

Babylon, “The Lady of Kingdoms” (Isa. 47:5)

“The Burden of Babylon” (Isa. 13:1)

The term “Babylon” has become synonymous with all that is worldly, wicked, and luxurious. Although it is used as a symbol and type throughout many books of scripture, Isaiah’s prophecies and pronouncements concerning it have perhaps laid the foundation for all that has been written afterwards. It is important to note that when we read of “Babylon,” it usually has both a literal and a spiritual meaning. Babylon was once a military and governing power that had tremendous influence over the nations. The Assyrian Empire admired its ideals and philosophies, and then fell to it, as did the kingdom of Judah. King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon had a famous dream prompted by his worries as to how long his empire would last, and who would follow him on the throne (see Dan. 2). He was right to be worried: although Babylon lives on in infamy, its empire ruled for less than 150 years. Although it was short-lived, the Lord and His prophets continue to use Babylon as the symbol for the antithesis of Zion. Latter-day scripture still warns that we must flee Babylon:

Go ye out from among the nations, even from Babylon,
from the midst of wickedness, which is spiritual Babylon (D&C 133:14).

Chapter 13 of Isaiah is addressed as “the burden of Babylon” (Isa. 13:1), as Isaiah foresaw its rise and destruction. The footnote for the verse in the KJV states “‘Burden’ as used in Isaiah is a message of doom ‘lifted up’ against a people.”

Isaiah’s warnings to Babylon regarding its fall are both literal and spiritual; just as his prophecy regarding its literal fall was fulfilled, so also will be the prophecy regarding the fall of the World or Satan’s kingdom (also called Babylon) in the latter-days.

Victor Ludlow outlines chapters 13 and 14 as follows:

- I. The fall of Babylon (13:1-22,14:1-23)
 - A. introduction (13:1)
 - B. The Lord gathers His forces (13:2-5)
 - C. The Lord brings His power against (spiritual) Babylon (13:6-13)
 - D. The Lord brings the Medes against (physical) Babylon (13:14-22)
 - B. The Lord will be merciful to Israel (14:1-3)
 - C. A taunt song against the king of (spiritual) Babylon (14:4-21)
 - D. The destruction of (physical) Babylon (14:22-23)
- II. The fall of Assyria (14:24-27)
- III. The fall of Philistia (14:28-32)

The following historical background on Babylon is taken from the *CES Old Testament Institute Manual*, pp. 231-33.

(G-1) Babylon: Symbol of Worldly Splendor

Not many years after Assyria had conquered the Northern Kingdom of Israel and taken the ten tribes captive, the empire began to crumble. In the southern part of the empire, the Chaldeans and Babylonians were in the ascendancy, and they quickly seized power from the toppling Assyrians. In 609 B.C., King Nabopolassar, in league with Egypt and Media, attacked and conquered Nineveh, the capital of Assyria. Babylonia became the ruling empire and set about to consolidate its position. Like Assyria before it, Babylonia used a combination of conquest and deportation of whole populations to do so.

Nebuchadnezzar inherited the empire when his father, Nabopolassar, died. Under Nebuchadnezzar's leadership Babylon reached the summit of its greatness and glory. Using slaves from various areas of the empire, Nebuchadnezzar inaugurated a massive building program and quickly made Babylon the greatest city in the world. Through conquest and commerce, the wealth of the world flowed into Babylon's treasury, and Nebuchadnezzar used that wealth to glorify the city. The descriptive phrases found in the prophetic writings of the Old Testament describe Babylon's glory. Daniel called it "this great Babylon" (Daniel 4:30); Jeremiah described it as "the praise of the whole earth" (Jeremiah 51:41); Isaiah said it was "the lady of kingdoms" (Isaiah 47:5), "the glory of kingdoms," and "the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency" (Isaiah 13:19).

Ancient historians spoke in detail of Babylon and showed that such descriptive phrases were not exaggerations. A modern scholar wrote that present-day archaeology supports the incredible claims of these writers:

"Herodotus claimed that this wall was eighty-four feet wide and three hundred and thirty-six feet high. He also claimed that small one-story houses were built on the top of the wall on either side, and there was even then space enough between the houses to permit four chariots to drive abreast.

"Herodotus has fared badly at the hands of modern critics, but in this instance the explorers found that this work of antiquity was even larger than he claimed. The outer retaining wall was twenty-three and a half feet thick and was made of baked bricks laid with asphalt. Inside of this there was a filling of sand and gravel which extended sixty-nine feet, and then the inner retaining wall, which was forty-four feet thick. The whole structure, therefore, was one hundred and thirty-six and a half feet wide. They also verified the statement of Diodorus to the effect that many of the bricks of the wall and its citadels were beautifully colored." (Samuel Fallows, ed., *The Popular and Critical Bible Encyclopedia and Scriptural Dictionary*, s.v. "Babylon," pp. 208–9.)

These massive walls encircled the entire city, running an estimated fifty-six miles, about fourteen miles on each side (see Merrill F. Unger, *Unger's Bible Dictionary*, s.v. "Babylon," p. 116). The walls were not the only amazing structure in Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar married a Persian princess named Amytis. Raised in the mountain highlands around Ecbatana, she found the arid plains of Babylon depressing. Nebuchadnezzar set about to create a mountain paradise within the walls of Babylon to help his wife feel more at home. Thus were built the famous hanging gardens of Babylon, ranked as one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. The sheer size of the undertaking staggers the imagination. Fallows wrote:

"Babylon was all flat; and to accomplish so extravagant a desire an artificial mountain was reared, 400 feet on each side, while terraces one above another rose to a height that

overtopped the walls of the city, that is, above 300 feet in elevation. The ascent from terrace to terrace was made by corresponding flights of steps, while the terraces themselves were reared to their various stages on ranges of regular piers, which, forming a kind of vaulting, rose in succession one over the other to the required height of each terrace, the whole being bound together by a wall of 22 feet in thickness. The level of each terrace or garden was then formed in the following manner: the top of the piers was first laid over with flat stones, 16 feet in length and 4 feet in width; on these stones were spread beds of matting, then a thick layer of bitumen; after which came two courses of bricks, which were covered with sheets of solid lead. The earth was heaped on this platform; and in order to admit the roots of large trees, prodigious hollow piers were built and filled with mold. From the Euphrates, which flowed close to the foundation, water was drawn up by machinery. The whole, says Q. Curtius (v:5), had, to those who saw it from a distance, the appearance of woods overhanging mountains. Such was the completion of Nebuchadnezzar's work when he found himself at rest in his house, and flourished in his palace. The king spoke and said, 'Is not this great Babylon that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and the honor of my majesty'? [Daniel 4:30], a picture which is amply justified by the descriptions of heathen writers. Nowhere could the king have taken so comprehensive a view of the city he had so magnificently constructed and adorned as when walking on the highest terrace of the gardens of his palace." (*Bible Encyclopedia*, s.v. "Babylon," pp. 204–5.)

(G-2) Babylon: Symbol of Worldly Wickedness

As so often happens, Babylon's wealth and glory were accompanied by moral decay, wickedness, and iniquity. So terrible were the morals of Babylon that the very name became the symbol for worldliness, spiritual wickedness, and Satan's kingdom. It is "the great whore" (Revelation 17:1); "the mother of harlots and abominations" (Revelation 17:5; see also D&C 133:14; 1:16; 13:5-9). The secular historians give information that helps to explain why the prophets used the name *Babylon* to symbolize the antithesis of godliness. Will Durant wrote that "even Alexander, who was not above dying of drinking, was shocked by the morals of Babylon" (*Our Oriental Heritage*, The Story of Civilization, vol. 1, p. 244).

Fallows also described the great city: "Babylon, as the center of a great kingdom, was the seat of boundless luxury, and its inhabitants were notorious for their addiction to self-indulgence and effeminacy. Q. Curtius (v:l) asserts that, 'nothing could be more corrupt than its morals, nothing more fitted to excite and allure to immoderate pleasures. The rites of hospitality were polluted by the grossest and most shameless lusts. Money dissolved every tie, whether of kindred, respect, or esteem. The Babylonians were very greatly given to wine, and the enjoyments which accompany inebriety. Women were present at their convivialities, first with some degree of propriety, but, growing worse and worse by degrees, they ended by throwing off at once their modesty and their clothing.' On the ground of their awful wickedness the Babylonians were threatened with [appropriate] punishment, through the mouths of the prophets; and the tyranny with which the rulers of the city exercised their sway was not without a decided effect in bringing on them the terrific consequences of the Divine vengeance. Nor in the whole range of literature is there anything to be found approaching to the sublimity, force, and terror with which Isaiah and others speak on this painful subject [Isaiah 14:2; 47:1; Jeremiah 51:39 5:1]." (*Bible Encyclopedia*, s.v. "Babylon," pp. 205–6.)

The Lord Assembles His Armies to Fight Against Babylon

Because Isaiah's writings are complex, both literal and symbolic, there are many study guides and helps for discerning his prophecies. For each of us, we may derive particular principles and "lessons" for our individual lives that vary with each reading. This is similar to our temple experience, where every time we attend, we may come away with a different personal application for the day. The Spirit is our essential guide as we ponder the writings of Isaiah, and ask the Lord what He would have us understand.

The following table represents some of the various translations of the first five verses of chapter 13. KJV = King James Bible, Parry = *Understanding Isaiah*, Parry and Parry, Ludlow = *Isaiah, Prophet, Seer and Poet*, Ludlow [Ludlow uses the TEV Today's English Version for the following verses], CJB = *Complete Jewish Bible*, Stern.

You will note how each translation may change the emphasis, and clarify or blur a specific interpretation as you read. The "right" answer may be difficult to determine, and you may achieve more from considering all of the translations together, and allowing yourself to embrace multiple interpretations.

KJV	Parry	Ludlow TEV	CJB
The burden of Babylon, which Isaiah the son of Amoz did see.	The burden of Babylon, which Isaiah the son of Amoz did see.	This is a message about Babylon, which Isaiah son of Amoz received from God.	This is the prophecy about Bavel, which Yesha'yahu the son of Amoz saw;
Lift ye up a banner upon the high mountain, exalt the voice unto them, shake the hand, that they may go into the gates of the nobles.	Lift ye up [my] banner upon the high mountain, exalt the voice unto them, [wave] the hand, that they may go into the gates of the nobles.	On the top of a barren hill raise the battle flag! Shout to the soldiers and raise your arm as the signal for them to attack the gates of the proud city.	Hoist a banner on a high mountain, shout to [the invaders]; beckon them to enter the Nobles' Gate,
I have commanded my sanctified ones, I have also called my mighty ones for mine anger, even them that rejoice in my highness 2 Ne. 23 changes this to "for mine anger is not upon them that rejoice"	I have commanded my sanctified ones, I have also called my mighty ones, for mine anger [is not upon them] that rejoice in my highness.	The Lord has called out his proud and confident soldiers to fight a holy war and punish those he is angry with.	"I have ordered my holy ones, summoned my heroes, eager and bold, to execute my anger."
The noise of a multitude in the mountains, like as of a great people; a tumultuous noise of the kingdoms of nations gathered together: the Lord of hosts mustereth the host of the battle.	The noise of [the] multitude in the mountains like as of a great people, a tumultuous noise of the kingdoms of nations gathered together, the Lord of Hosts mustereth the hosts of the battle.	Listen to the noise on the mountains - the sound of a great crowd of people, the sound of nations and kingdoms gathering. The Lord of Armies is preparing his troops for battle.	Listen! a tumult on the mountains - it sounds like a vast multitude! Listen! The uproar of the kingdoms of the nations gathering together! Adonai-Tzva'ot is mustering an army for war.
They come from a far country, from the end of heaven, even the Lord, and the weapons of his indignation, to destroy the whole land.	They come from a far country, from the end of heaven, [yea] the Lord, and the weapons of his indignation, to destroy the whole land.	They are coming from far-off countries at the ends of the earth. In his anger the Lord is coming to devastate the whole country.	They come from a distant land, from beyond the horizon. It's Adonai, with the weapons of his rage, to lay waste to all the earth.

The Parry brothers in their book *Understanding Isaiah*, give the following interpretations for verses 1-5:

13:2 banner: The *banner* also means "ensign," which is found earlier in 5:26 and 11:10. Anciently, Israel's families and clans gathered with their own banner around the temple of Jehovah (Num. 2:2; Mosiah 2:5-6). Similarly, members of God's kingdom of this dispensation will figuratively lift up the gospel banner upon the mountain 18:3, 30:17), which symbolizes the temple, and the nations of the earth will seek after it.

high mountain. A symbolic reference to the temple.

exalt the voice unto them. This is the “voice of warning” that shall be raised “unto all people, by the mouths of [the Lord’s] disciples” (D&C 1:4). Also, “And let your preaching be the warning voice, every man to his neighbor” (D&C 38:41).

wave the hand. To *wave the hand* is to beckon or extend an invitation to another.

gates of the nobles. Possibly a symbolic reference to the entrance into Zion or to the temple’s portals.

13:3 *my sanctified ones.* Jehovah’s *sanctified ones* (Josh. 3:5) are those who are temple worthy, who actually attend the temple, and who are made holy by Christ’s power. In ancient Israel the soldiers prepared for the holy war by participating in holy rituals connected with the temple (Deut. 23:10-15). In this dispensation, Jesus Christ’s soldiers (members of the Church) prepare for the battle against Babylon by participating in temple rituals.

my mighty ones. This phrase can read “my warriors.” The saints are warriors who battle against evil forces under Jehovah’s direction, using his weapons (13:5).

rejoice in my highness. Jesus is the “Son of the Highest” (Luke 1:32), and God is “the highest of all” (D&C 76:70). *Highness* refers to the Lord’s exaltation.

13:4 *noise of the multitude . . . nations gathered together.* The word *noise* in this verse may also be translated “voice,” such as in “the voice of many people in the mountains.” Elsewhere Isaiah likens the noise of a great multitude of people to the “noise of the seas” (17:12) and “the rushing of mighty waters” (17:12). The saints, or *multitude*, will gather together from the world’s nations and kingdoms with the intent of building Zion (Matt. 24:30-31; D&C 29:7-11; 45:66-71; 103:22-25).

in the mountains like as a great people. This has reference to the gathering of the Saints in the Rocky Mountains. Joseph Smith prophesied that some of the Saints would “live to go and assist in making settlements and build cities and see the saints become a *mighty people in the midst of the Rocky Mountains.*”¹

Lord of hosts. This title, which may be translated as *Lord of Armies*, is found sixty-two times in Isaiah’s writings. The same title is found in the Doctrine and Covenants as “Lord of Sabaoth” (D&C 87:7; 88:2; 95:7). *Sabaoth* (“hosts”) should not be confused with *Sabbath*.

The Lord’s hosts or armies consist of ancient Israel, which was called “the armies of the living God” (1 Sam. 17:26, 36); the hosts of heaven, also called armies (Dan. 4:35; Rev. 19:14; D&C 88:112); and the latter-day Church, described as being “terrible as an army with banners” (D&C 5:14) and “the army of Israel” (D&C 105:26, 30-31; 109:73). As the Lord’s army, we are equipped with the “whole armor of God” (Eph. 6:11-17; D&C 27:15-18), spiritual armor designed to assist us to use light and truth in the battle against the forces of evil.

¹ *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 255

13:5 *They come from a far country, from the end of heaven.* Those who join the Lord's army will be gathered from all the nations of the earth. "Yea, verily I say unto you again, the time has come when the voice of the Lord is unto you: Go ye out of Babylon; gather ye out from among the nations, from the four winds, from one *end of heaven* to the other" (D&C 133:7; JS-M 1:37; emphasis added). *The end of heaven* may simply suggest the farthest reaches of the earth.

weapons of his indignation. These represent the Lord's heavenly powers. Compare Jeremiah's words, "The Lord hath opened his armory, and hath brought forth the weapons of his indignation" (Jer. 50:25).

To destroy the whole land. Isaiah seems to be saying here that the Lord's valiant servants will successfully battle evil during this time period. A modern revelation adds light to this phrase of Isaiah: "Wherefore, I [the Lord] call upon the weak things of the world, those who are unlearned and despised, to thrash the nations by the power of my Spirit; and their arm shall be my arm, and I will be their shield and their buckler; and I will gird up their loins, and they shall fight manfully for me; and their enemies shall be under their feet; and I will let fall the sword in their behalf, and by the fire of mine indignation will I preserve them" (D&C 35:13-14; 133:58-59).

The Parry brothers offer us an LDS-perspective on the verses. After reading their commentary, I would add three further thought questions:

- 1) How does the war against Babylon relate to the war that was begun in heaven?
- 2) What weapons were used in the war in heaven (see Rev. 12:11)?
- 3) How do the verses support the goals and experiences of attending General Conference (see Isa. 2:2-3; also D&C 115:5-6)?

The Lord's forces are called to gather together to arm themselves for the war against evil, which is symbolized by Babylon. Just like the war that began in heaven, the outcome is foreknown; the Lord will win, but in the meantime, there are moments that it will seem as if the Saints are losing, and even overcome. John's Revelation reveals that it will be "given unto him [Satan] to make war with the Saints, and to overcome them: and power [will be] given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations" (Rev. 13:7). There are those who may become discouraged and fearful, because they were not prepared for these circumstances.

The emphasis on the "heart" during these events is seen throughout many scriptures. On every side, it seems that men's hearts are "failing" them from fear. The Doctrine and Covenants warns that in the last days' "signs of the times" "... all things shall be in commotion; and surely, men's hearts shall fail them; for fear shall come upon all people" (D&C 88:91). We need not fear if we remember that the Lord has promised and reassured us about the ultimate outcome. Isaiah prophesies that if one promise has been fulfilled, we can be sure that the others will be, too. Isaiah likens the prophesied destruction of Babylon (or the world) to the Second Coming. In both cases, we are told that the Lord is aware of His sheep, and that He will preserve a righteous remnant. These prophecies are particularly powerful in light of the fact that Isaiah prophesied of Babylon's rise and fall more than a hundred years before Babylon came to power.

The Fall of Babylon and The Day of the Lord

The footnote for Isaiah 13:1c reads: “The historic destruction of wicked Babylon, prophesied in Isaiah 13 and 14, is made typical of the ultimate destruction of the whole wicked world (D&C 133:14 [5,7,14]).”

Isaiah prophesied in minute detail about the fate of Babylon, and all has been fulfilled. He prophesied that the Medes would come against Babylon, and would not be motivated by silver and gold, but to gain power (Isa. 13:17). Isaiah also prophesied of the Persian king, Cyrus, who would have the famous Babylonian gates opened to him by the God of Israel, Whom Cyrus did not know (Isa. 44:28-45:5; *more to come on Cyrus*). More than 130 years after his prophecy, Darius, the Mede, and Cyrus, the Persian, joined forces to destroy Babylon in approximately 539 BC. Everyone was astonished that the golden city of wonders could fall so easily.

Isaiah further prophesied that Babylon would become desolate, “never to be inhabited,” but a home to “wild beasts” and “doleful creatures” (Isa. 13:19-22). [Note, 2Ne. 23:22 adds: “For I will destroy her speedily; yea, for I will be merciful unto my people, but the wicked shall perish.”] The CES Institute Old Testament manual explains:

Isaiah’s description of Babylon in these verses was literally fulfilled. (Remember that at the time Isaiah wrote, Babylonia was not a world empire.) Under Nebuchadnezzar, Babylonia overthrew Assyria and took over the reins of world power. Nebuchadnezzar undertook a building program which made Babylon one of the most remarkable cities of the ancient world. To predict the total devastation and desolation of such a city was remarkable, for some ancient cities, such as Jerusalem, Damascus, and Jericho, have continued through the centuries and still exist today. But after its conquest by Cyrus, Babylon steadily declined. Several hundred years passed before Babylon was abandoned, but by the first century after Christ it lay deserted and in ruins, and so it has remained. The silent ruins stand as an eloquent witness that Isaiah spoke with divine accuracy. Spiritual Babylon shall likewise become a waste and desolation when God comes upon the world in judgment and ushers in the millennial reign of Christ (see Rev. 18).

In the book of Revelation, John sees a Babylon of a future day that represents a worldly and wicked society. He prophesies that just as ancient Babylon fell so easily in fulfillment of prophecy, so the latter-day Babylon will fall:

And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory.

And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.

For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies.

And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.

For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.

Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works:
in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double.

How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her:
for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow.

Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine;
and she shall be utterly burned with fire:
for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her.

And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her,
shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning.

Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying,
Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city!
for in one hour is thy judgment come.

And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her;
for no man buyeth their merchandise any more:

The merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls,
and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet,
and all thyine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory,
and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble.

And cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense,
and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat,
and beasts and sheep, and horses, and chariots,
and slaves and souls of men.

And the fruits that thy soul lusted after are departed from thee,
and all things which were dainty and goodly are departed from thee,
and thou shalt find them no more at all.

The merchants of these things, which were made rich by her,
shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing.

And saying, Alas, alas, that great city,
that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet,
and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls!

For in one hour so great riches is come to nought.
And every shipmaster, and all the company in ships,
and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off.
And cried when they saw the smoke of her burning,
saying, What city is like unto this great city!

And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing,
saying, Alas, alas, that great city,
wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness!
for in one hour is she made desolate.

Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets;
for God hath avenged you on her (Rev. 18:1-20).

“How Art Thou Fallen . . . Is This the Man Who Made the Earth to Tremble, that Did Shake Kingdoms?” (Isa. 14:12, 16)

The sense of wonder and awe over Babylon’s [double] destruction is evident in both Isaiah’s and John’s writings. How is it possible that a city/empire/world so admired by men, so powerful and rich, could come to naught?

Isaiah had taught in earlier chapters that the leaders of the people had caused them to err (Isa. 3:12). This theme is accentuated again in John’s Revelation, recorded above, and in Isaiah’s “taunt-song” against the king of Babylon, as recorded in Isaiah 14:4-22. Both prophets record the kings’ wonder at Babylon’s collapse, and also point out how the kings seek to separate themselves from their evil ally once she no longer has power.

To repeat John’s words:

And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her,
shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning.

Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying,
Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city!
for in one hour is thy judgment come (Rev. 18:9-10).

Isaiah’s “taunt-song” as recorded in chapter 14 is particularly powerful in revealing the motives of earthly kings who seek for power over their people, as he compares them to the king of all evil, who is Lucifer, or Satan. In Isaiah’s vision, Lucifer, or the king of Babylon, wields great power, and yet is later revealed to be lowly, and covered by worms in death . . . however, even the kings of the earth who were Satan’s tools, are better off than Satan, who does not even have a grave, or a body to be eaten by worms. Just as John records the shock of the kings and merchants who watch Babylon’s destruction, so Isaiah likens the same surprise on behalf of the earthly kings who followed Satan, and are in the end made aware of the fact that he is weaker than they were.

The following table compares the various translations for Isaiah 14:4-20:

KJV	Parry	Ludlow TEV	CJB
Thou shalt take up this proverb against the king of Babylon, and say, How hath the oppressor ceased! the golden city ceased! [2 Nephi 24 adds "And it shall come to pass in that day, that thou shalt take up ..."]	[And it shall come to pass in that day,] that thou shalt take up this proverb against the king of Babylon, and say: How hath the oppressor ceased, the golden city ceased!	When he does this, they are to mock the king of Babylon and say: The cruel king has fallen! He will never oppress anyone again!	You will take up this taunt-song against the king of Babel: At last the oppressor is stilled, his arrogance ended!
The Lord hath broken the staff of the wicked, and the sceptre of the rulers.	The Lord hath broken the staff of the wicked, the scepters of the rulers.	The Lord has ended the power of the evil rulers	Adonai has broken the staff of the wicked, the scepter of the rulers,
He who smote the people in wrath with a continual stroke, he that ruled the nations in anger, is persecuted, and none hindereth.	He who smote the people in wrath with [unceasing blows], he that ruled the nations in anger [with relentless aggression]	who angrily oppressed the peoples and never stopped persecuting the nations they had conquered.	which furiously struck down peoples with unceasing blows, angrily beating down nations with relentless persecution.
The whole earth is at rest, and is quiet: they break forth into singing.	The whole earth is at rest, and is quiet; they forth into singing	Now at last the whole world enjoys rest and peace, and everyone sings for joy.	The whole earth is at rest and quiet. They break into song.
Yea, the fir trees rejoice at thee, and the cedars of Lebanon, saying Since thou art laid down, no feller is come up against us.	Yea, the fir trees rejoice at thee, and [also] the cedars of Lebanon, saying: Since thou art laid down no [woodsman] is come up against us.	The cypress trees and the cedars of Lebanon rejoice over the fallen king, because there is no one to cut them down, now that he is gone!	The cypresses rejoice over you, with the cedars of L'vanon - 'Now that you are laid low, no one comes to cut us down.'
Hell from beneath is moved for thee to meet thee at thy coming: it stirreth up the dead for thee, even all the chief ones of the earth; it hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations.	Hell from beneath is moved for thee to meet thee at thy coming; it stirreth up the dead for thee, even all the chief ones of the earth; it hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations.	The world of the dead is getting ready to welcome the king of Babylon. The ghosts of those who were powerful on earth are stirring about. The ghosts of kings are rising from their thrones.	Sh'ol below is stirred up to meet you when you come. It awakens for you the ghosts of the dead who were leaders on earth; it makes all the kings of the nations arise from their thrones.

KJV	Parry	Ludlow TEV	CJB
All they shall speak and say unto thee, Art thou also become weak as we: art thou become like unto us?	And they shall speak and say unto thee: Art thou also become weak as we? Art thou become like unto us?	They all call out to him, 'Now you are weak as we are! You are one of us!	They all greet you with these words: 'Now you are as weak as we are, you have become like us!
Thy pomp is brought down to the grave, and the noise of thy viols: the worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee.	Thy pomp is brought down to the grave; the noise of thy viols is not heard; the worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee.	You used to be honored with the music of harps, but now here you are in the world of the dead. You lie on a bed of maggots and are covered with a blanket of worms.'	Your pride has been brought down to Sh'ol with the music of your lyres, under you a mattress of maggots, over you a blanket of worms.'
How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!	How <i>art thou</i> fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! <i>Art thou</i> cut down to the ground, which did weaken the nations!	King of Babylon, bright morning star, you have fallen from heaven! In the past you conquered nations, but now you have been thrown to the ground.	"How did you come to fall from the heavens, morning star, son of the dawn? How did you come to be cut to the ground, conqueror of nations?
For thou hast said in thine 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:	For thou hast said in thy heart: <i>I will ascend</i> into heaven. <i>I will exalt my throne</i> above the stars of God; <i>I will sit</i> also upon the [mountain of the assembly of the gods] in the [farthest] north]	You were determined to climb up to heaven and to place your throne above the highest stars. You thought you would sit like a king on that mountain in the north where the gods assemble.	You thought to yourself, 'I will scale the heavens, I will raise my throne above God's stars. I will sit on the Mount of Assembly far away in the north.
I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.	<i>I will ascend</i> above the heights of the clouds; <i>I will be like</i> the Most High.	You said you would climb to the tops of the clouds and be like the Almighty.	I will rise past the tops of the clouds, I will make myself like the Most High.'
Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit.	Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the [depth] of the pit.	But instead, you have been brought down to the deepest part of the world of the dead.	Instead you are brought down to Sh'ol, to the uttermost depths of the pit.

KJV	Parry	Ludlow TEV	CJB
They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms;	They that see thee shall [stare] at thee, And [shall] consider thee, [and shall say]: Is this the man that <i>made the earth</i> to tremble, That did shake <i>kingdoms</i> ?	The dead will stare and gape at you. They will ask, 'Is this the man who shook the earth and made kingdoms to tremble?	Those who see you will stare at you, reflecting on what has become of you: 'Is this the man who shook the earth, who made kingdoms tremble,
That made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; that opened not the house of his prisoners?	[And] made <i>the world</i> as a wilderness, and destroyed <i>the cities thereof</i> , [and] opened not the house of his prisoners?	Is this the man who destroyed cities and turned the world into a desert? Is this the man who never freed his prisoners or let them go home?	who made the world a desert, who destroyed its cities, who would not set his prisoners free?'
All the kings of the nations, even all of them, lie in glory, every one in his own house.	And the kings of the nations, [yea], all of them, lie in glory, every one of them in his own house.	All the kings of the earth lie in their magnificent tombs,	All other kings of the nations, all of them, lie in glory, each in his tomb.
But thou art cast out of thy grave like an abominable branch, and as the raiment of those that are slain, thrust through with a sword, that go down to the stones of the pit; as a carcase trodden under feet.	But thou art cast out of thy grave like an abominable branch, and [the remnant] of those that are slain, thrust through with a sword, that go down to the stones of the pit; as a carcase trodden under feet.	but you have no tomb, and your corpse is thrown out to rot. It is covered by the bodies of soldiers killed in battle, thrown with them into a rocky pit, and trampled down.	But you are discarded, unburied, like a loathed branch, clothed like the slain who were pierced by the sword, then fall to the stones inside a pit, like a corpse to be trampled underfoot.
Thou shalt not be joined with them in burial, because thou hast destroyed thy land, and slain thy people: the seed of evildoers shall never be renowned.	Thou shalt not be joined with them in burial, because thou hast destroyed thy land, and slain thy people: the seed of evildoers shall never be renowned.	Because you ruined your country and killed your own people, you will not be buried like other kings. None of your evil family will survive.	You will not be joined with those kings in the grave, because you destroyed your own land, you have brought death to your own people. The descendants of evildoers will be utterly forgotten.

The CES Old Testament student manuals states regarding the above:

Isaiah again used dualism. Chapters 13 and 14 describe the downfall of Babylon, both of Babylon as an empire and of Babylon as the symbol of the world (see D&C 133:14). Thus, most scholars think “Lucifer, son of the morning” is the king of Babylon, probably Nebuchadnezzar. In the symbolic use of *Babylon*, (Babylon as spiritual wickedness and the kingdom of Satan), Lucifer is Satan. This interpretation is confirmed in latter-day revelation (see D&C 76:26–8). Satan and Babylon’s prince (both represented by Lucifer in this passage) aspire to take kingly glory to themselves, but in fact will be thrust into hell where there will be weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth.

As we consider the similarities Isaiah describes between the king of Babylon (and other earthly kings) and Lucifer, we will see that both ruled with blood and horror and destruction. Both weakened their followers through promises of alliances, riches, and worldly power that were fleeting, and impossible to deliver. When their kingdoms come to naught, both are seen as weak, vain, and petty.

Victor Ludlow quotes Kaiser as writing:

Lucifer’s attempt to usurp God’s power and glory ‘transgresses the limits laid down for both mortal and heavenly beings, for he is trying to take the place reserved for the highest God alone, and is consequently punished by a fall into the deepest and darkest depths of the underworld’ (Kaiser, *Isaiah 13-39*, p 41 as quoted in *IPSP*, 188).

The Parry brothers write the following commentary:

14:7 *whole earth is at rest, and is quiet.* The earth will rest and become quiet once the king of Babylon, or Satan, is cast down to hell (14:7-8). Enoch ask the Lord, “When shall the earth rest?” (Moses 7:58), to which the Lord responded, “for the space of a thousand years the earth shall rest” (Moses 7:64), referring to the Millennium, when Satan is bound and powerless.

14:7-8 *fir trees/cedars of Lebanon/rejoice at thee.* The verse recalls other scriptures in which God’s creations (the trees, forest, mountains, earth, and heavens) “break forth into singing” when the Lord redeems Jacob (44:23), comforts his people, and has mercy on the afflicted (49:13; D&C 128:22). The trees, representative of people (Judg. 9:15; Ezek. 31:8; Hosea 14:8; Zech. 11:2), now rejoice and sing because Satan has been cast down to hell.

no woodsman is come up against us. This implies that the king of Babylon had cut down some of the trees, or murdered the people. Thus the king was seeking to become like God, who has authority to end life. We recall also that Jehovah is the great forester identified in 10:33-34, and hence the king of Babylon attempts to imitate God’s ability to cut down nations and peoples.

14:12-23 Fall of Lucifer. Lucifer’s statement about his goals demonstrates his extreme self-centeredness. He begins all five lines with the personal pronoun *I*, which shows that he is interested in his own goals and in glorifying himself. Lucifer had a five-fold plan. He wanted to enter heaven (without following God’s laws), to be great than other souls, to become part of the assembly of gods, to be exalted above other authorities and powers, and to become like God himself (14:13-14). In contrast, God’s Saints are taught to lose themselves in the service of others (Matt. 16:25; Luke 9:24) not by looking after self but by seeking out the widows, the poor, the fatherless, and those with spiritual and temporal needs.

Isaiah's treatment of the archdevil and enemy of all humanity, Lucifer, sets forth terms and phrases that on one hand demonstrate Lucifer's attempt to imitate God's exalted state, and on the other present Lucifer's true degradation. Note the language connected with Lucifer's attempts at exaltation: *ascend, heaven, exalt, above, stars, mount, and north* (14:13); and *ascend, above, heights, clouds, and Most High* (14:14). Contrast that with the language that deals with Lucifer's actual lowliness: *fallen, cut down, to the ground* (14:12); *brought down to hell, pit* (14:15); and *cast out of thy grave, go down, pit, and trodden under* (14:19).

The section has two applications: Lucifer's fall from heaven during the premortal existence, and the time when Lucifer will be cast down to hell, after the Millennium. In the end, Babylon will be completely destroyed because it housed Lucifer and his followers.

14:12 *fallen from heaven/cut down to the ground* The first phrase implies that Lucifer was a star that lost its heavenly prominence by falling (Rev. 8:10; 9:1; 2 Ne. 2:17). The second phrase suggests that Lucifer was a mighty tree that was *cut down* by God the forester (10:33-34). Both the star and the tree commonly symbolize an individual, and both show how Lucifer was once mighty.

Lucifer: "And was called Perdition, for the heavens wept over him – he was Lucifer, a son of the morning" (D&C 76:26).

The name Lucifer (Hebrew *helel*) means "shining one." If the name is given different vowels (*helal*), it signifies the crescent of the moon, having a possible meaning that Lucifer had less light (symbolically) than the full moon, or Lucifer's light waned as does the light of the moon during its cycle. Further, Lucifer's light was far less than the light of Jesus Christ, whose light is the sun.

Son of the morning. In Hebrew this means "son of the dawning light." The title *son of the morning* recalls the phrase *morning stars* (Job 38:7; D&C 128:23) and refers to eminent persons from the premortal existence.

14:13 *I will exalt my throne above the stars of God . . .* he believes that he is able to exalt himself. Yet, the scriptures inform us that no one can become exalted without Jesus Christ and his atonement . . .

The stars of God refers to righteous people who belong to God (Job 38:7; D&C 128:23; Gen. 37:9). Satan wants to possess a throne that is higher than those of God's other children.

14:14 *I will ascend above the heights of the clouds (in the farthest north). Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the depth of the pit.* Satan sought a high position in heaven; . . . God, sent him to the place farthest from heaven.

14:16 *Is this the man who made the earth to tremble?* By calling him *man*, Isaiah emphasizes that Lucifer is by no means a god.

14:17 *made the world as a wilderness . . .* The Lord creates, but Lucifer's work has the opposite effect

Opened not the house of his prisoners. The New International Version reads that Lucifer “would not let his captives go home,” which is a possible reference to the fact that Lucifer does not want his spiritual captives, or those bound by sin, to be released. Lucifer’s goal, of course, stands in direct opposition to Jesus Christ’s righteous and perfect desire, which is to release from sin all those who come unto him.

14:19 *cast out of thy grave like an abominable branch.* The grave of Nebuchadnezzar, Babylon’s king, has never been discovered, and Lucifer will never have a grave or a monument because he never received a body. The imagery of *cast out of the grave* stands opposite Jesus and his tomb (John 5:26); he used his own power to arise and exit the tomb. Lucifer, *the abominable branch*, can be contrasted to the useful “Branch” that will “grow out” of the roots of Jesse (Isa. 11:1; D&C 113:1-2).

14:22 *cut off the name and remnant, son and nephew.* The term *cut off* is the same as excommunication (Ex. 12:15, 19). Hence, those in Babylon who are cut off will be excommunicated from God and his saints, and they will not have any part of God’s covenants. The reference to *son* and *nephew* here indicates that the line of inheritance will be cut off to make room for the new King Messiah to reign (*Understanding Isaiah*, pp. 144-152).

“And all the Nations that Fight against Zion, and that Distress Her, shall be as a Dream of a Night Vision . . .” (2 Ne. 27:3; Isa. 29:3)

Chapters 15 and 16 of Isaiah record the prophesied judgments against Moab. The CES Old Testament student manual explains that:

Moab was the eldest son of Lot’s older daughter (see Genesis 19:37). His people settled east of the Dead Sea from the Zered River northward. The Moabites were cousins of the Israelites; but there was continual strife between them, and the Lord used them as His chastening rod against Israel. Nevertheless, lest Israel feel that the wickedness of the Moabites was preferred before the Lord, Isaiah revealed the Moabites’ destiny in these two chapters. Isaiah promised that some day the Lord would remember His covenants with Israel and gather them from the world and establish His covenant with them forever, while Moab would receive the sentence of destruction. In this sense Moab was also a symbol for the wicked world, and none of her powerful cities nor her lucrative trade routes nor her prominence among her sister nations would be able to stand in that day, but all would be destroyed.

Although the Lord allows Assyria, Babylon, the Moabites, etc. to be His weapons of destruction, when He has finished with them, He will destroy them. Always, there is the promise (especially in Isaiah!) that:

For the Lord will have mercy on Jacob, and will yet choose Israel, and set them in their own land
And the people shall take them and bring them to their place;
yea, from far unto the ends of the earth;
and they shall return to their lands of promise . . . [2 Ne. 24 addition to verse2].
. . . And it shall come to pass in the day that the Lord shall give thee rest from thy sorrow,
and from the fear, and from the hard bondage wherein thou was made to serve (Isa 14:1, 3).