

The Fall of a “Lady”

Isaiah 47

Isaiah 46 dealt with the *foolishness* of Babylon (trusting in idols). In chapter 47 Isaiah prophesies of the *fall* of Babylon (also prophesied in Isaiah 13-14).¹ Idolatry² and defeat go together.

I. The PROPHECY of Babylon’s downfall (47:1-3, 5-7).

The “*Chaldeans*” were the Babylonians (v. 1). Babylon was located in the land of Chaldea (modern day Iran).

When Isaiah prophesied, Babylon was merely an insignificant speck on a map. Babylon would not rise to power until about 100 years after Isaiah. Yet, Babylon is called “*The lady of kingdoms*” (v. 5) while it was still a small nation.

- A. The **HARLOT** (vs. 1-3). Babylon is envisioned as a sophisticated, lady—tender and delicate—who is accustomed to having her own way (v. 1 cf. Rev. 18:7, 12, 16). Verse 8 says she is “*given to pleasures,*”³ lived “*carelessly,*” and proud (much like the United States today! See 2 Timothy 3:2).
1. God strips her of her robes and made naked (vs. 2-3).⁴ She is exposed for what she really is—A harlot (Rev. 17:5).
 2. “*O VIRGIN daughter of Babylon,*” is not referring to her moral purity. The word “*virgin*” in verse 1 indicates she has never been violated or conquered by a foreign nation.
- B. The **HUMILIATION** (vs. 1, 5-7). God is in the humbling business! Notice how Isaiah 46 and 47 begin the same way—God is bringing something or someone DOWN—“*Bel boweth DOWN...*” (Isa. 46:1)—“*Come DOWN, and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of*

Babylon” (Isa. 47:1). “*The lady of kingdoms*” will be knocked off her throne and become a slave grinding meal.

1. She will “*no more be called, The lady of kingdoms*” (v. 5).
2. *I will take vengeance, and I will not meet thee as a man*” (v. 3b). God will not deal with Babylon “*as a man,*” but as GOD (Nahum 1:2, 7-8; 3:5; Heb. 10:31; 12:29)!
3. God turned Israel over to Babylon to chasten them (v. 6).⁵ Babylon showed no mercy (Dt. 28:49-50 cf. Lam. 5:2-5, 7, 10-18).⁶
 - God will sometimes use a heathen nation to chastise His people, then judge that heathen nation for their own atrocities (see Isa. 10:5-13; cf. Mt. 18:7; Luke 17:1).
 - Babylon failed to take it to heart⁷ that Israel was God’s people (v. 7).
 - Babylon’s downfall began, not with the coming of Cyrus, but in the imaginations of their heart (vs. 7-10). All downfalls begin in the heart. God knows the heart!

II. **The PROMPTNESS of Babylon’s desolation** (47:8-11).

➡ “*...in a moment in one day*” (v. 9). “*...desolation shall come upon thee suddenly...*” (v. 11 cf. Rev. 18:8, 10, 17-19; 1 Thess. 5:3).

A. Babylon’s **PRIDEFUL** assumption—“*I am, and none else beside me...*” (vs. 8, 10). She boasts like she is God (45:6-7; 46:9), as the devil does (Ezek 28:2) and the antiChrist (2 Thess. 2:4; Rev. 13:4-5).

- Babylonians thought they were invincible (vs. 8, 10). God would show them otherwise.

⁵ The modern slang is a “hatchet man”—One who carries out an unpleasant task for an employer or superior. Someone who does another’s “dirty work.” For example: Saddam Hussein’s “hatchet man” was Chemical Ali. Heinrich Himmler was Hitler’s “hatchet man.” Also, Jehu; Joab; Jezebel & the sons of Belial.

⁶ July 7, 2014 report from the National Center on Elder Abuse, Bureau of Justice Statistics states there are an average of 2,150,000 cases of elderly abuse reported each year. The average age of those being abused is 78 yrs old. God will judge this pitiless mistreatment of senior citizens.

⁷ cf. Jer. 12:11; Mal. 2:2

About 100 years later God humbled Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 4:29-37). Nebuchadnezzar later admitted, *“Those that walk in pride he is able to abase.”* Proverbs 16:18—*“Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.”*

1. Self-confidence (v. 7—*“I shall be a lady forever... v. 8—I am, and none else beside me; I shall not sit as a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children.”* Yet, God says in verse 9, *“But these two things shall come to thee in a moment in one day, the loss of children [her sons killed in battle], and widowhood [her king is killed]”* (cf. Rev. 18:7, 16).

NOTE: Babylon’s boast in verse 8 may have a double application. It could be that *“mystery Babylon”* (Rev. 17) in the tribulation is bragging after the rapture that she is still exists as a lady with her children.

2. Self-deceived (vs. 8-9).
 - Verse 9, *“the multitude of thy **sorceries** and for the great abundance of thine **enchancements**”* (cf. Rev. 18:23⁸).
Babylon was notorious for its involvement in the occult (Dan. 2:2).

B. Babylon's **PERVERTED** assumption (v. 10).

- *“...thou hast said, None seeth me.”* Be not deceived, God sees everything you do (Job 34:21-22; Ps. 94:7-9; Prov. 5:21; 15:3; Isa. 29:15; Jer. 16:17; 23:24).
1. The *“wisdom”* in Isaiah 47:10 is not God’s wisdom, but worldly *“devilish”* wisdom (James 3:15; 1 Cor. 3:18-19).
 - Babylon had skilled engineers; built vast irrigation systems (hanging gardens); constructed huge temples, etc. But their vast knowledge and expertise did not help them against God’s judgment.

⁸ The word translated **“sorceries”** in Revelation 18:23 is from the Greek word *pharmakia*. This is where we get our word “pharmacy.” It involves the mixing of potions to produce mind altering drugs. This same word is translated **“sorcerers”** in Revelation 21:8 and 22:15.

2. Knowledge lead to the fall of Adam and Eve. Some forms of knowledge are best left alone (Ex. 23:13; Dt. 11:28; 13:2, 8, 13; Jer. 10:2; Rom. 16:19; Eph. 5:12).
3. Knowledge has a way of puffing up (1 Cor. 8:1-2).

III. The **PERFORMING** of Babylon's devastation (47:11-15).

- A. The **COMPLETENESS** of Babylon's desolation (vs.11).
 1. Apart from repentance there is no stopping the juggernaut of God's judgment. (v. 11—"*...mischief SHALL fall upon thee; thou shalt NOT BE ABLE TO PUT IT OFF: and desolation SHALL come upon thee suddenly...*" v. 14— "*...they shall be as stubble; the fire shall burn them...*" v. 15- "*none shall save thee.*")
 2. v. 11—"*Therefore shall evil come upon thee; thou shalt not know from whence it riseth...*" The invasion of the Medes and Persians would take Babylon completely by surprise, exactly as described in Daniel 5:30-31.
- B. The **CHALLENGE** to Babylon's diviners (vs. 12-13). The Lord is being sarcastic. He will prove their sorcery is worthless.

➡ **Three groups of counselors addressed in verse 13—**

1. "***astrologers...***" (cf. Dan. 2:10; 5:7, 11, 15). Astrology is a practice based on the false assumption that the position of the moon, sun, and stars affect human events. Astrologers claim to have the ability to foretell the future by studying the the stars. Forbidden by God (Dt. 4:19; 18:10).
 2. "***stargazers...***" Someone who gazes at the stars and pretends tell future events.
 3. "***monthly prognosticators***" [***pro*** = go before / ***gnostic*** = knowledge]. Advanced guidance by the use of a horoscope.
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- C. The **CONFLAGRATION** of Babylon's dominion (vs. 14-15 cf. Rev. 18:8-9, 18).

SUMMATION: "*...they shall wander everyone to his quarter; NONE SHALL SAVE THEE.*" When God's judgment falls Babylon will wander seeking refuge. But, to no avail (47:15). Salvation is only in Christ (Acts 4:12).