

The Millennium Forecast

The Book of Isaiah

Text

Isaiah 13:1-14:23

Topic

Lucifer is cast from Heaven having delusions that he can be like God

Title

“Lucifer in the Sky with Delusions”

I’m addicted to watching fail videos.

They are brief videos that capture something that has gone terribly wrong. Right now my favorites are about tree trimming and tree removal. Let’s just say, you should hire a professional if you want to live.

When reading the history of the nation of Israel in the Bible, it’s easy to think you are watching an epic fail compilation.

There are so many fails to choose from. Can You say, “The Golden Calf?” Stephen, the first Christian martyr, would say to Israel, “Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who foretold the coming of the Just One, of whom you now have become the betrayers and murderers” (Acts 7:52).

The first verse of chapter fourteen is thus a surprise: “For the LORD will have mercy on Jacob, and will still choose Israel, and settle them in their own land. The strangers will be joined with them, and they will cling to the house of Jacob.”

Did you catch that? God “will still choose Israel.” Despite all her notorious failures, God will not revoke His choice of them as His special nation. He has promised them they will be saved, live in their Promised Land, and be the key nation during the thousand year Kingdom of God on Earth.

The apostle Paul in his letter to the Church in Rome, explains it by saying, “For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable” (11:29).

- God’s call to Abraham to be the father of a new nation cannot be revoked.
- The grace that the LORD promised Israel through Abraham can never, ever be revoked.

They are unconditional promises based upon God’s faithfulness and not theirs.

Every unconditional promise God has made to us cannot be revoked.

If you are saved, God “will still choose you.”

I’ll organize my comments around two points: **#1 The LORD “Will Still Choose Israel” Is How You Interpret The World**, and **#2 The LORD “Will Still Choose Israel” Is How You Interpret The Unseen World**.

#1 - The LORD “Will Still Choose Israel” Is How You Are To Interpret The World (13:1-22)

You know who else has a lot of fails? Me. John Stott once said, *“Seldom if ever do I leave the pulpit without a sense of partial failure, a mood of penitence, a cry to God for forgiveness, and a resolve to look to Him for grace to do better in the future.”*

You know who else has a lot of fails? You. Henry Drummond once said, *“Our efforts after Christian growth seem only a succession of failures, and, instead of rising into the beauty of holiness, our life is a daily heart-break and humiliation.”*

Let’s read the key verse (14:1) again: “For the LORD will have mercy on Jacob, and will still choose Israel, and settle them in their own land. The strangers will be joined with them, and they will cling to the house of Jacob.

“Jacob” was Abraham’s grandson. God changed his name to Israel. He was the father of the twelve boys who became the twelve tribes. The “strangers... joined with them” are the Gentile nations - anyone not a Jew.

Isaiah was looking past his own time, past our time, to Jew & Gentile living in peace in the Kingdom of God on Earth.

I find it interesting that the way God chose to comfort and encourage His people was to show them the far future. A person might think, "How does it help me today to know the future?" God says it does, and we should take Him at His word.

Let me put it another way: You come to gather with believers hoping and expecting God to minister to you. The preacher talks about events that have not yet happened. How is that helpful? It must be, because it is God's common way of comforting His people, both Israel and the Church.

Isa 13:1 The burden against Babylon which Isaiah the son of Amoz saw.

We don't immediately catch it, but Isaiah wrote this *one hundred fifty years before Babylon was a world power*. Throughout these next several chapters, Isaiah will be jumping back and forth in time. We will see him speaking about his own time, a near future time to him, and the far future beyond our time.

What he had to say was a "burden." In the Fillmore the hippie VW bus version, we read, "That's heavy, man"

The next several chapters of Isaiah involve the nations of the Earth, specifically Babylon, Assyria, Philistia, Moab, Damascus, Cush, Edom, Tyre, and Sidon. One-by-one from chapter thirteen through chapter twenty-three, Isaiah gives a history lesson.

God is over all nations. History is anchored to Jerusalem. We interpret history, and nations, by God's plan of redemption through Israel.

Isa 13:2 "Lift up a banner on the high mountain, Raise your voice to them; Wave your hand, that they may enter the gates of the nobles.

Isa 13:3 I have commanded My sanctified ones; I have also called My mighty ones for My anger - Those who rejoice in My exaltation."

The Medes & Persians would conquer Babylon. God considered them His "sanctified ones," set apart by Him to do His will. They were His "mighty ones" in that He allowed them to rise to power.

Their conquest of Babylon was God's victory, but they would "rejoice" as if it were theirs. Nations would do well to acknowledge God rather than supposing their own wisdom makes them great.

Isa 13:4 The noise of a multitude in the mountains, Like that of many people! A tumultuous noise of the kingdoms of nations gathered together! The LORD of hosts musters The army for battle.

Isa 13:5 They come from a far country, From the end of Heaven - The LORD and His weapons of indignation, To destroy the whole land.

This seems far future. Isaiah was made aware of the rebuilding of the city of Babylon during the Time of Jacob's Trouble, the Great Tribulation. Two chapters, 17&18, in the Book of the Revelation are dedicated to the End Times Babylon.

"Kingdom's of nations" will be "gathered together" from "far," to "destroy the land." Ring a bell?

It is a description of the Battle of Armageddon in the Valley of Megiddo.

Leading to the Battle of Armageddon is a time of global tribulation greater than anything the world has ever experienced. Isaiah gives an eleven verse summary.

Isa 13:6 Wail, for the day of the LORD is at hand! It will come as destruction from the Almighty.

Isa 13:7 Therefore all hands will be limp, Every man's heart will melt,

Isa 13:8 And they will be afraid. Pangs and sorrows will take hold of *them*; They will be in pain as a woman in childbirth; They will be amazed at one another; Their faces *will be like* flames.

Isa 13:9 Behold, the day of the LORD comes, Cruel, with both wrath and fierce anger, To lay the land desolate; And He will destroy its sinners from it.

Isa 13:10 For the stars of heaven and their constellations Will not give their light; The sun will be darkened in its going forth, And the moon will not cause its light to shine.

Isa 13:11 "I will punish the world for *its* evil, And the wicked for their iniquity; I will halt the arrogance of the proud, And will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible.

Isa 13:12 I will make a mortal more rare than fine gold, A man more than the golden wedge of Ophir.

Isa 13:13 Therefore I will shake the heavens, And the earth will move out of her place, In the wrath of the LORD of hosts And in the day of His fierce anger.

Isa 13:14 It shall be as the hunted gazelle, And as a sheep that no man takes up; Every man will turn to his own people, And everyone will flee to his own land.

Isa 13:15 Everyone who is found will be thrust through, And everyone who is captured will fall by the sword.

Isa 13:16 Their children also will be dashed to pieces before their eyes; Their houses will be plundered And their wives ravished.

It's the Great Tribulation. We rather call those seven years the Time of Jacob's Trouble. It is the title given by Jeremiah (30:7). It keeps our focus upon its purpose, which is to save all Israel before the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. Sure, there will be Gentiles on Earth. They are called "the inhabitants of the Earth" in the Revelation. But Israel is the focus.

Isa 13:17 "Behold, I will stir up the Medes against them, Who will not regard silver; And as for gold, they will not delight in it.

Isa 13:18 Also *their* bows will dash the young men to pieces, And they will have no pity on the fruit of the womb; Their eye will not spare children.

The Jews would be held captive in Babylon for a period of 70 years, as prophesied by Jeremiah. God would raise up "the Medes" to conquer Babylon, setting the stage for Israel to return to Jerusalem.

Isa 13:19 And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, The beauty of the Chaldeans' pride, Will be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah.

Isa 13:20 It will never be inhabited, Nor will it be settled from generation to generation; Nor will the Arabian pitch tents there, Nor will the shepherds make their sheepfolds there.

Isa 13:21 But wild beasts of the desert will lie there, And their houses will be full of owls; Ostriches will dwell there, And wild goats will caper there.

Isa 13:22 The hyenas will howl in their citadels, And jackals in their pleasant palaces. Her time *is* near to come, And her days will not be prolonged."

The conditions described here have never been entirely true of Babylon. We read in the Revelation that "Therefore her plagues will come in one day - death and mourning and famine. And she will be utterly burned with fire, for strong *is* the Lord God who judges her" (Revelation 18:8).

Will Babylon be rebuilt on the ancient site? Some argue that Babylon is merely a symbol indicating some other wicked world city. We like to take things at face value unless there's a good reason to see them as symbolic or typical. While it may be difficult to see how Babylon could be restored in the End Times, that seems the most likely scenario.

Has God cast away His people? No; God “will still choose Israel.”

“For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable” is a promise to Israel that what God started by calling Abraham. Their “gifts” were to reveal to the other nations of the world, “the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of *God*, and the promises; of whom *are* the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ *came*, who is over all, *the* eternally blessed God...” (Romans 9:4-5).

Despite failure after epic failure, God has revealed Himself through them.

Let’s call failure it what it is: **Sin**. We should never willfully sin so that grace may abound, but when we sin, grace abounds. God has made many unconditional promises to you. Here is a doozy passage: “Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in Heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time” (First Peter 1:3-5).

Unconditional promises include: He saved you, you serve Him and will be rewarded, you are “kept” by His power, and He is coming for you.

If you’ve failed - sinned - repent and get moving in your walk.

#2 - The LORD “Will Still Choose Israel” Is How You Are To Interpret The Unseen World (14:1-23)

Behind the conflict between nations, there is a cosmic conflict playing out. It involves malevolent, powerful, supernatural beings, who are in rebellion against God. One of their key strategies is to destroy Israel. If they can do that, then God will have failed epically. We meet their leader.

Isa 14:1 For the LORD will have mercy on Jacob, and will still choose Israel, and settle them in their own land. The strangers will be joined with them, and they will cling to the house of Jacob.

Isa 14:2 Then people will take them and bring them to their place, and the house of Israel will possess them for servants and maids in the land of the LORD; they will take them captive whose captives they were, and rule over their oppressors.

The Medes would allow Jews to return to Jerusalem. That history is recorded in the OT books of Ezra & Nehemiah.

Isa 14:3 It shall come to pass in the day the LORD gives you rest from your sorrow, and from your fear and the hard bondage in which you were made to serve,

Isa 14:4 that you will take up this proverb against the king of Babylon, and say: "How the oppressor has ceased, The golden city ceased!

Isa 14:5 The LORD has broken the staff of the wicked, The scepter of the rulers;

Isa 14:6 He who struck the people in wrath with a continual stroke, He who ruled the nations in anger, Is persecuted *and* no one hinders.

Isa 14:7 The whole earth is at rest *and* quiet; They break forth into singing.

Isa 14:8 Indeed the cypress trees rejoice over you, *And* the cedars of Lebanon, *Saying*, 'Since you were cut down, No woodsman has come up against us.'

Isa 14:9 "Hell from beneath is excited about you, To meet *you* at your coming; It stirs up the dead for you, All the chief ones of the earth; It has raised up from their thrones All the kings of the nations.

Isa 14:10 They all shall speak and say to you: 'Have you also become as weak as we? Have you become like us?

Isa 14:11 Your pomp is brought down to Sheol, *And* the sound of your stringed instruments; The maggot is spread under you, *And* worms cover you.'

These verses describe a very human king of Babylon in his defeat:

- Other kings of the Earth address him.
- He is called "the man."
- He possesses a physical body.
- He's on his way to "Hell" to be with other deposed tyrants.
- His body is maggot food and a worm's bed.

There is an abrupt shift in verse twelve. A supernatural is introduced, and we learn he is responsible for puppeteering the world's tyrants.

Isa 14:12 "How you are fallen from Heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! *How* you are cut down to the ground, You who weakened the nations!

"Lucifer" is not a proper name. It is the Latin word for *morning star* or *day star*. It referred to the planet Venus, but metaphorically was used to refer to earthly kings, emperors, and even pagan deities. Leonardo DiCaprio is the self-proclaimed king of the world. There are any number of monarchs in human history who called

themselves, the king of kings, but we know that Jesus is the only King of kings. Jesus is the bright and morning star.

Charles Ryrie writes that this person is *"evidently a reference to Satan, because of the inappropriateness of the expressions of verses 13-14 on the lips of any but Satan."*

In the NT he is called the "god of this age" (Second Corinthians 4:4), the "ruler of the power of the air," and the "spirit now at work in the disobedient" (Ephesians 2:2).

Satan energized the King of Babylon and he will do it again, in the future rebuilt Babylon. He will energize the Beast of the Revelation, the antichrist.

It is one of his favorite spots on earth apparently. It was there he launched a rebellion against God, inciting the post-flood population of the world to build a tower to the gods. It's not wrong to say that all of the world's false religions have their origin in Babylon.

One of his most successful strategies is weakening nations. I think most evangelical Christians would agree that the United States has been weakened spiritually, especially over the past century. We have done almost everything possible to exclude God. Public schools had prayer for nearly 200 years before the Supreme Court ruled that state mandated class prayers were unconstitutional in June 1962. Removing prayer - has it helped public schools?

Jim Nelson Black wrote, *"As I have looked back across the ruins and landmarks of antiquity, I have been stunned by the parallels between those societies and our own... Three important trends demonstrate moral decay. They are the rise in immorality, the decay of religious belief, and the devaluing of human life."*

Is there moral decay in America? Are once Christian churches and colleges denying the faith once for all delivered? Have we murdered upwards of 63m babies?

Preachers are obligated to say that Satan has an "I" problem:

Isa 14:13 For you have said in your heart: 'I will ascend into Heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation On the farthest sides of the north;

Isa 14:14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.'

What can be said about Satan's sin? Where did it originate? Certainly not with God; He is not the creator of evil. I speculate it has to do with man's free will.

Opponents to the idea we have free will say things like, "Free will makes man his own savior and his own god." Nonsense. They need to take into account how precious to God free will is in His plan. It would be easy for God to make an automaton. It's really something to make a man or woman in His image. In the end, when we are with the Lord, in our new bodies, we will have what might be called perfect free will. Like God, we will no longer be able to sin. We will be in his image and able to enjoy an eternity of fellowship with Him.

Isa 14:15 Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol, To the lowest depths of the Pit.

Isa 14:16 "Those who see you will gaze at you, *And* consider you, *saying*: 'Is this the man who made the earth tremble, Who shook kingdoms,

Isa 14:17 Who made the world as a wilderness *And* destroyed its cities, *Who* did not open the house of his prisoners?'

King Theoden, hold up in Helm's Deep, looked upon the approaching orcs and lamented, "What can we do against so much hate? Against so many enemies? Against so much chaos, so much stress, so much evil - so much false worship!"

What we are told to do is Go and with the Gospel make disciples of all men. Whatever the question, the answer is Jesus.

Isaiah gives us a final look at the human king of Babylon in defeat.

Isa 14:18 "All the kings of the nations, All of them, sleep in glory, Everyone in his own house;

Isa 14:19 But you are cast out of your grave Like an abominable branch, *Like* the garment of those who are slain, Thrust through with a sword, Who go down to the stones of the pit, Like a corpse trodden underfoot.

Isa 14:20 You will not be joined with them in burial, Because you have destroyed your land *And* slain your people. The brood of evildoers shall never be named.

Isa 14:21 Prepare slaughter for his children Because of the iniquity of their fathers, Lest they rise up and possess the land, *And* fill the face of the world with cities."

Isa 14:22 "For I will rise up against them," says the LORD of hosts, "And cut off from Babylon the name and remnant, *And* offspring and posterity," says the LORD.

Isa 14:23 "I will also make it a possession for the porcupine, *And* marshes of muddy water; I will sweep it with the broom of destruction," says the LORD of hosts.

We are rightfully concerned about the war in Ukraine. About the alliance that is growing between Russia and China. About China and Brazil switching from the US dollar to the Chinese yuan. About the superpower China has become. Let us not forget to factor in that there is a supernatural power behind those nations. Satan has a strategy to align nations against God, against Israel. He will kill and destroy anywhere he can.

Thanos chided the Avengers, surprised they never used their most powerful weapon. We ought to use ours first and foremost. Prayer, corporate prayer, worship, testimony, and, of course, the Word of God.

We also need these little used weapons, cataloged by the apostle Paul: patience, tribulations, needs, distresses, stripes, imprisonments, tumults, labors, sleeplessness, fastings; purity, knowledge, longsuffering, kindness, the Holy Spirit, sincere love, the word of truth, the power of God, the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, honor and dishonor, evil report and good report; as deceivers, and *yet* true; as unknown, and *yet* well known; as dying, and behold we live; as chastened, and *yet* not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and *yet* possessing all things (Second Corinthians 6:4-10).