

Thursday Evening Bible Study
Series: The Book of Isaiah

Teaching Summary for Week 105

Isaiah Chapters 47 and 48

Chapters 47 and 48 go together. They bring chapters 40-48 to a dramatic conclusion.

Chapter 48 is the mirror image of chapter 47. Babylon and Israel will have a total reversal of fortunes.

Chapter 47 contemplates the fall of Babylon, while chapter 48 anticipates the call of the Jewish captives to return home to Zion.

Babylon is destroyed because of her pride. Israel is redeemed despite her stubborn unbelief and rebellion. The Lord acts for His own sake, to vindicate His name and reveal His glory. He is the sovereign, all-powerful God, and there is none other like Him.

Chapter	Audience	Message
47	The virgin daughter of Babylon	Destruction will come upon you suddenly (47:11).
48	The house of Jacob	The LORD has redeemed His servant Jacob (48:20).

Isaiah Chapter 47

Chapter 47 is a poem in the form of the oracles against the nations in chapters 13-23. The Lord will execute His vengeance on Babylon in a single, catastrophic day.

Once again, Isaiah uses rich imagery. Here he uses the metaphor of **the daughter of the Chaldeans** to personify the kingdom of Babylon, and to dramatize the fate that awaits Babylon.

Let's read Isaiah chapter 47 now.

Chapter 47 unfolds in three stages. Except for verse 4, the LORD is speaking to Babylon throughout. In verse 4, Isaiah announces Who is speaking and acting.

	Subject	Message
<i>Verses 1-3, 5</i>	The humiliation of Babylon	Your shame will be exposed.
<i>Verse 4</i>	The Avenger	Our Redeemer is the Lord of hosts, the Holy One of Israel.
<i>Verses 6-11</i>	Crime and Punishment	Destruction will come on you suddenly.
<i>Verses 12-15</i>	The Impotence of their spells and sorceries	There is none to save you.

Verse-by-verse

Verses 1-3,5: The humiliation of Babylon. How the fate of the Virgin Daughter of Babylon translates into the fate of the kingdom of Babylon.

From pampered queen to captive slave girl going into exile.

Sitting in the dust portrays humiliation and despair.

The darkness here symbolizes the blackout of knowledge and the dim fate that awaits Babylon.

Grinding the meal was the job of the lowest slave, **Exodus 11:5**.

The veil and the skirt were marks of modesty and purity. Nakedness means disgrace and violation.

The vengeance of the Lord is the exercise of His justice in correcting wrongs and punishing the guilty.

He sought revenge both for the abuse of His people and for the trampling of His holy name. See Isaiah 34:8 and Jeremiah 50:26, **51:5-6**.

Verse 4: The Redeemer is identified as the Lord of Hosts, the Holy One of Israel. The title Lord of Hosts emphasizes His sovereignty and power. The title the Holy One of Israel emphasizes His righteousness and justice. See **Isaiah 44:6** (Redeemer, the Lord of Hosts) and **45:11** (the Holy One of Israel).

Verses 6-11: Crime and punishment.

Babylon's crimes are (1) pride and (2) wickedness.

Pride: as manifested in the thoughts and statements of the Queen.

“I shall be a queen forever”. “I shall not be a widow”. “I shall not know loss of children.”

These statements reveal the arrogance of thinking she is totally in control of all aspects of her life and fate.

The next two statements are a direct challenge to the Lord. They contradict statements He has made about Himself.

“I am and there is no one besides me” (verse 8,10). Direct contradiction to Isaiah 48:5,6, & 18; **46:9**.

“No one sees me” (verse 10). This is a denial of the Lord’s omniscience. See **Isaiah 29:15**.

Wickedness: They had no mercy on the Lord’s people (His heritage). They were cruel to the most vulnerable (the elderly). They engaged in sensuality. They desecrated the Temple in Jerusalem. And they practiced the dark arts of magic, sorcery, and astrology. See **Daniel 5:1-4**.

The punishments included loss of children, widowhood, evil, disaster, and destruction.

Loss of children: in the ancient world, a childless woman was shamed and spurned.

Widowhood: this symbolizes the removal of support and protection from Babylon.

Evil, disaster, and destruction. See **Jeremiah 51:8-11,43**.

Daniel lived through the exile of Judah in Babylon. He describes what happened to Babylon. Let’s read about it in **chapter 5:22-31** of the book **of Daniel**.

The destruction of Babylon occurred suddenly – in a single day: October 12, 539 BC according to Herodotus and Xenophon (Greek historians who wrote in the 4th and 5th centuries BC).

Verses 12-15: The impotence of spells and sorceries to save Babylon.

The Babylonians practiced a false religion that encompassed magicians, astrologers, conjurers, and sorcerers. At the critical moment, that religion completely failed.

In verses 12-13, the Lord mocks the Babylonians and their religious leaders. He taunts them to work even harder at their craft. Perhaps with more effort you can actually ward away the hand of the omnipotent God! (Not gonna happen!).

Each recommended a different course of action based on their particular specialty, be it the stars, the entrails of sacrificial animals, omens, or dreams. The result was a mass of confusion and frustration.

See Daniel 5:7-8, 15.

It was all for naught. These so-called wise men could not even save themselves, much less the nation of Babylon! Like their idols, the nation would go down in flames.

See Isaiah 44:14-19, 24-25. See Jeremiah 51:30, 32, 58.

How does what we have learned in Isaiah 47 apply to our lives as Christians?

1. What aspects of American culture today are dominated by pride? By wickedness?
2. What are our modern version of spells and sorceries, magicians and astrologers?
3. In what ways is our situation different from that of the kingdom of Babylon?
4. Compare and contrast the United States in 2022 with Babylon in 539 BC in these respects.