

Historically Rooted Oracles Against the Nations

Isaiah 13—23

13:1—14:27 <u>Babylon</u> + <u>Assyria</u> (14:24-27)	21:1-10 <u>Babylon</u>
Isaiah uses an initial fulfillment of the fall of <i>Assyria</i> (14:24-27) to prove the greater, future prediction that historical <i>Babylon</i> also will fall (13:17-18), and after historical Babylon, an eschatological Babylon as well on the day of the Lord (13:1-13).	The <i>Babylon</i> of Isaiah 21 is not the Babylon of Nabopolassar, Nebuchadnezzar and his descendants, but the Babylon one century older, still an unruly vassal of Assyria. Isaiah 21 describes the unsuccessful rebellion of Babylon from Assyria under Merodach-Baladan with the help of Elam (21:2) which was eventually put down by Sennacherib in 702 (v. 9).
14:28—16:5 <u>Smaller neighboring states</u> Philistia (14:28-32) Moab (15—16)	21:11-17 <u>Small neighboring states</u> Dumah (21:11-12) = Edom Arabia (21:13-17)
After Judah rejected <i>Philistine</i> appeals for an anti-Assyrian alliance (14:32), Philistia rejoiced over Judah's vassalage under Ahaz (v. 29) but will itself be devastatingly defeated by Assyria in 701 (v. 31). After an equally devastating attack on <i>Moab</i> by Assyria (15:1-16:2), Moab sent messengers to Judah pleading for the admittance of refugees (16:3-4). Isaiah's cryptically responds that Assyria is only a temporary foe (v. 4), but the throne of David will endure forever (v. 5).	<i>Edom</i> seeks for good news that Assyria has let up its assault (21:11), but receives bad news that Assyria's heavy hand is unwavering (21:12). Fugitives from a defeat by Assyria will flee into the deserts of <i>Arabia</i> (21:13-15), but within one year these Arabian tribes will also be finished off by Assyria (21:16-17).
17 <u>Damascus</u> (Aram) and <u>Israel</u>	22 <u>Judah</u>
It is unsurprising that Damascus (17:1), capital of <i>Syria</i>, should be linked together in an oracle with the 'glory of <i>Jacob</i>' (v. 4) as they formed the Syro-Ephraimite coalition against both Assyria and Judah. They both will be destroyed (vv. 1-3), but hope is held out for both as well after judgment (v. 3). Isaiah makes an interesting shift to Judah in 17:12-14, where he anticipates God's deliverance of Judah from Sennacherib in 701.	Assyria's siege of <i>Jerusalem</i> is devastating (22:8-11), but instead of repentance (22:12), the people are drinking wine (22:13).
18—20 <u>Ethiopia</u> (18), <u>Egypt</u> (19), both (20)	23 <u>Tyre</u> (trading partner of <i>Egypt</i>, 23:3, 5)
<i>Cush</i>, like Philistia and Syro-Ephraimaim, also sought a military alliance with Judah (18:1-2), and are turned back for the same reason Philistia was rebuffed, God will defeat the Assyrians in His own time without their help (vv. 2-6). Isaiah then jumps to the eschatological future, when Cush would bring tribute into Zion (v. 7). Isaiah went to desperate lengths to convince Hezekiah not to ally with <i>Egypt</i> (20:2-6). They, like Cush, would form strong future ties with eschatological Judah (19:16-25).	The seventy-year exile of <i>Tyre</i> (23:15) likely began in 701 when Assyria installed Ethbaal III over Tyre and halted its mercantile prostitution. Tyre was restored to its maritime import/export dominance around 630 when Assyria began to decline in power (v. 15).