

The Three Cycles in Isaiah 13-17

**The short one following Babylon
Each has reference to a Gentile nation**

By [David Linden](#)

I have been convinced by studying the text that the three cycles are the way Isaiah laid out these divine messages. We see Babylon mentioned first in each: in A. (chapters 13/14) then in B. (chapter 21), and in C. as the earth, world, and city. That is persuasive, and it helps to interpret chapter 24. That, in turn, is a major help in interpreting Revelation. Follow the thread in the second item of the three cycles:

A. Isaiah 14:28-32

This oracle came in the year King Ahaz died: Do not rejoice, all you Philistines, that the rod that struck you is broken; from the root of that snake will spring up a viper, its fruit will be a darting, venomous serpent. The poorest of the poor will find pasture, and the needy will lie down in safety. But your root I will destroy by famine; it will slay your survivors. Wail, O gate! Howl, O city! Melt away, all you Philistines! A cloud of smoke comes from the north, and there is not a straggler in its ranks. What answer shall be given to the envoys of that nation? "The LORD has established Zion, and in her his afflicted people will find refuge."

B. Isaiah 21:11-12

An oracle concerning Dumah: Someone calls to me from Seir, "Watchman, what is left of the night? Watchman, what is left of the night?" The watchman replies, "Morning is coming, but also the night. If you would ask, then ask; and come back yet again."

C. Isaiah 24:21-23

In that day the LORD will punish the powers in the heavens above and the kings on the earth below. They will be herded together like prisoners bound in a dungeon; they will be shut up in prison and be punished after many days. The moon will be abashed, the sun ashamed; for the LORD Almighty will reign on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, and before its elders, gloriously.

Alec J. Motyer says in *Isaiah, An Introduction and Commentary* (Tyndale OT commentaries):

The present poem sums up the series which began with 14:28-32. Against premature Philistine rejoicing, Isaiah warned of a great Davidic king to come; to the inquiring Edomite (21:11-12) he spoke of prolonged waiting; but the climax still comes only *after many days* (24:22d); the king deadly as a serpent (14:29) will *punish* (24:21); the darkness (21:11-12) will be swallowed in brightness (24:23a); the long progression of day and night (21:11-12) will end as *moon* and *sun* are transcended (24:23a); and the promised king (14:30) will be the Lord. (p.168)

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