

**CALVARY PANDAN
BIBLE-PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

**DHW BIBLE CLASS
LESSON 14
THE BOOK OF ISAIAH
CHAPTER 14**

Theme: “Rest for God’s People but
Sorrow for God’s Enemies!”

THEME VERSE

Isaiah 14:3 (KJV) And it shall come to pass in the day that the LORD shall give thee rest from thy sorrow, and from thy fear, and from the hard bondage wherein thou wast made to serve.”

INTRODUCTION

Chapter 14 of Isaiah continues from where the LORD left off in Chapter 13. It is still about the punishment of Babylon. The LORD interject His treatise with a brief mention of Israel and then continues on again with the destruction of Babylon.

The just retribution of God cannot be thwarted by sinful man. It will be based upon God’s standard that He has set in His holy Word. To those who repent and are called God’s people, they will enjoy rest in their soul today and forevermore. These are called the disciples and followers of Jesus Christ. It is not by might or by power but by the blood of Christ that they are born

again. Israel as a nation will flourish and one day the LORD will restore Israel to her former glory. She will be a nation of God’s people, each and every one of them. This is God’s promise and hope to a nation devastated by oppressors because of Israel’s sin of idolatry and immorality.

On the other hand, the enemies of the LORD will be punished. The nations of Babylon and Assyria are recorded in this chapter as a lesson for all Gentile nations that they might fear God. They might be used as God’s instrument of chastisement against His people, nevertheless they are guilty and responsible for their evil and wickedness committed against Israel and Judah. They will be justly rewarded by God for their dastard deeds.

The enormity of this truth cannot be comprehended by men not even God’s people. How could God who is so powerful and good use these evil men to punish His own people who sinned so grievously and then turned around and punish these evil nations for their wicked deeds! This demonstrates that the great wickedness of all men is known to Him and is permitted by Him, and men are helpless against this truth of the Almighty and all-knowing God. However, after having done their evil, they must know that they would be punished if they do not repent of their sins the way Nebuchadnezzar did before he died.

Hope to all is also the message sent out by God all the time even in the darkest moment of man’s calamities.

To all who repent, Israelites and Gentiles alike, they would be forgiven.

OUTLINE

1. Israel shall rise (v.1-3);
2. A Proverb against Babylon (v. 4-23);
3. The Assyrians shall be broken (v. 24-27);
4. The Philistines shall not rejoice! (v. 28-32).

COMMENTARY

Israel shall rise – 14:1-3

The chapter division is man-made. The sudden interruption by the LORD in introducing Israel is significant. Sandwiched between the first revelation of Babylon's destruction (chapter 13) and the continuation of the same in chapter 14:4-23 is the mercy of the LORD shown to His people Israel. Israel was to be judged by the Babylonians for her sins. However, the judgement of the LORD on Israel does not mean annihilation or total and permanent rejection.

The purpose of Israel's role in the coming of the Saviour has yet to be fulfilled including many of the prophecies of the LORD upon Israel. The use of the word mercy to describe this section is very apt. It highlights Israel's sin and the restoration of Israel is entirely because of God's mercy. The LORD will have mercy on Jacob i.e. the usurper for Israel behaved more like the usurper in her idolatry against the LORD. This is followed immediately by the use of Israel i.e. the

prince of God which is the new name given by God to Jacob. Her role as a nation of witness to a dark world dwelling in sin remains. The LORD will return Israel back to her own land in God's time. The exile will not be forever. Strangers will join themselves to Israel i.e. Gentiles will be converted and become proselytes and return with Israel to the Promised Land.

The people of God will take them i.e. the Gentiles to their homeland, back to the Promised Land. It is called the Land of the LORD inverse 2. Israel will return home one day! Israel will return with many of the Gentiles who will now become their servants and handmaids as the Land of Promise must be owned only by Israelites. These Gentiles who have accepted the faith of the Israelites i.e. Jesus Christ, will include the Assyrians and the Babylonians who followed Israel to the Promised Land. The OT was a time when Gentiles will have to become proselytes and lived in the Land of Promise in order to be visibly identified as God's people.

The LORD will bring Israel back to her Land and give her rest from her fears and from the hard bondage that she was made to serve in Babylon. The chastisement upon Israel was needful as the consequences of the sins that Israel and Judah had committed against God. However, one day Israel shall return from her captivity in glory and she will have her rest. This rest was with reference to their time of captivity. It was not meant to be absolute rest unless they become believers in the LORD Jesus Christ as a nation of all believers which

will not come to pass until the time of the millennium.

A Proverb against Babylon – 14:4-23

The LORD now turns His attention back to Babylon and continues the condemnation upon this wicked Gentile nation. Babylon is called an oppressor here i.e. a taskmaster. The oppression from the oppressor will come to an end, for it is only a matter of time. No kingdom of man will last forever, no matter how great and invincible they might appear to their generation. They all flourish for a while like the wild flowers that appear in the morning but wither by noon time and their glory dies with them.

The great city of Babylon is called here as the golden city which is a very apt description. Gold was the chief material of Nebuchadnezzar just as silver was the main material of the Medes and Persians and bronze or brass was of the Greeks and iron of the Romans (see Daniel 2). The city will also cease like the oppressor. The word for cease is the word for Sabbath i.e. rest permanently. The reason is that the LORD has broken the staff of the wicked i.e. the strength of the wicked and also the sceptre of the rulers i.e. their power will disappear. It was not the power of might of the Medes and Persians but the LORD that caused the empire of Babylon to fall.

Babylon is described by the LORD as, “he who smote the people in wrath with a continual stroke”. This is a great condemnation upon the Babylonians by the LORD. Their evil continues unabated against the people

of God. Even after the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple of Solomon, the indictment against Babylonians was a continuous hammering of God’s people. This means that even in exile the people of Israel were badly treated. The Babylonians ruled the nations in anger i.e. not only Israel but other nations as well as the plural denotes. Now it is her turn to be persecuted. There is no one to stop the Medes and Persians from punishing the Babylonians! The just retribution of God is a most comforting doctrine as it reveals that every case of injustice will be dealt with by God in His time. It is done either on this earth or beyond this earth and in the presence of God. Not one evil man will escape His judgement no matter how powerful he may be on this earth! There is no exception to this law of God unless the sinner has his sins forgiven and washed by the blood of Christ. Then the judgement is averted as Christ is now his advocate before God. There is no other way!

The next few verses describe the reaction to the destruction of the Babylonian Empire. The first (verse 7) is the whole earth. The whole earth here refers to the earth in the Middle Eastern region where the empire of the Babylonians ruled. The earth is at rest i.e. settles down from a time of chaos and turmoil. They are quiet now that the Babylonians are no longer in power. They also break forth in singing as they witness the timely fall of Babylonians and perhaps the justice of God has prevailed. The second (verse 8) comes from the fir trees and the cedars. They are personified as people

who can see and rejoice. They are rejoicing now as the time of death and destruction is over. There is no more cutting of the trees by the “feller” i.e. the lumberjacks. This pictures an end of the Babylonians’ destructive power. Everywhere they went, they destroy. The glory and splendour of the fir and cedars perhaps represent the splendour of nations that the Babylonians have destroyed. Her destructive power is at an end and they rejoice.

The third (verse 9) is the reception from Hell i.e. Sheol which represents the place of the dead. This is also personified as a person to meet all the Babylonians who died. They welcome them with open arms. A welcoming party is stirred up in Hell to receive the dead Babylonians! All the chief ones of the earth who have died and gone before them await in Hell for the Babylonian leaders. These were the despots of old before the time of the Babylonians. They had their glory and power when they ruled on earth and now that they had died, they are in Hell. The Babylonian despots are no better. They will receive the same end like all rulers of the world.

The words from these chief ones in Hell as they welcome the Babylonian dead are, “Art thou also become weak as we? Art thou become like unto us?” Their power and might are all gone. They are weak i.e. devoid of health and strength like the dead chief ones. Their pomp i.e. their arrogance and pride is brought down to the grave. They have become like dead men and their pomp died with

them. There is no more viols which used to play to welcome the king but now they are as silent as dead men. The worms cover the dead kings and princes like a blanket. Their flesh which they once indulged in all sort of sin and they dressed with pomp and splendour is now a bed of worms to consume lying cold in the grave.

There is no better illustration to warn all despots than the fall of Lucifer i.e. Satan. Lucifer means “the morning star”. This is a hapax legomena i.e. the only occurrence of a word in the Bible. Lucifer was called the son of the morning. He was cut down to the ground. This means that he was sent down onto the earth by God. He weakens the nations i.e. he ruled the nation by his deceptions throughout the ages. Lucifer was cast down by God because he said in his heart, “I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: **14** I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.” He wanted to be like God! His pride condemned him to earth and ultimately to the Lake of Fire! Today Satan, which means adversary, continues to deceive the world into worshipping him as God. The despotic kings all have the same notion as Satan. Their inflated pride or ego gets the better of them and they ruled as if they are gods because they desire man’s worship like Satan! What Lucifer did was exactly what all depot kings throughout the ages tried to do and what all future despots continue to do.

The illustration ends in verse 14. Verse 15 reverts back to the Babylonian empire. The reason is that the verbs “cut down and fallen” have already been used to describe Lucifer in verse 12. A similar verb is used in verse 15 to describe the kings of Babylon. Also the destination is different as the kings are brought down to hell whereas Lucifer was brought down to the earth! These despotic kings will end up in Hell and to the sides of the pit i.e. the rear of Hell itself. This probably refers to the lowest part of Hell!

Anyone who sees such a despotic king would remark and say with amazement that could this be the king who made the earth to tremble and did shake kingdoms! He is the one who made the world as a wilderness and destroyed cities and opened not the house of his prisoners i.e. did not let any prisoner leave! This sarcasm is aptly used here to describe the end of the Babylonian kings. They destroyed all in their might and earthly glory and no one was able to stand against them. But, in the end, other kings who died, at least they lie in glory and in his own house. Whereas the kings of Babylon will be cast out of their graves like an abominable branch and like the garments of those that had been slain and covered in blood! They will be thrust through with a sword and cast down together with the stones of the pit i.e. like stones used for the pit in the ground. Their bodies are like carcasses trodden under feet without burial and hated and despised by all. They would not even have a decent burial.

The bodies of the Babylonian kings when they die will not be united with them in burial because they have destroyed not only other lands and nations but their own land and their own people as well. Their names would not last forever and will soon be forgotten (verse 20). The Babylonian children will also be punished just as the Babylonians punished the children of their enemies. They will no more become a super power or be allowed to conquer the way they did ever again! Their day of greatness will be lost forever. It will only come to them once in their existence and never to be repeated!

The reason is that the LORD will rise up against them. He will cut-off the name of Babylon and her remnant and son and nephew (verse 22). The site where the golden city was built will become swampland good only for the bitten i.e. a kind of bird with long necks and leg that lives among weeds and feeds on fish. The LORD will sweep Babylon with the besom of destruction i.e. the broom of destruction. The destruction would be total and thoroughly complete like one sweep away the dust from the floor!

This prophecy of Babylon was before she came into prominence and power.

**The Assyrians shall be broken
– 14:24-27**

The LORD turns His attention to the Assyrians who will be destroyed by the Babylonians in due course. He described Himself as the LORD of hosts here. This refers to His power and sovereignty as the Creator of

heaven and earth. His thoughts become reality. There is no difference between what the LORD thinks and what He wants done! His purposes become the standing order and law for all of mankind. The LORD answers to no one and He reports to no one. He does whatever He thinks and purposes to be the best and it is done according to His time!

He declares that he will break the Assyrians in the Land of Promise and treads upon them under His foot on His mountain, He will do exactly that! All the slaves under the yoke of the Assyrians will be taken away. The burden imposed on them by the Assyrians will be lifted from off their shoulders. This is the purpose of the LORD upon the face of the whole earth i.e. referring to the Middle Eastern region only as the context suggests. The hand of the LORD has stretched out upon all the nations and so they will be done as the absolute potentate often does. The stretching out of the hand is a sign of power and authority!

Two rhetorical questions are used to emphasize the power of God in verse 27. The LORD of hosts has purposed and no one can disannul it. The LORD has stretched for His sovereign hand and no one can turn it back! There will be no delay in the judgement upon the Assyrians. The certainty of her total destruction in the Land of Promise and under the foot of the LORD came to pass as described in 2 Kings 19:35-37 where 185,000 soldiers of the elite and mighty Assyrian armies perished in one night! They were killed at night by the angel

of the LORD who is none other than Jesus Christ Himself!

The Philistines shall not rejoice!

– 14:28-32

This burden came in the year that King Ahaz died (verse 28). Could this burden be the burden referred to earlier or the one from verse 29 to 32? I believe that it is both rather than either or.

The Philistines and not Israel and Judah were warned not to rejoice because the rod of him that smote her was broken i.e. King Ahaz has died. Ahaz was a bad king who followed the ways of the northern kingdom in his sin and idolatry. He made his son to go through fire (see 2 Kings 16:1-4). The reason is because there will come a new and more destructive king than Ahaz. This king was Hezekiah. He is described here as a cockatrice i.e. a viper. Indeed King Hezekiah, who was a good king, punished the Philistines for the evil they did against the people of God. He will deal with the Philistines like a fiery flying serpent i.e. swift and deadly (see 2Kings 18:8).

The details of this destruction of the Philistines are described in the rest of the verses. The firstborn shall feed in safety and so shall the needy lie down in safety. These refer to the people of Israel and Judah who have been under the harassment of the Philistines since the time of the Judges. The LORD will kill their root with famine. This refers to a slow and painful death by starvation. He shall slay their remnant. There will be a total destruction of the people of Philistines till they exist no more.

The gates of the Philistine cities are called to howl. Cry O city for the people of Philistine are dissolved into nothingness. They will cease forever as a sovereign nation. King Hezekiah's army is that army that will come from the north to punish the Philistines. None shall be alone in his appointed times i.e. the Philistines will be killed and they will all died together! However, the nation of Israel whom the LORD has founded will prevail and the people of the LORD will trust in the city i.e. find safety and security in the city.

PRACTICAL VALUE

Rest for God's people – It is wonderful to be God's people in every age. The LORD will protect His own and will never forsake them. No matter what they might have done, the LORD's plan in their lives will prevail. If that generation rebels and sins against the LORD, the LORD will punish them for their sins. Yet their sins will not prevent or derail the plan of God concerning the 1st and 2nd coming of Christ.

The generation that obeys and follows the Word and will of God will be blessed with joy and strength. They will be protected by God and blessing will be theirs to enjoy. They will have the peace of God, which passes all understanding to guard their hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. The world can turn upside down and believers will still be at peace because their hope and trust is not in man or the things of man but in God alone.

Despots of the world will end in Hell! – All the despots of the world will end in Hell. There is no escape. There is no protection in Hell for any of them. They will welcome one another in Hell when they meet one another there! It will be a place of great torment and pain. The warning is clear. It is better to be a believer on earth and have nothing and be in heaven one day than to be a king on earth and have everything and end in Hell without Christ.

The only way out for them is to become a believer the way that Nebuchadnezzar became a believer before he died (see Daniel 4; 7:4). King Nebuchadnezzar turned to Christ before his death for the LORD humbled him and he learned his lesson of humility.

The sin of pride – Of the three sins mentioned in 1 John, the sins of the lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes and the pride of life, it is the sin of pride that is most deadly. It follows us all our days till we breathe our last breath. The body grows old and weak and the first two sins will probably fade away with time. However, the sin of pride remains and does not diminish with age. Instead it becomes stronger with age.

Was the last recorded sin of King David not the sin of pride? He numbered the people to see how great a kingdom he had amassed. By that sin of pride 70,000 died (see 2Samuel 24:15). Repentance was the only way out for the king as is the case for us today. The sin of pride has ruined many relationships and ministries.

Nations have fought against one another because of pride. Best friends become worst enemies because of pride. The believer must beware of the sin of pride in his life! AMEN.

DAILY READINGS & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Daily Readings

MONDAY: Isaiah 14:1-3;

TUESDAY: Isaiah 14:4-23;

WEDNESDAY: Isaiah 14:24-32;

THURSDAY: Isaiah 14:1-32;

FRIDAY: Isaiah 14:1-32.

Discussion Questions

1. God did not give up on Israel. Why? Do you think God will give up on the believer today? What about the witness of His church today?

2. Why is it that those whom God has plans for are not totally destroyed whereas those who do not are destroyed? Please explain your answer.

3. What makes the justice of God so comforting to the believer? Please explain your answer.

4. Can we say that when men become kings they want to be like God? Was this what God warned Israel of when they demanded a king in the days of Samuel in 1Samuel 8? Please explain.

5. Why should Lucifer not be cast down to Hell instead of onto the earth after he sinned against God? Did God send Lucifer to Hell at all in the last days?

6. Why must God send Jesus Christ to die on the cross of Calvary to destroy Satan? Why can't God just use His almighty power to destroy him and send him to Hell?

7. Are you a proud person? How do you deal with the sin of pride in your life?.

8. What is the meaning of humility? Is a humble person a yes man in the office and in church? Please explain your answer.

9. Is the trend of kings coming to power and losing power the norm throughout man's history? Will there come a time when this will end? How will it all end? Please explain.

10. What will happen to all those who persecute believers today? Will they end in Hell when they die? Can God forgive the sins of those who persecute Christians?

11. What is the biblical perspective a believer ought to have of kings and princes and leaders in his personal life? Can he speak ill of them? Please explain.

13. What lessons can you learn from this chapter about God’s Word and about yourself?

12. How should one regard church leaders who are derelict in their duties? Do we castigate them or keep our mouths shut and just pray for them? What would you pray for if you were to pray for them? Please give reasons for your answer.