

WEEK 03

ISAIAH 14

God's divine judgment will result in the complete and utter destruction of the proud, bringing relief and comfort to the oppressed.

Preface

In the previous weeks, we learned that God is aware of all the injustices resulting from those who neglect the poor and powerless, and His justice will come forth with His grace to judge the wicked and refine His people. **Last week**, we learned that God has the power to harden the hearts of the wicked and even render them blind to the truth as His way of punishing them.

This week, we will learn about God's abhorrence towards pride.

Context: After Isaiah received his calling (Isa. 6) to proclaim judgment upon the Kingdom of Judah, he confronted King Ahaz. Isaiah reassured the king of God's protection, warned of the Assyrian invasion, and advised against forming alliances. He also prophesied about a future time of deliverance through the birth of a child named Immanuel (Isa. 7) and the branch from Jesse (Isa. 11). From chapter 13 onwards, Isaiah denounced the cruelty of other nations and prophesied about their impending judgment.

History: Many agree that Isa. 13-14 takes place during the political events in Isa. 39:1-8 when Babylon became relevant (~701 BC). At that time, Judah sought an alliance with Babylon to fight against Assyria but the Babylonian king eventually failed. In his prophecy, Isaiah gave reasons why Judah should not place their trust in the surrounding nations, but only in God.

Observation

1. What is the king of Babylon condemned for doing? (Isa. 14:6, 8, 9-11, 12-15)

Leaders' note: v.6 - in his anger struck down people and subdued nations, v.8 - mistreated the land, v.9-11 - killed the kings of other nations, v.12-13 - his own desire to be worshipped.

2. What will happen to the offspring of the wicked? (Isa. 14:20b)

3. How do the judgements against Babylon (Isa. 14:20-23), Assyria (Isa. 14:24-27), and the Philistines (Isa. 14:28-32) differ from one another?

*Leaders' note: **Babylon** (v.3-22) – complete destruction, **Assyria** (v.24-27) – crushed in God's land and mountains, **Philistines** (v.28-32) – destroyed by famine.*

Interpretation

1. Do you think that God's judgment in Isa. 14:20 is too extreme? Why or why not?

2. What are the roots of pride, based on what the ‘morning star’ said in his heart? (Isa. 14:13-14)

Leaders’ note: There are five “I Wills” where he asserted his own will rather than the will of God. The five wills refer to his desire to be like God, be exalted, have governing power, be glorified, and be the Most High.

Side note: *The Latin translation of the Bible (Septuagint), translates ‘morning star’ as Lucifer, which is where we get his name from. While it is traditionally associated with the king of Babylon in its immediate context, some consider it an allusion to the fall of Satan. This verse has also been linked to two verses in the New Testament, which are, Luke 10:18 and Revelation 12:8. It is common for prophecies to have a “near” fulfillment and a “far” fulfillment. Therefore, some argue that this text shadows forth the coming of the Antichrist.*

3. What does the humiliation described in Isa. 14:15-23 teach us about pride?

4. How do you interpret the judgment given to the Philistines, “that the rod that struck you is broken” (Isa. 14:29), concerning Judah’s trust in God’s sovereignty?

Leaders’ note: Historically, Assyria was the rod that struck the Philistines. Now that Assyria was humbled, the Philistines rejoiced. However, judgment would come for them as well. Hence, Isaiah continued to warn Judah not to place their trust in their surrounding nations.

Application

1. How does pride manifest itself in different areas of your life, such as self-righteousness, personal achievements, cultural identity, etc.?

2. Share about a moment in your life when you were exceedingly prideful.

3. What are some practical ways to grow in humility?

Optional Follow-Up Exercise: Redirecting Praise

Pride is a universal human problem that can manifest as an attitude of self-sufficiency, self-importance, and self-exaltation in relation to God. Pride is a great danger to our souls as it usually creeps in slowly, erecting a barrier between us and God and others. Feeding into our pride is an implicit attempt to steal God’s glory, and may lead to other sins or sinful behaviors. This chapter shows us the dark repercussions of a prideful heart and how God judges the proud severely. This week, try to pick up a new practice of redirecting praise to God in order to guard ourselves against pride. “He must become greater; I must become less.” - John 3:30

Practical Instructions:

1. Write down the praises and compliments that you receive from others
2. Acknowledge and digest them with a thankful heart
3. Think of a characteristic of God based on the praises you received
4. Redirect the praises we received to God in prayer