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I Have Commanded My Holy Ones

13: 1-5

I have commanded My holy ones **DIG: Is this the near historical Babylon or far exegetical Babylon? How can we tell who these holy ones are? Where are they coming from? What is their purpose?**

REFLECT: Isaiah tells us that God will gather His holy ones, His set apart ones to carry out His wrath. How do you feel about being set apart for the holy purposes of the LORD? Is that exciting to you, or scary. Why? Are you set apart today? What is the evidence of that? If you were put on trial for being a believer, would there be enough evidence to convict you? Why or why not?

This is an introductory section and is ascribed to **Isaiah son of Amoz**, who is allowed to look down the halls of history to witness the destruction of **Babylon** the Great. **The King James** uses the phrase **the burden of Babylon**. The word **burden** is a Hebrew word that means *to lift or carry a heavy weight, or a heavy message*. The word carries within it the meaning of an **oracle, or vision (13:1)**. In this entire segment of **Chapters 13** through **23**, **Isaiah** uses the word **oracle** frequently (**14:28; 15:1; 17:1; 19:1; 21:1; 11, 13; 22:1; 23:1**). **God** has some heavy messages and visions against these nations. **Oracle** is **Isaiah's** key word in this segment of the book.

Babylon deserved **the wrath of Ha'Shem**, for that **city** had long been a rallying point against **the Holy One of Isra'el**. From the very beginning it had been characterized by rebellion against **the LORD** (see the commentary on **Genesis, to see link click Dm - Let Us Build a City and Make a Name for Ourselves**). Over the centuries, as various dynasties ruled over that city, it was always viewed as a place that hated **the God of Isra'el**.

The **oracle** begins with a call to arms. **Isaiah** returns to symbol he uses frequently, **a banner** on a barren **hilltop** where it can be seen by all around (**5:26, 11:10** and **12, 18:3, 49:22** and **66:10**). **Rise a banner on a bare hilltop, shout to them;**

beckon to them to enter the gates of the nobles (13:2). **Gates** are the symbol of defense. When the enemy enters **the gates**, the city has fallen. The **banner** is used here for gathering military troops and this army will be called to defeat the proud **nobles (Proverbs 3:34)**.

There is a three-fold summons. First, **raise the banner**. Second, **shout** out a military command, and third, **beckon to them**, in the sense of directing the army the way it should go. This international army will move toward **Babylon**. The purpose for the three-fold summons was that they could **enter** the city **gates** as conquerors. **The name, the gates of the nobles, is suggestive of the name of Babylon, which is derived from Babel, or gate of god. The traditional Hebrew understanding of the name is confusion (Genesis 11:9).** The three-fold summons is followed by a three-fold command in the next verse.



But this is not just any army. **ADONAI**, speaking through **His** prophet, declares: **I have commanded My holy ones; I have summoned My warriors to carry out My wrath - those who rejoice in My triumph (13:3)**. This command concerns **God's holy ones, God's warriors**, and **those who rejoice in His triumph**. The implication is that those who are gathering against the city of **Babylon** are **God's** people who are set apart for **His** use. We know from **Matthew 25:31-46** that during the Great Tribulation Gentiles will fall into two camps, the goats (anti-Semites) and the sheep (pro-Semites). **What we have here is the sheep Gentiles gathering and destroying the capital city of the antichrist.** This is the second of eight stages of the Campaign of Armageddon (see the commentary on **Revelation E** - **They Will Make War Against the Lamb, But the Lamb Will Overcome Them**).

Lastly, we have the answer to the call in words that convey the sense of gathering doom, **Isaiah** begs us to **listen to a noise on the mountains, like that of a great multitude! Listen, an uproar among the kingdoms, like nations massing together. The LORD of heavens armies is mustering an army for war (13:4)**. Because it is a gathering from many **nations**, it is an international call. This army will be **a great multitude, like** an amassing of entire **nations. The commander of the LORD's army (Numbers 21:4; Joshua 5:15)**, none other than **Yeshua Messiah**, is **the One** who is preparing that future **holy** army for battle.

They come from faraway lands, from the ends of the heavens - the LORD and the weapons of His wrath - to destroy the whole country (13:5). That army will come from all over the earth, even as far as **the ends of the heavens**, the place where the earth and sky meet at the horizon. The purpose of the gathered army will be to **destroy the whole country**, or the entire land of **Babylon**. **ADONAI** is **the Master** of history. How foolish it is to put one's trust a man like the antichrist, rather than **the LORD of heaven's** angelic **armies (CJB)**.