

EXPOSITIONAL NOTES ON ISAIAH 21

“Babylon is fallen, is fallen”

Isa. 21 is an intriguing and wonderful chapter. It is important to first establish the context of the chapter. V.1 is a key. "The burden of the desert of the sea" is an unusual beginning but is critical. Firstly, this is an oracle about a heavy burden of Divine judgement to come. Next we find a desert; i.e. a wilderness. And then there is the sea = nations, peoples and tongues (Rev. 17:15) - in other words, judgement on a power that is found in a wilderness of peoples. There is only one such wilderness in Scripture and that is Rev. 17:3 – the home of Babylon the great – central Europe. The harlot woman of the Apocalypse whose empire ruled the world in the days of John (AD 96), namely, Rome, sits upon a scarlet coloured beast and makes war against Christ and the saints (Rev. 17:14). This dates the prophecy to the time beyond Armageddon when Catholicism will be in rebellion against the newly established throne of David in Jerusalem. It is important to note that the weapon of Christ and the saints against Babylon the great is Israel returning under Elijah through the “wilderness of the peoples” (Ezek. 20:33-38). Their brethren in the Land will have fled from the Gogian invasion and will have been succoured by the Arab peoples of the Sinaitic peninsular after fleeing - V.15.

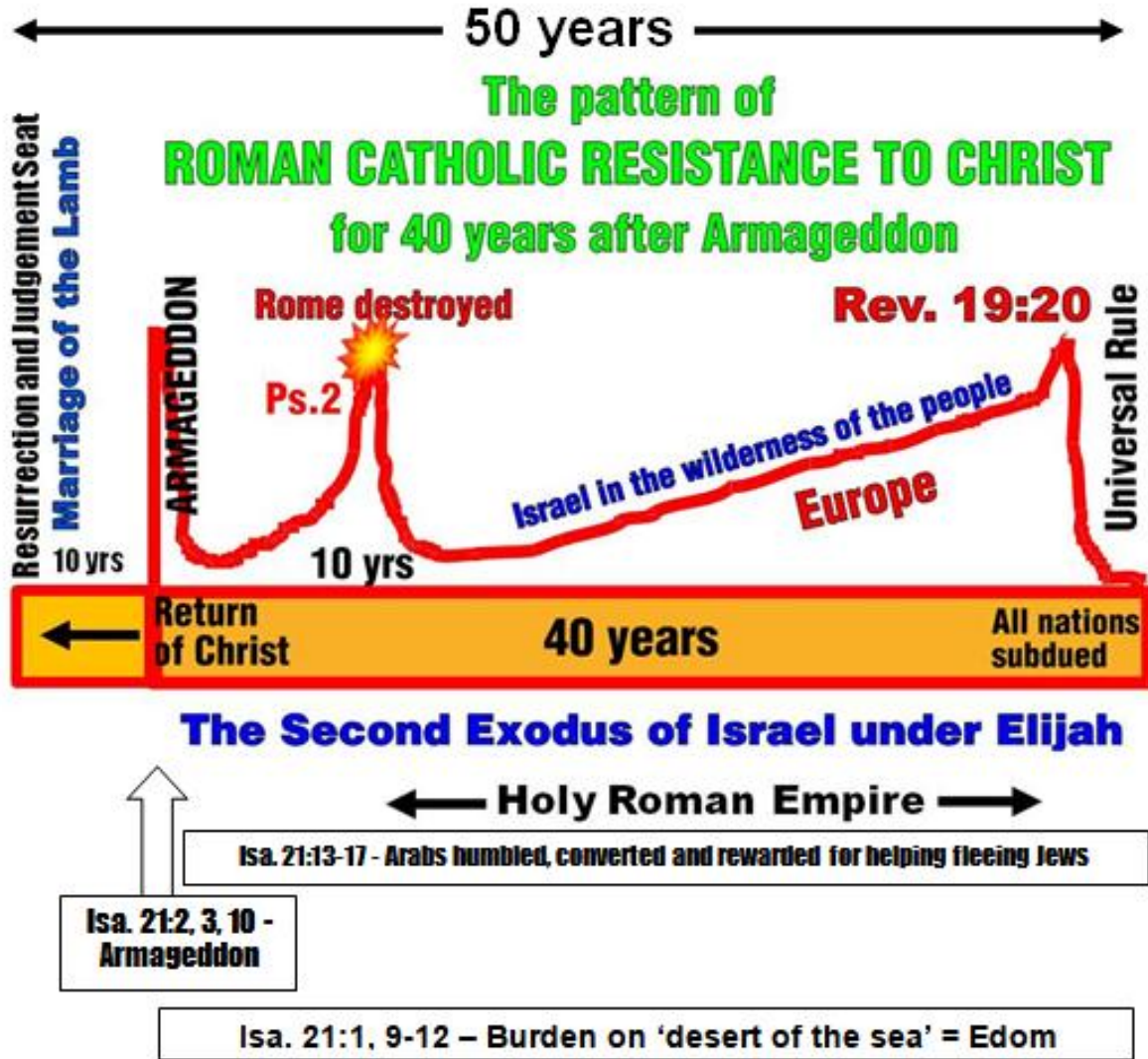
That the above is the context is confirmed by V.9 - "And, behold, here cometh a chariot of men, with a couple of horsemen. And he answered and said, Babylon is fallen, is fallen; and all the graven images of her gods he hath broken unto the ground." This a reference to the outcome of the heavy burden laid down in the oracle of V.1. Additional proof is provided in V.11 where Dumah is an Anagram (transposition of the letters) for Edom. Edom is the prophetic name of Babylon the great (Isa. 34:10-11 is cited in Rev. 14:9-10 where the subject is the fall of Babylon the great – V.8). There are many proofs that God uses Edom (Esau - the first anti-Semite) as a type of all latter day anti-Semites - Ezek. 35 & 36; Ps. 83; Obadiah; etc. Babylon the great is the latter day 'Edom' who will oppose the rule of Christ for some 40 years beyond Armageddon.

Armageddon is the beginning of Divine judgements upon all anti-Semites and the Catholic system will receive a heavy blow due to the events of Armageddon, but this will not stop them from initiating and implementing their Jesuit 'Antichrist' doctrine (Ps. 2) and begin to gather their forces against the King who has declared himself King of Israel in Jerusalem. The pattern of Roman Catholic resistance to Christ's rule is set out in the chart below and its relationship to the prophecies of Isa. 21 traced. The language of Armageddon is found in Isa. 21:2 - "...the treacherous dealer dealeth treacherously, and the spoiler spoileth" (Cp. Ezek. 38:8-12; Isa. 10:5-6; 33:1 in the context of the latter day 'Assyrian' and Armageddon); V.3 - "...pangs have taken hold upon me, as the pangs of a woman that travaileth" (this is the language of the time of Jacob's trouble - Jer. 30:4-7 which is Armageddon); V.10 - "...O my threshing, and the corn of my floor" (this is a reference to the 'harvest of the earth' - Rev. 14:15, i.e. Armageddon).

Watchmen are prominent in this chapter, but it should be noted that different Hebrew words are used rendered 'watchman'. In V.5 and 6 *tsâphâh* is rendered "watch" and "watchman" respectively. It means to lean forward like a watchman. However, in V.11 & 12 "Watchman" (3 times) is *shamar* - to hedge about; guard. Hence, the watchman is no longer leaning forward to

see things coming, but rather keeping guard over the night when the things looked for are coming to pass.

HOW ISAIAH 21 FITS THE FRAMEWORK OF THE JUBILEE PERIOD



The Hebrew word *shamar* occurs 468 times in O.T. It is normally translated "keep", "kept", and sometimes "observed", or preserved". Of those 468 occurrences it is only translated "watch" or "watchman" in the following places. 1 Sam. 19:11 - Saul sent men to "watch" (*shamar*) David and to kill him in the morning (Ps. 59:1). Job 14:16 - Job saw God as "watching" over his sin. Ps. 127:1 - *shamar* occurs twice here - "...except the LORD keep (*shamar*) the city, the watchman (*shamar*) waketh but in vain." Ps. 130:6 - "My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch (*shamar*) for the morning: I say, more than they that watch (*shamar*) for the morning." SS 3:3 - "The watchmen (*shamar*) that go about the city found me: to whom I said,

Saw ye him whom my soul loveth?" SS 5:7 - "The watchmen (*shamar*) that went about the city found me, they smote me, they wounded me; the keepers (*shamar*) of the walls took away my veil from me." Isa. 62:6 - "I have set watchmen (*shamar*) upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night: ye that make mention of the LORD, keep not silence." Jer. 20:10 - "All my familiars watched (*shamar*) for my halting." Jer. 51:12 - "Set up the standard upon the walls of Babylon, make the watch strong, set up the watchmen (*shamar*) prepare the ambushes: for the LORD hath both devised and done that which he spake against the inhabitants of Babylon." This indicates that it is more about involvement in prophesied actions than just watching from a wall or tower at things coming.

So then, what does "Watchman, what of the night" actually mean in this context? Given that verse 13 begins a new but related theme of the actions of previously prepared Arabian Bedouins (Hab. 3:7) succouring Jews fleeing from the Gogian invasion in the events leading up to Armageddon, it is curious but not unusual that V.1-11 speak of subsequent events. The Arabs of Sinai, once fierce anti-Semites, will have been converted into allies of the Jews (a process already underway today), but the foolish supporters of the Papacy will become even more anti-Semitic than their history has already been. The night referred to is most probably the period described in Zech. 14:6-7 where in the 40 years beyond Armageddon there is gloominess - "not day, nor night: but it shall come to pass, that at evening time it shall be light." This seems to be what is implied in Isa. 21:12. It will be 'day' in the Land of Israel because Christ will be there in glory, but in the lands of Europe and beyond where the Papacy rules it will be dark, but the morning is coming as the Millennium has begun as soon as Christ establishes the throne of David (this is the message of Rev. 20:4,6), but night prevails in much of the earth as nations line up behind the Papacy against Christ's rule - Ps. 2:1-6.

In summary, verse 11 and 12 present a wonderful prospect of involvement with Christ, both for the saints who are with him, and for the remnant of Jacob's seed in the Land and under Elijah to bring judgement on the Harlot system which in conjunction with Gog will have "taken crafty counsel against" Yahweh's "hidden ones", and said "Let us cut them off from being a nation; that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance" (Ps. 83:3-6). The leader of this attempt to destroy Israel is Edom (Ps. 83:6 – first mentioned among 10 nations because they are the head of Nebuchadnezzar's image) – namely, Babylon the great.

Compiler – Jim Cowie