

a great future world power. Babylon, as used in this figurative sense, could include the great Assyrian aggressor of Isaiah's day and all those of later times, paralleling the use of the term Babylon in Revelation 17-18.

According to this view what is meant here by Babylon includes Babylon itself, but also includes far more. Certain elements in the descriptions and predictions are exemplified in the literal Babylon. In addition, in the providence of God, the city declined to such a point, long after its actual conquest, that most of it eventually became a desolate wilderness fitting the description in Isaiah 13:19-22. Here we have a foretaste of the fate of all those wicked powers which oppose God.

According to this view the picture of Babylon leads into a reference to the great central spiritual figure which is at the head of the ungodly world, including all the empires that oppose God. This king is Satan, the great enemy of the people of God, the one through whom sin came into this world. Isaiah shows the disaster which is to come to him, as he is cast into the pit, as described in Revelation 20:1-3.

This interpretation of the passage seems to me by far the most satisfactory. Babylon here is a figure standing for a great succession of ungodly powers in which the literal Babylon is included as one element. Its climax is not the literal Babylon of the century after the time of Isaiah but is rather some great combination in opposition to God which is to be active at the end of the age. The king of Babylon here referred to is no literal king of Babylon but Satan himself -- the great "prince of the power of the air" (Eph. 2:2). It is to be noted that according to this view Isaiah 14:24-28 is not a separate section haphazardly joined to what precedes, but is indeed a vital part of the burden of Babylon. It accurately describes the way God will deliver His people from Assyria, which is part of the totality that the section includes under the figure of Babylon. God gave this marvelous deliverance in the lifetime of Isaiah, when the great army of Sennacherib perished in the land of Judah in a single night. This was a foretaste and an earnest of the fact that ultimately God will completely destroy "Babylon" and its wicked king, "the prince of this world" (John 14:30; 16:11).