

ISAIAH

Chapter 14

The Restoration of Jacob

For the LORD will have compassion on Jacob and will again choose Israel, and will set them in their own land, and sojourners will join them and will attach themselves to the house of Jacob. 2 And the peoples will take them and bring them to their place, and the house of Israel will possess them in the LORD's land as male and female slaves. They will take captive those who were their captors, and rule over those who oppressed them.

14:1 *will have compassion ... will settle them.* Babylon's fall will be linked with Israel's restoration. God's compassion on his people is the theme of chs. 40–66 (see 40:1–2). (CSB)

Jacob. God once chose Jacob and renamed him Israel (Gn 32:28). Now He chooses and renames His people again. (TLSB)

sojourners. The exiles are returning to their land. Instead of being joined to the foreign nations, the foreigners come to Israel to be a part of the nation. (TLSB)

To lead out of Babylon those who were led there captive, and with them also others, non-Jews, so that Jerusalem will become even larger than before. (Luther)

God speaks both law and gospel to human beings. The law is His harsh demands for absolute perfection and the announcement of just punishment upon all sin and all sinners. The gospel announces the love of God for sinners and the forgiveness God Himself provides in the suffering and death of His own Son. As harsh, brutal, and merciless as the law had been in the previous chapter, so gentle, loving, and filled with mercy is the gospel of these verses. The gospel recorded in these words anticipates the message of the second part of Isaiah's prophecy, chapters 40–66. Here it's part of the revelation God gave Isaiah and is just as certain as the harsh predictions of the previous chapter. Luther comments on these verses, "Everything aims at the consolation of the godly. In no affliction can there be enough comfort for the human heart because the works of God are great and we are weak. And so the prophet lifts up by means of admonitory threats against our enemies and by means of promises and examples, lest we fall into despair" (LW Volume 16, Page 138). (PBC)

But while the punishments of the previous chapter came from God as a response to sin, these comforting words came because of God's promises. God chose to give Adam and Eve a promise of reconciliation after their disobedience. They deserved to die as God had threatened. Nothing in Adam and Eve moved God to issue the first promise of the Messiah, but out of undeserved love He chose not to annihilate them. Instead, He promised that the Seed of the woman would crush the head of the serpent. In Isaiah's day, that promise had not yet come to pass. (PBC)

Since the time of Adam and Eve, God had become more and more specific about the coming of the Messiah. Among other promises, God foretold that the Savior would come from the people of Judah and specifically from the house of David. But the virgin had not yet given birth to Immanuel, as Isaiah had predicted. All these promises were made because God chose to make them. He did not issue them because His people deserved them. Instead of clinging to the promises of God, both Israel and Judah had turned away from their gracious Lord. They deserved punishment, and judgment would come upon both. (PBC)

in their own land. The road that ended in the birth of the Messiah was a long one with many twists. Yet God's promises would still be fulfilled. He would have compassion on His people in order to fulfill His promises in spite of their rebellion and unfaithfulness. After their captivity in Babylon and after Babylon's destruction, God's people would return to Jerusalem in preparation for the coming of the Messiah. All that God said would come to pass, as He said it would. The return from Babylon was one of the last road markers before the coming of the Messiah. Malachi announced the final road marker – the messenger (Malachi 3:1), or the prophet Elijah (4:5). Finally, John the Baptist would stand at the Jordan River and announce, "Behold the Lamb of God!" (PBC)

sojourners will join them. See 11:10; 56:6–7; 60:3. (CSB)

God brought the Messiah into the world through the Jewish people, but He did not intend that only Jews would be saved. God intended His love in the Messiah for all the world. When the promise of God in Christ converts the races of the world, they are united with the house of Jacob. God had told Abraham this would happen, "All peoples on earth will be blessed through you" (Genesis 12:3). When Paul and Barnabas came to Jerusalem and told how the Holy Spirit was working among the Gentiles (Acts 15), this prophecy was being fulfilled. It is fulfilled whenever Gentiles or non-Jews believe in Jesus Christ. All nations become children of God "through faith in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:26). (PBC)

14:2 The return from Babylon (cf 40:3–5), likened to the rescue of enslaved Israel from Egyptian bondage, serves as a type of the subjection of "all rule and authority and power" to the Redeemer of all people (Eph 1:21). (TLSB)

peoples... place. See note on 5:26. (CSB)

What we have is an emphatic and colorful way of expressing how deeply Gentiles will appreciate how much they owe to God's chosen nation, Israel. Peoples did not literally "take them and bring them to their proper place," but they did in more instances than we might suppose help the children of Israel on their way as they returned from captivity. (Leupold)

All these things were done under Cyrus, king of the Persians, who permitted the Jews conquered by the Babylonians to return to their own land, etc. (Luther)

LORD's land. Territory of Israel, lent to His people as stewards. (TLSB)

male and female slaves. Complete role reversal. Israel is now the master, not the servant.

rule over. Another depiction of the role reversal. (TLSB)

To be ruled by the people of God is in the eyes of the prophet rare and good fortune, and to let oneself be ruled by them is freedom. For not active enslavement of Gentiles by Israel is in any way indicated. Gentile submission is sought by them (i.e., Gentiles) and is purely voluntary. (Leupold)

14:1–2 Moved by compassion, the Lord will reverse the fortunes of Israel. As the chosen of the Lord, Israel will rule her enemies and settle in the land the Lord gives. Whenever our relationship with the Lord stands in need of restoration because of our disobedience, our own actions and prayers alone cannot make things right. It is always God's compassion in Jesus Christ that

restores us again and again. Through the waters of Holy Baptism, the Lord chose us to live in His blessed land forever. • Gracious Lord, look upon us with Your compassion, and restore us when we go astray. Amen. (TLSB)

Israel's Remnant Taunts Babylon

3 When the LORD has given you rest from your pain and turmoil and the hard service with which you were made to serve, 4 you will take up this taunt against the king of Babylon: “How the oppressor has ceased, the insolent fury ceased! 5 The LORD has broken the staff of the wicked, the scepter of rulers, 6 that struck the peoples in wrath with unceasing blows, that ruled the nations in anger with unrelenting persecution. 7 The whole earth is at rest and quiet; they break forth into singing. 8 The cypresses rejoice at you, the cedars of Lebanon, saying, ‘Since you were laid low, no woodcutter comes up against us.’ 9 Sheol beneath is stirred up to meet you when you come; it rouses the shades to greet you, all who were leaders of the earth; it raises from their thrones all who were kings of the nations. 10 All of them will answer and say to you: ‘You too have become as weak as we! You have become like us!’ 11 Your pomp is brought down to Sheol, the sound of your harps; maggots are laid as a bed beneath you, and worms are your covers. 12 “How you are fallen from heaven, O Day Star, son of Dawn! How you are cut down to the ground, you who laid the nations low! 13 You said in your heart, ‘I will ascend to heaven; above the stars of God I will set my throne on high; I will sit on the mount of assembly in the far reaches of the north; 14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.’ 15 But you are brought down to Sheol, to the far reaches of the pit. 16 Those who see you will stare at you and ponder over you: ‘Is this the man who made the earth tremble, who shook kingdoms, 17 who made the world like a desert and overthrew its cities, who did not let his prisoners go home?’ 18 All the kings of the nations lie in glory, each in his own tomb; 19 but you are cast out, away from your grave, like a loathed branch, clothed with the slain, those pierced by the sword, who go down to the stones of the pit, like a dead body trampled underfoot. 20 You will not be joined with them in burial, because you have destroyed your land, you have slain your people. “May the offspring of evildoers nevermore be named! 21 Prepare slaughter for his sons because of the guilt of their fathers, lest they rise and possess the earth, and fill the face of the world with cities.” 22 “I will rise up against them,” declares the LORD of hosts, “and will cut off from Babylon name and remnant, descendants and posterity,” declares the LORD. 23 “And I will make it a possession of the hedgehog, and pools of water, and I will sweep it with the broom of destruction,” declares the LORD of hosts.

14:3–21 However exalted (and almost divine) the king of Babylon may have thought himself (see vv. 12–14), he will go the way of all world rulers—down to the grave. (CSB)

14:3 *when the Lord has given you rest* – Above, Isaiah predicted the devastation of Babylon and that the time in which it would be destroyed was near, so that the people would all the more quickly and strongly believe the promise of deliverance. Everything aims at the consolation of the godly. In no affliction can there be enough comfort for the human heart because the works of God are great and we are weak. And so the prophet lifts up by means of admonitory threats against our enemies and by means of promises and examples, lest we fall into despair. This chapter is also full of rhetorical figures. The prophet is so sure that he speaks of future events as if they had already happened, although, of course, that kingdom of Babylon was still flourishing and the Jews, on the contrary, were not far removed from despair. Therefore, for the greatness of the impending calamity he uses grand words and powerful figures of speech to strengthen the weakness of faith. (Luther)

from your pain – The pain of the Israelites in the period of their captivity in Babylon was, as it were, like that of a woman struggling in childbirth and at the point of giving birth, namely, to a kingdom for Christ. For we have the same word here that was spoken to Eve in Gen. 3:16: “In pain (צָוָרָה) you shall bring forth children.” (Luther)

All the suffering and afflictions they had faced. (TLSB)

and turmoil – Namely, when you will think that everything is about to go to ruin. It will certainly happen that at that time you will have nothing more contemptible than that king who is now extremely dreadful. This is the way of divine deliverance, that whoever is in extreme despair and has nothing more formidable than his own trials will afterwards hold nothing in greater contempt than these. Formerly the pope was more formidable than the highest princes, yet now he is abused with lampoons so that among those who have come to know the truth nothing is more contemptible than he; yes, even the ungodly belittle him. (Luther)

hard service. The Babylonian captivity was much like Israel’s experience in Egypt (cf. Ex 1:14). (CSB)

14:4–21 Ode beginning at v 4 unleashes a torrent of ridicule on God’s enemies. Line after line cuts down the pretensions of arrogant men. They are such ludicrous figures because they must leave all their pomp behind as they go down to the grave and its decay. In vv 12–21, the futility of death-bound men wanting to “be like God” (Gn 3:5) is made graphic by a parable drawn from a pagan tale about a celestial deity. This magnificent satire, with the force of a proverb, applies whenever anti-God powers set out to defy and to destroy the kingdom of heaven. Vv 4b–8 describe the reaction of the people on the earth to the death of the king. Vv 9–11 share the reaction of those in Sheol. (TLSB)

14:4 taunt. Cf. the taunts against Babylon in Rev 18. (CSB)

Hbr *mashal*, “to be like, to be similar”; as a noun translated “parable” or “allegory” (Ps 78:2; Ezk 17:2; 24:3). When such comparisons illustrate generally accepted truths, they come under the category of proverbs (Ps 49:4; Pr 1:1; Ezk 12:22–23); when the point to be made in a parable or proverb is mockery, the word is rendered “taunt song” or simply “taunt” (Jer 24:9; Hab 2:6; Mi 2:4). (TLSB)

That is, this mocking triumphal song. There is comfort in vengeance, which is especially sweet to the flesh. (Luther)

king of Babylon. Another title used by the king of Assyria at this time. (CSB)

Sargon II (reigned 721–705 BC) had achieved a pinnacle of world dominance that none of his predecessors had known. He even styled himself as “Lord of the universe.” This pride fits the description of the king in vv 3–27. But Sargon also fits these verses in another way. Less than a year after his palace in Dur-Sharrukin was dedicated in 706 BC, he suffered a fate unknown among Assyrian monarchs: he was killed on the battlefield. Mystery surrounds the event, but plainly it was viewed as the ultimate disgrace. Hence, in contrast to most other Assyrian kings, his son Sennacherib does not identify his father. Dur-Sharrukin was soon abandoned, and all Sargon’s glory was forgotten. (TLSB)

ceased. Sargon’s death in 705 BC on a battlefield in Anatolia and the impossibility of burying him in a royal grave caused a wave of joy throughout the ancient Near East. Subject

nations believed they could liberate themselves from Assyria. When Sennacherib ascended the throne in 704 BC, his annals record widespread mutiny throughout the Assyrian Empire. (TLSB)

14:5 *staff... scepter*. Symbol of Sargon II's power and his conquering nature. The Lord has destroyed that staff, as well as the power behind it. (TLSB)

That is, his scepter or kingdom, and the violent scepter denotes uprightness, which kings should employ to protect the innocent and punish the guilty. The round apple reminds them that they must rule everywhere without respect of persons. But he bore the staff for the purpose of smiting, not of judging. Since it is the duty of a good prince to serve rather than to exercise lordship, the princes should have their power for constructive rather than destructive purposes, so that they may be loved rather than feared. Wretched is the prince who has lost the common prayer. If the prince grieves over the slaughter of the people and wards off evil from them, this, indeed, is what it means to rule and to shepherd. (Luther)

14:6 *struck the peoples in wrath* – That is without any right, without any judgment, without any laws. This describes the rule of the ungodly and tyrants, who do not fear God and seek only their own advantage. Alas for the detestable reign where the people applaud and dance when the king has been removed! (Luther)

These are the efforts to keep the rebellious under total domination. Or to develop the picture more fully, in the process they “trampled down the nations in anger with persecution unrelenting.” These verse reflect the huge sigh of relief that went up from the dominated nations when the controlling power was broken. (Leupold)

14:7 *earth is at rest*. Peace followed the demise of Sargon II, and the result was the celebration. The boast of the conqueror is replaced with the song of the redeemed (24:14, 16; 26:1, 19). (TLSB)

break forth into singing. Rather bold imagery – the whole earth, that is, all that dwell on the face of the earth, not only heave a great sigh of relief, but they break forth into one loud song at the death of the tyrant. What a tyrant he must have been, or better: how tyrannical must have been the administration of his kingdom. The idea of breaking forth into singing is a characteristic form of statement of the prophet. Cf. 44:23; 49:13. (Leupold)

14:8 The Assyrian tyrants, holding dominion over many people, do not take care of the earth (cf Gn 2:15; Dt 20:19). Instead, they boast of their ability to destroy it, in particular the cypress and Lebanon cedar (Is 37:24). Therefore, nature also rejoices at the downfall of this king. (TLSB)

pine trees ... cedars. Isaiah often personified nature. The trees along with the mountains burst into song in 44:23 (cf. 55:12). (CSB)

cedars of Lebanon. These highly prized timbers were hauled away by the kings of Assyria and Babylon for centuries. (CSB)

That is, all the nations surrounding Babylon, especially the Jews, which are alluded to by Lebanon, have rest. Palestine and Judea lie at the foot of Lebanon. The cypresses and cedars are the nobles of the people, the children of Israel and Judah, whom the king of Babylon cut down as he led them into captivity. (Luther)

Cypresses and cedars are mentioned, perhaps because they were the trees most commonly sought by foreign invaders. It is a well-known fact that one after the other of the nations that invaded Syria and Israel slashed away at the cedars of Lebanon in particular, because they made choice timber for lasting construction. Babylon must have ravaged Lebanon beyond all others the went before. (Leupold)

Nebuchadnezzar even built a road just to bring these trees back to his capital. (PBC)

14:9–10 *rouses the shades*. The kings who went before Sargon II welcome the new arrival to the grave and remark on how he looks like them. (TLSB)

14:9 *Sheol beneath is stirred up* – Here Isaiah becomes a poet fashioning some sort of theater among the dead and setting up a beautiful contrast. Once, he says, you were sitting proudly on the throne. All were afraid of you, all were bending the knee and saying: My most clement lord! Now you will have the same thing in Sheol, throne, servants, etc. It is an illusion. Sheol is *stirred up*, that is, it has been shaking. The nether regions have become afraid that you will rule there as formerly. Among the Hebrews Sheol very rarely means the place of punishments, but often it means grave, which they also call the pit. This, then, is the meaning: All the dead have been thoroughly terrified at so important an arrival, namely, since you, now dead too, have been lowered into the grave, for they have heard of your cruelty. (Luther)

leaders. Lit. “goats”; a goat often led a flock of sheep (see Jer 50:8). In Zec 10:3 the term is parallel to “shepherds.” (CSB)

rise from their thrones. Conditions among the dead are described in terms of their roles on earth. (CSB)

14:10 *all them will answer* – That is, one after another they all will say: Ah, lord, king, etc., we thought so great a king would never die. (Luther)

Death, the great leveler, has brought this about. The-time eminence is completely erased. One thing that we might have expected fails to find expression. (Leupold)

14:11 *pomp ... Sheol*. The point of departure in this verse is the remembrance that the great monarchs of the days of old spent much time and wealth on feasting and drinking. (Leupold)

noise of your harps. Music is sometimes a sign of luxury and pleasure (see Am 6:5–6). (CSB)

maggots are laid as a bed beneath you – Formerly you sat in gold, purple, and silk, now your throne will be maggots and your bed worms. (Luther)

Elsewhere, the worm is cited as an agent of the Lord’s judgment (Dt 28:39) and a vicious consumer of human remains (Is 66:24; Mk 9:47–48). (TLSB)

Where the ones who took part in the banquets used to repose on luxurious couches and draped themselves with expensive coverings, now the couch will be worms and the covering maggots. (Leupold)

14:12–15† In Babylonian and Canaanite mythology celestial bodies became personified deities. The king of Babylon is later used as a type (prefiguration) of the “beast” who will lead the

Babylon of the last days (see Rev 13:4; 17:3). Cf. the description of the ruler of Tyre in Eze 28. (CSB)

Ancient Near Eastern mythology contains stories of war in the heavens, but not of a person challenging God. This particular depiction does not correspond to any one myth, but instead is an image that Isaiah has constructed on the myths of neighboring nations. (TLSB)

14:12 *you*. Sargon II. Jesus may allude to this passage (Lk 10:18; Rv 12:8–9) in describing Satan’s fall from heaven. (TLSB)

O Day Star.† The Hebrew for this expression is translated “Lucifer” in the Latin Vulgate. See Lk 10:18; Rev 9:1; 12:9. (CSB)

This is not said of the angel who once was thrown out of heaven⁷ but of the king of Babylon, and it is figurative language. Isaiah becomes a disciple of Calliope and in like manner laughs at the king. לְיָלֵךְ denotes the morning star, called Lucifer and the son of Dawn. “Heaven” is where we are with our heads, and that is obviously above the ground, just as that most powerful and extremely magnificent king was once above, but now his lamp is extinguished. Formerly he was the light of the earth and thought that at any moment he would rise really high and advance the light toward high noon, but he falls in the very act of rising. Ps. 55:23 says: “Men of blood and treachery shall not live out half their days.” (Luther)

Likely the planet Venus (Hbr word occurs only here). The translation “Lucifer” (light-bearer) in the KJV is derived from the Latin name for Venus. In Babylonian and Canaanite mythology, celestial bodies were associated with gods. (TLSB)

son of Dawn! Synonym for Day Star. (TLSB)

from heaven – That is, from the highest peak of sovereignty. (Luther)

He lost his important position. (TLSB)

down to the ground – That is, to the lowest depths. You wanted to tread our God underfoot—this is to rise up above the clouds and heavens, of which He himself is the lord. (Luther)

The greatest possible overthrow that can be conceived of is from the heights of heaven to the depths of hell. (Leupold)

14:13 *You*. Sargon II. (TLSB)

I will ascend to heaven; above the stars of God – These were bombastic words and high-vaulting ambitions. Reduced to prose they meant he was going to rise as high as any being, mortal or divine, had ever risen apparently. Echoes of the ambitions of the men who built the original tower of Babel (Gen 11) are heard here. (Leupold)

Above all things. Stars may refer to angels. (TLSB)

I will sit on the mount of assembly – This is Zion, and Jerusalem is situated on the side of the far north. There God dwelled. This is prophetic interpretation, not that that king was thinking this. It does not matter if you do not say it or think it, as long as you are there in fact. (Luther)

Aspiration of the king is similar to that of the nation at Babel (Gn 11:1–9; cf Ps 48:1–2; Am 9:2–3). (TLSB)

mount of assembly. Mount Zaphon (see Ps 48:1–2), also called Mount Casius, was about 25 miles northeast of Ugarit in Syria. The Canaanites considered it the home and meeting place of the gods, much like Mount Olympus for the Greeks (see Ps 48:2 and note). Cf. Ps 82:1. (CSB)

Hbr *tsaphon*; Mount Zaphon, in Canaanite mythology, was the place of their gods. (TLSB)

14:14 *I will ascend above the heights of the clouds* – On his own – how he can do it remains an unanswered question – he purposes to scale these unattainable heights. Thoughts of Dan 4 in reference to Nebuchadnezzar comes to mind at once. Pride seldom mounted higher. (Leupold)

14:15 *you are brought down* – Such heaven-storming defiance challenges God to act, and He will. (Leupold)

14:16–20a These verses seem to take place on earth, not in the realm of the dead (Sheol)—probably also vv. 9–10. (CSB)

Since no one particular king appears to be under consideration, and since poetic fancy has free play, the emblematic figure of the Babylonian king may be poetically thought of as suffering the indignity of lying unburied on the field of battle. It is immaterial whether this ever happened or not. The contempt with which the ruler of once-mighty Babylon would be treated is the point. (Leupold)

14:16 *ponder over you* – There he now life, brought as low as the corpse of the meanest soldier. He certainly never dreamed that he could fall so low. (Leupold)

Third view of Sargon II's demise. The nations react again. Instead of being remembered fondly, the very memory of the tyrant is repressed. The death of the king causes people to ponder and stare, considering the difference between reputation and reality. (TLSB)

14:17 *prisoners go home.* Babylon, like Assyria, deported large segments of defeated populations to subdue the rebellious among them (see 2Ki 24:14–16). (CSB)

He kept captives in permanent exile. (TLSB)

That is, he did not open the prison for the Jews, and now he himself comes down into the prison stretched out, killed like another in war, just as a useless plant is uprooted and thrown away. Wretched is the exit of great lords. (Luther)

14:18 *all the kings...lie in glory* – By contrast, other monarchs less mighty than he enjoyed greater honor after their death. It is as though the speaker began to reflect and said all others enjoyed a better lot, yes, on closer reflection, he could not recall of ever having heard of a single exception. (Leupold)

Buried with honor. (TLSB)

14:19 *cast out, away from your grave.* A proper burial was considered important for an ordinary individual, and especially so for a king. To have one's body simply discarded was a terrible fate. (CSB)

Even the king's body is treated with scorn. He is not buried with the other kings in the tombs, but set apart in shame. Not receiving a proper burial was a certain sign of being cursed (Ezk 37:1–14). (TLSB)

loathed branch – This could well mean a worthless sucker. (Leupold)

Translated “shoot” in Is 11:1. A sprout, snapped off before it grows into a sturdy oak, is considered of no value. So the oppressor will cast it out on the rubbish heap. This is the opposite of the branch of Jesse's root, which bears fruit (11:1; cf 60:21). (TLSB)

clothed with the slain – That might be in a welter of corpses, dead bodies lying in a disordered tangle. (Leupold)

Sargon II's royal raiment is stripped away, and his body is thrown into a pile. (TLSB)

go down to the stones of the pit – That is, like a corpse trodden underfoot, that is, you will be found and be counted among the slain lying scattered in the streets, trampled upon, and drenched with blood, and together with these you will be covered with sand or stones. (The Hebrews call all rough, gravelly, and uneven places “stones.”) And with their feet they will walk over you, and there will be no sepulcher as glorious as those of the other kings. (Luther)

14:20 *you have destroyed your land* – That is, you have raged not only against other kingdoms and other peoples but also against your own. Therefore you have lost the good will of the people, so that there is no one to bury you. (Luther)

He has ruined his land by the disastrous wars he had fought. (Leupold)

nevermore be named – The king is thought of as so dishonored a character that even his descendants live under the shadow of this disgrace. So much so, that later generations will disdain even to mention father and children. (Leupold)

That is, not only you will perish but also your descendants, and you will have no name in posterity. Belshazzar, the third grandson of Nebuchadnezzar, was killed at night by the Medes, as we read in Dan. 5:30. The fact that Scripture teaches in Deut. 24:16 that the children shall not “be put to death for the fathers” means that this is commended to human judges. But God, who is the Lord of body and soul, visits “the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and the fourth generation” (Ex. 20:5). (Luther)

14:21 *slaughter his sons.* A man's children, as well as his tombstone, were his memorial (cf. 2Sa 18:18). The king of Babylon would have neither (cf. 47:9). (CSB)

OT forbade Israel to punish children for the sins of the father (Dt 24:16; Ezk 18). But the Lord may end royal lines, that the remnant of those who believe will not be led astray (1Ki 15:25–30; 16:2–4, 9–13; 21:17–29) and create a land of unbelief, as in the time before Noah (Gn 6:5–7; 2Pt 2:4–9). (TLSB)

This expresses the thought that it is devoutly hoped that rulers of this type may never occupy the throne as they expand their empire by bloody conquests and build new cities as monuments of their so-called achievements. (Leupold)

cities. Condemns influence of paganism through growing cities of foreign countries. (TLSB)

14:22–23 The taunt is extended to include Babylon itself (see note on vv. 3–21); fulfilled, at least partially, through Sennacherib’s destruction of Babylon in 689 B.C.—ultimately by the Medes and Persians after they took Babylon in 539. (CSB)

14:22 *I will rise up Against them* – You see that they are not raised up and that they do not remain in the land. For they would not be anything else but greater tyrants if they would rise up living. (Luther)

It is now no longer the king of Babylon who is under consideration, but his whole empire. (Luther)

cut off...name and remnant – That is, I will remove whatever is made public and is in everybody’s mouth. It is as if He were saying: “Nothing will be said about Babylon, because it will be devastated and devoured. It will no longer be famous, and nothing will remain there of former things.” A name indicates the essence of a thing and denotes its nature. (Luther)

descendants and posterity. A remnant; Israel will survive through a remnant (see 10:20–22; 11:11, 16), but Babylon will not. (CSB)

14:23 *pools of water.* Southern Babylonia, where the Chaldean tribes once lived, was a region of marshlands. (CSB)

This will be in the place of the old irrigation canals that used to function so well in conjunction with the tow rivers and made the farm-land so productive. (Leupold)

The land would revert to its marshy state. (TLSB)

broom of destruction. Swept away. (TLSB)

14:3–23 The demise of Babylon’s king demonstrates the final outcome for all who rely on oppression and wickedness to achieve their aims. His fall is a warning to never put ourselves in the place of God. While the glorious king of Babylon remained in the grave, our King, the Lord Jesus Christ, rose from the grave. Through faith in Him, our guilt is taken away, and our resurrection is assured. • Lord God, even as we are surrounded by the anger and wickedness of the powerful, give us comfort and joy in knowing that You have destroyed death for us. Amen. (TLSB)

An Oracle Concerning Assyria

24 The LORD of hosts has sworn: “As I have planned, so shall it be, and as I have purposed, so shall it stand, **25** that I will break the Assyrian in my land, and on my mountains trample him underfoot; and his yoke shall depart from them, and his burden from their shoulder.” **26** This is the purpose that is purposed concerning the whole earth, and this is the hand that is stretched out over all the nations. **27** For the LORD of hosts has purposed, and who will annul it? His hand is stretched out, and who will turn it back?

14:24–27 Here is a little footnote to the first oracle. These verses are about the future of Assyria, not about Babylon. Why include them in this oracle concerning Babylon? During the lifetime of Isaiah, Assyria would invade Judah and surround it with a vast army (see chapters 36-38). But all Jerusalem and Judah would witness the Assyrian army limping home after losing 185,000 soldiers in one night. The truth of these words about Assyria underscored the truth of the words that God gave to Isaiah about Babylon. God had said that both would be so, and the people could refer to the fulfillment of the Assyrian prophecy for the reassurance that the Babylonian prophecy would be fulfilled as well. Here God actually takes an oath to remove all doubt about these events. (PBC)

One more thought should bring us great comfort. The destruction of Assyria and Babylon verify the truth of Isaiah's other words, especially his prophecies of the coming Messiah. Those promises also came to pass. Christ was born as the prophet predicted. The fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecies concerning Babylon and Assyria assure God's people that all his prophecies will be fulfilled. They stand as a pledge that the Messiah will come a second time to destroy all of His enemies forever. Those enemies not only opposed God but afflicted His people. On that day of final judgment, the righteous remnant will rejoice eternally in God's deliverance. (PBC)

14:24 *the Lord of hosts has sworn* – Here now he is describing something altogether different from the last. For Isaiah is speaking of Sennacherib, king of Assyria, and by way of a digression he is going out of his way to strengthen the promise to the people of his own time, as if to say, "Do not be afraid. Behold, I shall say something else to you: Not only will the king of Babylon accomplish nothing against you, but neither will Sennacherib, the Assyrian." (Luther)

At the time this word was spoken Assyria may have appeared to be far from a final overthrow. In the eyes of the Lord the matter looked otherwise. (Leupold)

planned. God is carrying out His perfect plan for His people. These are not random events. (TLSB)

so shall it stand. See 8:10 and note. God's sovereign purposes regarding Assyria and Babylon will be carried out. (CSB)

14:25 *in my land* – That is, Judea. This is comfort for Hezekiah and the godly people who were weighed down by the yoke of the Assyrian king. The Lord swears—something He would not do if He did not see the extreme need and the wavering hearts and jittery faith of the people over whose neck Assyria was dangling. Therefore He promises them that help has been found. (Luther)

Thinking back to the idea that a nation is an instrument in God's hand, we can well understand that the worthless instrument may be broken in pieces and cast aside. The concept is a grand one, emphasizing the omnipotence of the Almighty. To be a bit more specific, the Lord has determined to do this breaking in no other place than in His own land and upon the mountains of the land of His people – the land which the Assyrians had so often invaded and defiled. (Leupold)

trample him – The figure has the idea of grinding under foot the object that has offended, and leaving it behind utterly useless and helpless. (Leupold)

yoke ... burden. Since the imperial designs of nations cannot be achieved without laying heavy burdens upon the shoulder of each member of the dominated nation, this overthrow of the Assyrian will result in the removal of such yoke and burden from all individuals. (Leupold)

14:26–27 *hand stretched out.* God's hand was stretched out against Egypt at the Red Sea (see Ex 15:12). (CSB)

14:26 *the whole earth* – God's plan is not limited to Israel but encompasses all. (TLSB)

This verse appears as a summation and comment on the part of the prophet. For the prophet indicates the broader scope of this plan that God has. Though, on the face of it, it involves only Assyria, nevertheless since Assyrian domination was world-wide, these events will affect all the earth and so the hand is stretched out over all the nations. This statement describes a sort of gesture. Before the Lord fetches His mighty blow he raises His hand for the blow, a figure used by Isaiah several times also in reference to God's judgments on Israel (9:7-10:4) (Leupold)

14:27 *who will annul it* – No one can stop God or hinder His will for His people. "God's eternal election does not just foresee and foreknow the salvation of the elect. From God's gracious will and pleasure in Christ Jesus, election is a cause that gains, works, helps, and promotes our salvation and what belongs to it" (FC SD XI 8). (TLSB)

None apparently saw the doom of Assyria as Isaiah did. (Leupold)

14:24–27 The Lord's gracious plans and purposes will be accomplished, not just for Israel, but for the whole earth. God's people will be delivered from Assyria and all other enemies. Faith in this promise moves the believer to pray that God "breaks and hinders every evil plan and purpose of the devil, the world, and our sinful nature, which do not want us to hallow God's name or let His kingdom come" (SC, Third Petition, p xxxviii). God's people walk by faith, not by sight (2Co 5:7). God's greatest plans and purposes were accomplished through Jesus, who redeemed us from sin. • Heavenly Father, help us to remember that nothing can separate us from Your love in Christ Jesus. Amen. (TLSB)

An Oracle Concerning Philistia

28 In the year that King Ahaz died came this oracle: **29** Rejoice not, O Philistia, all of you, that the rod that struck you is broken, for from the serpent's root will come forth an adder, and its fruit will be a flying fiery serpent. **30** And the firstborn of the poor will graze, and the needy lie down in safety; but I will kill your root with famine, and your remnant it will slay. **31** Wail, O gate; cry out, O city; melt in fear, O Philistia, all of you! For smoke comes out of the north, and there is no straggler in his ranks. **32** What will one answer the messengers of the nation? "The LORD has founded Zion, and in her the afflicted of his people find refuge."

14:28 *the year.* Perhaps 715 B.C. The occasion appears to be the Philistine revolt against Assyria while King Sargon (see 20:1) was too preoccupied with serious revolts elsewhere to give much attention to Canaan. (CSB)

The last prophecy against Assyria was finished in the fourteenth or fifteenth year of Hezekiah's reign. But what the prophet is dealing with now happened in the king's first year (cf. 2 Kings 18), from which we observe that a strict order was not preserved in the prophetic writings, just as it was not in the Psalms. For that reason we must not be concerned about investigating the plan behind the sequence of the prophecies. It is enough that we have the prophecies. He prophesies

against the Philistines, who were the Jews' neighbors, and from there he goes on to all neighboring nations. "Judgment" is to "begin with the household of God," as we read in 1 Peter 4:17. So he first chastises himself and his people and then the other nations. First the beam must be pulled out of one's own eye (Matt. 7:5). The righteous man is his own accuser first; the ungodly, on the contrary, stick only to the crimes of others and forget their own. The Jews lived in the midst of the nations, and all of the nations hated and persecuted them, for Satan drove them to it because of the Word and works of God which were present among the Jews. But the most hostile of their enemies were the Philistines, so that if misfortune struck the Jews elsewhere, they celebrated. For that reason David said of the violent death of Saul, as we read in 2 Sam. 1:20: "Tell it not in Gath." Grievous and hard to bear is insult added to injury. Against these insulting and dancing Palestinians, therefore, he prophesies a burden, that is, affliction. (Luther)

14:29 *rejoice not* – The Philistines would rejoice over Assyria's great loss. But God tells the Philistines not to rejoice because greater judgment will come upon them. (PBC)

Over the centuries, Philistia was a constant enemy of God's people. They occupied a coastal strip of land along the Mediterranean southwest of Jerusalem and were established in five cities: Gaza, Ashkelon, Ashdod, Ekron, and Gath. They plagued the people of Israel almost from the very beginning. God called Samson to deliver his people from the Philistines. David killed Goliath, the champion of the Philistine army. While they at times were subject to Israel, yet they remained aggressive neighbors, reasserting their independence whenever possible. They worshiped Dagon, Ashtoreth, and Beelzebub. God's people fell victim to some of the idolatrous worship practices of the Philistines. God here announced the judgment on such enemies of His people. (PBC)

This is as if to say: "You should rather be weeping, your rejoicing is untimely. For you are glad and think that the rod about to smite you is broken." Ahaz smote them and Uzziah, the grandfather of Ahaz, over whose death the Philistines rejoiced and thought that they were now going to devour the Jews. (Luther)

Philistines. See note on Ge 10:14. Philistine territory was vulnerable to attack by the great empires (Egypt and Assyria) since it lay along the main route from Egypt to Mesopotamia. (CSB)

the rod. Probably Sargon of Assyria. (CSB)

David. He created a great portion of his dynasty on the backs of the Philistines (1Sm 17:50; 19:8; 23:1–5) (TLSB)

is broken. If the rod was Sargon, reference is to the threats to his empire by a series of revolts in Babylonia and Asia Minor. (CSB)

root ... fruit. A figure of speech that refers to the whole (tree) by speaking of its two extremes. After Sargon will come other Assyrian kings: Sennacherib, Esarhaddon, Ashurbanipal. (CSB)

Refers to Ex 4:2–3; 7:10–12, showing that the Lord's power is in the house of David. (TLSB)

There are certain species of serpents that attack by their breath; those he here calls flying and fiery dragons. And this maxim can be made to fit many places and things. It is easy to make changes, but they are not necessarily improvements. The king is changed in Israel, but not into your protector, O Philistines. Thus in a family the servant, the wife, the maid, etc., are changed,

and often it turns out worse. This maxim is spoken against the smugness of human vanity. New things are sought when people disdain what they have. There is no regard for the goodness of what is present, and because of a single little fault many excellent qualities in a man are despised. He who desires to change anything, let him pray that it turns out well. You are happy because the serpent has been removed, but a far more poisonous basilisk will rise up. He compares Hezekiah to an adder, Ahaz to a serpent. The Philistines were harassed more by Hezekiah. That he should be called an adder is not defamatory or dreadful but rather comforting when the ferocity is inflicted on the enemies. So Christ, too, is called death, plague of death, lion, serpent, sin, curse, fire, etc. This is what lifts up the faith of the godly. (Luther)

adder. A greater Davidic king, referring to Hezekiah and the Lord's victory over Sennacherib (Is 36–37). (TLSB)

flying fiery serpent. One comes from the line of David, who is even greater than the adder. (TLSB)

14:30 *poor ... needy.* Israelites (see v. 32). (CSB)

The poorest and most needy of Israel will be safe, but Philistia will fall completely. Famine for Philistia implies siege warfare, the basic principle being to starve them until they opened their gates (29:8). (TLSB)

These things are said in the interests of the fainthearted against the proud and presumptuous Philistines. If there had been no need of comfort, the prophet would not have spoken in this way. It is, therefore, an indication of the Jews' state of mind; they were in anguish. They must be looked at as a poor man at the crossroads, or as a scattered flock surrounded by many wolves; for their enemies are many. But let them threaten. Let them lie in ambush as much as they want. Those *will feed* who are the firstborn, that is, those beloved and chosen by God. In the regard of their enemies they are few indeed, but in the sight of the great God they are precious, and they will feed and be satisfied while their enemies go hungry, etc. But in view of the circumstances and the condition on both sides it seems impossible that this will happen. There is need here of faith and of hope. These are words of the Spirit. It is therefore not for you to be alarmed at the dreadful appearance of the foes. God, who is greater, is with us; we will sing (cf. Ps. 21:13). For from the serpent's root will come forth an adder; let the enemies be very presumptuous and proud. (Luther)

kill your root. Completely destroyed with no hope of recovery. (TLSB)

14:31 *Wail.* Cf. the similar reaction in 13:6; 15:2; 16:7; 23:1. (CSB)

This is the voice of faith and prophetic threatening. Run together into the marketplace; mourn rather and do not rejoice. For your jubilation will not last long. (Luther)

gate. Philistines at all levels will be crying out when the army from the north comes. (TLSB)

melt in fear – All of Philistia is cowardly. This is the certainty of prophecy, that the prophet speaks of future events as if they were present. He says they are thoroughly terrified in spirit and they pine away in the body. Their heart melts in their belly. (Luther)

smoke comes out of the north. The dust raised by the marching feet and the chariots of the Assyrians—who always invaded Palestine from the north. (CSB)

Gath refused to pay the tribute to Assyria and was sacked in 734 BC. The Philistine cities were plotting with Egypt against Assyria and so lost Ashkelon and Gath to Sargon II in 720 BC. Ashdod, another Philistine city and part of the famous Philistine Pentapolis, rebelled in 712 BC. Ashkelon rebelled again in 705 and was quelled by Sennacherib in 701 BC. (TLSB)

Thus Jeremiah says in ch. 1:13: “I see a boiling pot, facing away from the north.” Fire denotes adversity and misfortune. In Luke 12:49 we read: “I came to cast fire upon the earth,” that is, a separation of men. Here he calls it smoke, which appears before the fire and is a sign of fire close by, and here it denotes the report that is at hand for the evil approaching through the king, namely, the king of Assyria, who would be coming against the Philistines. For Jerusalem is to the south of Palestine. (Luther)

not a straggler. A longer description is found in 5:26–29. (CSB)

A disciplined force marching quickly upon them (5:26–30). *his.* The Assyrian enemy. (TLSB)

There is no one by himself in his ranks.” מִוֶּיֶדֶד denotes a set time or even a definite place. Here it means the set and ordered squadrons of the army. In this smoke, he says, the fire will not be absent, but it will arise in a set place. This is the great force of the king of Assyria. (Luther)

Everywhere there will be a pronouncement through messengers. In Philistia: You will perish by the smoke. Jerusalem has a protector and therefore will remain. This is the taunt against the taunts of the presumptuous. While all nations round about Jerusalem collapse, Jerusalem stands fast. (Luther)

14:32 *has founded Zion.* God will protect Jerusalem from the Assyrians (compare 31:4–5 with 2:2). (CSB)

Judah depends on the Lord alone (ch 12; Dt 6:4) and needs no alliances with pagan nations. (TLSB)

The chapter concludes with the assurance that the Lord stands behind Zion. He has founded it and has issued wonderful and gracious promises concerning it. Nothing could thwart the fulfillment of those promises, and God’s people be surrounded by enemies and threatened by their power, they can find comfort and refuge in Zion. Of course, this promise does not refer to a geographic city, where God’s people retreat from the armies of the world. Zion refers to the church where God’s people find refuge in the promises of a gracious God and are assured of God’s powerful protection. Even hell itself will not overcome it (Matthew 16:18). We have the Savior’s word on that. (PBC)

He protects it. Behold, the promises of God’s mercy and protection to a poor and afflicted people as consolation for all the godly who are the Zion of the Lord, and He cannot forsake those who trust in Him. However few I might find among you abiding in humbleness and confidence, this text will remain. And the enemies will die more quickly than you. (Luther)

14:28–32 Assyria would destroy Philistia with fearsome efficiency. But in Zion, the Lord founded a place of refuge for His afflicted people. Earthly alliances and human relationships are a source of safety. Yet we should enjoy these relationships as gifts from God and never allow them

to replace God as the object of our highest trust and love. Our refuge and safety are found in Jesus. In His Holy Church, our Zion, Jesus tends to those afflicted by sin. He grants forgiveness, life, and salvation. • We praise You, O God, for Your Holy Church throughout the world, and also for our own congregations. Though sin afflicts us, we flee to Your Church for safety and refuge in Jesus Christ. Amen. (TLSB)