

No Safety in Babylon

Isaiah 13:1 – 14:27

Halifax: 2 August 2009

Introduction:

Today we come to a new section in the prophecies of Isaiah.

- This section is a whole series of pronouncements describing what is going to happen to Israel's neighbours.
- In chapters 1-12 we have been given an overview of how God is going to deal with His covenant people because of their unfaithfulness...
 - We have been told that God is going to raise up Assyria and send them against His own people to chasten them and to humble them.
 - They had been so foolish!
 - God had been so gracious to them!
 - He had taken them from Egypt and brought them to their own land where He had established His dwelling in the midst of them...
 - He had given them His law to instruct them how to live beautifully before Him as His own people.
 - He had delivered them from all their enemies and had enriched them with His promises of salvation.
 - Now you would think that they would have been eager to receive His grace,
 - You would think that they would have been overflowing with gratitude!
 - But instead they had hardened themselves and gone after other gods.
 - As Isaiah reported in verse 1, the Lord said to them,
 - "I have nourished and brought up children, but they have rebelled against Me."
 - It is shocking to see how often we who are God's covenant people have done this!
 - As it was in Isaiah's day, so it is in our day in our part of the world.
 - We have God's grace and God's promises so rich and full and precious and free...
 - but we are cold and indifferent to them!
 - The wells of salvation are so near to us—bubbling up with grace—
 - but we drink from the polluted streams of this world and die in our sin.

But as we have seen in Isaiah's prophecies,

- God will not allow this wickedness to go on among His covenant people!
 - He tells them that He is going to send Assyria against them to chasten them, and that after He is finished with Assyria,
 - He will destroy Assyria, for they will not carry out this work for God's glory, but in great malice and pride, denying the One true God who raises them up.
 - But to Israel's amazement,
 - the LORD tells them that He will bring the theocracy to an end!
 - The house of David will become like a tree that has been cut down to a stump!
 - But this will not be the end!
 - The Lord declares that out of the roots of that felled tree, Messiah will come!
 - Emmanuel—God with us!
 - And that when He comes, He will bring salvation to the nations and to Israel!
 - He will take the throne of David and order and establish it and uphold it with judgement and justice...
 - and of the increase of His government there will be no end!
 - God will not forget the promise He made to bring salvation to Israel and to the world!
 - But first, He will bring Israel very low.
 - There will be a period of humiliation and gloom until the light of Messiah appears...

You can surely imagine how hard the coming chastisement would be for those among the covenant people who truly loved God!

- There was a remnant that trusted Him and longed for His salvation—
 - In the midst of all the corruption, they sought His grace and eagerly drank from the wells of salvation.
 - And they and their children would have to go through the hard days ahead—days of darkness—days in which the temple would be levelled and the nation would be deported to Babylon.
 - These faithful sons and daughters of God needed encouragement and comfort to sustain during that long dark period!
 - They needed to know that God had not forgotten them when they saw His kingdom reduced to rubble!

- They needed to be urged to keep on trusting God when there were no visible indications that His kingdom would prevail...
 - but in fact every visible indication that it would be wiped out!
- My brothers and sisters, they would live in days such as we increasingly find ourselves living in today in western Christendom...
 - Days in which it would just seem irrelevant to trust in God.
 - When Babylon, the city of man, would have all the visible glory and all the greatness and all the power and all the future!
 - When people would say,
 - “You believe what?”
 - “You believe that God created the world in six days?”
 - “You believe that there is some need to be saved from sin?”
 - “You believe that there was a man named Jesus who was God’s Son and who died on a cross to turn away God’s wrath?
 - What makes you think God would be angry with us?
 - What makes you think this God is real?
 - Do you see?
 - When everyone was afraid of Assyria and then of Babylon and when Israel had been taken captive to Babylon and Jerusalem had been destroyed,
 - it would provide a great deal amusement for the proud followers of Babylon (or for those they had trampled upon) to hear that you someone was actually trusting in the God whose city had just been destroyed.
 - Those were the hard times that were coming upon Israel!

But I want you to see how the LORD graciously fortifies His people for these hard times!

- In the section we are coming to, (chapter 13-27)
 - Isaiah declares what the LORD is going to do with Israel and with each of their neighbours.
 - He speaks of Babylon, Philistia, Moab, Damascus and Ephraim, Egypt, Cush, Edom, Arabia, Jerusalem, and Tyre—
 - and then He tells of His judgement that shall come upon the whole world.
- Why does He do this?
 - He does this to show them clearly that the LORD is over all the nations and does with them whatever He pleases.

- that He is the One whose plans will be brought to fulfilment upon each of these nations!
 - The Lord shows that He has the whole matter under His complete control and that at the end of it all, He will bring His promised salvation!
 - Through all the coming destruction of the theocracy,
 - He will be in absolute control of what befalls every nation and will bring about His purposes.
 - Israel could trust Him through those hard times of chastisement just as we can trust Him today!
- It is one of the hardest things in the world to convince people that God is sovereign over the nations...
 - But you cannot read the book of Isaiah and come away with any other perspective—if you believe this to be God’s Holy Word!
 - Isaiah wrote all this in His day—it was what he saw as a prophet!
 - And it was this that encouraged and sustained His people during the coming troubles.

And my brothers and sisters, all this is recorded for you who trust God today!

- It is written for your encouragement who trust God in this day when his chastening hand is falling upon us in the west because of our unfaithfulness...
 - We do not have all the details of what is going to happen to the nations of the world today—to North Korea, to Iran, to Iraq, to Afghanistan, to the USA, to Canada, to Mexico...
 - but we have the assurance that the same God who told what was going to happen in Isaiah’s day and who described it all as the outworking of His plan and decree,
 - is the God who is in control of the destiny of the nations around us!
 - And we have the assurance that just as He used the commotions of the world for the preservation of His people in Isaiah’s day,
 - and just as He remembered His covenant and preserved those who truly were trusting in Him through all the troubles,
 - so He remembers and will preserve us today who trust in Him!

And today as we begin with Isaiah 13-14,

- You will see that the first nation that Isaiah prophesies of is Babylon.
- This is a curious thing because in Isaiah’s day, Babylon was not the biggest threat.

- It was Assyria!
- Assyrian was the big bully on the block that was beating up on everybody!
- So why does Isaiah begin with Babylon instead of Assyria?
 - First of all, because he is already told us in detail what the LORD is going to do with Assyria.
 - He has told us this in chapter 8 and again in chapter 10.
 - We have been told that Assyria will come all the way up to Jerusalem and that they will be stopped at that point.
 - They will bring much destruction, but they will be cut down and will not be able to come into Jerusalem...
 - You can see that this is mentioned even in our text today—in Isaiah 14:24-27.
 - In these verses, we are reminded that God is going to stop them.
 - He is not going to any other nations, but He himself is going to cut them down when they come up against Jerusalem...
 - And of course that is exactly what happened.
 - Sennacherib woke up in the morning to find 185,000 of his men dead!
- But when the LORD does this to Assyria,
 - God's people must not suppose this to be the end of their troubles!
 - Assyria will be stopped, but Babylon will take Assyria's place!
 - They will become the big bully that all the nations tremble before!
 - And they will finish the Lord's work of humiliation and chastisement on Israel that Assyria began...
 - not in willing obedience to the Lord, but as His instruments in God's hand to humble His people.
 - When this happens in future days,
 - Isaiah's disciples will be greatly encouraged to remember that Babylon's rise and fall has all already been planned by the LORD and revealed to them...
 - Babylon will look so invincible, but God has already purposed and planned their complete destruction.

- The believing people will look at Babylon in all its pomp and arrogance and they will see with the eyes of faith the coming destruction.
 - Isaiah's prophecies will afford great comfort to them.
 - And this will help them to endure those days with a faith such as Daniel and his three friends had!
 - They will endure the mocking and the persecution that will come to them as followers of the LORD because they will remember what Isaiah told them...
 - They will know that just as Assyria was stopped, so Babylon will be stopped.

- And there was also a reason that the faithful people needed to hear about Babylon's future in Isaiah's day...when Assyria was the threat...
 - It was because they were, even as Isaiah gave them this prophecy, under a very strong temptation...
 - a temptation to trust in Babylon as they saw Assyria coming against them!
 - You may remember how Isaiah had to rebuke good king Hezekiah in Isaiah 39 where receiving envoys from Babylon!
 - Hezekiah was under a strong temptation to look to Babylon for help when God had declared plainly that He would take care of Assyria.
 - Babylon was desirous to take God's place as the object of Israel's trust.
 - That is why Isaiah mentions the coming destruction of Assyria at the end of his discourse about the destruction of Babylon...
 - He is warning the people not to trust in Babylon, but in the LORD.

And my brothers and sisters,

- this brings me to the main point of the two chapters before us this morning!
 - These words are written for us who believe to guard us against the temptation to trust in Babylon!
 - Literal Babylon (the Babylon Isaiah speaks about) is utterly destroyed...
 - but in Scripture, Babylon has become the name given to the city of man whenever God raises it up in great strength to chasten and to test His people.
 - It is the world in its pride and success that laughs at the kingdom of God and persecutes the kingdom of God...
 - It is that same spirit that we see at the tower of Babel in Gen 11 that seeks to replace God—

- to make a great name and to do great things without bothering to be reconciled to Him.
- to make its own morals and dominate by its own power and live by its own wisdom and to laugh at the true God.
- Whenever Babylon is successful in this world for a time...
 - there is always a temptation for us to be afraid of Babylon and even to trust in Babylon and to follow Babylon!
 - But Isaiah 13-14 is written to show you that there is no safety in Babylon.

TRANS> So as we look at Isaiah 13-14,

I. I want you to see first of all how tempting it is to trust in Babylon...

- By *trust*,
 - I mean that it is tempting to embrace Babylon's philosophy that you can be happy and prosperous without trusting and following the true and living God.
 - There is a real temptation to believe that those who believe this (those of Babylon) are right!
 - Let me show you three reasons why there is a temptation to trust in Babylon.
- A. There is a temptation to trust in Babylon because Babylon is so successful.
1. You can see from our text how Isaiah, looking into the future, sees the great height to which Babylon will be raised...
 - a. Look at 13:19...
 - Here Isaiah speaks of Babylon as
 - "the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldeans' pride."
 - Babylon was regarded as the epitome of religion and culture even while Assyria was still in the ascendancy.
 - There was in Babylon a learning that far excelled Jerusalem...
 - There were arts and culture and things that were truly beautiful.
 - There was great architecture and music and philosophy...
 - The hanging gardens of Babylon were one of the seven wonders of the ancient world.
 - b. And in 14:16-17, Isaiah speaks of the power and dominion that the king of Babylon came to possess...
 - He would be known as

- “the man who made the earth to tremble, who shook kingdoms, who made the world as a wilderness and destroyed its cities.”
 - Nebuchadnezzar boasted in his day that all authority was his.
2. And when there is all this glory and beauty and power in Babylon,
- there is a temptation for us to feel rather dumpy and frumpy in the kingdom of Jesus Christ.
 - especially when God’s hand of chastisement has brought us low.
 - We do not have many wise or many noble...
 - We do not have many rich...
 - As far as present glory is concerned, we do not have as much.
 - Sometimes we feel that we should try to compete, but when God is chastening his church, we fall behind the glory of Babylon...
 - And in such times, there are those who forsake Jesus Christ to follow after Babylon.
 - It is very sad, but it happens...
 - They say, “there is more learning, there is more success, there is more beauty, there is more pleasure...”
 - and like the man in Proverbs who is captured by the beauty of the seductress,
 - they go to her as to the slaughter, not knowing that there is nothing but death and snares there.

TRANS> But not only is there temptation because of Babylon’s glory and beauty...

B. There is a temptation to trust in Babylon because Babylon herself is so confident!

1. Just look at the boast of the king of Babylon in 14:13-14!
- Isa 14:13-14: 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; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.’
- a. This is that confident, cocksure attitude that the kings of Babylon embrace when God withholds His judgement from them for a time...
- when He who alone causes kingdoms to rise and fall raises them up.
 - They actually come to believe that they will sit in the place of God and have the power of God!
 - Nebuchadnezzar thought that and so did the Roman emperors and Pharaoh and many others who have been king in Babylon!

- “Who is the LORD that I should obey Him?” they say.
 - God charges them with supposing themselves to be gods.
- b. This is that ancient lie that brought about the fall of man in the garden...
- The serpent deceived Eve, telling her that she and her husband would be like God, knowing good and evil...
 - It would no longer be God who would determine what was good and evil—no longer His judgement that would prevail...
 - but they would become the judges of good and evil!
 - They would decide for themselves, independently of God!
2. And so it is today that foolish little human beings, when they are not humbled by God’s judgements in this world,
- come to believe that they can actually take the place of God Himself!
 - They turn up their little noses at Him and actually challenge Him for the throne of heaven!
 - Satanists do this openly...
 - others do it more subtly...
 - We do it, in fact, every time we dismiss what we know to be God’s will and assert our own will in its place!
 - And if God let’s us get away with it for a while,
 - it’s not long before we are boldly committing all sorts of sins in high defiance of Him!
 - How thankful we should be that He does not leave those He loves to rise to such arrogance,
 - but chastens us so that we will remember that we are not gods...
 - But pity the one who is not chastened!
 - Such is the case with the kings of Babylon.
 - And such is the case with those who see Babylon defying God and seeming to get away with it and begin to join with her in her deception!
 - who begin to redefine good and evil based upon what Babylon says.
 - Guard yourself against this temptation brothers and sisters!
 - We must not let the world define right and wrong for us!
 - We must come to God’s word with humility and plead with Him to teach us His way and to give us a heart to delight in it!

TRANS> So I have shown you that there is a temptation to trust Babylon because of Babylon's glory and a temptation to trust Babylon because of Babylon's confidence...

- and now thirdly, I want to show you that...

C. There is a temptation to trust in Babylon because Babylon is so cruel to those who trust in the Lord.

1. You see, Babylon is in direct conflict with the true and living God.

- It is not that Babylon claims to have no gods...
 - it is just that Babylon cannot accept the true God who rules over all.
- In 14:4, the king of Babylon is called an "oppressor" and in verse 6, the one who "struck the people with a continual stroke" and who "ruled the nations in anger."
 - If any one crosses him, he oppresses them with ferocity!
 - Babylon will allow no rivals.

2. History is full of the blood of the martyrs as one nation after another has slaughtered those who follow the Lord...

- You know the story of Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel when Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refused to bow down to the golden image that he set up...
 - He threw them into the fiery furnace.
- You know that all of the apostles of the Lord whose law was love were persecuted and tortured and killed...by Romans and Jews...
- You know how the Covenanters of Scotland were put into dungeons and were put on the rack and how their children were tortured in front of them—all because they followed Jesus Christ...
- And did you know that in the last century, more people were martyred for Christ than in all other centuries combined?
 - Babylon will have no rivals!
- Even in our land which has Christian roots,
 - we are seeing an increasingly harsh response to those who oppose abortion or homosexuality...
 - We are seeing an increasing hostility to and intolerance of those who confess that Jesus Christ is the only way of salvation.

3. And when persecution arises in this way,

- there is a temptation to soften our testimony—to pull back—to give in...

- There is a danger that we will submit to Babylon instead of to the Lord because the threat of Babylon is in our face!
- But we must obey God rather than men!
 - We are not to be foolish and stir up controversy, but neither are we to give way to Babylon because Babylon to avoid her oppression...

TRANS> So you see that there is a strong temptation to follow Babylon...

- because of her glory, because of her confidence, and because of her cruelty to those who do not bow to her...
 - but now...

II. I want to show you that there is no safety in trusting Babylon...

A. There is no safety in trusting Babylon because the LORD shows us that He Himself is going to destroy Babylon...

- When they ignore the One who made heaven and earth and pretend that they can get on without Him, they pave the way for their own destruction!
 - He will not tolerate such behaviour!
 - It is wicked and unjust and inexcusable and He Himself will deal with it in His time!

1. See how our text shows us plainly that **He** is the One who summons the nations to rise up against them.

- This permeates the entire passage...
 - a. In 13:2-5, the LORD is described as calling together an army to destroy Babylon...
 - In verse 3, He says that He has commanded His sanctified ones and called His mighty ones for His anger...
 - This does not mean that the LORD actually issues a call to them, but that He will stir them up against Babylon when the time has come to bring them down...
 - He will stir them up and He will give them strength and success to prevail—
 - just as we saw that He would do with Assyria in Isaiah 10...
 - If you look on down in the passage, you will see in verse 4 that He is the Lord of Hosts (or armies) who musters the army for battle—
 - and that they are His (v 5) “weapons of indignation to destroy the whole land.”

- b. And as you see in verse 6, Babylon’s destruction is said to come from the Almighty— He is the source of it!
 - and in verse 12, He says, “**I** will make a mortal more rare than fine gold... **I** will shake the heavens (v 13)”
 - c. And in verse 17 He even tells us the nation that He will use to destroy Babylon...
 - He says, “I will stir up the Medes against them...”
 - This was spoken almost 200 years before the fact and this is exactly what happened!
 - We are even told that they will not regard gold or silver—and they didn’t. They did not do it for hire, but in wrath against Babylon.
 - d. And you see in 14:22 that God’s action is summarized in saying of Babylon,
 - “**I** will rise up against them, says the Lord of Hosts...”
 - There destruction is His action!
 - Nothing is clearer than the fact that the LORD will be the agent of Babylon’s destruction!
 - No kingdom rises and no kingdom falls but by His hand.
 - He may use nations to bring about the destruction, but it is all His work and He wants us to know this!
 - He is in absolute control of Babylon’s destiny.
2. The Day of Babylon’s destruction is *His day*.
- Isaiah refers to it as the day of the LORD in verse 13:6 and again in verse 9.
 - a. It is *His Day* because it is His judicial wrath that is poured out in that day.
 - Isaiah 13:9 explains that it is the LORD destroying sinners from the land.
 - Look at what He says in 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."
 - The LORD visits them with severity because of their sin and guilt...
 - He is giving them what His perfect justice demands!
 - They are part of this fallen human race that has rebelled against their Maker and they have acted as if this doesn’t matter!

- They have gone on in their pride as if they could ignore Him whom they have so highly offended,
 - and in doing so they have offended Him all the more!
 - Verse 9 says that the day of the Lord is cruel, with both wrath and fierce anger!
 - Those are dreadful words—but there is no injustice here!
 - The Lord is giving them nothing more and nothing less than what they deserve!
 - and what they deserve is cruelty!
- b. His glory is revealed through this exercise of His justice...
- It is revealed to us and to the nations.
 - Before He judges, it seems to all that it is okay for Babylon to ignore Him.
 - His glory is hidden because the lie is spread successfully that men can get on without Him...
 - It seems that He is the sort of God that it doesn't really matter what we do or how we live or whether we worship Him...
 - But the day of the Lord is the day when His glory is revealed because we see that it really does matter!
 - We see, by His punishment, how wrong Babylon has been!
 - We see how wrong **we** have been, for we have all shared in sin!
 - The sinfulness of our sin is revealed and so is the glory of God!
- c. But my brothers and sisters, you need to see the sinfulness of sin now in the cross of Jesus Christ!
- You need to see that the God we have offended is such a God that our sin matters more than all the world...
 - It matters so much that it could not be atoned for apart from the death of our dear Saviour who is the very Son of God!
 - If **He** had to suffer the pain and shame of the cross to atone for it,
 - what will those who do not come to Him have to face on account of their sin?
 - God will be glorified.
 - The fierceness of His wrath against Babylon will show how great a God He is who has been offended...
 - I know that many will scoff at this and say that if God were great He would overlook sin...

- But they will not speak so arrogantly when His Day to judge the world comes at last!
- And by the way,
 - you can see how Isaiah moves back and forth from God's judgement of Babylon to His judgement of the entire world at last...
 - The judgement of Babylon in Isaiah's Day is only a forerunner of the final judgement of those who ignore God at the last day.
 - Everything included the created order will be turned upside down...

TRANS> So you see that there is no safety in trusting Babylon because God Himself will destroy her...

- and I want you to see as well that there is no safety in Babylon because...

B. The LORD shows us that His destruction of Babylon is very complete!

1. He says that it will be like the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.
 - a. This is brought out in 13:19—
 - It says that it will be
 - “as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah.”
 - That means that there will be nothing left of it at all...
 - In Isaiah 1:9, Isaiah said that unless the Lord had left a remnant of His people, their destruction would have been like Sodom and Gomorrah.
 - You see, the point is that there will be no remnant of Babylon.
 - b. This is explained in 13:20-22 where we are told that it will be so desolate that the Arabian shepherds will not even pasture their sheep there!
 - All that splendour and all that glory will be taken away!
 - And this is literally what happened to Babylon!
 - There is not a trace of this city left!
 - It is completely destroyed as even the Greek historians testify.

TRANS> How great will be the destruction of Babylon! Babylon the invincible!

2. Isaiah also describes the complete reversal of the king of Babylon's glory and power...
 - a. Look at what he says in chapter 14 of this king who boasted that he would ascend above the heavens and be like the most high...

- Isa 14:12 says,
 - “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!...
 - v. 15—You shall be brought down to Sheol, to the lowest depths of the pit...
 - v. 16—Those who see you will gaze at you, and consider you, saying, “Is this the man who made the earth tremble?”

- b. Isaiah goes on to explain that he will not even be given an honourable burial...
 - an honourable burial was considered a very important thing to a great king in those days...

 - Isaiah explains in verse 18 that all the other lesser kings of the nations would have their tombs and a glorious place for their bodies to sleep...
 - But that the king of Babylon will be cast out of his grave like an abominable branch—like a corpse trodden under foot...

 - And if you look back in verse 11, you see that a terrible picture of his reversal is given...
 - 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.

 - Look at this new bed for this great king who was accustomed to fine music and great pomp!
 - He will be laid upon a bed made up of maggots and will have flesh eating worms as his only blanket!
 - How Lucifer—this one who brought light by his appearing... is fallen!
 - From a bed of luxury to bed of worms that will eat his flesh to the bone!
 - What a smelly, disgusting, shameful end for the one who thought He would rise to God’s throne in heaven!

 - c. How death brings perspective to us!
 - Death teaches us that we are not gods!
 - We were made of dust and we shall all return to dust!
 - Death teaches us that the king of Babylon is not God!
 - He is made of dust and he shall also return to dust!
 - His pomp is brought down to Sheol...
 - Babylon is no safe place to put your trust!

- Babylon's confidence has no basis.
 - She will not be as God, she will be in Sheol!
 - laying upon a bed of maggots with a blanket of worms.
 - Who is this that thought he could exalt his throne above the stars of God!
 - He will have no city, no tomb, and,
 - as I want to show you next,
 - no progeny.
3. The destruction of Babylon will be so complete that even her children will be destroyed in day of God's wrath...
- The fact of this is stated in 13:16—
 - Isa 13:16: Their children also will be dashed to pieces before their eyes; Their houses will be plundered And their wives ravished.
 - This is a hard truth that tests us as to what we really believe about our sin...
 - For the reality is that we are all conceived and born in sin.
 - We come into the world as vile enemies of God who are under the wrath and curse of God from our first day...
 - The wickedness of Babylon is so great that even her infants fall under the destroying sword of the LORD.
 - They are not innocent, else they would not be dashed to pieces.
 - We are all sinners, you see, by our very nature—to the very core of what we are.
 - Therefore, when God's wrath falls upon Babylon, it also falls upon Babylon's children.
 - This is why when we are redeemed, the Lord tells us that His promise is to us and to our children...
 - This is why Abraham was commanded to give his children the sign of the covenant—circumcision—
 - to mark them out as those whom God counts to be among His people.
 - But the children of Babylon will perish with their parents.
 - We need to see the horrible reality of our sin.
 - It destroys us and our children unless we repent.
 - Babylon is no safe place for either you or your children!

4. All that we have seen about God's judgement of Babylon is summarised for us in 14:22-23...

- Look at what the Lord says He will do to Babylon:
 - Isa 14:22-23: "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. 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."
 - That covers all the reasons we have seen that there is no safety in Babylon...
 - Because God Himself will rise up against them...
 - Because God will cut them completely off so that there is no remnant, no posterity, and no city.
 - And to this is added the picture of our great God with a broom of destruction, sweeping them out of the world!
 - There He is from on high, looking down at their little palaces of ivory and gold, looking at their little armies and their little thrones—
 - and seeing how filthy they have become,
 - and like a woman with a broom, sweeping them off the face of the earth to make it a place that is fit for habitation...
 - Matthew Henry said:
 - "When a people have nothing among them but dirt and filth, and will not be made clean with the broom of reformation, what can they expect but to be swept off the face of the earth with the broom of destruction?"
 - Someone will object and say,
 - But this is not dirt—these are people!
 - Indeed, and that is what makes it worse...
 - Filth is bad and it is to be swept out—
 - But when men and women become filthy, they are guilty filth!
 - Guilty filth is worse than filth.

TRANS> Make no mistake, the day of the Lord will surely come...

- Do not trust in Babylon or you will be swept away with them...
 - Babylon, despite all her glory and confidence and intimidation is no safe place to trust.

III. And now lastly I want you to see that in judging Babylon, the LORD is merciful to His people!

- Even though Babylon rises up strong and proud from time to time in this world,
 - be certain that the Lord will never forget His mercy to you who trust in Him, for you are His people.
 - Babylon attempts to make herself blessed,
 - but we who love Christ look to Him to bless us and our children.
- In the middle of all this talk about God's judgement of Babylon,
 - A. Our Gracious Lord tells us that He will still choose Jacob.
 - Look with me at Isaiah 14:1. It says:
 - Isa 14:1: For the LORD will have mercy on Jacob, and will still choose Israel, and settle them in their own land.
 - 1. These words are to encourage us through the times when we are brought low by God's hand of chastisement—when He raises up Babylon to chasten us.
 - a. Remember the circumstances here...
 - The LORD had to cast his people out of the land because of their sin...
 - He had to raise up Babylon because Israel had spurned His covenant.
 - They who had been given the promises and the covenants and the law had not come and lapped up His grace with gratitude but had become cold and indifferent—
 - They had turned to false gods and had cast away His law...
 - That is why God had raised up Assyria and then Babylon.
 - b. But here He graciously tells His people that this is not the end of them!
 - They will not perish in Babylon!
 - No!
 - The Lord will remember His mercy to Jacob...
 - Jacob—the one God chose to have mercy on when His brother Esau was rejected...
 - not because of anything that Jacob had done, but for the glory of His mercy.
 - c. In those dark times when Babylon seems so strong and so glorious and so successful...
 - and when they laugh at us for trusting in the Lord...

- It is then that we must remember that God will never forget His mercy to us...
 - Our unfaithfulness will not eclipse His mercy!
 - We must look to Him in hope and assurance and the God who will ever be faithful to His covenant.
 - He will restore to us the joy of our salvation...
 - He will bring us back to the land of fellowship with Himself.
2. Isn't it marvellous the way He says that He will settle us in the land and that strangers will join us and cling to the house of Jacob...
- As we go through the times when His hand is heavy upon us,
 - It is only with this in mind—
 - that He will bring us out again that we may be near to Him and serve Him and that He may bring others with us.
 - He does not send His people to exile to destroy them, but that they might be saved...
 - Oh yes, the false sons among them are certainly destroyed—they are swallowed up by Babylon when Babylon rises...
 - They are drawn away and enticed because they were only pretending to be God's people...
 - But the rise Babylon only strengthens and purifies the true remnant...
 - And the persecutions that fall on them give them an opportunity to show the world that their faith is real...
 - And when that happens, God calls many out of the world to come and join them.
 - God does not forget us when He raises up Babylon...
 - He remembers us!

TRANS> And we must know that His mercy will be seen in the eventual destruction of Babylon...

B. We will be freed from all the oppression of Babylon.

1. We may have to wait long, but we will be delivered in time...
 - Look at 14:3-4...
 - Isa 14:3-4: 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, that you will take up this proverb against the king of Babylon, and say: "How the oppressor has ceased, The golden city ceased!"

- God gave these words of Babylon's destruction before they went into captivity and 200 years before that destruction fell...
 - He did this for the same reason that He told Abraham of the 400 years his posterity would spend in bondage in Egypt...
 - So they would know that He had a plan and that He would indeed deliver them.
- You will say to me,
 - But what comfort is that if you are only at year 300 and know that you will die in bondage to Egypt?
 - It is the comfort that God has a plan to bring about your salvation according to His promise...
 - That even after you are dead, He will accomplish His promise and will complete all that He has spoken...
 - for the benefit of all of us who are His covenant people.
 - You see, all this is much bigger than one generation that is delivered from Babylon or from Egypt...
 - This is God's promise that He will at last free us from all the oppression of Babylon and her King—even Satan...
 - That He will cast Babylon and her king into Hell and that we will serve Him forever in His eternal house.

2. We will have complete peace in the kingdom of God!

Conclusion:

So don't be deceived by Babylon!

- There is no doubt that God is chastening the church today.
 - People no longer fear God in our land and they mock us for fearing Him.
 - Nothing seems to happen to them.
 - But just wait.
 - Your relationship to the true God is not irrelevant.
 - It matters.
 - You cannot succeed if you ignore Him...
 - If you embrace Babylon's morals instead of His...
 - If you embrace Babylon's philosophy instead of His...

- If you embrace Babylon's hope instead of His...
- Jesus Christ came to die on the cross and until you come to turn from your own way to embrace Him as your Lord and Saviour,
 - you embrace death and destruction and Hell...
 - Whatever success you may have now,
 - you will end up on a bed of worms with a blanket of worms and no one to comfort you.
- How thankful we should be for Jesus Christ!
 - What an excellent Saviour He is—that He should come and bear the very shame that the king of Babylon had to bear in our place!
 - Come to Him with zeal and serve Him with gladness all the days of your life.
 - You will indeed have to bear much tribulation in this life,
 - but be of cheer, He has overcome the world!
 - You will never be ashamed if you follow Him!