the usage of יום יהיה in Ezekiel 13:5 on the basis of overall context--namely, the fall of Jerusalem.³ The false prophets are spoken of for their lies (v 16) and vanity (v 8) as well as their central message of peace in Jerusalem (v 16). Therefore, God states in verse 5, "You have not gone into the gaps, neither made up the hedge for the house of Israel to stand in the battle in the day of the Lord." Here, Israel is not standing militarily.

¹McClain, The Greatness of the Kingdom, p. 127. McClain states, "Furthermore, to the same prophet who saw the departure of the Glory and the end of the Kingdom in Old Testament prophecy, the Lord graciously gave a vision of the future return of the same glory (Ezek 43:1-7)."

²There are only three usages of the niphal of in the Old Testament: Ezek 12:25, 28 and Isa 13:22. There is a definite parallel between these passages which will be discussed later.

³A. J. Everson, "Days of Yahweh," pp. 332-33. This agrees with Feinberg (The Prophecy of Ezekiel Chicago: Moody Press, 1969, p. 74) who states that "The day of the Lord came when the Babylonians attacked Jerusalem and destroyed it in 586 B.C."

Contrasted, the eschatological Israel will stand militarily in the future Day of the Lord (Zech 12:8, 14). Therefore, because of context (fall of Jerusalem) and content (historical) this reference is seen as a reference to the fall of Jerusalem.

Ezekiel 30:3

Here the context is basically historical as seen by references to Nebuchadnezzar in 29:18 and 30:10. The purpose of God in the judgment against Egypt is given in 29:20: "I have given him the land of Egypt for his labour wherewith he served against it, because they wrought for me, saith the Lord." The purpose, therefore, of the judgment which follows is inextricably linked with the historical figure Nebuchadnezzar (Ezek 29:19-20).¹ In Ezekiel 30:3 the *יום יהיה* is said to be against "the nations." Some have conjectured that this designates the prophecy as eschatological,² but it is much more commensurate with the context to see this as a lament over the fall of Egypt to be accomplished by Nebuchadnezzar (see vv 19-21 of chap. 29). Another attempt to deny the historic fulfillment of this chapter might be based upon verse 21, which gives some indication of being

¹One might note that the historical references with the usage of *קרוי* are beginning to emerge. However, a premature conclusion to this effect is not warranted in light of the solidly future passage in Joel 3:14, where the judgment is qualified by the adjective *קרוי*.

²Merlin Berkey, "The Day of the Lord" (Unpublished Postgraduate Seminar Paper, Grace Theological Seminary, 1967), p. 10.

millennial. Here again, though, see verses where Nebuchadnezzar is stated to perform this judgment. The problem which understandably arises is the historical problem of finding the fulfillment by Nebuchadnezzar in history. This writer will leave this problem, in ambiguity, to historians, admitting that it exists, however, not altering the natural reading of the text.¹

Jeremiah 46:10

This oracle against Egypt portrays the loss of the Egyptian army at Charchemish in 605 B.C. in the taunting style of Isaiah 14:3-14. The position of Everson with regard to this passage is as follows:

For the prophet the past event was not simply a confrontation between Egypt and Babylon. It was a confrontation between Egypt and Yahweh, whose sovereign position as Lord of all nations was being challenged and usurped by Egypt. This is close to being a parallel to Ezekiel's prophecy against Egypt; however, it seems clear that Jeremiah's prophecy concerns Charchemish.²

It seems that the best argument which can be advanced in favor of the Day of the Lord here being fulfilled at Charchemish is the superscription of Jeremiah to the prophecy itself. It reads: "This is the message the Lord spoke to

¹One might begin with Josephus, who places the destruction of Egypt after the fall of Jerusalem. Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1960), p. 222.

²Everson, "The Days of Yahweh," p. 334. This passage may strictly be translated, "For that day belongs to the Lord God of hosts" (NASB) for the Hebrew contains a γ of possession. Cf. Lawrence Boadt, Ezekiel's Oracles Against Egypt (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1980), p. 58. He takes the γ as emphatic.

Jeremiah the prophet about the coming of Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon to attack Egypt" (NIV). It seems that Jeremiah straightforwardly gives the occasion and fulfillment of the יום יהוה.

The conclusion of this author is that not all the passages concerning the Day of the Lord are eschatological, but the basic thrust of the phrase is the victory of God bringing blessings as well as judgment. The time period is determined by the context. This view is consistent with a Near Eastern tradition as embodied in the texts listed by Stuart. The possibility that this tradition was well known and forms the background of the phrase is reasonable. The prophet used the phrase for momentous events of judgment (i.e., fall of Jerusalem, Ezek 13:5) both future and/or imminent.

The purpose of the above discussion was to show that the Day of the Lord in Isaiah 13 may refer to a past judgment of God upon Babylon. In chapter 2 it was demonstrated that this past judgment or fulfillment, although future to Isaiah, was performed by Sennacherib when he totally destroyed the city in 689.

CHAPTER V

TEXTUAL OBSERVATIONS IN ISAIAH 13:17-22

There are several observations which are pertinent to our understanding of the fulfillment of this passage as historical or tribulational. It is the contention of this writer that some of the key phrases which are taken literally to prove the futiricity of this passage are much too fluid in their scriptural usage for one to deny the possibility of historical fulfillment.

"The Medes"--verses 17-18

The historic background for our interpretation of the יָדָד is given in chapter 2 of this paper. In this section there are some interesting phrases which refer to the "Medes."

The first phrase which refers to the "Medes" is to be interpreted in light of the proposed background. The text states that the "Medes" "will not value silver or take pleasure in gold." If one but recalls the fact that Merodach-Baladan was constantly bribing the Elamite army with "gold and silver,"¹ it is ironic that the prophet here, with regard to Babylon, is denying them that possibility.

¹Brinkman, "Elamite Military Aid to Merodach-Baladan," p. 166.

In fact, it is possible that the "Medes" were persuaded for money to participate against Assyria on occasion.¹ However, the "Medes" here cannot be persuaded for money.

Why can't the Medes be persuaded for tribute? The answer to this question is found in the motive for the destruction of the city of Babylon. Sennacherib was not coming against the city of Babylon to loot or to gather bounty for the Assyrian empire. His sole reason for attacking the city was to disrupt the political rule of an independent and rebellious Babylon. He had previously attempted, without success, other political means to control the city and the area. His motivation for the destruction was revenge. This time he would not be bribed.

"As God Overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah"--verse 19

The phrase "as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah" is a most significant one for the interpretation of verse 19, as well as the section 19-22. Wolff states that the phrase "as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah" is always used to denote the complete overthrow of "political entity."²

¹I know of no evidence for this. As stated in chapter 2, the most likely conclusion from the Assyrian texts is that the Medes were considered part of Assyria proper.

²Hans Walter Wolff, Joel and Amos, Hermeneia, trans. by Waldemar Janzen, et al. Ed. by S. Dean McBride (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977), p. 221.

The prominence of the phrase for the interpretation is established by its relationship to the treaty-curse idea. However, before the relationship of this phrase to the curse motif in the Old Testament may be discussed, the scriptural usage of $\eta\eta$ in this phrase must be determined and the specific point of the comparison designated by "as."

Scriptural Usage of $\eta\eta$ in the Formula

The term $\eta\eta$ is a significant word in the phrase "as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah."¹ In Genesis 19:29 a summary statement of the Sodom and Gomorrah incident is given.² This statement refers to the event as $\eta\eta\eta\eta$. God is the subject of all of the clauses in this condensation of the entire event. The entire section of Genesis 18-19 is tied together by the writer's returning to Abraham (i.e., chapter 18).³ The direct object is not stated to be Sodom or Gomorrah, but the cities.

Later in Deuteronomy 29:22, a comparison is made between the judgment of God upon Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboiim and the judgment that will befall the

¹In Ugaritic the word occurs at least twice. See Gordon, UT, no. 788. He gives two instances: Text 49: VI:28; 67:III:12. Where Mot and Baal fight in Text 49 Shapash cries out to Mot that El: $\eta\eta\eta$. ksa. mlkk. This is parallel with $\eta\eta\eta$. ht. mtptk or "indeed he will break the sceptre of your rule."

²Gerhard von Rad, Genesis A Commentary, The Old Testament Library (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1972), p. 222.

³Ibid.

children of God, if they break covenant.¹ The phrase here is already being used as a formula to picture God's judgment upon sin. This judgment takes the form of desolation described in 22a.

In the prophets, beginning with Amos, the phrase becomes fixed,² with Sodom and Gomorrah alone as the direct object of the verbal noun מִהַפְכָּה. It is clear in Amos that a fixed formula is being used because the grammar of the phrase is not affected by the fact that God is the subject of the action.³ Here the point of the comparison is not the manner of destruction so much as the thoroughness or completeness of the destruction. This exact usage summarizes the general usage of this phrase in the prophets.⁴ In fact, by the time of the prophets, the curses mentioned in Deuteronomy 28 had already begun.⁵ The judgment of God upon Israel for breach of covenant was compared by the prophets to the judgment upon Sodom and Gomorrah for sin. The destruction spoken of by הָפַךְ is often by intermediate agency. Our interpretation of this chapter as referring to

¹Or "depart" from the covenant.

²GKC, 115 d. The noun מִהַפְכָּה grammatically functions as a verb.

³But the third person is used in 4:11b despite the fact that God is speaking in 4:11a.

⁴See William Rainey Harper, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Amos and Hosea, ICC (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1979), p. 100. Also Wolff, Joel and Amos, p. 221.

⁵See Amos 4:6-11.

the destruction of Babylon by the Assyrians is a distinct possibility. The main point of the comparison is the completeness of the destruction rather than the supernaturalness of the destruction, although the latter is not always excluded.

The Curse Motif

As shown above, the word $\gamma\epsilon\eta$ relates with regard to Israel to the covenant curses. These curses result from disobedience to God and therefore incur His judgment. Fensham¹ has demonstrated a number of remarkable parallels with the treaties of the Ancient Near East, Kudurru inscriptions² and prophetic maledictions.³ The most germane parallel he discusses for the interpretation of Isaiah 13:19-22 is the animal motif. Here Fensham has noticed that a common idea in the Ancient Near East is that "the ruins of the transgressor's city shall be inhabited by wild animals."⁴ In the Sefire treaty the animal motif is as follows:

A destroyer of houses will tear it down! Its pastures (will be dev)astated and become a wilderness, and Arpad will become a ruined hill, (the lair of the stag and)

¹Fensham, Common Trends in Curses of the Near Eastern Treaties," pp. 166-69.

²Boundary Stone inscriptions.

³Fensham also noted the differences in the above article, pp. 173-75.

⁴Fensham, Common Trends in Curses of the Ancient Near Eastern Treaties," pp. 161-68.

the gazelle and the fox and the hare and the wildcat
and the owl and (the screech owl) and the magpie!¹

In Isaiah 13:21-22 the following is given, "But wild beasts will lie down there, and its houses will be full of howling creatures; there ostriches shall dwell and there satyrs will dance. Hyenas will cry in its towers, and jackals in the pleasant places" (RSV). The animals, although different, the desolation, and clear curse or malediction in juxtaposition form a definite parallel. These desert animals point to the picture being drawn by the prophet of desertion, desolation and death.²

This motif does not negate the literality, but contributes to our understanding the generic nature of this poem. Isaiah is picturing in common curse language God's judgment upon an immoral city.

"It Shall Not Be Inhabited"--verse 20

The author first noticed this phrase where Zechariah discusses the 𐤏𐤍𐤁 "against the land of Hadrach." Hadrach is not to be interpreted mystically, as Leupold does, but as a well-known district mentioned in Old Aramaic inscriptions.³ With the background described as judgment, the phrase appears

¹Walter Beyerlin, Near Eastern Religious Texts Relating to the Old Testament, The Old Testament Library (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1975), p. 259.

²The desolation produced by the judgment of God may also come upon God's people. Cf. Isaiah 24; 32:12-14.

³Dr. James R. Battenfield, Unpublished Class Notes: Zechariah, Grace Theological Seminary, 1978.

in verse 5 with reference to Ashkelon. It might well be translated "Ashkelon shall not be inhabited." Even though historical information is scanty concerning Ashkelon,¹ it is probable that Alexander the Great fulfilled Zechariah 9:1-8, leading to the author's introduction of the Messiah in Zechariah 9:9.

So the phrase itself does not preclude historic fulfillment, even though Ashkelon today is a thriving metropolis. The normal tribulational argument either from the history of Babylon or the present existing condition of Babylon depends upon the literalness of this phrase. One might begin by comparing Jeremiah's similar terminology, which is used throughout his prophecy, also of the destruction of Babylon, to determine the nature of this phrase.

Jeremiah's Usage of מאין יושב "Without Inhabitant"

In Jeremiah 26:9, when Jeremiah faced the prospect of death, the people evaluated Jeremiah's message predicting the fall of Jerusalem in the words: "Why do you prophesy in the Lord's name that this house will be like Shiloh and this city will be desolate and deserted" (NIV)? Notice that the words מאין יושב are applied to the fall of Jerusalem. Another verse which shows the stereotyped, poetical nature of this phrase is Jeremiah 33:10 which states: "This is what the Lord says: You say about this place, it is a desolate

¹Merrill F. Unger, Prophet of Messiah's Glory (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1963), p. 156.

waste, without men or animals" (NIV). Notice that the desolation of Jerusalem is said to be מאין אדם ("without a man"). Finally, the parallel verses in Jeremiah to Isaiah in 51:28-29 describe the historic conquest by the Medes.¹ God's purpose is "to lay waste the land of Babylon so that no one will live there" (NIV). The Hebrew phrase is again מאין יושב. Therefore, this establishes the conclusion that Jeremiah states that the destruction of Jerusalem is to be not only without inhabitant, but he states on one occasion "without man or beast" (Jer 33:10). It is apparent that this phrase is not to be forced as literal, because Jerusalem was never totally "without a man or beast."² The phrase is a poetical one used by Jeremiah to describe the desolation of a conquered city. Isaiah's usage here seems to be parallel with that of Jeremiah's use of מאין יושב concerning Jerusalem. The ultimate desolation of the city of Babylon is in view. Therefore, the phrase seems to be somewhat fluid or poetical in nature.³ Whether or not this may be pressed is difficult to say, and it must be admitted that

¹Notice that Medes here cannot be supernatural beings for they are described as "ruling countries."

²Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews, states that "Jerusalem continued to be a desert for seventy years"; however, literal exact fulfillment of this phrase would require that not one person be in Jerusalem or its cities (Jer 4:7).

³C. F. Keil, Minor Prophets (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1950), p. 328.

לנצח has future possibilities.¹

"Her Days Shall Not Be Prolonged"--verse 22

The Hebrew word קרוב, which means "near," is used with the phrase "the Day of the Lord" in seven instances in Scripture.² As previously mentioned, there is a diversity in these passages which will not allow for some pre-formulized determination. The context determines the nature of the nearness. For example, the latter passages in Joel seem to favor an eschatological "nearness" for the Day of the Lord, while in Ezekiel 30:3 the context seems to favor a literal "nearness" (not necessarily from God's point of view, but man's) of the judgment (see Ezek 12:23). So the word "near" may be from God's point of view and does not necessarily mean near from the prophet's point of view, just as Kingdom prophecies seem to be near (Hag 2:6-9), while other prophecies indicate otherwise (Isa 21).

So in this passage, which reads: "And the wild beasts of the coastlands shall cry in their desolate houses, and jackals in their pleasant palaces; and her time is near to come, and her days shall not be prolonged,"³ there are

¹A possible explanation for לנצח is that it is to be taken in the sense of "continuation" not uninterrupted continuation of the non-dwelling.

²George W. Wigram, The Englishman's Hebrew and Chaldea Concordance of the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1970), pp. 1127-28. These are Joel 1:15; 2:1; 3:14; Isa 13:6; Ezek 30:3; Zeph 1:7, 14.

³C. I. Scofield, The New Scofield Reference Bible (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 725.

two basic interpretations: 1) "Isaiah may be saying that from the time God begins dealing with Babylon during the tribulation period, the cities' days shall not be prolonged."¹ This is certainly a valid interpretation of this passage from the viewpoint of the futuricity of the context. The two basic strongest points for this argument are that the context has some eschatological, tribulation² phrases, and the word קרוב in verse 22 is also used with יום יהיה in verse 6. Therefore, if "Day of the Lord" is eschatological in verse 6, it certainly presents a strong parallel for the futuricity of verse 22. The second interpretation is that Isaiah is presenting the judgment of God upon historic Babylon and the verse is to be taken literally that Babylon's time is short.³

This interpretation is based upon the following ideas from Scripture. There is a strong parallelism between the two ideas of קרוב and the niph'al verb form of ימשכו (from משך). This presents no problem to either view, except that משך is used only three times in the niph'al and the meaning in the other two instances is fixed.

¹Kenneth Allen, "The Rebuilding and Destruction of Babylon," p. 20.

²Perhaps in vv 9-11, which this writer considers to be the most "universal" verses in the chapter.

³In the opinion of this writer the word משך represents the strongest possible way for Isaiah to say that the time is literally short.

In Ezekiel 12:25, 28, there was a proverb in the land of Israel which God answers in verses 22-28: "Son of man, what is that in the land of Israel, saying, the days are prolonged, and every vision faileth? Tell them, therefore, thus saith the Lord God: I will make this proverb to cease, and they shall no more use it as a proverb in Israel; but say unto them, the days are at hand, and the effect of every vision (at hand קרבו)." God answers again in verse 28, which contains the Hebrew word מִשָּׁח: "Therefore, say unto them, thus said the Lord God: There shall none of my words be prolonged anymore, but the word which I have spoken shall be done, saith the Lord God."

The people were saying here that Ezekiel was prophesying about the end-times, but God rebukes them for this proverb. In this passage the clear meaning of the word is that the judgment of Ezekiel's prophecy will shortly come to pass.¹ The date of the previous prophesied judgment is about 592 B.C. The judgment upon Jerusalem followed shortly. The niphal or passive voice indicates that the subject is not acting, but being acted upon and is the same form used in Isaiah 13:22. The parallelism between Isaiah and Ezekiel is striking, especially since Ezekiel only five verses later used the phrase יום יהיה to refer to the fall

¹The meaning of the word מִשָּׁח, it is felt from the scriptural evidence, will not allow for a long interval of time from the prophet to the fulfillment. קרבו alone would allow for this meaning, but מִשָּׁח means "to be distant in time," hence, when negated it means "to not be distant in time." Note it always means to be distant geographically in Qal. Cf. BDB, p. 604.

of Jerusalem. It is felt by this writer that $\gamma\omega\delta$ indicates in a strong manner that the fulfillment of this prophecy must be thought to be literally near the time from the prediction. Since the word means "to be distant in time," the negation of it naturally carries this idea.

CONCLUSION

The main idea of this thesis has been that Isaiah 13 finds its historical placement and fulfillment in the Neo-Assyrian period rather than the Neo-Babylonian period. It has long been realized that the language of the poem, however general it may be, simply cannot be accommodated with the Neo-Babylonian fall under Cyrus in 539. The futuristic or tribulational alternative is rather weak in that its strongest arguments depend upon the lack of an adequate historical possibility for the text. Therefore, I feel that a Neo-Assyrian fulfillment and background is a more appropriate starting point for the discussion of the text and any tribulational points that Isaiah, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, may have indicated.

The Neo-Assyrian background was demonstrated to be a more logical starting point for three reasons. First, the Neo-Assyrian background fits certain statements in the text historically, and renders the fulfillment of the text in 689 B.C. a probability. Second, a major theological concern of the OAN is that the nation trust in Yahweh rather than military alliances. This theological concern of Isaiah fits the historical situation of the eighth century best. One might attempt to show that Isaiah 14:1-3 proves that Isaiah's theological concern is deliverance after this fall

of Babylon in 539. Although the fall of Babylon in 539 B.C. might be viewed as a more direct cause of the restoration in 14:1-3, this idea need not prove conclusive. Isaiah's concern may be simply to show that God will ultimately restore them and they need not trust in anyone but God.

Third, it was shown that the context in a major portion of Isaiah 1-39 deals with the Neo-Assyrian period. This idea alone should provide an impetus for reconsidering the assumed Neo-Babylonian period as being the most likely historical referent.

The exegetical section of this thesis is almost like the icing on a cake. It is a meager attempt to establish exegetically the proposed background. Although I am convinced that the Neo-Assyrian background is the most adequate one, the exegetical explanation of the details within the poem was found to be somewhat difficult. However, the details are especially difficult, if not impossible, if one accepts the tribulational or Neo-Babylonian theories about the text.

Probably the three key exegetical points made were, first, that "Day of the Lord" may indeed have a non-tribulational aspect; second, that the "Medes" best reflects an eighth century understanding; and third, that the Hebrew word מִשָּׁךְ simply will not allow for a long period of time from the prediction to the fulfillment.

In light of these considerations, I believe that more examination of the prophecies in Isaiah 1-39 from the

viewpoint of an Assyrian background is needed. My earnest desire is that historical-grammatical, God-honoring exegesis be furthered within the Church of the Living God.

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CHART I

Comparison of Exodus 15 and Isaiah 13

<u>Exodus 15:14-18</u>	The Song of Moses	<u>Isaiah 13:7, 9</u>
v 14	שמע עמים ירגזון חיל אחז ישבי פלשת	ונבהלו צירים וחבלים יאחזון כיוולדה יחילון
v 15	אז נבהלו אלופי אדם אילי מואב ואחזמו רעד נמגו כל ישבי כנען	יחמהו
v 16	חפל עליהם אימחה ופחד	

- 1) Three words are used from same root, אחז, חיל, also בהל (v 17 but in diff. way) Isa 13:13.
- 2) Other words (similar) are used in Isa 13
Note רפה and מסס v 7.
- 3) Notice the result of the psychological terror is same (v 17 with Isa 14:1, 2 salvation and reception of land).
- 4) Evidence that verses 7 and 8 are psychological effects produced by holy war (Exod 15).
- 5) The contexts are truth in holy war tradition.

CHART II

PROMINENCE OF WAR IN THE DAY OF THE LORD

	Scripture References	Occurrences within battle	Occurrences which mention a battle	Occurrences explained in an aspect of holy war (battle)
1.	Obadiah 15		x	
2.	Joel 1:15			x
3.	2:1	x		
4.	2:11	x		
5.	2:31 (3:4)			x
6.	3:14 (4:14)	x		
7.	Amos 5:18			x
8.	5:18			x
9.	5:20			x
10.	Isa 2:12		x	
11.	13:6	x		
12.	13:9	x		
13.	Zeph 1:7			x
14.	1:14		x	
15.	1:14		x	
16.	Eze 13:5		x	
17.	30:3	x		
18.	Zech 14:1	x		
19.	Mal 4:5 (3:23)			x

CHART III

THE HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE
FALL OF BABYLON IN 539

Genesis 9:25-27

Broad Outline	People's Involved	Major Fulfillments	Babylon's History
HAM	Sidon Heth Jebusite Cush Ham-- Mizraim-- Put Canaan	1) Conquering of Canaan by Joshua see Gen 15:16 (1405-1360 B.C.) 2) David against Jebusites 3) Sidon and Tyre (Phoenecians) destroyed by Alexander the Great (332 B.C.) (see Eze 26:1-14) 4) Destruction of Carthage Zama-202 B.C. Scipio defeats Hannibal, 3rd Punic War 139-135 Carthage totally destroyed	1) Nimrod (Gen 10:8-10) 2) Sargon (2350-2294) 3) Naram-Sin (c. 2250) 4) Hammurabi (1792-1748) 5) Kassites Rule Babylon (1500) 6) Adad-Nirari (911) Founder Assyrian Empire 7) Sargon (722-705) Assur-banipal (d. 626) 8) Fall of Ninevah (612) Neo-Babylonian Empire
SHEM	Elam Asshur Archpachshad-Abraham Lud Aram	Gen 12:1-6 The seed of Abraham "in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." (cf. Gen 10:8-10)	9) Nebuchadnezzar 10) Nabonidus 11) Belshazzar All of these rulers are Hamitic-Semetic Rulers
JAPHETH	Gomer Magog Medes Greeks Romans Madai Javan Tubal Meshech Tiras Made up sea-peoples movement (1200 B.C.)	1) The fall of Babylon (538 B.C.) marks the beginning of the Japheth rulership in God's program for the nations. 2) The image of Daniel Babylon Medo-Persian Greek Empire Roman Empire	

Daniel 2:36-40
Daniel 7:1-12

CHART IV

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE FOR THE BOOK OF ISAIAH¹

	745 B.C.	Tiglath-pileser III ascends the Assyrian Throne.
6:1	740	Uzziah dies. Jotham becomes sole king of Judah. Isaiah's inaugural Vision. (Chapter 6)
7:1	735	Jotham dies. Ahaz succeeds. Syro-Ephriamitic coalition against Judah.
9:1	734-32	Syrian Campaign of Tiglath-pileser III. Siege and capture of Damascus. Invasion of Israel. Captivity of Zebulon, Naphtali, and Galilee (Isaiah 9:1). Ahaz visits Damascus.
	727	Shalmaneser V succeeds Tiglath-pileser III. Hezekiah succeeds Ahaz (or 725).
	725	Shalmaneser marches on Syria.
	722 or 721	Sargon succeeds Shalmaneser. Capture of Samaria. Captivity of all Northern Israel.
14:28	715	Death of Ahaz. Hezekiah becomes sole king.
20:1	711	Sargon invades Syria (Chapter 20). Capture of Ashdod.
	709	Sargon takes Babylon from Merodach-Baladan.
	705	Murder of Sargon. Sennacherib succeeds.
36:1	701	Campaign of Sennacherib against Phoenicia, Philistia, and Judah.
	687 or 686	Death of Hezekiah. Manasseh becomes sole king.
37:38	681	Death of Sennacherib.

¹Dr. Wayne Knife, Major Prophet's Class Notes--
A Hand-out, 1979.

