

Fact Sheet for “160 Years”

Isaiah 13:1-22

Pastor Bob Singer
11/02/2014

Last week:

ESV Isaiah 11:1 There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit.

The Lion and the lamb

Chapter 12 is filled with praise to God for what He will do. One verse of that chapter provides the words for a familiar song.

Isaiah 12:2

² "Behold, God is my salvation;
I will trust, and will not be afraid;
for the LORD GOD is my strength and my song,
and he has become my salvation."

Chapter 13 is the first of several chapters of judgment on Babylon, Assyria, Philistia, Moab, Damascus, Cush, Egypt, Jerusalem, Tyre and Sidon, Ephraim, and the whole earth.

The hanging gardens of Babylon were one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World.

We read about Babylon in the book of Daniel, first with Nebuchadnezzar in chapters 1-4, then with Belshazzar in chapter 5 (read that chapter). That night in 539 BC Babylon fell to the Medes. They diverted the Euphrates river and came under the wall. After that the city of Babylon would be held by several peoples and was in constant turmoil. By 275 BC life in Babylon essentially came to an end, and by 141 BC it lay desolate... to this very day. Isaiah would write the following words about 701 BC, some 160 years before Babylon fell to the Medes...

Read Isaiah 13:1-3

Those who were to destroy Babylon were God's "consecrated ones".

Read Isaiah 13:4-5

Many nations were to come against Babylon.

Read Isaiah 13:6-8

The “day of the LORD” refers to a time of judgment. Here are just two examples from the New Testament.

ESV 1 Thessalonians 5:2 For you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night.

ESV 2 Peter 3:10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.

Consider the references to “Babylon” in Revelation 14:8; 16:19; 17:5; 18: 2, 10, 21. It seems that Isaiah 13 may have some future fulfillment also.

Read Isaiah 13:9-16

But look at who Isaiah says will be coming to the party... the Medes.

Read Isaiah 13:17-22

In 1978 Saddam Hussein began to rebuild some of the ancient buildings of Babylon, but today Babylon is still an empty city.

Here is the point. Through Isaiah God named the Medes as those who would conquer Babylon 160 years before the city fell.

160 years ago was 6 years before the Confederates bombarded Union soldiers at Fort Sumter, South Carolina and the Civil War began. Imagine someone in 1854 predicting some event in 2014, naming a major American city, mentioning a major player by name, and giving specifics of the outcome, both near and into the far distant future. Outside of the Bible there are no prophecies like this! Imagine trying to predict some event with this kind of specificity in the year 2174! Imagine your statistical probability of being wrong! Prophecies like this are impossible... unless you are God. Multiple prophecies like this are found throughout the Bible. And every prophecy that should have been fulfilled by now has been fulfilled exactly. There are no failures.

This should encourage you in three different areas.

1. Have confidence in your Bible. It is indeed the “Word of God”.
2. The Bible alone, and the Bible in its entirety, is the “Word of God”.
3. Live by all that the Bible says.

It makes no sense to marvel at prophecies like this and then to deliberately ignore what God tells you to do.