

GOD WILL DESTROY PRIDEFUL AND IDOLATROUS NATIONS

Isaiah 14:1-11

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I. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND BIBLICAL CONTEXT

As we *look back and review the history of the Israelites*, especially starting from the time God delivered them out of Egypt under the leadership of Moses, we will find ***consistently recurring behavioral patterns emerge***. Let me highlight some of the *major character traits that are still prevalent today among God's chosen people, the Israelites (as well as Christians)*.

a) Strong Yearning for Idol Worship.

In spite of God's Love, Mercy and Grace shown to them *abundantly* as the LORD delivered them out of Egypt, *they kept on looking back and yearning for idol worship*. As soon as they had the opportunity, the Bible says in **Exodus 32**, they said to Aaron "come, make us gods who will go before us. As for the fellow Moses who brought us out of Egypt, we don't know what has happened to him." Of course, they all knew exactly where Moses had gone! *It wasn't a secret!* In addition, Aaron, **neither opposed their wicked request nor refused to take part in making the golden calf!** *This affinity for idol worship and the pattern of "backsliding" continued throughout their history (and ours)!*

b) Unfaithfulness and Disobedience.

Because of their *strong yearning for idol worship*, **unfaithfulness and disobedience** became a *regularly recurring pattern!* Consequently, *they continued to suffer the catastrophic consequences of being unfaithful and disobedience to God!* **Characteristic of "stiff-necked" people!**

c) Stubborn Ungratefulness.

One other major *character trait* of the Israelites was **Ungratefulness!** Despite the abundant Love, Provision and Protection shown to them by the Almighty God, *they consistently behaved in profoundly ungrateful ways!* One of the ways the Israelites expressed their *deep contempt for what God was doing* for their good was *their constant "grumbling and complaining" ways!* Read Exodus 16:1-36; Numbers 11:1-15. **Characteristic of "stiff-necked" people!**

d) False Righteousness/Hypocrisy.

On the one hand, they claim to know God and declare they are the "righteous people!" On the other hand, *they do exactly the opposite of what they claim to know and believe in!* That is why Jesus *rebuked them severely and repeatedly condemned them* as "**Hypocrites!**" Read Matthew 23:1-39.

II. THE LESSON: God will Destroy Prideful & Idolatrous Nations

- a) **Proverbs 8:12-13:** “I, wisdom, dwell together with prudence; I possess knowledge and discretion. To fear the LORD is to hate evil; I hate pride and arrogance, evil behavior and perverse speech.”
- b) **Proverbs 16:18:** “Pride goes before destruction; a haughty spirit before the fall.”

Let us now examine Isaiah 14, verses 1 through 11. Please note that the contents of Isaiah chapters 13 and 14 are *continuous* as they relate to the **Prophecy on Babylon**. The phrase “Once Again” is the *refrain* in the following verses.

1. **vv. 1-2. “Once Again” God’s Compassion Overflows!**

“**Once Again**” indicates that the Israelites have *failed again* to live by God’s **Law** under the **Covenant Relationship** with the LORD because of the *recurrent behavioral pattern* highlighted earlier. But as we have learned from the previous chapters, the **Hope of Redemption** was *reserved* only for the **Remnants!** God **Righteous Judgements** was *pronounced* upon the ungrateful, “stiff-necked” and unrepentant Israelites as well as all idols worshipping nations! Nevertheless, the Bible says, “**once again, the LORD will have compassion on Jacob/Israel!**” Our God is so Merciful and Gracious! We are here because “Once Again,” the LORD has compassion on us! How many times you and I received the “once again” of God?!

a) “Once Again,” Aliens will Join Israel (Verse 1).

From the beginning, God had made provisions for the “aliens” to be accepted/included in His Plan of Salvation, if/when, they decide to believe in Him and pledge to abide by the Covenant. Recall Abraham had many **Canaanite male and female servants** in his household whom God accepted as His own when they were circumcised (Gen. 17:1-27). Furthermore, God made provisions in the Law for the “aliens” to be **included in His Plan of Salvation, not the Israelites wicked plans!** (Deut. 10:12-18; 14:21; 16:11-14; 24:14-17; also, Psalm 146; Isaiah 56:1-8). However, the Israelites have consistently excluded, exploited and oppressed the “aliens” in opposition to God’s plan and commands! Even Jonah, one of the prophets of God, refused to go and preach repentance to the people of Nineveh *because he didn’t want the LORD to grant them salvation!* **How wicked is that?** But the LORD *always righted the wrong* in His own time and ways! *God has a way of turning the table against the wicked, regardless of their nationality, ethnicity or religious affiliations!* *Being a Baptist, Presbyterian, Methodist or Catholic will not save anyone from God’s Righteous Judgement!* *God will judge the wicked in His Righteousness!* *It doesn’t matter whether one is American (Black or White), Republican or*

*Democrat, right wing, left wing or centrist, God will judge wickedness in His Righteousness! **All Hypocrisy will come to an end on Judgement Day!***

b) “Once Again,” The Captives become Rulers! (Verse 2).

Throughout Israel’s history, we see this *reversal* of situations, i.e., (a) Israel becoming **slaves/captives** to idols worshipping nations every time they turn their backs on God and (b) the Israelites becoming **victors/rulers** over those who enslaved them when God *reverses* their misfortunes because of **His Compassion** for them according to **His own Promises** given to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and David. We need to ask ourselves the following questions.

Why does the Righteous God continue to show **compassion** to a people who have *repeatedly demonstrated* “**unfaithfulness and disobedience**” to His **Law**? The answer to this question is based on **God’s Promises** to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and David. The Bible is *absolutely clear* that God didn’t choose the Israelites as His people because they were better in any way than other people in the world! (**Deut. 9:4-6**). God chose Abram and Sarai *out of His own Goodness* to *initiate* **His Plan of Salvation** within the boundaries of **the Law** and under the **Covenant Relationship**.

What is it that *compels* God to show Mercy and Grace to people who *consistently demonstrate* “**ungratefulness**” toward His **Goodness**? It is God’s abundant Love that *compelled* Him to be merciful and gracious to ungrateful, unfaithful and disobedient people like the Israelites and us, the Christians! Nothing Good was found in Jacob when God decided to “have compassion” on him “**once again!**” Nothing Good was found in you and I when God decided to show Love, Mercy and Grace in Jesus Christ while we were deep in our sins! It is **Love** that *compels* God to show **Compassion** on us, again and again! But, we have to be careful not to take His Love, Mercy and Grace for granted! The **Righteousness of God** *demands* **Judgement** upon *ungrateful, unfaithful, disobedient and unrepentant people*, regardless of one’s status as an Israelite nation or Christian nation! The Old Testament makes this truth abundantly clear! And the New Testament affirms and confirms the same truth! As the Scripture says, “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches!”

2. vv. 3-11. God will Destroy Proudful and Idolatrous Nations!

These **9 verses** under this section are **encased** *between* **verse 3 and 11**. They are *forever encapsulated* in poetic language which declares **the eternal warning** to all of those who *get puffed up* in **pride** and **arrogance** depending on their **positions of power!** Verses 3 and 11 are the Key Verses! Let us now examine what God has reserved for the Proudful and Idolatrous person/people or nations.

a) **Verse 3. The Taunt on the Demise of the Prideful Babylon.**

God has *reserved* for Himself **the Day of Accounting** to all Prideful, Boastful and Arrogant kings, people and nations. In the Book of Isaih, there are references to “**On The Day of the LORD**,” or “**In That Day**” pointing to and signifying the **Day of Judgement** that is coming! *God has judged the Israelites and idol worshipping nations many times in the past!* Those Days of Judgements in the past are *different in scope, significance and finality* from the **Last and Final Day of Judgement** referred to in Matthew chapters 24 and Revelation chapters 20, 21 and 22. Here in Isaih 13 and 14, **the Day of Judgement** was on Babylon when King Nebuchadnezzar ruled and the Israelites were his captives! We know the Babylonians *taunted* them during their *exilic journey* and made fun of their *captive situation*. Isaih prophesized that God will reverse the situation when the **Day of Judgement** comes! “On the Day the LORD gives you relief from suffering and turmoil and cruel bondage, you will take up this taunt against the king of Babylon.” The Prophecy is that “Once Again,” God will reverse the misfortunes of the Israelites! Understand God is not doing this because the Israelites were sinless, special or perfect people! No! God has done it because of **His own Promises** and **His Plan of Salvation** that will include all the people of the world who will put their faith in Him and seek His Salvation! The Bible *emphasizes* that God does this for “His Name Sake.” In other words, God did it because He is protective of His Holy and Righteous Name! God knew that the Israelites will repeatedly fail to keep their faith under the Covenant in obedience to the Law! God already knew that the Israelites would repeatedly dishonor and misrepresent Him! Therefore, the LORD planned to do it His Way!

On that Day, the *taunting* of the Israelites will have the following characteristics:

- Verses 4-6. Because of God’s Righteous Judgement, the tyrannical rule of the wicked Babylonians will come to an end! God has a way of using idols worshipping nations like the Babylonians as *His instruments* to punish His own people. Then later, God will turn around and punish the same nations He has used as His instrument of judgement! **God’s ways are not our ways! God’s ways are always True and Righteous!**
- Verses 7-8. Even the Lands and the Trees will have “rest and peace!” The Bible clearly says that even the lands become *polluted* when the people living in them become *idol worshipers*! Consequently, the lands become the *battlefields* where *conflicts* abound and **the soil becomes soaked with the bloods of those killed in wars!** The lands will not have “rest and peace” because of conflict and wars due to idol worship! In addition, the Bible says even the Trees will be deprived of “rest and peace” because in those day, so

many trees were cut down to make weapons of war such as arrows, spears, carts, catapults as well as for fuel in the camps of the soldiers in ancient times! When God bring Peace, even the lands and the trees rejoice! O, how the world needs God's Peace in our times! **Today as in the old days, the lands and the trees of the Palestinians and the Israelites yearn for God's Peace!** *O, how the lands and trees yearn for "rest and peace" even today!*

- Verses 9-10. Even the dead kings of the past will rise up to welcome you and the graves will await you with their mouths wide open! You will join them in defeat and shame never to rise again! Isaiah's prophecy has come true!
b) **Verse 11. All Pomp and Boisterous Noise Will Come to an End!**

In verse 11, the Bible essentially says, when God cuts you down, you will lie down where the maggots and worms will cover you in the grave! All your Pride, Pomp and Boisterous Noise will be swallowed up in the place reserved for you in the grave! There will come a day where all the Pomp and Boisterous Noise will cease!

III. CONCLUSION

God knows that Christians too will not be able to represent Him well to the world as He requires them to do. Therefore, He secured His Plan of Salvation in His own Son, the Only One who is capable of securing it forever! God knows we are not perfect. But His Plan of Salvation includes the means by which we can be perfected through the **Sanctifying work of Christ** which He already accomplished for us in His Blood at Calvary!

God's Plan of Salvation **does not exclude** *certain* ethnic groups, nationalities or those who practice religious practices in idol worship. God's Plan of Salvation is available to anyone who confesses that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and receives Him as his/her Savior by faith! (Ephesians 2). No religious group, denomination, religious association, etc. has been authorized to exclude sinners from God's Plan of Salvation! God never ordained for the Israelites or Christians to *exclude* any one from coming to Christ by faith and joining their fellowship. However, in practice, it has happened and continues to happen in reality! **Beware! God will judge such wickedness!**

In That Day, All Pomp and Boisterous Noise will come to an End!

God will Destroy the Prideful and Idolatrous Nations!