

A Trek Through Isaiah 40 - 47:1-15

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June 23, 2024

Free but not yet home 47:1 – 48:22

Context

- The book of the Servant (38 - 55): How will God's people be redeemed from captivity?
- Structure

The Great Deliverance: the Work of Cyrus (44:24 - 48:22)
Cyrus: builder and conqueror 44:24 - 45:8
Yahweh's people and His purpose 45:9 - 46:13
Free but not yet home 47:1 - 48:22

- The Great Deliverance: delivery from Babylon
 - Cyrus: builder and conqueror (44:24 - 45:8)
 - Yahweh's people and His purpose (45:9 - 46:13)
 - Free but not yet home (47:1 - 48:22)
- Free but not yet home
 - Fall of Babylon. Is 47
 - Israel's return to Jerusalem. Is 48
 -

Babylon's Fall 47:1-15

- No details of the actual conquest. Indicates that the author was not present at the scene of Babylon's fall.
- Rather Isaiah speaks of the causes behind Babylon's fall
 - V1-7 Divine vengeance
 - V8-11 Pride
 - V12-15 Impotent religion

Divine vengeance 47:1-7

Isaiah 47:1-7 (LSB)

1“Come down and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon; Sit on the ground without a throne, O daughter of the Chaldeans! For you shall no longer be called tender and delicate.

2“Take the millstones and grind flour. Uncover your veil, strip off the skirt, Uncover the leg, cross the rivers.

3“Your nakedness will be uncovered; Your reproach also will be seen; I will take vengeance and will not spare a man.”

4Our Redeemer, Yahweh of hosts is His name, The Holy One of Israel.

5“Sit silently, and go into darkness, O daughter of the Chaldeans, For you will no longer be called The queen of kingdoms.

6“I was furious with My people; I profaned My inheritance And gave them into your hand. You did not show compassion to them, On the aged you made your yoke very heavy.

7“Yet you said, ‘I will be a queen forever.’ These things you did not put on your heart Nor remember the outcome of them.

- V1-3, 5 Vengeance on Babylon
 - Questions
 - What was Babylon now? Queen of kingdoms, virgin, tender and delicate
 - What would she become? Slave, in the dust, stripped, nakedness uncovered
 - Who would do this? Yahweh
 - Detail
 - Come down and sit in the dust.
 - Descend from your throne and take the place of a slave.
 - O virgin daughter of Babylon ... tender and delicate
 - City personified.
 - Virgin. Never conquered.
 - Pampered and protected
 - sit on the ground without a throne.
 - Formerly a queen, now a slave.
 - In Babylon, not to sit on a chair was regarded as a sign of degradation.
 - Take the millstones and grind flour.
 - The lowest form of slavery.
 - Uncover your veil
 - Be exposed to public view.
 - strip off the skirt, uncover the leg, cross the rivers.
 - On the way to her work.
 - Your nakedness will be uncovered; Your reproach also will be seen
 - Public shame and disgrace.

- I will take vengeance.
 - Retribution rightly due.
 - Done by Yahweh.
- Sit silently. Rather than commanding.
- go into darkness. Deepest obscurity. Maybe in prison. Maybe in depression from grief and anguish.
- you shall no more be called the mistress of kingdoms. No longer ruling.
 - achieved if Babylon remains, and Yahweh will bring it down.
- V6-7 Reason for vengeance
 - Questions
 - What had Yahweh done? Become furious with His people. Profaned His inheritance. Given them into the hand of Babylon
 - What had Babylon done? Made their yoke heavy. Showed no compassion.
 - What was Babylon's attitude? She would rule forever. She was answerable to no one.
 - Detail
 - I was furious with My people; I profaned My inheritance And gave them into your hand.
 - The real cause of Judah's fall was Yahweh's discipline.
 - On the aged you made your yoke very heavy.
 - What Babylon did.
 - You did not show compassion to them
 - How Babylon acted
 - Yet you said, 'I will be a queen forever.
 - Eternal
 - Ruling over all.
 - These things you did not put on your heart Nor remember the outcome of them.
 - Did not consider who was acting or why.

- V4 Celebration
 - Questions
 - Prophet celebrating
 - He has just spoken of Babylon's fall. Why does he call Yahweh Redeemer?
 - The promised delivery from exile could not be accomplished unless Babylon was brought down.
 - Yahweh knew all that Babylon had done and would exact all the vengeance they deserved. As Dt 32:35-36 Vengeance is Mine...For Yahweh will render justice to His people...
 - Detail
 - Our Redeemer, Yahweh of hosts is his name— the Holy One of Israel.
 - The prophet exclaims
 - Redeemer. The One who delivers His people
 - Yahweh of hosts. The One who rules heaven and earth.
 - The Holy One of Israel. Holy and Israel's God.
 - The previous promises of redemption for Israel (45:13, 46:13) cannot be achieved unless Babylon is brought down.

Pride 47:8-11

Isaiah 47:8–11 (LSB)

8“So now, hear this, you sensual one, Who sits securely, Who says in your heart, ‘I am, and there is no one besides me. I will not sit as a widow, Nor know loss of children.’

9“But these two things will come on you suddenly in one day: Loss of children and widowhood. They will come on you in full measure In spite of your many sorceries, In spite of the great might of your spells.

10“You felt secure in your evil and said, ‘No one sees me,’ Your wisdom and your knowledge have turned you astray; So you have said in your heart, ‘I am, and there is no one besides me.’

11“But evil will come on you Which you will not know how to charm away; And disaster will fall on you For which you cannot atone; And destruction about which you do not know Will come on you suddenly.

- V8 & 9 parallel v10 & 11
- V8, 10 Babylon’s pride.
 - Questions
 - What was Babylon’s heart attitude?
 - I am God
 - I am not accountable to anyone
 - How did this attitude manifest itself?
 - Sensual
 - Complacent
 - Secure
 - Trusting in worldly wisdom and knowledge
 - Detail
 - Sensual one. Focus on the pleasures of this world.
 - Who sits securely. Complacency.
 - who says in your heart,
 - Heart attitude
 - Cause of her complacency
 - I am, and there is no one besides me
 - Repeated in v8, 10
 - As Yahweh describes Himself (Is 45:5-6, 47:10)
 - Making herself God
 - No fear of Yahweh
 - I will not sit as a widow
 - No poverty
 - No helplessness
 - Or know loss of children”.
 - No bereavement
 - No posterity
 - You felt secure in your evil
 - Complacent.
 - No moral accountability

- you said, "No one sees me";
 - Accountable to no one.
 - As Ps 14:1 The fool says in his heart, "There is no God."
- your wisdom and your knowledge have turned you astray,
 - Worldly wisdom that leads to death.
- V9 & 11 Babylon's judgment
 - Questions
 - What two things is Yahweh going to do to Babylon?
 - Widowhood: poverty and helplessness
 - Loss of children: bereavement, no posterity
 - How is the judgment described?
 - Sudden
 - Cannot be charmed away (sorceries, spells)
 - Cannot be atoned for (worldly wealth)
 - About which she does not know
 - Detail
 - Exactly what Babylon thought would never happen to her.
 - suddenly in one day. Quickly
 - in full measure. Completely
 - In spite of your many sorceries, In spite of the great might of your spells.
 - Spells. Magical arrangements to secure the future.
 - Sorceries. Incantations to invoke these arrangements.
 - But
 - History will turn out differently than Babylon intends
 - Evil
 - Babylon felt secure in her evil, now it will come upon her.
 - disaster...destruction
 - What is coming for Babylon.
 - Which you will not know how to charm away
 - Their knowledge will not save them.
 - for which you cannot atone
 - Their wealth will not save them.
 - About which you do not know
 - Not within their experience
 - Will come upon you suddenly
 - No warning

Religion that fails 47:12-15

Isaiah 47:12–15 (LSB)

12“Stand fast now in your spells And in your many sorceries With which you have labored from your youth; Perhaps you will be able to profit; Perhaps you may cause trembling.

13“You are wearied with your many counsels; Let now the astrologers, Those who behold visions by the stars, Those who predict by the new moons, Stand up and save you from what will come upon you.

14“Behold, they have become like stubble, Fire burns them; They cannot deliver themselves from the power of the flame; There will be no coal to warm by Nor a fire to sit before!

15“Thus they have become for you, those among whom you have labored, Who have traded with you from your youth; Each has wandered in his own way; There is none to save you.

- V12-13 False religion
 - Questions
 - What is Isaiah saying here?
 - Sarcasm.
 - Challenge: much time and effort and wealth spent; let’s see some results.
 - Detail
 - Isaiah speaks sarcastically
 - Stand fast...perhaps you will be able to profit.
 - spells...sorceries
 - As v9
 - Magical arrangements to secure the future.
 - You are wearied with your many counsels;
 - Much time and effort and wealth spent. As Is 40:18-20; 41:6-7; 44:9-20; 46:5-7.
 - Let now the astrologers... Stand up and save you from what will come upon you.
 - Challenge to the astrologers upon whose counsel Babylon depended.

- V14-15 End of Babylon's religion
 - Questions
 - From v14 will Babylon's sorcerers and astrologers save her?
 - No.
 - Cannot even save themselves. They become fuel for the fire.
 - The fire will not be gentle but will destroy all.
 - From v15 what will happen to the sorcerers and astrologers?
 - Go their own way to save themselves.
 - In v15 what is the significance of the last sentence: "There is none to save you."
 - The false gods cannot save. The sorcerers and astrologers with their worldly wisdom cannot save. Those who depend on them will be destroyed.
 - Only Yahweh saves.
 - Detail
 - they have become like stubble
 - Worthless
 - Easily consumed
 - fire burns them;
 - To be destroyed
 - they cannot deliver themselves
 - Not only can they not save but they cannot even deliver themselves.
 - There will be no coal to warm by Nor a fire to sit before!
 - The fire of destruction
 - those among whom you have labored
 - False priests and astrologers
 - who have traded with you
 - They treated spiritual matters like a business for profit.
 - Each has wandered in his own way; There is none to save you.
 - Now that the profit is gone they are gone.
 - No one is left to save.

Application: Let go and let God.

Is 47:4 Our Redeemer, Yahweh of hosts is His name, The Holy One of Israel.

- Isaiah celebrating. Israel would be delivered from exile.
- Yahweh would finally give Babylon what they deserved.

Vengeance belongs to God not to us.

Romans 12:1–2 (LSB)

1Therefore I exhort you, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a sacrifice—living, holy, and pleasing to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.

2And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may approve what the will of God is, that which is good and pleasing and perfect.

Romans 12:17–21 (LSB)

17Never paying back evil for evil to anyone, respecting what is good in the sight of all men,

18if possible, so far as it depends on you, being at peace with all men,

19never taking your own revenge, beloved—instead leave room for the wrath of God. For it is written, “VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY,” says the Lord.

20“BUT IF YOUR ENEMY IS HUNGRY, FEED HIM, AND IF HE IS THIRSTY, GIVE HIM A DRINK; FOR IN SO DOING YOU WILL HEAP BURNING COALS ON HIS HEAD.”

21Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

- Ro 12-16 is application based on Ro 1-11. Ro 12:1-2 is a general statement followed by specific examples.
- In Ro 12:1-2, as God’s people, what are we to do?
 - Present our bodies as a living sacrifice (v1)
 - Not be conformed to the world (v2)
 - Approve God’s will (v2)
- Ro 12:17-21 speaks of vengeance.
 - What is revenge?
 - Paying back evil for evil. (v17)
 - As Lamech (descendent of Cain) in Gen 4:23-24 ...I have killed a man for striking me; And a boy for wounding me; If Cain is avenged sevenfold, Then Lamech seventy-sevenfold.”
 - Yahweh said Cain would be revenged seven times if he was killed.
 - Lamech boasted of taking his own revenge and making it much more severe than God’s revenge for Cain.

- In Ro 12:17-21, as God's people, what are we to do when someone does evil to us?
 - Not pay back evil for evil (v17)
 - Respect what is good in the sight of all men (v17)
 - Be at peace with all men, as far as it depends on us (v18)
 - Peace may not be possible.
 - Leave revenge to God (v19)
 - Do good to the one doing you evil (v20)
 - Do not be overcome by evil but overcome evil with good (v21)
- Why can we trust God to take revenge?
 - He is faithful. He will let no wrong go unpunished.
 - He is omniscient: He knows exactly what wrong was done, and exactly what revenge is needed.
 - He is sovereign. He will bring exactly the appropriate consequences at the appropriate time, and none can stop Him.
 - His revenge will bring Him glory.
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- Why is it unwise for us to take revenge
 - We are not approving God's will.
 - We are not allowing ourselves to be a living sacrifice.
 - We are not showing that our faith is genuine.
 - 1 Pet 1:7a so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire...
 - We are not achieving His righteousness
 - Ja 1:20 ...for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God.
 - We don't know the whole situation
 - We don't know the appropriate action.
 - We don't know God's plan.
 - We are missing the opportunity for glory.
 - 1 Pet 1:7b ...may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.
 - We are not following the example of our Lord.
 - 1 Pet 2:21-23 For to this you have been called, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example that you should follow in His steps, WHO DID NO SIN, NOR WAS ANY DECEIT FOUND IN HIS MOUTH; who being reviled, was not reviling in return; while suffering, He was uttering no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously.
 - Our example is Jesus.
 - He had no sin
 - He suffered greater injustice than any of us know
 - He was insulted from the moment of His birth. The King of all creation was born in a stable because there was no room for Him in the inn.
 - Because His mother became pregnant before being married, He was seen as an illegitimate child.
 - During His time on earth He was attacked continually. Multiple times men tried to kill Him. He endured their opposition and continued to do His Father's work, loving them and calling them to Him
 - When His time finally came, He was betrayed by one of His close friends. He was arrested and convicted by both the Jews and the Romans, although He had done nothing wrong. Pilate sentenced Him to be crucified. He was hung on a cross until He died.
 - He did not revile or retaliate or take revenge, leaving that to the Father.
 - As a result, He was exalted to the highest position and given the name that is above every name (Ph 2:9)

What to do?

- When hurt...Let go of the hurt. Let God do the avenging..
- Be transformed in our mind. Not evil for evil but overcome evil with good.
- Approve the will of God. Be content.
- Be prepared to be a living sacrifice.

References

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