

**Lesson 13**  
**Isaiah 21**  
**Troubles Ahead**

**Memory verse:** “A second angel followed and said, ‘Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great,’ which made all the nations drink the maddening wine of her adulteries.” (Rev. 14:8 NIV).

In this chapter we have a prophecy of sad times coming and heavy burdens.

Babylon is called the “Wilderness (NKJV)/ Desert (NIV) of the Sea”. Here it is called the desert or plain of the sea; because the great plain, the flat country of Babylon was divided with full of lakes and marshes, like little seas, and was abundantly watered with the many streams of the river Euphrates, so it was referred to as a “sea.” Elam and Media are the ancient names for the peoples of Persia, modern day Iran.

The wilderness of the “sea” covers a wide area and Isaiah uses the image of a “desert storm” as he describes the attack of the Assyrians against Babylon. The armies came as a whirlwind (a hot, desert wind) from the Negev, a region infamous in Judah for its barrenness and heat. The destruction coming on Babylonia from a terrifying land would be similar to the devastation that blew into Judah periodically from the Negev.

At that time, Babylon and Assyria were rival powers (although Assyria was stronger), and the nations in the Fertile Crescent hoped that Babylon would stop the advance of Assyria. Alas, Babylon fell to Assyria, opening the way for Assyria to sweep across the region in conquest. Historically, Babylon fell several times: to the Assyrians in 710, 702, 689, and 648, and to the Medes and Persians in 539 B.C., among others. Isaiah prophetically also saw the Medo-Persian armies marching on Babylon. We had one burden of Babylon before in chapter 13; here we have another prediction of its fall.

Dumah and Seir are names for Edom (Num. 24:18). Isaiah moved one letter in the Hebrew word Adom and created Dum, which means “stillness, silence.” It was his way of saying, “Edom will be silent; it will be no more.” Edom” is “Dumah” in the Hebrew text, a word play. Dumah also may have been the name of a place in Edom or the Akkadian designation for Edom (Udumu). The Edomites were descendants of Esau, whose nickname was “red [Edom]” (Gen. 25:21–34). Edom was a rugged land of red sandstone; her people were bitterly hostile to the Jews (Ps. 137:7). The Dumah in Gen. 25:14 was one of Ishmael's rather than Esau's descendants. Isaiah's prophecy promised prolonged recurring trouble for Edom.

Arabia was a large country that lay eastward and southward of the land of Canaan. Much of it was possessed by the posterity of Abraham. The Dedanites, here mentioned (v. 13), descended from Dedan, Abraham's son by Keturah; the inhabitants of Tema and Kedar descended from Ishmael, Gen. 25:3, 13, 15. The Arabians generally lived in tents, and kept cattle, were a hardy people, accustomed to labour; probably the Jews depended upon them as a sort of a wall between them and the more warlike eastern nations; and therefore, to alarm them, they shall hear the burden of Arabia, and see it sinking under its own burden.

**Scripture reading:** Isaiah Chapter 21

Things to learn: 1) The fall of Babylon 2) The burden against Edom 3) The burden against Arabia

**Discussion Questions:**

1) Isaiah warned a second time the fall of Babylon. How should Israel and Judah treat the prophecies and for that matter, the church too?

2) How can we best apply scriptural teachings to the conversation between the “someone” from Edom and the Watchman in verses 11 to12?

3) What do we know and learn from the events that will happen to Arabia even though they were not part of the conflict in the region (Chapter 21:13-17)?