

The Demise of Babylon

Text: Isaiah 46-47

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I. The impotence of Babylon's gods (Isa. 46:1-2).

Two prominent gods of the nation: *Bel* (meaning *lord* or *possessor*) was the god of the sun, was comparable to Baal, and refers to the main Babylonian god *Marduk*. *Nebo* was Bel's son and was the god of *wisdom* or *learning*. Isaiah tells of these main two Babylonian deities bowing down and stooping for they have failed in their mission.

Babylon had trusted in their gods and their idols, but when compared to God Himself, these things became nothing more than snazzy burdens.

II. The majesty of Israel's God (Isa. 46:3-13).

The Babylonian idols could not bear their nation but instead had become burdens born on beasts. In complete antithesis, God had borne (meaning carrying a load on someone else's behalf) His people since before they were born (the nation's beginning).

"When man carries his god, the end is destruction; when the true God carries man, the end is salvation" (Young 222).

God transcends all created beings for there is none to even begin to compare to Him. The given facts in the prior verses make the comparison laughable for while the dead and lifeless idols must be carried about by beasts, God will lovingly redeem and bear them all the days of old (Isa. 63:9).

Isaiah again proves the supreme folly of worshipping a god who is inadequate, ineffective and incompetent. Unlike the false gods, Jehovah can successfully answer people's prayers and deliver them.

Those who choose to consider both the powerlessness of idols and the constant providence and provision of Jehovah will find they can strengthen themselves in their faith and devotion to God.

God has proven Himself in fulfilling some of the things prophesied, and for those things that have been prophesied and have yet to come to pass, the guarantee is given: God will do it!

Here again is proof that God, and not idols, can be the only One to provide both righteousness and salvation. Why? They are a part of His character and nature, they are actions that only He can perform, and they are a part of His word which only He can keep.

"But in a state of transgression and stubbornness of heart one cannot expect deliverance; there must be a change of affection, mind, and will. This change is expressed in repentance and a genuine faith in God which impels one to implicit obedience to His will as set forth in His word" (Hailey 390). That salvation will one day be in Zion and the promise is given that it will happen when the delivered are returned. The comparison between the idols and Jehovah is abundantly clear: This is God's righteousness. Salvation is God's doing. Israel is God's glory.

III. The humiliation of Babylon (Isa. 47:1-7).

This undressing of Babylon pointed to a woman being exposed showing that the nation would be completely humiliated. "As Babylon had humbled nations, stripping them of their glory and carrying them into captivity, so will she be humbled in the presence of others" (Hailey 392).

The truth remains: the God of Israel is the people's redeemer. When judgment comes upon Babylon then salvation comes to God's people.

Babylon thought she would last forever. Babylon never once considered this outcome was possible, but now she sits in silence, dejected, rejected, and defeated.

IV. The claims and consequences of Babylon (Isa. 47:8-11).

Here is what Babylon, the lover of pleasures who lived securely (*carelessly*), claimed:

- We are the only nation and there is no one besides us.
- I will never have to live like a widow or never lose my children.

In the end she had it all wrong. In a moment's notice, in the middle of feeling secure and sovereign, the two things would come to her: she would be made a widow and childless.

In the end God would treat these pagans in the same way that He treats all who do not trust in His Sovereignty. Unable to save others, the enchanters and sorcerers are powerless to save themselves from the fire of judgment. They will all perish like dry grass or chaff in a fast blaze.

“Since that day in which this prophecy was fulfilled, the history of Babylon has been repeated over and over in the annals of nations; and yet men fail to learn” (Hailey 396). When God chooses to use a nation, they will be made useable. When God chooses to judge a nation who refuses to admit that God is in control, they will be judged and destroyed every single time. Nothing will save those people or nations. Yet, let me ask you today, why do you still fail to trust in Jehovah?