

## Isaiah 46-47:1-22

### “Babylon Is Brought Down”

Over & over again God proves the reliability of His word. In so doing it comforts & encourages His people. Strengthens & fortifies the *faith* of His people. & Often the way God *proves* the reliability of His word is by informing us of things we *would* not know, in fact *could not know* if He hadn't told us. (We call it prophecy).

Oftentimes, it may be a 2<sup>nd</sup> tier benefit. Meaning, God's primary purpose in a given passage may not be to assure us that we can trust His word. He may be simply seeking to comfort His people w/a particular truth. Assure them that He sees them & that He will be there for them each/every step of the way. That none of the goings on in/of our lives escapes His attention or catches Him by surprise... But along the way He's proving to us that He is not a man that He should lie. That if He says it, you can believe it. \* You & me, we can trust in the *word of God*... Thus far, throughout history, God is batting 1,000%. He's never missed in a single prophetic utterance. When He tells of what's going to happen before it happens (be it by a few minutes, a few days, a few years, a few hundred years or beyond) it has always come to pass.

What then are the odds that His word will fail now? If I hit 1,000 targets on the bullseye from 300 yds, you could say that the odds are pretty good that I'll hit the 1,001 target on the bullseye as well... God promised the 1<sup>st</sup> coming of J.C. (we're in the season of year that we look back on that, we celebrate that (a little more cognitively/intentionally) during the Christmas season. That promise didn't fail, Jesus came. He's also promised a 2<sup>nd</sup> coming of Christ... Yet people roll the dice, somehow counting on the fact that though the word of God has never missed, it probably will this time... It's a fool's game to bet against the promise of the word of God. – His word goes out of His mouth in righteousness & it shall not return... His counsel shall stand. \*

I say all that by way of reminder. God is telling the nation of Judah that they will go into Babylonian captivity over 100 yrs before it happens. But He also tells them that Babylon will fall as well. That they to will be taken captive by the Persians & that Cyrus (the king of Persia) will set them free to return to Jerusalem to rebuild & reinhabit it.

### Vs 1-2

We may as well get right to it. Bel & Nebo were 2 of the prominent Babylonian gods. They're familiar to you in the names, “Belshazzar” (in the book of Daniel) & Nebuchadnezzar. Belshazzar means “Bel's prince” & Nebuchadnezzar means, “May Nebo protect the crown”.

& Basically, what's being said here is that these "great gods" of theirs (the Babylonians) were going to be humiliated & brought low, carried off (via their idols) in wagons. They wouldn't even be able to deliver *themselves*, much less the Babylonian people. In fact, they would be burdensome to the people who were having to cart their gods away as they were being led off into captivity. They would be *burdens* to the beasts as the Persians would parade these "gods" around in humiliation.

But there's a bit of a side point here that I want you to see so as to consider. God is "getting personal" in naming the names of these inept, unable to save, completely false "gods". I say that to say this... sometimes people wonder about the ethical nature of naming names from the pulpit (or even in casual conversation). You'll hear things like, "There's a man (I won't name names) ...". My question is, "Why not"? If you know of a false teacher, should you point them out? Drop their name? Let people know who they are? – Family, I'm not talking about branding as a heretic someone who has a different opinion on the rapture, or the gifts of the Holy Spirit...

But if there's someone out there, or a group of people who claim that Jesus isn't the sinless Son of God, the *only begotten* Son of God, fully God, fully Man & the only means by which man can be saved... Don't you want to know it? **The point isn't to be mean or malicious. It's to protect the sheep from wandering into strange pastures. To help people obtain/maintain a biblical world view, to equip the saints for the work of the ministry, to be effective in the warfare God has called us to fight.**

Now perhaps you're wondering, "Who's he getting ready to call out?" I don't have anyone in mind 😊. I could inform you (as I have in the past) the J.W.s don't believe in the deity of Jesus, they think He's Michael the arc angel. Mormons believe that Jesus & Lucifer are brothers (that either reduces Jesus to angelic status or elevates Satan to godhood, both of which are blasphemous, not to mention that throws a wrench in Jesus being the *only begotten* Son of God if He has a brother).

**But the point I'm making, the principle I'm developing is that God named names. Paul the apostle named names (Alexander the coppersmith, Demas etc). The apostle John named names (Diotrephes)... A good shepherd will have a heart to protect the sheep, to warn the sheep of wolves, or wolves in sheep's clothing.**

But back to our present passage, God calls these false gods out. They can't deliver, can't save, they will be brought low, paraded about as the spoils of war (in humiliation)... On the other hand, you don't have to carry God, it's quite the opposite, He carries you...

## Vs 3-4

I trust you get the gist. \* If you look *to* or trust *in* something less than God, you'll windup carrying *it*. It'll become an unbearable burden to you. But when you look *to* & trust *in* the True & *Living* God, you discover that *He* carries *you*, He's an overwhelming *blessing* to you. – So I suppose the question that I want to confront you with is this. Do you carry your god, or does your God carry you? Do you have to take your god to the shop now & then? Pay for upgrades or new updates?

Or does your god drain your pocketbook? Always buying another bottle, a new prescription or illegal substance? You get the idea... Do you carry your god (is he a burden to you) or does your God carry *you*? Provide for you, take care of you?

& Listen, I'll confess that there are many, even in the church that would represent the Lord like you need to carry *Him*. They have these "beg-athons". As if to say that if you don't give, then God is going to go broke. Listen, I don't need to carry God, God needs to carry *me!* \*

Now, that's not to say that we're not to be givers, of course we are. In fact, God calls us to be *generous* givers. But not because He needs us to *give*. It's not for *His* sake, it's for *ours*. & There are multiple reasons. 1 of which is that we're selfish by nature. God wants us to learn what it means to crucify the flesh, the walk in the Spirit & surely selfless giving is an aspect of that. **Another reason is that it bears witness that we're being transformed, we're growing, becoming more & more like our God (who is the most generous Giver of all). What do we have but that God hasn't graciously given it to us? Even salvation is a free gift (though it cost Him everything). You know you're becoming more like your God as you grow in giving (time, talents & treasures).**

But before we move on I want to draw your attention to 3 little words that seem to be on repeat in our recent section of scripture. Look at Vs 3, "Listen to Me..." There is so much *trouble* that we could avoid, so much *frustration, exasperation & turmoil*, if we would just listen & give heed to the Word of God... Too often we're on the side of "hearing, we do not understand" we won't take it to heart. We have to find out the hard way. God says, "Listen to Me..."

& He draws their attention to something that we've touched on a time or two lately. That He's been *with* them, He's upheld them & carried them all throughout their lives, even though they may not've recognized it, or realized it, He was there & He will always *be* there. \* God says, "From the womb to the tomb I will carry you & I will deliver you."

Isn't that comforting to know? We don't always sense Him, can't always *feel* His presence or *see* His hand on our lives... doesn't matter. We can trust His word... God watches over His own... God told Jeremiah, *"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; Before you were born I sanctified you;"*<sup>1</sup> God has known you, been there *for you*, & taken care of you every step of the way & He will until your dying day. He will never leave you nor forsake you... He has carried our sins, He carries our sorrows, our burdens our cares, *"Casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you..."* (1 Pet 5:7) \*

### Vs 5-7

Man's gods sure can be pricey, can't they? But in the day of trial & tragedy they aren't worth a dime... Contrast that w/the True God. To whom are we going to liken Him & make His equal? To whom might we compare Him, that they should be alike? There's no one, there's nothing w/which to compare Him. He's infinite, eternal, all powerful, no beginning & no end. We can't even fathom the likes of who He is, but J.C. has revealed Him to us... & the only way we can really *know* Him, is through Christ. & *He* can save you out of all your trouble...

### Vs 8-10

\* *"Remember, recall, remember". Notice He says, "& show yourselves men". The idea is that to remember the things that God has done, the things He's said, that He always sees His word through, will add strength & courage to your life! So much defeat enters through the doorway of forgetfulness. We forget what God has done in the past so we fail to trust Him in the present!*

*"Remember the former things of old... there is none like Me, declaring the end from the beginning." God dwells outside the "space/time" continuum. It's all in the now for Him. We're watching the parade of human history in linear form. We can only see so far behind us & all we know about the future is what's already gone before... God has the aerial view. Sees/knows the end from the beginning... But He's not casually viewing the parade of human history, He's directing it. "My counsel will stand & I will do all My pleasure." The psalmist said that this way, *"The counsel of the Lord stands forever, The plans of His heart to all generations."*<sup>2</sup> Jesus said it like this, *"Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away."*<sup>3</sup> Sometimes we say like this, "God is in control".*

<sup>1</sup> *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Je 1:5). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>2</sup> *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Ps 33:11). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>3</sup> *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Mt 24:35). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

& When we remember that from the beginning to the end, God is in control. We remember the things He's said & done... It will add tremendous courage to our lives to live out loud for J.C. \*

### Vs 11-13

We identified Cyrus (the Persian king who would conquer Babylon) in our last study, he's this "bird of prey" that's going to take Babylon down.

But again, we see the admonition, "Listen to Me". The word goes out to the "stubborn hearted". Salvation is coming, God doesn't delay, He's never late, He's always right on time. Of course the application for us would be, if God is knocking on the door of your heart, don't be stubborn hearted, believe on the Lord J.C. & be saved.

For them, God was saying, "Don't worry, deliverance is coming. Babylon will be brought down & you will rebuild & reinhabit Jerusalem."

### Isaiah 47

### Vs 1-3

Why does God refer to Babylon as a virgin daughter? It wasn't because Babylon was pure. It was because she had never been conquered, her walls had never been breached... But God tells them, "That's all coming to an end. You're going to be reduced to the status of a slave, stripped of your dignity & I'm not going to stop it." They would be carried away by the Medo-Persian empire.

A little later on in this Ch God explains why this is going to happen but allow me to sum it up w/a word. "Sin". \* Sin always leads to slavery. Babylon was given to pride & arrogance, to pleasure, to occultic practices. But sin (& we see it in the life of Samson, [book of Judges] particularly toward the end of his life) will ultimately bind you, *blind you & grind you*. It will ensnare you & enslave you. It will take from you your dignity & shame you in humility... & God won't stop it. If we *insist* in our way, God will give us over to the *end* of our way as well... Better to lead a life of repentance, turning from sin & seeking after the Lord. \*

### Vs 4

Isaiah offers a word of praise, contrasting the failure of the Babylonian gods w/the faithfulness of the God of Israel to deliver His people.

### Vs 5-7

Couple things here & we'll keep truckin. God begins to reveal the "why" behind the "what" regarding both His people & the fall of Babylon.

He says, “The reason you’ll be brought low is because of your pride. You said, ‘I shall be a lady forever...’” Babylon was convinced they’d always be the “Queen bee” among the nations. They couldn’t be conquered. They didn’t take these things “to heart” (Btw, God is always looking to the... *heart*).

God says, “Yes, you conquered nations, you took My people into captivity. But not because you were so great, it was because I *gave* them to you because I was angry w/them, disciplining them.” But look at what He says, “You showed them no mercy...” Babylon was all too happy to be the chastening rod in the hand of God, they took it too far. God says, “You didn’t even show mercy to the elderly, you made them labor heavily...” They abused their “God given” authority. Be careful that you don’t abuse your authority (in whatever context it’s given to you, parents, employers, managers, church leaders, government officials, whatever). That’s not to say we shouldn’t be fair & just, but it is to say we’re not to bully people w/the authority that God has entrusted to us.

\* How many of you feel like you could use a heaping helping of mercy from the hand of God? 🙏 What did Jesus say? “ *Blessed are the merciful, For they shall obtain mercy.*”<sup>4</sup>

James underscored that like this, “*For judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.*”<sup>5</sup> If you *desire* mercy, be *merciful*.\*

Babylon was blind & cruel, proud & presumptuous... God would bring them low. Is there a word for America tucked away in there somewhere? I believe there is...

### Vs 8-9

Given to pleasure, the fruit of prosperity... dwelling securely (a false sense of security), the superpower of the world, “We’ll never be brought down!” “I am, & there is no one else besides me...” But for all her children (subservient provinces & nations), Babylon would lose it all... why? “Because of the multitude of your sorceries.” Again, occultic/demonic activity. Not to altogether different than we see in the music industry & so many celebrities lives today. – Look at Vs 10

### Vs 10-11

Are you picking up on the emphasis upon the heart? “You have trusted in your wickedness...” Wow. You have said, “No one sees me...” No accountability. This is so often the deceitfulness of sin. We think no one sees what we’re doing, so we’re getting away w/it. But you can be sure, your sin will find you out.

<sup>4</sup> *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Mt 5:7). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>5</sup> *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Jas 2:13). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

We start thinking we're so clever, "Your wisdom & your knowledge have warped you..." God sees you, He sees me, He knows the goings on of our hearts... & Should we sow to the wind, we'll reap the whirlwind.

In one day, Babylon was conquered. This impenetrable city fell to Cyrus just like God said it would (Daniel 5). Ladies & Gentlemen, the Bible is clear, "God resists the proud (or sets Himself against the proud) but gives grace to the humble." (James 4:6) Pride goes before destruction, & a haughty (arrogant) spirit before a fall... (Prov 16:18)

### Vs 12-15

All these enchanters, sorcerers, stargazers (horoscopes & such) couldn't see it coming. Couldn't save themselves, much less those who looked to them for guidance. God would expose their folly in judgment.

Before we conclude I want to draw your attention to one last point that we have here. God says, "They shall not deliver themselves from the power of the flame..." \* It doesn't matter how esteemed one may *be*, how much people looked *to* them, or took confidence in their counsel. – No one escapes the judgment of God.

But this is what I want you to see, "It shall not be a coal to be warmed by, nor a fire to sit before!" How many times we hear the world mock the judgment of God. They think it'll be a cool thing, a party kind of atmosphere in which to debase themselves throughout all eternity! They'll be w/all their friends ... Somehow the fires of judgment will be useful or comforting... Don't be deceived. It will *not* be a pleasant experience as some have envisioned to their own destruction & demise. – How greatly people underestimate the blazing strength of the judgment of God... Close

& Note the finality, "No one shall save you." – What a sobering final sentence. – Allow me to remind you of Isaiah 45:22, "Look to Me, and be saved, All you ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other."<sup>6</sup> Here's the take home. If you won't look to the Lord J.C. & be saved, then *no one* will save you. For there is no other name under heaven, given among men by which we must be saved... Jesus is the way, the truth & the life & no one comes to the Father except through Him... \*

<sup>6</sup> [The New King James Version](#). (1982). (Is 45:22). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

**Prayer Points:**

God we thank You for the life, the power & the strength that resides in Your word. Surely You are God & there is no other, nor is there any other Savior outside of You. Help us to remember & to recall Your word, Your ways... that we might grow in strength & courage to be who You've called us to be throughout a time such as this. May we listen & give heed to You... & We thank You that from before we were born until we see You face to face, You will carry us, never leaving nor forsaking us... & We give You praise.

Listen, if God is dealing w/you today. Perhaps you've been stubborn hearted, but a breakthrough is taking place right here, right now. I'm speaking truth to you, outside of J.C. No one will save you. Look to Him, believe on Him & be saved today.