Motivation: Judgement, judgement, judgement! After proclaiming judgement on Israel, Judah and Aram in chapters 7-12, Isaiah now turns to the surrounding nations. Typically, we don’t like to read of judgement because it implies that we too will be judged by God. However, because Christ took our judgement for sin upon Himself, Christians are redeemed rather than condemned. (2 Corinthians 5:21)

I. ☼ Song of Trust (12:1-6)

A. ☼ Time “On that day” (12:1) points to the joy realized in the age of the Messiah. Compare this to Moses' song of praise in Exodus. 15:1-18. HCSB, p. 1148, 12:1 “On that day points to a future date. That date is unspecified, but is a day that will certainly come. Up to this point in the text, the phrase has been used in reference to the coming judgment (2:20; 3:18; 4:1; 7:18, 20-21, 23), but now it points to the time after the storm, the time of salvation.”

B. ☼ Trust “God is my salvation; I will trust Him and not be afraid” (12:2) A primary weapon of Satan is fear which leads to discouragement. 1 John 4:18 reminds us “There is no fear in love; instead, perfect love drives out fear…”

C. ☼ Testimony “Give thanks to Yahweh; proclaim His name! Celebrate His works among the peoples. Declare that His name is exalted...Let this be known throughout the earth.” (12:4-5) HCSB, p. 1148, 12:4 “The praise of God serves as a testimony not just within God’s people, but also to the nations. They were also recipients of God’s blessing through Abraham’s descendants (Gn 12:1-13).”
II. Judgement of Babylon (13:1-14:23)

A. Accusation “an oracle against Babylon” (13:1) HCSB, p. 1148, 13:1 “Oracle (Hb massa; lit 'burden') is often used in the context of judgment pronouncements against the nations. This is a “war oracle,” a declaration of war. Babylon is the object, which is surprising since Babylon was not the major player on the world scene in Isaiah’s time. But Babylon will play a major role in the judgment of God’s people in Judah. Babylon represented cultural arrogance and human self-reliance.”

B. Army “The Lord of Hosts is mobilizing an army for war. They are coming from a far land…” (13:4b-5a) Prophecy involves stating future events as present certainties. The fact-checking for God’s prophecy is 100% true (Deuteronomy 18:20) because He knows the beginning and the end (Isaiah 46:10). The army in this reference is the Medo-Persian force led by Cyrus that conquered Babylon in 539BC (13:17)

C. Abandoned “It will never be inhabited or lived in from generation to generation” (13:20, Jer. 50:13, 30). Many ancient cities were destroyed and rebuilt 20 or 30 times on the same site. Babylon was in a very defensible spot in the heart of the fertile crescent. At the height of her power Babylon was considered invincible. Yet both Isaiah and Jeremiah prophesied that Babylon would be destroyed and never inhabited again. For a major city along a fertile waterway, Babylon would be expected to be rebuilt. The modern city of Baghdad is only fifty miles to the north. Yet to this day, Babylon is a ruin visited only by soldiers and tourists. Two men in history have arranged grandiose plans to rebuild and inhabit Babylon: 1) Alexander the Great, who died shortly thereafter and Saddam Hussein whose plans were terminated by Operation Desert Storm.

III. Prophecy of a Restored Judah (14:1-2) HCSB, p. 1150, 14:1-2 “An oracle anticipating the restoration of God’s people appears in the midst of the oracle against Babylon. While this seems awkward, Babylon’s fall correlates with the rise of a restored Judah. Indeed, this restoration provides the context for the taunt song against Babylon’s king in verses 4-21.”
IV. Judgement of the King of Babylon (14:3-23)

The king of Babylon stands as a type of the enemy of God’s people, the chief of which is Satan. In this regard, this passage could parallel Luke 10:18 and Revelation 12:8-9. Some of the commonalities include a destination of hell (9, 15), fallen from heaven (12), proud in the heavenlies (13-14), and an enemy of God (22-23).

V. Judgement of Assyria (14:24-32) Assyria has been judged by some historians to be the first terrorist empire. Their reputation was one of brutality, intimidation, and wholesale slaughter. HCSB, p. 1151, 14:24-27 “The oracle shifts focus to the northern center of Mesopotamian power, Assyria.

Assyria was the nation that under Tiglath-pileser III reduced the size of the northern kingdom of Israel in the 730’s B.C. and then in 722, under Shalmaneser, deported its citizens. But God will bring even this strong kingdom to an end.” 14:24

“On a human level Assyria seemed invincible, but God assured His people of His determination to judge the Assyrian people.”

VI. Judgement against Surrounding Nations (14:28-18:7)

HCSB, p.1152, 14:28-32 “The oracle against Philistia is the first in a series of oracles against nations that were immediate neighbors of Israel. Indeed, Philistia occupied part of the promised land in a region west of Jerusalem and on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. The book of Genesis records interaction between the patriarchs and the Philistines (Gn 10:14; 21:32, 34), but it was not until the period of the united monarchy that we hear of a sizeable presence of Philistines in the region. Both Saul and David waged war against them. A remnant of Philistines lasted until the sixth century (Jr 47).”

A. Philistia (14:28-32) HCSB, p. 1152, 14:29 “Debate surrounds the exact reference to the figurative language of this verse, but the broken rod may be a reference not to a particular king but to weakness in Assyria, perhaps in the period after Sargon II took the throne. However, the warning is that, though apparently weak, Assyria is not done. From its slumber will come a flying serpent against Philistia. Under Sennacherib, Esar-haddon, and Ashurbanipal, Assyria did experience a major
B. Moab (15:1-16:14) A Messianic prophecy is contained in 16:5: HCSB, p. 1153, 16:5
“The oracle evokes the picture of a just descendant of David
ruling on the throne forever
. The language is a reminder of the Davidic covenant in 2 Sm 7:12-16 (cp. Is 7:7; 11:1-9), and it hints at the expectation of the Messiah.”

C. Damascus (17:1-3) HCSB, p. 1154, 17:1-3 “The next oracle is directed against Damascus,
an ancient city and the capital of Syria. From the time of Solomon (1 Kg 11:23-25) to the mid-eighth century, there was fighting between Israel and Syria. Isaiah 7 describes how Isaiah encouraged Ahaz of Judah to resist the threat of a Syrian-Ephraimite alliance. Assyria under Tiglath-Pileser III absorbed Damascus into its growing empire.”

D. Israel (17:4-11) Israel will become an emaciated body (4), grain gathered by a reaper (5), and a harvested olive tree leaving only a remnant. (6). Following judgement, the people ‘will turn their eyes to the Holy One of Israel’ (7).
HCSB, p. 1154,
17:7-8 “On that day (v. 4) points to a time beyond the judgment. Indeed, the judgment of God will cause the remnant to turn from false worship to the worship of the true God who created them. Asherah was a Canaanite goddess of love and war. The plural form (Asherahs) signifies that the reference is to wooden poles or trees associated with her worship.”

VII. Judgement of Ethiopia (18:1-7) HCSB, p. 1156, 18:7 “The Ethiopians (Cushites),
described as a tall and
smooth-skinned
people (v. 2), are pictured as bringing tribute. This is a sign of their submission to God’s temple on Zion after the judgment.”
VIII. Judgement of Egypt (19:1-25) The altar and pillar in Egypt (19:19) await the restoration of God’s rule by the Messiah (19:24). Chapter 20 warns Israel that Ethiopia nor Egypt will provide allies against Assyria.

IX. Judgment Against Babylon, Dumah and Arabia (21:1-17)


B. The Message to the Edomites (21:11-12) Dumah is a region of Edom (Idumea) The doom of Edom is dawning. The nation should turn to God.

C. The Message of God to Arabia (21:13-17) Although the tribes shall escape total destruction, God will still exact judgment on them. Only a few will survive.

X. Judgement against Jerusalem and Her Leaders (22:1-25)

While Jerusalem is a ‘Valley of Vision’ (1) and a ‘jubilant town’ (2), her leaders, Shebna (15-19) and Eliakim (20-25) will ultimately fail.

XI. Judgement against Tyre (23:1-7)

HCSB, p. 1161, 23:1 “Tyre was the southernmost major city of Phoenicia. It was a wealthy city, due to its development and control of sea trade. As an island city (with overflow population living on the mainland) its major port was easily protected. Tyre had established a trading colony on Tarshish, thought to be in what is a modern Spain (Tartessus). The ships of Tarshis were particularly impressive, since they traveled so far between Tyre and Iberia. The destruction of Tyre prophetically described in the oracle is difficult to pin down from the description made here. In the latter part of the eighth century and
the early seventh century B.C., the Assyrians tried to take Tyre a number of times. However, the oracle may also look forward to Nebuchadnezzar’s attack on Tyre (including a thirteen-year siege) in the sixth century and perhaps even to the final destruction of Tyre by Alexander the Great in 332 B.C.  

Cyprus was a large island about 75 miles west of Tyre and would have been the last port of call before reaching Tyre."

XII. God is Just (23:8-12)

"Who planned this against Tyre, the bestower of crowns, whose traders are princes, whose merchants are the honored ones of the earth?  

The Lord of Hosts planned it,  
to desecrate all its glorious beauty,  
to disgrace all the honored ones of the earth.  

Overflow your land like the Nile, daughter of Tarshish;  
there is no longer anything to restrain you.  

He stretched out His hand over the sea;  
He made kingdoms tremble.  

He said,  
“You will not rejoice anymore,  
ravished young woman, daughter of Sidon.  
Get up and cross over to Cyprus—  
even there you will have no rest!”

(23:8-12)

HCSB,  
p. 1162,  
23:9  
“In answer to the question of verse 8, the oracle proclaims that the One who planned the fall of the magnificent city of Tyre was none other than the Lord of Hosts. Thus, this oracle continues the teaching that God is sovereign over all nations.”
XIII. God is Active (23:13-14)

“13 Look at the land of the Chaldeans— a people who no longer exist. Assyria destined it for desert creatures. They set up their siege towers and stripped its palaces. They made it a ruin.

14 Wail, ships of Tarshish, because your fortress is destroyed!”

(23:13-14) In the 8th century, the Chaldeans rebelled against Assyria and were destroyed. Isaiah predicts that a similar fate awaits Tyre.

XIV. God is Honored (23:15-18)

“15 On that day Tyre will be forgotten for 70 years—the life span of one king. At the end of 70 years, what the song says about the prostitute will happen to Tyre: Pick up your lyre, troll through the city, prostitute forgotten by men. Play skillfully, sing many a song, and you will be thought of again.

17 And at the end of the 70 years, the Lord will restore Tyre and she will go back into business, prostituting herself with all the kingdoms of the world on the face of the earth.

18 But her profits and wages will be dedicated to the Lord. They will not be stored or saved, for her profit will go to those who live in the Lord’s presence, to provide them with ample food and sacred clothing.”

(23:15-18) The 70 years parallels the exile of Judah. Since Tyre’s wealth was built upon trade, the image of a prostitute was particularly stinging. Ultimately God will be honored by Tyre’s profits going to the priests of Israel.
Application:

1. God is Sovereign over all nations.

2. God judges sin wherever it is found.

3. God's Word is reliable as proved by prophecy, inerrant, infallible and true with no mixture of error.


Biblical Illustrator: p. 10 ‘Merchants and Traders’

Notes: **You may access David’s Lesson Preview in MP3 format at: www.hfbcbiblestudy.org**

Dates: **In the midst of COVID, calendared events continue to be under review, check with your ministry office for updates**