(14-14) Isaiah 14:12–15. Who Was “Lucifer, Son of the Morning”?

Isaiah again used dualism. Chapters 13 and 14 describe the downfall of Babylon, both of Babylon as an empire and of Babylon as the symbol of the world (see D&C 133:14). Thus, most scholars think “Lucifer, son of the morning” is the king of Babylon, probably Nebuchadnezzar. In the symbolic use of Babylon, (Babylon as spiritual wickedness and the kingdom of Satan), Lucifer is Satan. This interpretation is confirmed in latter-day revelation (see D&C 76:26–8). Satan and Babylon’s prince (both represented by Lucifer in this passage) aspire to take kingly glory to themselves, but in fact will be thrust into hell where there will be weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth.

Compare Isaiah 13:13–14 with Moses 4:1–4, where Lucifer’s conditions for saving all men are given. What adds to the power of the imagery is the fact that the word congregation (v. 13) is translated by Keil and Delitzsch as the “assembly of gods” (Commentary, 7:1:312).

In still another example of Isaiah’s beautiful dualism, even the kings of the world lie in their tombs (house) in respect (see vv. 18–19), but Babylon’s king was to be cast aside and trodden under foot. This reward was literally visited upon the city of the Chaldees, and though Nebuchadnezzar was certainly buried in great splendor, there is no grave found for him today in the ruins of Babylon. Think for a moment of Satan’s “grave.” Never having received a body, he shall never have a tomb or monument of any kind, though he was king and ruler of the great world-wide and history-wide empire of spiritual Babylon. No wonder the kings of the earth, who, though wicked in mortality, could still inherit the telestic kingdom, would marvel at his demise.

(14-15) Isaiah 14:24–27. Assyria Was Like Babylon

In addition to his use of the Babylonian Empire as a symbol of spiritual Babylon, Isaiah also sketches the demise of the great Assyrian Empire, which in the days of Hezekiah met crushing defeat upon the hills of Jerusalem at the hands of an angel of destruction (see Isaiah 37:33–38). Assyria also served as a type of the world. In like manner will all evil nations feel the hand of God’s judgments (see Isaiah 14:26).

(14-16) Isaiah 14:28–32. The Burden of Philistia

These verses reveal the judgment of destruction, which Isaiah lived to witness, against Philistia. The Philistines were long-time enemies of Israel, and warfare between the two peoples had gone on for centuries. (See Bible Dictionary, s.v. “Philistines.”) They controlled parts of the Holy Land’s coastal regions, though their power waned considerably from the time of David on. In Roman times, the Holy Land was known as Judea until the Jewish revolt of A.D. 132–35, after which the Emperor Hadrian changed the name to Syria Palaestina to show the Jews that they had no claim there any longer.

The King James Version used the Latin form and called it “Palaestina,” but what is meant is the Philistines, not Palestine, as the terms are used today.

The Assyrian emperor Tiglath-pileser captured the Philistines about the time of the death of Ahaz, king of Judah, who had made an alliance with him. In spite of the hatred of the Philistines and their persecution of Israel, the Lord’s people were established in the land. In like manner will Zion be established while all her enemies (Babylon, Assyria, Philistia, and so on) will be powerless to make it otherwise, but they will fall.

(14-17) Isaiah 15–16. The Lord’s Judgment against Moab

Moab was the eldest son of Lot’s older daughter (see Genesis 19:37). His people settled east of the Dead Sea from the Zered River northward. The Moabites were cousins of the Israelites; but there was continual strife between them, and the Lord used them as His chastening rod against Israel. Nevertheless, lest Israel feel that the wickedness of the Moabites was preferred before the Lord, Isaiah revealed the Moabites’ destiny in these two chapters. Isaiah promised that some day the Lord would remember His covenants with Israel and gather them from the world and establish His covenant with them forever, while Moab would receive the sentence of destruction. In this sense Moab was also a symbol for the wicked world, and none of her powerful cities nor her lucrative trade routes nor her prominence among her sister nations would be able to stand in that day, but all would be destroyed.