

Study 86: Isaiah, Part 42

Isaiah 47

“Go down, sit in the dust,
Virgin Daughter Babylon;
sit on **the ground**¹ without a throne,
queen city of the Babylonians [Chaldeans].
No more will you be called
tender or delicate.
²Take millstones and grind flour;
take off your veil.
Lift up your skirts, bare your legs,
and wade through the streams.
³Your nakedness will be exposed
and your shame uncovered.
I will take vengeance;
I will spare no one.”
⁴Our Redeemer—the Lord Almighty is his name—
is the Holy One of Israel.
⁵“Sit in silence, go into darkness,
queen city of the Babylonians;
no more will you be called
queen of kingdoms.
⁶I was angry with my people
and desecrated my inheritance;
I gave them into your hand,
and you showed them no mercy.
Even on the aged
you laid a very heavy yoke.
⁷You said, **‘I am forever—
the eternal queen!’**
But you did not consider these things
or reflect on what might happen.
⁸“Now then, listen, you lover of pleasure,
lounging in your security
and saying to yourself,
‘I am, and there is none besides me.
I will never be a widow²
or suffer the loss of children.’
⁹**Both of these will overtake you
in a moment, on a single day:**³
loss of children and widowhood.
They will come upon you in full measure,
in spite of your many sorceries
and all your potent spells.
¹⁰You have trusted in your wickedness
and have said, ‘No one sees me.’
Your wisdom and knowledge mislead you
when you say to yourself,
‘I am, and there is none besides me.’ [Blasphemy: taking to oneself the prerogatives of God alone]

¹ ארץ – *eretz*, sometimes rendered as “earth”. The choice of whether to use “land,” “ground,” or “earth” is determined by the bias of the translator. If the translator wants to give the impression that the passage is referring to the entire globe, he will use “earth,” but this is misleading.

² See: Rev 18:7

³ See: Rev 18:8

¹¹ Disaster will come upon you,
and you will not know how to conjure it away.

A calamity will fall upon you
that you cannot ward off with a ransom;
a catastrophe you cannot foresee
will suddenly come upon you.

¹² “Keep on, then, with your magic spells
and with your many sorceries,
which you have labored at since childhood.

Perhaps you will succeed,
perhaps you will cause terror.

¹³ All the counsel you have received has only worn you out!
Let your astrologers come forward,
those stargazers who make predictions month by month,
let them save you from what is coming upon you.

¹⁴ Surely they are like stubble;
the fire will burn them up.

They cannot even save themselves
from the power of the flame.

These are not coals for warmth;
this is not a fire to sit by.

¹⁵ That is all they are to you—
these you have dealt with
and labored with since childhood.

All of them go on in their error;
there is not one that can save you.

Isaiah 48

“Listen to this, you descendants of Jacob,
you who are called by the name of Israel
and come from the line of Judah,
you who take oaths in the name of the Lord
and invoke the God of Israel—
but not in truth or righteousness—

² you who call yourselves **citizens of the holy city**
and claim to rely on the God of Israel—
the Lord Almighty is his name:

³ I foretold the former things long ago,
my mouth announced them and I made them known;
then suddenly I acted, and they came to pass.

⁴ For I knew how stubborn you were;
your neck muscles were iron,
your forehead was bronze.

⁵ Therefore I told you these things long ago;
before they happened I announced them to you

so that you could not say,
‘My images brought them about;
my wooden image and metal god **ordained** them.’

[i.e. the true God ordained (**predestined**) them. How else is true prophecy possible? Think of the vast multitude of individual choices made in the span of even one hour, let alone the virtually innumerable number of decisions made over a week, a month, a year, or decades! True predictive prophecy (that actually comes to pass) would be absolutely impossible if events and decisions were not preordained (predestined). This is not “fate,” but the sovereignty of God.]

⁶ You have heard these things; look at them all.
Will you not admit them?

“From now on I will tell you of new things,
of hidden things unknown to you.

⁷ They are created now, and not long ago;
you have not heard of them before today.

So you cannot say,
‘Yes, I knew of them.’

⁸ You have neither heard nor understood;
from of old your ears have not been open.

Well do I know how treacherous you are;
you were called a rebel from birth.

⁹ For my own name’s sake I delay my wrath;
for the sake of my praise I hold it back from you,
so as not to destroy you completely.

¹⁰ See, I have refined you, though not as silver;
I have tested you in the furnace of affliction.

¹¹ For my own sake, for my own sake, I do this.
How can I let myself be defamed?

I will not yield my glory to another.

¹² “Listen to me, Jacob,
Israel, whom I have called:

I am he;

I am the first and I am the last.⁴

¹³ My own hand laid the foundations of the earth,
and my right hand spread out the heavens;

when I summon them,
they all stand up together.

¹⁴ “Come together, all of you, and listen:
Which of the idols has foretold these things?

The Lord’s chosen ally
will carry out his purpose against Babylon;
his arm will be against the Babylonians.

¹⁵ I, even I, have spoken;
yes, I have called him.

I will bring him,
and he will succeed in his mission.

¹⁶ “Come near me and listen to this:

“From the first announcement I have not spoken in secret;
at the time it happens, I am there.”

And now the Sovereign Lord has sent me,
endowed with his Spirit.

¹⁷ This is what the Lord says—
your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel:

“I am the Lord your God,
who teaches you what is best for you,
who directs you in the way you should go.

¹⁸ If only you had paid attention to my commands,
your peace would have been like a river,
your well-being like the waves of the sea.

¹⁹ Your descendants would have been like the sand,
your children like its numberless grains;
their name would never be blotted out
nor destroyed from before me.”

²⁰ Leave Babylon,
flee from the Babylonians!
Announce this with shouts of joy

⁴ Cp. Rev 1:17; 2:8; 22:13.

and proclaim it.
Send it out to the ends of the earth;
say, "The Lord has redeemed his servant Jacob."
²¹They did not thirst when he led them through the deserts;
he made water flow for them from the rock;
he split the rock
and water gushed out.
²²"There is no peace," says the Lord, "for the wicked."