

Isaiah 14: Shake Hands with the Devil

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About 730 BC the king of Judah and Jerusalem was Ahaz, and 2 Kings 16 tells us he was truly evil and was involved in leading the people into idolatry. He was so bad that he even sacrificed his first born son to the idols. The two kings of Israel and Syria were bringing armies against Jerusalem to take the city and depose Ahaz. Patiently, God sent His spokesperson Isaiah to warn King Ahaz, and to assure him that God would not allow those two kings to take Jerusalem. Therefore Ahaz should repent of his evil and trust in The Lord, but Ahaz stubbornly said no. The reason Ahaz said no is basically the same reason that Adam and Eve said no to God, and the same reason Cain said no when he killed Abel. Instead of submission to authority they want to be the authority. Ahaz wanted fame and fortune and power, but it was elusive. He had to finagle, deceive, compromise--anything to achieve his ends. Therefore he made a behind the scenes shrewd alliance with the greatest warrior nation of that time--Assyria. He shook hands with the devil and it came back to bite him. After Assyria knocked off Syria and Israel and Egypt, they headed for Jerusalem. Ahaz had to pay huge tribute (extortion money) to Assyria to keep them at bay--so much that Ahaz had to loot all the gold and silver out of the Temple of God in Jerusalem. Assyria used and abused Ahaz, and made him worship their pagan idols--even to the point of sacrificing his child in the fire.

Isaiah 13-23

In Isaiah chapters 13-23, the prophet makes it clear how insane it is to make these compromises and shake hands with the devil. Isaiah's question that he asks and then answers with predictions is, "Why make unlawful foolish alliances with evil corrupt nations when God is going to judge and destroy each and every one of these nations like Assyria, Egypt, and Babylon?" Why not trust God instead? Here's a radical idea--Why not do what is right and trust God to bless you for it? In order to prove how foolish it is to trust all the evil pagan nations, Isaiah meticulously went through the future fate of each of the surrounding nine nations making it clear that they were all in the hands of our all powerful sovereign God. Historically, all these nations went down just like Isaiah predicted. Maybe you are thinking--what's that got to do with me? Jesus said in Matthew 12:30, "Whoever is not with me is against me". Most think they are just living their own lives like a neutral party, but if you are not with God, you are unknowingly with the adversary of God. From time to time all of us are like Peter in Matt.16:23 when he told Jesus he would not allow Him to be crucified. Jesus said "Get behind me Satan", meaning that at that point in time Peter was selfishly opposed to Gods interests and therefore in league with Satan.

In Isaiah 13-14, the prophet discussed the great issue of pride and self seeking that plagues humanity. As examples, Isaiah discussed the pride and ambition of the ruthless kings of Assyria and Babylon. Isaiah predicted that although God would use these nations to discipline Israel and Judah, eventually God would wipe out Assyria and Babylon. Historically this was fulfilled for Assyria being destroyed in 605BC and Babylon destroyed by Persia in 539 BC. Both were wiped out and never rebuilt. What was their problem? What led them to be so ruthless and ambitious, and why did they fall? Isaiah wrote a poem about it in Isaiah 14. In Isaiah 14:12-15 we will see that the King of Babylon was the personification of Satan, and we will see the angelic rebellion against God led by the adversary of God. The point being that all people who rebel against God are just following the lead of the original rebel, and by rejecting the one true God they align themselves with Lucifer. What was Lucifer's original sin and what caused him to fall?

Isaiah 14--the Fall of the Bright Morning Star

In Isa.14:1-3, the prophet assures his people that eventually God will restore Israel to the land. Isaiah had predicted their destruction and captivity in Babylon, but God would have compassion on them and bring them back. In that future day they would finally have peace and rest, and they would have self rule. In short, God would turn the tables, a reversal of fortune. Their oppressor, Babylon will be broken by The Lord God. In verse 7, the whole earth will rejoice at the fall of the King of Babylon. In verses 9-11, Sheol, which is the abode of the wicked dead, rejoices to see his fall. All the previous evil kings and conquerors come out to taunt the once proud King of Babylon who is now as impotent as they are. They say to him, "Now you are also nothing just like us". In v.11 they get very explicit in how bad it is, "Instead of pomp and ceremony and royal music, now maggots are spread out as a bed for you and worms are your covering". The arrogance of the tyrant and his fall personify the fall of the once most powerful angel Lucifer whose name means "bright one" or bright shining star, but now the fallen angel is known as Satan which means "adversary" of God. Therefore, Isaiah will detail the sin and fall of Satan in verses 12-17. In a sense, all the great and ambitious tyrants and conquerors throughout history have been backed by Satan and have been his pawns in his struggle against God throughout history. What negative traits do all the ruthless tyrants share with

Satan---pride, unrestrained ambition, hunger for power and prestige, obsession with self, and the desire to take God's place.

Isaiah 14:12-15, the Fall from Heaven

Verse 12 begins with Satan's fall which is also detailed in Revelation 12:7-9. When Satan rebelled, a third of the angels in heaven followed him and thus began the intense spiritual warfare that we first read about in Genesis 2-3 where Satan tempted Adam and Eve in the Garden. Satan and his fallen angels were thrown out of heaven, but God gave them free reign on planet earth where "the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan who deceives the whole world" operates. Since Lucifer was created to be such a beautiful creature to rule over God's angels, what caused him to fall and become so evil? We have the answer provided by the prophet in Isaiah 14:12-15.

Lucifer is quoted in Isa. 14:13-14 as desiring to ascend to the heights of heaven to rule over all of God's creation, and even to ascend above God. Lucifer wanted to know what God knows and sit on God's throne. "I will make myself like the most high God" was his ultimate desire. Can we think of any historical people who aspired to be God? All the ancient Egyptian Pharaohs, all the Caesars of Rome, Alexander the Great, Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon and all the Persian monarchs all claimed deity. All the great conquerors like Attila, Napoleon, and Hitler all aspired to have absolute rule over the whole world. I can identify at least five sins Satan shares with all those guys---1. Desire to occupy God's place, 2. Desire to exalt himself over all others, 3. Desire to rule the world, 4. Desire for the glory that belonged to God alone, 5. Desire to know what God knows and to be like God in power

Isaiah 14:15-20---the Fate of all Tyrants---Road Kill

Where are all the great men (in their own eyes)? They have all met the same fate, which was to be "thrust down to Sheol, to the recesses of the pit where all evil people await them. As they welcome the great men like Alexander, Xerxes, Caesar, Attila, Stalin, and Hitler, they say "so this broken bum is the man who made the earth tremble in fear...who brought such destruction to the cities?" In the case of the King of Babylon, he didn't even get a good burial, and he was totally humiliated in death, just left in the street to rot. I remember the fate of Hitler at the end of WWII. The Russians were closing in on him so he committed suicide and his men took him into the street, poured gasoline all over him and burned him into a charred corpse left in the gutter. In Isaiah 14:19-20 the King of Babylon ended up just like Hitler---ROAD KILL.

In John Milton's famous book about the fall of creation, PARADISE LOST, the memorable line of Satan was "Better to rule in hell than to serve in Heaven". A lot of men have agreed with this, but we read the truth in Isaiah. Nobody rules in hell, but they are humiliated and tormented forever.

Isaiah's Solution

In chapter 1:18-19, the prophet offers a simple solution to all who desire to see God on His throne and worship and obey Him as the Creator and all-powerful God. Isaiah assures us that God desires to forgive us if we will just approach Him in humility, submission, and belief. "Even if your sins are red as scarlet, they will be white as snow". We have only to turn to God with all our heart and He will be faithful to cleanse us.

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