

Sermon Notes, Isaiah 14

vv. 1-2 – Because of her sin, Babylon must fall. This ungodly world power must be crushed so that God’s promised purpose to exalt His people, Israel can be realized. The people of God will emerge triumphant in the end—even subjecting the heathen nations to themselves. But, this subjection will be through the spiritual conquest of the gospel, and the rule of Christ on earth.

Vv. 3-11 – In these verses how fully the tables have been turned! The last word to the Babylonians, the great conquerors comes not from their admirers, but from their victims. (EX. At one time or another we have all enjoyed a popcorn movie in which the ruthless bully gets what’s coming to him.) This is a song, a taunt about Babylon’s downfall. The broken oppressor: her destruction and complete overthrow has ended her cruel conquests. **V. 7** -- Her fall brings joy to the whole earth. **V. 8** – Even the trees of the forest are happy about her destruction; for they will be spared from the axe of the Babylonian axe men.

Vv. 9-10 -- Other God-defiers ‘welcome’ the arrival of Babylon in Sheol. At the pinnacle of her power, the great enemy of God (mother of harlots) has become like us. (EX. Hell’s one ‘comfort’. And, hell’s partial ‘directory’ **Ez 32**, see **32:31**, Pharaoh ‘comforted’) **V. 11** – The splendor of her finery, fabrics, and carpets are now satirically mocked. For, Babylon is depicted as a trampled, unburied, desecrated corpse in a state of corruption. Her pride and power are brought in an instant to the grave (extinguished).

Vv. 12-14 – One commentator says of these verses, “The titanic pride and ambition expressed in vv. 13-14 are out of place anywhere but from the lips of Satan” (Gleason L. Archer).

“How you have fallen from heaven, O star of the morning, son of the dawn! You have been cut down to the earth, you who have weakened the nations! But you said in your heart, ‘I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God, and I will sit on the mount of assembly in the recesses of the north. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High’” (**Is 14:12-14**).

In our study of Isaiah chapter 14, it behooves us to investigate the following question: ***What does the fall of Satan have to do with the believer today?*** First of all, in systematic theology we learn under the doctrine of angelology that prior to Lucifer’s fall into sin, the angels were not yet confirmed in a state of righteousness, or unrighteousness. In other words, their decision to follow God fully would confirm them in righteousness. And, this came **in the form of a test**. And that test

was the fall of Lucifer himself. As with the imagery in Isaiah 13 and 14, the devil himself is behind the wicked empire and king of Babylon. And as God addresses the human king, He also targets or rebukes the ancient serpent of old who inspires Babylon's ruthless leader, and so many murderous world leaders through history (EX. Stalin, Hitler, Pol Pot, Idi Amin, Mao Tse Tung).

“Son of man, take up a lamentation over the king of Tyre and say to him, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD, ‘You had the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was your covering: the ruby, the topaz and the diamond; the beryl, the onyx and the jasper; the lapis lazuli, the turquoise and the emerald; and the gold, the workmanship of your settings and sockets, was in you. On the day that you were created they were prepared. You were the anointed cherub who covers, and I placed you *there*. You were on the holy mountain of God; you walked in the midst of the stones of fire. You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created until unrighteousness was found in you. By the abundance of your trade you were internally filled with violence, and you sinned; therefore, I have cast you as profane from the mountain of God. And I have destroyed you, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom by reason of your splendor. I cast you to the ground; I put you before kings, that they may see you. **V. 18 -- By the multitude of your iniquities, in the unrighteousness of your trade you profaned your sanctuaries.** Therefore, I have brought fire from the midst of you; it has consumed you, and I have turned you to ashes on the earth in the eyes of all who see you. All who know you among the peoples are appalled at you; you have become terrified and you will cease to be forever” (Ezekiel 28:11-19).

Verse 18 in Ezekiel chapter 28 may not only be referring to the wealth that Tyre gained by its shrewdness in trade, but also to the persuasion exercised by Lucifer to win the loyalty of **one third of the angelic host** (Rev 12:4, 7-9). We find it shocking that angels who had worshipped in the presence of the majesty of God Himself should follow Lucifer. In Ezekiel Chapter **28** what begins as a note of condemnation of the King of Tyre, is expanded to describe Lucifer's original fall.

In this Ezekiel 28 account we see how Lucifer was corrupted by his own pride and arrogance. Isaiah 14 targets his wicked ambition whereas Ezekiel 28 identifies his self-corruption through pride. Once Satan had convinced a third of the angels to follow him, the test was over and two-thirds of the angels who remained loyal to their Creator were eternally confirmed in righteousness and one-third of the angels who followed Satan were confirmed in wickedness. This number does not change.

Some commentators have suggested that Satan's pride was wounded when he discovered through God's announcement that angels would be sent out as ministering spirits to render service to God, not only in maintaining His providential order, but also in serving us humans—creatures of dust and clay inferior to angels. “Are they not all ministering spirits, sent out to render service

for the sake of those who will inherit salvation? (**Heb 1:14**).

We do not know what Satan said to the angels who sinned and followed him. But, we do get a hint from the Book of Job when God essentially asks Satan what he has been doing. “The LORD said to Satan, ‘From where do you come?’ Then Satan answered the LORD and said, “From roaming about on the earth and walking around on it” (**Job 1:7**).

This response from the devil seems to suggest that the evil one believes that he has won control of the earth fair and square. After all, he reasons, if he has won the loyalty of our first parents, then certainly he has won the dominion over the earth; after all, Adam and Eve were to rule over the creation and subdue it as God’s vice regents (**Gen 1:26-28**).

Again, we do not know how the evil one convinced one-third of the angels to follow him. But, his sales pitch likely suggested that it was a poor calling to serve humans, creatures made of dust, and once Adam and Eve had rebelled against God, then Satan will have gained the loyalty and worship of the human race. And having done so, God would have to go to some other part of the universe and start over, and the powers of darkness would have their own thrones and empire.

Scripture indicates that the devil is a deceiver, that he is the father of lies, that he tempts, seduces, blinds, buffets, and beguiles (**Jn 8:44**). This is how he murders souls—with the lie. But some of this demonic activity is carried out as Satan disguises himself as an **angel of light** in which he and his followers disguise themselves as ministers of righteousness (EX. Mormon ‘Jake’ on July 4th). “No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. Therefore, it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness, whose end will be according to their deeds” (**2 Cor 11:14-15**). The evil one inspires and originates false religion—disguising it as spiritual insight. His followers that dispense false teaching can look like sheep though they are wolves in sheep’s clothing (**Matt 7:15**).

The penalty for sinning against God is death (**Gen 2:17**). Physical death came to our first parents centuries after they’d sinned. But, it did come. Satan told Eve that she would not die. We see clearly that Satan uses the Lie to murder souls. We could boil that lie down to its very essence in this phrase, “God is not as good as His Word” (there are countless nuances of this lie in every generation, from ‘good people go to heaven’, to ‘the Bible is full of errors and contradictions’ to ‘we are the product of evolution’).

Satan did not have to look far to hatch this lie that God is not as good as His Word. For, he had believed that lie himself when he rebelled against his Creator. In his effort to deceive Eve, he intimates that God makes idle threats, that He is bluffing when the Creator threatens death for sin. In

Lucifer's own self-deception, he must have told himself that God would not throw His anointed cherub into an eternal lake of fire. In essence, he was saying in his arrogance, I dare you to judge someone as wonderful and important as me.

He offers this same twisted view of God to our first parents.

In essence, he says to Eve, you can be independent, you can be free of this yoke of divine rule, you can wager your own soul that God is not as good as His Word. I have wagered my soul and won. This Luciferian wager or bet is embraced by every natural man; by every unbeliever. Jesus said, "For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?" (**Mt 16:26**). Even if you gained the whole world what would it profit you? (EX. My encounter with the UCSD students.)

Our Lord has told us that every natural man loves darkness, not light (**Jn 3:19-21**). With that love of darkness, comes a resilient arrogance which says, "I have an unconquerable soul. I have held out so far and escaped the wrath of God, I will continue to escape and perchance if I do have to face that wrath, I will be able to bear it and endure it." (This hubris is part and parcel of our leprous natural depravity; it is filled with defiance.)

Our first parents utterly failed the test in the Garden of Eden, and in so doing Adam's sin nature was passed on to us. Their probation was so easy, it was simply, "Do not eat from this one tree." That probation against eating of forbidden fruit prohibition and its threat of death for disobedience was styled by Satan as God withholding desirable knowledge—knowledge which would supposedly allow our first parents to transcend their creaturehood and become as God.

The rebellion of Adam and Eve our first parents confirmed the human race in unrighteousness and its accompanying death. Adam failed as our representative. His test was a failed probation. The results of his deeds spread to the whole human race (**Rom 5:12**). The evil one receives a perverse pleasure in damning as many souls as he can. His misery loves company. He cannot rest if there is even one true worshipper on the planet.

For, the existence of a true worshipper shouts at Satan's conscience that God is worthy of worship and that Satan's rebellion was a horrendous and treasonous act of folly. Satan's present career involves energizing this present world system with its lust of the eyes, lust of the flesh and boastful pride of life (**1 Jn 2:15-17**). By blinding men to the glory of God in Christ, Satan labors tirelessly to stimulate an idolatrous love of the world so that men will not love God (**2 Cor 4:3-4**).

"There is no neutral ground in the universe. Every square inch, every split second is claimed by God, and counterclaimed by Satan" (C. S. Lewis). In Lewis' *Screwtapes* a demon gives counsel to his demonic understudy, stating, that man should consider all his possessions his own, so that he will regard them as "being

stolen” from him. Whilst all the time the expression “Mine” as expressed by a human “sounds equally funny in Heaven and in Hell” (and I am paraphrasing) for only God or the devil will say ‘mine’ at the end of time (C. S. Lewis).

The evil one is the **silent invisible coroner** at the bedside of every unsaved person. He does his best to make sure there are no gospel warning signs and that the lost person only comes to his senses when he wakes up in the flames of Hell.

Satan is jealous for souls. For every soul that dies unsaved, says in his mind ‘my rebellion was justified’—God is not worth following. The Son of God is the rightful Lord of men and angels. Satan is but a **usurper**. The evil one is not a rightful king. His empire is a house of cards built only upon the sin of men and angels. Adam’s failure and Satan’s rebellion and this present world system will not deter God from His purpose of filling the earth with His kingdom of righteousness.

“But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up. Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat!

But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells” (2 Pet 3:10-13).

Adam was the divinely appointed representative of the human race.

As such, he was the first probationer. He was created with incredible, power, beauty, privilege, and blessedness. But, like us, he was created as a bounded creature designed to enjoy freedom and fulfillment within the creaturely bounds that God had determined. These boundaries are fully scribed and spelled out in the infallible Word of God which must be properly interpreted and obeyed.

In the glorious the gospel we discover that there is a second Adam, a second probationer whose trial and test is infinitely harder than not eating a piece of fruit. Our Lord Jesus Christ was despised and rejected by men, disowned by His countrymen and given over to crucifixion. It should cause us to marvel that the work He was sent to do, the offering up of Himself as a sacrifice, He regarded as His meat and drink. “Meanwhile the disciples were urging Him, saying, ‘Rabbi, eat.’ But He said to them, ‘I have food to eat that you do not know about.’ So the disciples were saying to one another, ‘No one brought Him *anything* to eat, did he?’ Jesus said to them, ‘**My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work**’” (Jn 4:31-34).

Through His obedience to the Father, Christ fulfilled all righteousness on behalf of all who would believe. He obeyed to the

letter. He accomplished redemption. He brought grace and life to His people. His righteous life and perfect obedience is credited to the accounts of all who believe.

Many of the promises associated with His redeeming work describe His victory over Satan and Satan's kingdom. Here are just a few: He disarmed the powers of darkness and made a public display of them (**Col 2:15**). He makes His followers overcomers of the world, the flesh, and the devil (**1 Jn 5:4-5**). He transferred us out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of His beloved Son (**Col 1:13**). He's made us His 'unveiled ones' able to behold His glory, and who have escaped Satanically induced blindness (**2 Cor 3:16-18**). "The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet" (**Rom 16:20**). And one of my favorites, Christ our Savior now has the keys of death and Hell—those keys are on his keyring (**Rev 1:18**).

Every true believer is in possession of these blessed promises of Christ's victory because of Christ's successful probation on our behalf. And, by saying 'probation' I mean that Christ was tested on our behalf (**Mt 4:1-11**).

Marvel of marvels, because of Christ's successful probation, the true believer is more secure than Adam was in innocence because the true believer is confirmed in a state of righteousness because Christ obeyed perfectly on our behalf. His success is credited to us when we are justified by faith. Because of Christ's successful probation, the true believer is not on probation.

But let us make no mistake, the devil is still very much a dangerous foe. He is the personal enemy and adversary of every human being. He plans his deceptive work according to our moods and circumstances. He sails with the wind and tide. When we are happy, he tempts us to ethical daring and moral laxness. When we are low, he accuses us and tempts us to despondency, despair, doubt, and depression and false comfort through indulging the flesh. When we are not on watch, he startles us with sudden ambushes and temptations to sinful passion.

Believers are commanded to be on watch and to resist him. "Be of sober *spirit*, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. But resist him, firm in *your* faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world" (**1 Pet 5:8-9**).

(EX. Christians in early America very commonly had a copy of Milton's *Paradise Lost* on their nightstand along with their Bible. Milton's epic poem about the fall of Satan and of Adam and Eve, was to remind them to be alert, that though their ancient foe would someday be cast into the Lake of Fire along with all who follow him, for the present he was a mighty and clever and dangerous enemy. But, Christ our Champion has defeated him. And we are to reckon that victory as ours, as belonging to Christ's church.

In Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, the author refers

to this world as the City of Destruction and to Heaven as the Celestial City. In view of our sermon today, it would behoove us to ask, where are your values coming from? Are they eternal or are they temporal? Satan tempts professed believers with the tyranny of the urgent. He wants people infatuated with the present. He is particularly good at this (**Phil 3:18-20**).

I think of young adults today with whom I share the gospel. They live in a godless culture and for the most part, have swallowed the Devil's bait. They believe they can choose right and wrong for themselves and escape Hell. They believe they can live for immediacy and still have Heaven. They believe they can live for the approval of their friends and not Christ and yet escape condemnation. (EX. I met with a 19 year-old believer from Grace Fellowship for discipleship last week. We brainstormed on how to better communicate the glory of Christ to today's rising generation.)

Brethren, we must seriously ask this question to our own souls, what will it take for you to place your full hope in Christ's coming Kingdom? Now we know the answer from Scripture. We are called to keep beholding the glory of the Lord (**2 Cor 3:18**). We must take delight in, and marinate in, the promises of the glory to come. We must determinately smash our idols out of love for God. We must walk with the Holy One so that there's an echo of holiness in us that is discernable. We must preach to ourselves our right to these promises because of Christ's successful probation on our behalf.

If you know Almighty God as your Heavenly Father through Christ, then you know the Promise Maker, if you know the promises are true, if you know the promises are yours, because of your Savior, then these promises will be your true treasure, and by them you will navigate to your heavenly destination (and help other believers do so as well).

The gospel is not solely a body of truth to be accepted. The gospel is about an eternal relationship bestowed by God's grace; about knowing God, about Christ crucified and risen so that we might know our Creator as our Heavenly Father.

Those who have come to know God through the gospel of Jesus Christ have discovered a love like nothing on earth—a love that makes believing sinners adopted into God's forever family. This love is not motivated by your beauty or virtue, for in heaven's eyes, sinners have neither. It will take an eternity to navigate this ocean of divine love. But, knowing God is equally about His burning holiness—His moral majesty, purity and righteousness. My friends, this is why you can only know God if your hope is placed in Christ crucified and risen. For, only His cross gives us a right-standing with God, and only His cross reconciles God's love and holy justice against sin.