

Fact Sheet for “One Illustration” Isaiah 21:1-10

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ESV **Isaiah 21:1 ¶ The oracle concerning the wilderness of the sea.**
This is about Babylon (see v. 9)

**As whirlwinds in the Negeb sweep on,
it comes from the wilderness,
from a terrible land.**

**² A stern vision is told to me;
the traitor betrays,
and the destroyer destroys.**

**Go up, O Elam;
lay siege, O Media;**

ESV **Acts 2:8-9a** And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language? ^{9a} Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia...

Read thru v. 5

They oild shields to prevent them from cracking when struck by weapons

Read thru v. 10

Our family uses lines from some of our favorite movies. (“He chose... poorly.” “Resistance is futile.” “What do you want to do? I don’t know. What do you want to do?” Paul, a man who knew the OT scriptures well, does essentially the same thing.

Today I want to consider one illustration from this passage in Isaiah and Paul’s use of it in the NT.

Destruction was coming to Babylon for sure. The illustration in Isaiah 21:3, of a woman in labor, is used several times in the OT, primarily in three prophets (Ps. 48:6; Isa. 13:8; 21:3; 42:14; 45:10; Jer. 4:31; 6:24; 13:21; 22:23; 30:6; 31:8; 49:24; 50:43; Mic. 4:9; 4:10). But this illustration is used only once in the NT (1 Thess. 5:3). Paul is using an illustration from the scriptures that he knew well.

Let’s take a closer look at 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11, and actually go back to 4:13. In v. 17 the words “caught up” are translation of the Latin *rapturo*. We get our word “rapture” from this. Also, keep v. 18 in mind.

Now don’t let the paragraph division here throw you. Paul continues in the same vein. Paul will use three things found in the book of Isaiah in 1 Thess. 5:1-11. I’ve already given you one. Look for the other two.

ESV **1 Thessalonians 5:1-11 Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers, you have no need to have anything written to you.**

NLT **1 Thessalonians 5:1** Now concerning how and when all this will happen, dear brothers and sisters, we don’t really need to write you.

Paul is referring to 4:13-18.

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

1. Day of the Lord

Isaiah has already used this term (Isa. 13:6, 9). It is also used elsewhere (Jer. 46:10; Ezek. 13:5; 30:3; Joel 1:15; 2:1, 11, 31; 3:14; Amos 5:18, 20; Oba. 1:15; Zeph. 1:7, 14; Mal 4:5; Acts 2:20; 1 Cor. 5:5; 1 Thess. 5:2; 2 Thess. 2:2; 2 Pet 3:10).

2. Woman in Labor

³ While people are saying, "There is peace and security," then sudden destruction will come upon them as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape.

This is an illustration similar to Isaiah 21:3. Paul is reminding them what will happen to those who don't know Christ.

⁴ But you are not in darkness, brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief. ⁵ For you are all children of light, children of the day. We are not of the night or of the darkness. ⁶ So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober. ⁷ For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, are drunk at night.

3. Armor of God

⁸ But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation.

See Isa 11:5; 59:17; Eph. 6:14-18a. Paul is using three illustrations that are found in Isaiah to communicate NT truth to the Thessalonians. Then there is a link with 1 Thessalonians 4:18.

⁹ For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁰ who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him. ¹¹ Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.

Here's Paul's point.

The "Day of the Lord" will come suddenly. But that day of judgment is not for us.

However, we should not just be comforted by that thought. We should be living for the Lord in all of our choices and attitudes.

We are children of the light, not of the darkness.

We need to ask ourselves two questions.

First, where do I stand with Christ and eternity? Am I a Christian or not?

Second, Where do I stand with Christ on a daily basis?

Living for Him is a constant challenge.

Discipleship has a cost, it's not just about fun.

Am I a gourd or an oak?