
ISAIAH 13-23

Lesson 24, Old Testament, Adult Religion Class, Tuesday, 21 February 2012

Study Guide

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INTRODUCTION

After establishing the Lord's case against Israel and laying out a vision for a future full of blessings in chapters 1-12, Isaiah turned to Israel's neighbors, declaring the Lord's judgments on them for their own sins. Later prophets made similar pronouncements—see Jeremiah 46-51 and Ezekiel 25-32. Only the first two chapters in this lesson are quoted in the Book of Mormon (see 2 Nephi 23-24), likely because Babylon was very significant to Nephi and his family as the great world power of their day.

There is a proverbial story about two missionaries tracting when an angry man pulled a gun on them and fired. One of the missionaries was hit but amazingly unharmed. When he pulled out the Book of Mormon in his pocket, the bullet was lodged in the book, stopping at 2 Nephi 12. His companion remarked, "Wow, *nothing* can get through those Isaiah chapters!" Likewise, many brave souls have ventured into Isaiah, only to be stopped by the chapters in this lesson because of the language of the "burdens." Hopefully some of the thoughts here can help you not only get through these chapters but appreciate some of the great beauty and doctrines presented in them and how they reveal more of the greatness of Isaiah the prophet.

KEYS TO UNDERSTANDING ISAIAH

There have been many thoughts written about how to help Isaiah be more understandable. Elder Bruce R. McConkie (*Ensign*, Oct 1973) shared his ten keys to understanding Isaiah, which were:

1. Gain an overall knowledge of the plan of salvation and of God's dealings with his earthly children.

2. Learn the position and destiny of the house of Israel in the Lord's eternal scheme of things.
3. Know the chief doctrines about which Isaiah chose to write.
4. Use the Book of Mormon.
5. Use latter-day revelation.
6. Learn how the New Testament interprets Isaiah.
7. Study Isaiah in its Old Testament context.
8. Learn the manner of prophesying used among the Jews in Isaiah's day.
9. Have the spirit of prophecy.
10. Devote yourself to hard, conscientious study.

Of those, I would emphasize:

- Understand the "manner of prophesying among the Jews" (2 Nephi 25:1), especially in relation to poetry/parallelism and metaphor/simile
- Be familiar with "the things of the Jews" and "the regions round about" (2 Nephi 25:5-6), such as culture, history, politics, and geography.
- Use the Book of Mormon versions of Isaiah and the interpretations there, and the JST where the Book of Mormon doesn't quote Isaiah.
- Use the footnotes, language tools at your disposal (you don't have to learn Hebrew to benefit from Hebrew scholarship), and other translations for comparison.

Ultimately, diligent study combined with prayer and a sincere desire yields the greatest understanding of the scriptures.

OUTLINE

Isaiah can be broken into eight sections:

1. Judgment on Judah and Jerusalem (1-12)
 2. Judgment on Other Nations (13-23)
 3. Redemption of Israel (24-27)
 4. Trust in God, Not Nations (28-35)
 5. Historical Recitation (36-39)
 6. The Return from Captivity (40-48)
 7. The Suffering Servant (49-55)
 8. Future Blessings (56-66)
1. Babylon (13:1 – 14:27)
 2. Philistia (14:28-32)
 3. Moab (15:1 – 16:14)
 4. Syria and Israel (17)
 5. Beyond Ethiopia (18)
 6. Egypt (19 – 20)
 7. Babylon again (21:1-10)
 8. Edom and Arabia (21:11-17)
 9. Jerusalem (22)
 10. Tyre (23)

In this lesson, with chapters 13-23, Isaiah prophesies against Israel's neighbors (except for chapter 22). Thus a more detailed outline is:

BABYLON (13:1 – 14:27)

Babylon is the ultimate metaphor for evil in the scriptures. In Isaiah's day, Babylon was a former powerful kingdom defeated by the Assyrians; it was thus a weak vassal state in Isaiah's day. But even with minimal political power, it was still the cultural capital of the ancient Near East. Many thoughts, practices, and activities came from Babylon and spread to the region around it. That large degree of influence, especially when it was wicked in the eyes of the prophets, led to Babylon's reputation that persists even to our day as we sing about coming out of Babylon and Babylon the great falling.

In John's Revelation, Babylon is the epitome of sin, the persecutor of the righteous, the embodiment of Satan's power (Revelation 14:8; 16:19; 17:5; 18:2, 10, 21). Likewise, in modern revelation, Babylon is the symbol of worldliness and defiance of God's laws and the place for Saints to flee (D&C 1:16; 35:11; 64:24; 86:3; 133:5, 7, 14). In Isaiah, Babylon takes on both of these characterizations—the symbol of sin and defiance but also the place to flee when the Lord calls his people to rally to his ensign.

THE LORD CALLS FORTH HIS HOSTS (13:1-5)

13:1 **The burden of Babylon.** "A *burden* is a prophecy of doom or judgment against a people. The Hebrew root (*masa*) literally means 'lifting' or

'a lifting up,' perhaps indicating that the prophecy or judgment is lifted up by the voice of the prophet against the people" (Parry, *Understanding*, 130).

13:2 **Lift ye up a banner.** "Lift" here is the same root term as 'burden' in verse 1. The Lord holds up the ensign to call the righteous to escape the punishment coming to Babylon. Here the banner is lifted "upon the high mountain," representing the temple.

13:3 **my sanctified ones.** Could also be translated 'saints'; "my holy ones" (NIV); "my sacred warriors" (NJB).

13:4 **a multitude in the mountains.** A large gathering of people to the temples of the Lord.

JUDGMENT ON BABYLON: THE DAY OF THE LORD (13:6-10)

13:6 **Howl ye.** The wicked will howl and wail at the Second Coming because it is a day of judgment. Their hands and hearts will fail and they will feel pain and sorrow.

13:10 **not give their light.** The stars, sun, and moon all hide their light, ashamed of the wickedness before them. This could also have reference to the Babylonian gods who were associated with the

heavenly objects; in that case, they would be ashamed or fail in the presence of the Lord.

JUDGMENT ON BABYLON: THE WICKED PUNISHED (13:11-22)

13:11 ***I will punish the world for their evil.*** Babylon is portrayed as being punished for her great sins, which is all a type of the Second Coming.

13:12 ***a man more precious than fine gold.*** “I will make man scarcer than pure gold” (NIV).

13:13 ***I will shake the heavens.*** The last days will see great earthquakes that will shake heaven and earth, so fierce will be God’s wrath.

13:16 ***children also shall be dashed to pieces.*** The scene is gruesome—people stabbed and cut down, children thrown the ground to be killed, women raped, houses plundered and destroyed—a scene easily imagined when an invading army attacks the town of a powerful enemy.

13:17 ***I will stir up the Medes.*** In Isaiah’s day, the Medes were a people living in the mountains of what is today northern Iran, renowned for their horses. One Mede, Cyaxares, made alliance with Babylon and together they were responsible for the conquest of Assyria. It was also the Medes that allied with Cyrus and conquered Babylon by blocking the mighty Euphrates River and slipping in under the city walls when the river dried up.

13:19-20 ***Babylon, the glory of kingdoms . . . shall never be inhabited.*** No one in Isaiah’s day could imagine that a city like Babylon would ever fall and be left desolate for hundreds of year, but that is just what the prophet said—and just what happened. It was a great city of power and culture, well-protected with huge walls and gates. Predicting its fall would wound as foolish then as predicting the complete desolation of London, Paris, or New York City.

ISRAEL WILL BE GATHERED (14:1-3)

14:1 ***the Lord will have mercy on Jacob.*** In the middle of the judgment on Babylon passages, there are a few verses to remind us of the Lord’s mercy

toward his chosen people, which will be returned to their own land.

14:1 ***strangers shall be joined with them.*** Not only Israel but people from other countries will accept the Lord and his commandments and will become part the covenant people.

14:2 ***bring them to their place.*** In the last days, others shall make it possible for Israel to return to their lands and will bring them there. This has been fulfilled in the last 100 years.

14:2 ***shall possess them.*** In the KJV, “them” appears to refer to the people helping the Jews return to their lands, especially considering the last part of the verse where it speaks of defeating their enemies. But the Book of Mormon version makes it clear that “them” are the lands that Israel will possess.

14:3 ***give thee rest.*** The rest of the Lord is a great blessing; it is peace and posterity, the exact opposite of “hard bondage” that they had experienced in Egypt.

FALL OF THE KING OF BABYLON (14:4-11)

14:4 ***the king of Babylon.*** These verses describe the fall of Babylon’s future king. He was “the oppressor” who has ceased and his entire “golden city” has ceased to exist.

14:6 ***none hindereth.*** Babylon persecuted many and they had no choice but to take it. Now that Babylon is humbled, there is nothing stopped their former persecuted enemies from having their revenge on them.

14:8 ***no feller is come up.*** “Feller” is a ‘woodsman’ or ‘tree-cutter’; the wood-cutter is the king of Babylon, but now that he is gone, the trees (people) don’t have to live in fear of being cut down.

14:9 ***Hell from beneath is moved for thee.*** Not physically moved to another place but moved emotionally; ‘Sheol’ is excited to have the king of Babylon there.

14:10 **Are thou also become weak as we?** During life, the king had great power and the respect of all. Now in death, he is just like everyone else.

FALL OF LUCIFER (14:12-23)

14:12 **O Lucifer.** Continuing the theme of the fall of the king of Babylon, Isaiah expands the judgment to “Lucifer,” which is *hēlēl*, means ‘light-bearer’ or ‘morning star.’ This is the only place in the Bible the word “Lucifer” is used, which is a Latin word that means the same thing as the Hebrew and was used here because the KJV translators interpreted this passage as apply to the devil, so used his (to them) familiar Latin name.

14:12 **son of the morning.** This refers to the darkness just before the light comes up. Lucifer is not a character of light but of darkness, forced to wait for the light to burst upon and dissolve him.

14:13 **in the sides of the north.** In the ancient Near Eastern understanding of the world, “the north” was the dwelling place of the gods, a synonym for heaven.

14:14 **I will be like the most High.** Satan’s goal was to have the power and glory of God (D&C 29:36; 76:28) and to exalt himself above his pre-mortal brothers and sisters.

14:15 **brought down to hell.** Though he tried to ascend to God’s throne in heaven above the earth, he shall instead be brought down to the dark confines of Sheol under the earth, as far from his goal as is possible. See also Psalms 28:1; 38:18; 143:7.

14:16 **Is this the man that made the earth to tremble.** Once Satan is powerless, even his fellow dwellers in Sheol will be amazed at his fall and his inability to carry out his grand plans.

14:19 **as the raiment of those that are slain.** Satan was compared to an undesirable branch pruned from a tree and thrown away or the torn, blood-stained, and useless clothing of someone killed in battle. Even the wicked kings of the earth at least are buried in lavish tombs; the devil gets no remembrance at all.

14:22 **I will rise up against them.** Those have elected to follow Lucifer in this life will ultimately be judged of the Lord for their deeds and will never “possess the land” (14:21). Instead, their land will be barren and bitter, swept clean as with a broom (14:23).

14:24 **as I have thought, so shall it come to pass.** The Lord’s plans happen exactly as he decides; unlike other gods of the age, he is not surprised by events.

14:25 **break the Assyrian.** The focus shifts for just one verse from Babylon to Assyria, who will symbolically suffer a similar fate at God’s hand.

14:26 **upon all the nations.** YHWH is the God of all nations, of the whole earth, not just the nation of Israel. This verse prepares us for the judgments of the chapters that follow on the various nations.

14:27 **his hand is stretched out.** As in previous chapters (5:25; 9:12, 17, 21; 10:4), the Lord’s hand is stretched out in judgment on all the nations and no one can reverse his judgment.

PHILISTIA (14:28-32)

14:28 **the year that king Ahaz died.** About 716 B.C.; scholars disagree on the exact timing of his reign.

14:29 **Palestina.** Here and in verse 31, the Hebrew is *pēlešet*, which would normally be translated Philistia or the Philistines, the Sea People who inhabited the southern coastline of Israel though the years of the monarchy.

14:29 **the rod of him that smote thee is broken.** There were two occasions in Isaiah’s day when the Philistines managed to break loose of Assyrian rule for a time (after the death of Tiglath-pileser in 727 B.C. and when Sargon died in 705 B.C.), only to be subjugated and defeated later. Either of those incidents could be referred to here.

14:30 **he shall slay thy remnant.** After the time of the Assyrians, the Philistines disappeared from

history as a unique people.

MOAB (15:1 – 16:14)

15:1 **The burden of Moab.** The lands of Moab were east of the Dead Sea. Historically, they were generally enemies of Israel. Like other local kingdoms, they were generally subject to Assyria during Isaiah's lifetime but experienced periods of independence at the death of certain kings and during the rebellion of Ashdod I 713 B.C.

15:2 **to Bajith, and to Dibon.** Several verses in this chapter refer to cities or landmarks in the land of Edom. The listing includes cities in the north and the south, indicating the destruction will cover the entire land.

15:5 **My heart shall cry out for Moab.** Though Isaiah lifted up his voice against them, seeing their pending destruction in vision brings him grief and pain.

15:5 **flee unto Zoar.** Zoar was in the far south of the lands of Moab, at the southern end of the Dead Sea. The Assyrians attacked from the north, forcing the refugees to move as far south as they could.

15:7 **shall they carry away.** Moab was a prosperous trading country. The Lord is saying that they will have to leave behind their wealth and can only take what they can carry with them as they flee the advancing army.

15:8 **Eglaim...Beer-elim.** Cities on the northern and southern borders of Moab, signifying that the entire land will be in mourning.

MOAB SEEKS REFUGE IN JUDAH (16:1-5)

16:1 **Send ye the lamb to the ruler.** This refers to an offering or gift from the king of Edom ("from

Sela") to Judah ("the mount of the daughter of Zion").

16:2 **as a wandering bird cast out of the nest.** "Like fluttering birds pushed from the nest" (NIV). The Moabites are forced from their homes and looking for a place of refuge ("Let mine outcasts dwell with thee," verse 4), calling upon Judah for help after many hundreds of years of animosity.

16:5 **in mercy shall the throne be established.** Moab appeals to Judah by extolling their virtues if they were to help.

LAMENT FOR MOAB (16:6-14)

16:6 **We have heard of the pride of Moab.** Judah begins the reply by first citing the historical interactions between Judah and Moab, stating that in the past, Moab has shown only pride toward Judah.

16:7 **Kir-hareseth.** Modern day Kerak; Kir-hareseth was the location of great wine making, so the references to fields, vine, plants, branches, and water fit in that context.

16:8 **the fields of Heshbon languish.** Judah bemoans the fate of Moab, with its fields destroyed, its crops decimated its harvest wasted.

16:10 **gladness is taken away.** As a result of their destruction, Moab has no gladness in the harvest, no singing with the treading of grapes, no shouting for joy.

16:14 **the glory of Moab shall be contemned.** "the glory of Moab will be humbled" (NJB).

SYRIA AND ISRAEL (17)

JUDGMENT AGAINST DAMASCUS AND ISRAEL (17:1-11)

17:1 **Damascus.** The capital city of the kingdom of Syria.

17:3 **Ephraim**. This chapter deals with both Syria and Israel together, Ephraim being the dominant tribe of the northern kingdom of Israel.

17:5 **as when the harvestman gathereth the corn**. The destruction of Israel and Syria will be like when someone goes through the field with a sickle, harvesting wheat (the KJV often translated “wheat” as ‘corn’), cutting down the stalks and collecting the good grain, leaving a mowed down field behind. It is also compared to the grape harvest or the olive harvest where very little is left on the vine or tree after the work.

17:7 **a man look to his Maker**. In the middle of this great ‘harvest’ and affliction, Israel and Syria will finally turn to God and abandon their other gods.

17:10 **plant pleasant plants**. Isaiah compares those who have forsaken the Lord and followed other gods to someone who plants a plant (a grape vine, from the description) but then grafts it with foreign branches (“strange slips”). At first, it seems to flourish but at harvest time it’s just “a heap” (verse 11) bring grief and sorrow.

FATE OF NATIONS THAT OPPRESS ISRAEL (17:12-14)

17:13 **God shall rebuke them**. Nations might rush like mighty waters to oppress Israel (“us” in verse 14) but ultimately God will chase them away and they will be like a sagebrush plant in the wind, rolling along helplessly.

BEYOND ETHIOPIA (18)

Elder Joseph Fielding Smith (later President) said that this chapter was “clearly a reference to the sending forth of missionaries to the nations of the earth to gather again this people who are scattered and peeled. The ensign has been lifted upon the mountains, and the work of gathering has been going on for over one hundred years. No one understands this chapter, but the Latter-day Saints, and we can see how it is being fulfilled” (Parry, *Understanding*, 171).

18:1 **Woe**. This is the Hebrew *hōy*, a greeting, not a pronouncement of judgment.

18:1 **the land shadowing with wings**. Both Hyrum Smith and Joseph Fielding Smith said this is a reference to North and South America (Parry, *Understanding*, 172).

18:1 **beyond the rivers of Ethiopia**. The Hebrew word is ‘Cush’ which represents a land at the edge of their known world.

18:2 **That sendeth ambassadors**. Missionaries from the Church go out all over the earth.

18:4 **like a clear heat . . . a cloud of dew**. The Lord carefully manages the harvest of souls, providing heat when needed or nourishing water at other times.

18:5 **afore the harvest**. The Second Coming will be a time of judgment and destruction. So before that “harvest,” the Lord will bring in the wheat and prune the grape vines, leaving the rest for the birds and wild animals to consume.

EGYPT (19 – 20)

EGYPT’S DEVASTATION (19:1-17)

19:1 **the Lord rideth upon a swift cloud**. The cloud symbolizes both the Lord’s presence and his dominion over the heavens.

19:1 **shall come into Egypt**. The Lord doesn’t limit himself to oversight of Israel—he is the God of the

whole world, even Egypt, that ancient nation that worships many other gods.

19:2 **set the Egyptians against the Egyptians**. This is a prophesy of civil war, spreading out first from families to neighborhoods to cities to “kingdoms” or large, geographical areas.

19:3 **seek to the idols.** The Egyptians will turn to their false gods and to charmers, necromancers, and those who claim to work magic, but it will not help them.

19:4 **a cruel lord; and a fierce king.** In the middle of this tragedy, a man will arise that will lead the people but turn out to be a cruel and evil master.

19:5 **the river shall be wasted.** Egypt is totally dependent on the Nile River for survival. If the river dried up, the ancient economy would be in a shambles, which is reflected in verses 6-10 as people cannot fish, make clothing, or grow crops.

19:11 **the princes of Zoan are fools.** Zoan was the Egyptian capital at the time of Isaiah. The words of the leaders will become foolish, letting everyone see their deception and destruction influence, causing Egypt to be “as a drunken man staggereth in his vomit” (19:14).

19:15 **any work.** Because of the drought and political mismanagement, productive work will come to a grinding halt.

19:16 **like unto women.** Not the bold heroine often portrayed in today’s movies but the stereotypical fearful woman who is paralyzed by the events before her.

19:17 **Judah shall be a terror unto Egypt.** Never in the history of Israel and Egypt has this been true—until our generation. With the Six-Day War in 1967 and the Yom Kippur War in 1973, Israel’s military might humbled Egypt and brought that country to the negotiating table.

EGYPT TURNS TO THE LORD (19:18-25)

19:18 **speak the language of Canaan.** Some in Egypt will convert to Judaism and even begin to speak their language and make similar covenants (“swear to the Lord”).

19:19 **an altar to the Lord.** Altars are symbols of worship, sacrifice, and covenants and are often associated with temples. Building one in Egypt is a symbol of their conversion, and the pillar marking the border indicates their commitment to the Lord.

19:20 **he shall send them a saviour.** A great ‘deliverer’ will rise up and lead Egypt to freedom. The identity of this future leader is not given but it will be a dramatic and fascinating time in Egypt’s history.

19:21 **the Egyptians shall know the Lord.** Isaiah predicts that the great pagan nation will know Jehovah, worship him, make covenants with him, and live the gospel. Though there were and are Christians in Egypt, they are a very small minority among the population today and certainly do not reflect this prophecy.

19:22 **he shall smite and heal it.** This sums up the chapter—the Lord will humble Egypt through their challenges and will heal them as they turn to him and accept his laws.

19:23 **a highway out of Egypt to Assyria.** Assyria and Egypt were the greatest of enemies in Isaiah’s day. When Egypt is converted to the Lord, that animosity will end and the two nations will prosper through cultural and economic exchange.

19:24 **Israel be the third.** Not only will Egypt and Assyria join forces but Israel will be a third partner in the mix, all three enjoying blessings from the relationships.

ISAIAH DRAMATIZES CONQUEST OF ETHIOPIA AND EGYPT (20:1-6)

Prophets are sometimes asked by the Lord to illustrate his words with personal actions. In this chapter, the Lord asked Isaiah to represent his actions against two nations by walking “naked and barefoot” for three years. This sign represented their slavery and being humbled by the power of the Assyrian empire in Isaiah’s day, preceding the attack on Jerusalem in 701 B.C.

20:1 **the year that Tartan came unto Ashdod.** This was 711 B.C. Tartan was the servant of Sargon and Sennacherib (2 Kings 18:17). Ashdod is a port city on the coast in Philistine territory.

20:2 **loose the sackcloth.** Evidently, Isaiah was already wearing a goat hair garment, symbolic of mourning and sadness, though the reason is unknown. The Lord told him to take it off for three

years so that he would not be seen as mourning what will happen to these two nations.

20:2 **naked and barefoot.** Removing his sackcloth garment would not make him naked as we use the term, but he would be down to a basic loincloth or something similar. Similarly, Peter in the New Testament (John 21:7) is said to be “naked” when he leaps into the water to swim to Jesus, but it merely means he took off his outer garment so he could swim in his lighter inner garment.

20:3 **a sign and wonder.** Isaiah’s act was a sign to all who saw him of the truth of his words.

20:4 **So shall the king of Assyria lead away.**

Assyria forced those captured in battle to march without clothing or shoes, just as Isaiah had done. Likewise, we stand ‘naked’ before the Lord in our sins, which are only ‘covered’ (one Hebrew meaning of atonement) by the sacrifice of the Savior.

20:6 **how shall we escape?** Seeing Assyria’s power to conquer even mighty Egypt, the Israelites will wonder how they themselves could ever escape the same fate.

BABYLON AGAIN (21:1-10)

21:1 **the desert of the sea.** An interesting image for Babylon, which is in the desert but sat astride the Euphrates River which often flooded, filling the plain with water.

21:2 **A grievous vision.** Isaiah felt particular pain about this vision. It filled him with pain and made him bow down in dismay (21:3). It made him fear and hurt his heart (21:4).

21:2 **Elam . . . Media.** Babylon was destroyed by the Medes and Persians under the leadership of Cyrus in 538 B.C., almost 200 years after Isaiah gave this prophecy. “Isaiah . . . presents here a simple war cry uttered by a military leader (or perhaps one of the warriors)” (Parry, *Understanding*, 189).

21:5 **watch in the watchtower.** Better translated, “spread out the rugs” (NAB), where the people of Babylon sat to eat and drink, unaware of the danger that is coming.

21:6 **Go, set a watchman, let him declare.** Isaiah is a silent observer of the coming destruction, watching from the tower of his calling as prophet even as the city did not watch but enjoyed themselves.

21:8 **And he cried, A lion.** Better, ‘he cried out like a lion [roaring]’; the prophet on the watchtower cried loudly in warning but no one listened.

21:9 **Babylon is fallen, is fallen.** The news comes from the conquering army, their work done and heading home. John uses Isaiah’s language in Revelation 14.

21:10 **O my threshing.** Isaiah spoke to Israel who will one day be scattered by this Babylon, letting them know that as they were threshed by Babylon, so will Babylon be threshed by others because the Lord has said it.

EDOM AND ARABIA (21:11-17)

CONVERSATION WITH MAN OF EDOM (21:11-12)

21:11 **Dumah.** Dumah lies between Israel and Babylon in the northern Arabian peninsula.

21:11 **out of Seir.** Another name for Edom. Isaiah had a conversation with an unnamed man from Edom who asked him, ‘What is left of the night?’ or ‘How long until dawn?’

21:12 **The morning cometh.** Isaiah the watchman replied that morning was coming but it would be again followed by night, and told the man to ask again later if he wanted to know more. Likewise, we can be in a time of apostasy and watch for the morning light of gospel truth, but later it will slip into apostasy again. Only when we keep asking will we receive the comfort of the Lord.

JUDGMENT AGAINST ARABIA (21:13-17)

21:13 **Arabia**. Though the prophesy is directed to Arabia, that is not a people but a territory inhabited by many different tribes, so three sites/groups are mentioned: Dedan, Tema, and Kedar. Dedan and Tema were cities in the northern part of the Arabian Peninsula; both benefitted from being part of the Frankincense Trail. Kedar was a nomadic tribe of people that lived in the same area.

21:13 **the forest in Arabia**. There are few forests there now but northern Arabia probably had many

more trees in ancient times, as did much of the Middle East. It makes a good place to hide from the armies who would attack them.

21:14 **prevented with their bread**. Better, 'they met with bread those that fled,' meaning that the kind people of Tema gave food and drink to those fleeing the destruction of the attacking army.

21:16 **Within a year**. The tribe of Kedar was prosperous because of their trade and control of the caravan routes. But the attacking army will overrun them in less than a year.

JERUSALEM (22)

JUDGMENT AGAINST THE VALLEY OF VISION (22:1-14)

22:1 **the valley of vision**. This phrase is only used here in this chapter in all of scripture, but it's clear from the context that it is Jerusalem, the place where prophets have visions and teach them to the people.

22:1 **gone up to the housetops**. In many cities, pagan gods were worshipped on rooftops. Perhaps that was Jerusalem's condemnation here, which matches the next verses.

22:2 **a joyous city**. Not joyful in a positive way but boisterous and raucous, full of revelry. It is a reflection of the evil in the town.

22:3 **they are bound by the archers**. They were captured without a single Bowman being used.

22:4 **I will weep bitterly**. Isaiah was overcome with grief at the vision of what will happen to Jerusalem. He doesn't want anyone to see him or try to comfort him.

22:5 **a day of trouble**. The destruction of Jerusalem is a day of panic and confusion as the army breaks down the walls and tramples through the city.

22:6 **bare the quiver . . . uncovered the shield**. The mercenaries of Babylon are armed and ready to attack the city.

22:8 **the house of the forest**. This was part of the royal palace (1 Kings 7:2-5; 10:17-21) that was used as an armory. The inhabitants of the city look to that building for their defense, ignoring the building right next to it—the temple of the Lord, and the covering/defense the Lord had promised to them if faithful.

22:9 **the breaches of the city**. As they are being attacked, the people see the walls being breached and gather at the pool at the south end of the city to rally their defensive efforts.

22:10 **houses have ye broken down to fortify the wall**. Lacking any other building material because of the siege, the Jerusalemites tear down their own houses to try and hold off the attacking army as they punch holes in the walls. It is a frantic scene, one of great fear and drama.

22:11 **Ye made also a ditch**. The word translated "ditch" is *miqvāh*, a reservoir used to store water or to perform ritual cleansing. But in all this effort to preserve the city and the people, they did not look to the God who gave them the city in the first place.

22:12 **did the Lord God of hosts call to weeping**. The Lord's call to the people is to repent and come to him sorrowing for their sins.

22:13 **behold joy and gladness**. Instead of humble and contrite people, however, they ignore him and spend their time eating, drinking, and enjoying themselves.

22:13 **let us eat and drink, for to morrow we die.** Both Paul (1 Corinthians 15:32) and Nephi (2 Nephi 28:7-8) used this phrase in their own writings.

22:14 **this iniquity shall not be purged from you till you die.** “Surely this iniquity shall not be forgiven you until you die” (NASB).

SHEBNA AND ELIAKIM (22:15-25)

22:15 **Shebna, which is over the house.** Shebna was a steward in the king’s house, a government official of some importance. His name means ‘vigor’ and was probably a shortened version of his full name, Shebnayahu, ‘vigor of the Lord,’ though as Isaiah portrays him, he is anything but committed to the Lord, which could be why Isaiah only used the first part of his name.

22:16 **hewed thee out a sepulcher.** A tomb was found in the Kidron valley dated to Isaiah’s time that had an inscription: “This is [the tomb of Shbn]yhu, who is over the house. No silver or gold is here, but rather [his bones] and the bones of his servant-woman with him. May the one who opens this be accursed” (Walton, 4:94).

22:19 **I will drive thee from thy station.** Sheba would be replaced by another. Shebna is a type of the wicked among Israel and what will happen to them.

22:20 **Eliakim the son of Hilkiyah.** Eliakim’s name means ‘God raises,’ an appropriate name for Shebna’s replacement. He was a priest and a good man and is thus a type of Christ who will come and replace the wicked leadership of Israel in the future.

22:21 **clothe him with thy robe.** Eliakim would get Shebna’s authority.

22:22 **the key of the house of David.** Keys represent authority; in this case the key opens the door to the house of David, which could either be the palace or the temple.

22:23 **as a nail in a sure place.** This language, familiar to Latter-day Saints in another context, represents the person being fixed and immovable in the position granted him.

22:24 **hang upon him.** Using the metaphor, many things ‘hang’ on this sure nail—glory, posterity, and the vessels of the temple. Likewise, as Jesus hung on the cross fixed by nails, everything depended on his act.

22:25 **be removed, and be cut down, and fall.** Speaking of Eliakim, this would mean that even his sure position would end because of the sins of the house of Judah. Speaking prophetically of Christ, it is a prophesy of his crucifixion and the fulfillment of his atoning sacrifice.

TYRE (23)

THE SONG OF DESTRUCTION (23:1-14)

23:1 **Tyre.** Tyre was a prosperous city of the Phoenician nation because of their position on the coastal area, which allowed for maritime trade and commerce. They also had great natural resources that could be used and sold. Thus they represent materialism and worldly possessions, a fitting symbol for the final ‘lifting up’ (“burden”).

23:1 **Howl, ye ships of Tarshish.** Because Tyre would be destroyed, her trading partners would howl and weep.

23:1 **Chittim.** The island of Cyprus, founded by the inhabitants of Tyre.

23:4 **Zidon.** The partner city of Tyre was Sidon, both prosperous ports on the Phoenician coast.

23:5 **As at the report concerning Egypt.** Egypt, another trading partner, will also feel great pain with Tyre and Sidon’s destruction.

23:9 **The Lord of hosts hath purposed it.** Though the world will wonder at Tyre’s destruction, it was done by the will of the Lord “to bring into contempt all the honourable of the earth.”

TYRE RESTORED (23:15-18)

23:15 **sing as an harlot.** Not comparing the city to a prostitute except in calling out; after the seventy

years of exile, they will get the attention of the rulers and her former trading partners as a harlot stands in the street with a musical instrument and sings to bring attention to herself.

23:17 **the Lord will visit Tyre.** Tyre will rise up because of the Lord's blessings.

23:17 **shall commit fornication.** At first, they will deal with things not approved by the Lord.

23:18 **shall be holiness.** After a time, Tyre's wealth will be used for good, to bless the righteous and see to their needs.

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