

ISAIAH 47 | *Babylon's Nakedness Uncovered*

Babylon's Disgrace

1 Come down and sit in the dust, virgin daughter of Babylon (בְּכֹל). Sit on the ground without a throne, daughter of the Chaldeans (כַּשְׁדִּים)! For you shall no more be called tender and delicate. 2 Take the millstones and grind flour. Put off your veil. Strip off your robe. Uncover your legs. Pass through the rivers. 3 Your nakedness (עֲרוּתָה) shall be uncovered, and your disgrace (חֲרָפָה) shall be seen. I will take vengeance (נִקְמָה), and I will spare no one. 4 Our Redeemer (גֹּאֵל)—Yahweh of hosts is his name—is the Holy One of Israel.

Queen No More

5 Sit in silence and go into darkness, daughter of the Chaldeans. For you shall no more be called the queen of kingdoms. 6 I was angry with my people [Israel]. I profaned my inheritance (נַחֲלָה). I gave them into your hand. You showed them no mercy (רַחֲמִים). On the aged you made your yoke exceedingly heavy. 7 You said, I shall be queen forever, so that you did not lay these things to heart (לֵב) or remember (זָכַר) their end.

Sudden Widowhood

8 Now therefore hear this, you lover of pleasures (עֲדִינָי),¹ who sit securely, who say in your heart (לִבָּב), I am (אֲנִי), and there is no one besides me.² I shall not sit as a widow or know the loss of children. 9 These two things shall come to you in a moment, in one day. The loss of children and widowhood shall come upon you in full measure, in spite of your many sorceries (כִּשְׁפֵי) and the great power of your enchantments (חֲבָרָה).

Evil, Disaster, and Ruin

10 You felt secure in your wickedness (רָעָה). You said, No one sees me. Your wisdom (חֲכָמָה) and your knowledge (דָּעַת) led you astray, and you said in your heart (לֵב), I am, and there is no one besides me (אֲנִי וְאִפְסֵי עוֹד). 11 But evil (רָעָה) will come upon you that you will not know how to charm away. Disaster (הֲוָה) will fall upon you, for which you will not be able to atone (כַּפֵּר). And ruin (שׁוֹאָה) will come upon you suddenly, of which you know nothing.

Wise Men Cannot Deliver

12 Stand fast in your enchantments and your many sorceries, with which you have laboured from your youth. Perhaps you may be able to succeed. Perhaps you may inspire terror. 13

¹ “[L]uxuriant, accustomed to a good life” (*HALOT*, 792).

² The great conflict is humanism and polytheism verses theism.

You are wearied with your many counsels.³ Let them stand forth and save you, those who divide the heavens, who gaze at the stars, who at the new moons make known what shall come upon you.

No One to Save

14 Behold, they are like stubble. The fire consumes them. They cannot deliver themselves from the power of the flame.⁴ No coal for warming oneself is this, no fire to sit before! 15 Such to you are those with whom you have laboured, who have done business with you from your youth. They wander about, each in his own direction.⁵ There is no one to save you.

³ **Da 2:10-12** 10 The Chaldeans answered the king and said, There is not a man on earth who can meet the king's demand, for no great and powerful king has asked such a thing of any magician or enchanter or Chaldean. 11 The thing that the king asks is difficult, and no one can show it to the king except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh. 12 Because of this the king was angry and very furious, and commanded that all the wise men of Babylon be destroyed.

⁴ **Da 3:24-25** 24 Then King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished and rose up in haste. He declared to his counsellors, Did we not cast three men bound into the fire? They answered and said to the king, True, O king. 25 He answered and said, But I see four men unbound, walking in the midst of the fire, and they are not hurt. And the appearance of the fourth is like a son of the gods.

⁵ This is an accurate description of modern and postmodern man.

Commentary

1. Isaiah 47.

- a. In this chapter, Isaiah represents Babylon and its empire as a beautiful and arrogant woman who is forced to take the place of a slave. All the things on which she relied, especially her own self-confidence, will be shown to have been a false hope.⁶
- b. This is another oracle against a nation, like what we saw in Is 13-23.⁷
- c. The chief purpose of Is 40-48 is not the prediction of the fall of Babylon in 539 bc. Rather, the theological point of these chapters is to teach the omnipotence and grace of God. God is supreme and no nation, however proud and great, can stand against him.⁸

2. Babylon.

- a. See *Babylon*.

3. Babylon's Disgrace (Is 47:1-4).

- a. **Is 47:1-4** 1 Come down and sit in the dust, virgin daughter of Babylon (בְּרִיל). Sit on the ground without a throne, daughter of the Chaldeans (כַּשְׂדִּים)! For you shall no more be called tender and delicate. 2 Take the millstones and grind flour. Put off your veil. Strip off your robe. Uncover your legs. Pass through the rivers. 3 Your nakedness (עֲרֹוֹת) shall be uncovered, and your disgrace (תְּרֻפָּה) shall be seen. I will take vengeance (נִקְמָה), and I will spare no one. 4 Our Redeemer (גֹּאֲלֵנוּ)—Yahweh of hosts is his name—is the Holy One of Israel.
- b. Yahweh commands Babylon to sit in the dust on the ground, a symbol of disgrace and humbling (vv. 1-2).
 - (1) Babylon has lorded it over the world as though it were somehow her right, but now she must come face-to-face with reality.⁹
 - (a) Every great nation in history has fallen. Today's great nations will be no exception.
 - (2) Babylon is personified as a young, innocent girl (cf. Is 23:12; 37:22) because the city's walls had never been breached.¹⁰
 - (3) *Chaldea* was the region of southern Mesopotamia from which the rulers of the Neo-Babylonian kingdom had arisen.¹¹

⁶ John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 240.

⁷ John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 240.

⁸ John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 241.

⁹ John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 241.

¹⁰ John A. Martin, "Isaiah," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 1101.

¹¹ John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 242.

- c. Babylon will no longer be like a “tender” and “delicate” queen (v. 1b).
 - (1) Isaiah depicts the city as a *virgin*, a young woman of luxury, who has never had to face the harsh side of life.¹²
 - (a) Many great nations in history have fallen to uncivilised barbarians because they grew apathetic, complacent, and lazy.
- d. Like a poor slave girl, she now has to grind flour and pass through rivers lifting up her skirt (v. 2).
 - (1) Work at the millstones was considered the lowest form of slavery.¹³
 - (a) **Ex 11:5** 5 ...Even to the firstborn of the slave girl who is behind the handmill....
 - (b) **Mt 24:41** 41 Two women will be grinding at the mill. One will be taken and one left.
 - (2) Uncovering the leg may imply gathering up a garment to work in irrigation ditches.¹⁴
- e. Babylon will be humiliated and defenceless, like a prostitute displayed naked (v. 3a).
 - (1) In biblical usage “uncovering nakedness” has the connotation of extreme humiliation and even rape. It is used figuratively of nations that have consorted with many different lovers, but are finally humiliated by being made to appear naked before them all. This will be Babylon’s fate as well. She may think herself in a different category from all the other nations, but she is not.¹⁵
- f. Yahweh will take revenge on Babylon’s entire population (v. 3b).
 - (1) This takes place in 539 bc, about 150 years after Isaiah’s prophecy
 - (2) This will happen because Babylon exalted herself to God’s place.
- g. It is Yahweh, the Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, who will do this (v. 4).

4. Queen No More (Is 47:5-7).

- a. **Is 47:5-7** 5 Sit in silence and go into darkness, daughter of the Chaldeans. For you shall no more be called the queen of kingdoms (מְלִכּוֹת). 6 I was angry with my people [Israel]. I profaned my inheritance (נְחֻלָּה). I gave them into your hand. You showed them no mercy (רַחֲמִים). On the aged you made your yoke exceedingly heavy. 7 You said, I shall be queen (גְּבִירָה) forever, so that you did not lay these things to heart (לֵב) or remember (זָכַר) their end.
- b. Babylon will now sit in silence and go into darkness (v. 5a). She will no longer be called queen of the kingdoms (מְלִכּוֹת)(v. 5b).
- c. Yahweh was angry with Judah (v. 6a) and gave her into Babylonia’s hand (v. 6b).

¹² John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 241.

¹³ John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 242.

¹⁴ John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 242.

¹⁵ John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 242.

- (1) Like Assyria (Is 10:5-11), Babylon would pride herself on capturing many nations, including Judah.¹⁶
- (2) The only reason Babylon had been allowed to capture Judah, was that God permitted it. “Babylon’s conquests were part of God’s plan for world redemption through Israel.”¹⁷
- (3) One of Babylon’s mistakes, like Assyria’s before (Is 10:12-14), was believing she had conquered God’s people in spite of God.¹⁸
 - (a) **Hab 1:6-11** 6 For behold, I am raising up the Chaldeans, that bitter and hasty nation, who march through the breadth of the earth, to seize dwellings not their own. 7 They are dreaded and fearsome. Their justice and dignity go forth from themselves. 8 Their horses are swifter than leopards, more fierce than the evening wolves. Their horsemen press proudly on. Their horsemen come from afar. They fly like an eagle swift to devour. 9 They all come for violence, all their faces forward. They gather captives like sand. 10 At kings they scoff, and at rulers they laugh. They laugh at every fortress, for they pile up earth and take it. 11 Then they sweep by like the wind and go on, guilty men, whose own might is their god!
- d. Babylonia showed Judah no mercy and oppressed even her old men and women (v. 6c).
- e. Babylon believed she would be queen of the kingdoms forever (v. 7a) and failed to understand her supremacy was only temporary (v. 7b).
 - (1) Above all, Babylon’s fault is claiming to be immortal and self-existent, something no part of creation can rightfully claim.¹⁹
 - (2) This is the problem of autonomous, independent, secular man. He has no one outside himself to remind him that even if he is the greatest the world has ever seen, he is not the standard of greatness. God is the standard, and man is measured against him.²⁰

5. Sudden Widowhood (Is 47:8-9).

- a. **Is 47:8-9** 8 Now therefore hear this, you lover of luxury (לְפָדָה), who sit securely, who say in your heart (לִבִּי), I am (אֲנִי), and there is no one besides me. I shall not sit as a widow or know the loss of children. 9 These two things shall come to you in a moment, in one day. The loss of children and widowhood shall come upon you in full measure, in spite of your many sorceries (קְשָׁפִים) and the great power of your enchantments (מְחִימָה).

¹⁶ John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 246.

¹⁷ John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 246.

¹⁸ John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 246–247.

¹⁹ John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 245.

²⁰ John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 247.

- b. Babylon is accustomed to the good life and feels secure (v. 8a).
- (1) לְיָפֶתֶת: “[L]uxuriant, accustomed to a good life” (HALOT, 792).
- (a) This term “conveys the air of thoughtless self-indulgence on the part of one who assumes that luxury is her right by reason of incomparable eminence. She does not prepare for any other eventuality because she cannot imagine it. Whatever might have happened to other empires cannot happen to her, because she is different.”²¹
- (b) **Re 18:1-3** 1 After this I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was made bright with his glory. 2 And he called out with a mighty voice, Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! She has become a dwelling place for demons, a haunt for every unclean spirit, a haunt for every unclean bird, a haunt for every unclean and detestable beast. 3 For all nations have drunk the wine of the passion of her sexual immorality, and the kings of the earth have committed immorality with her, and the merchants of the earth have grown rich from the power of *her luxurious living*.
- c. She tells herself she will be on top forever and won’t experience any disaster (v. 8b).
- (1) **Re 18:4-7** 4 Then I heard another voice from heaven saying, Come out of her [Babylon], my people, lest you take part in her sins, lest you share in her plagues. 5 For her sins are heaped high as heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities. 6 Pay her back as she herself has paid back others, and repay her double for her deeds. Mix a double portion for her in the cup she mixed. 7 *As she glorified herself and lived in luxury*, so give her a like measure of torment and mourning, because in her heart she says, *I sit as a queen, I am no widow, and mourning I shall never see*.
- (2) “I am, and there is no one besides me,” is the voice of secular humanism, and postmodernism, which puts autonomous man at the centre instead of God.
- (3) But it is Yahweh, not Babylon, who *is*. He is the incomparable, self-existent one.
- (a) **Is 43:11** 11 I, I am Yahweh, and besides me there is no savior.
- (b) **Is 44:6** 6 Thus says Yahweh, the King of Israel and his Redeemer, Yahweh of hosts: I am the first and I am the last. Besides me there is no god.
- (c) **Is 45:5** 5 *I am Yahweh, and there is no other*, besides me there is no God. I equip you, though you do not know me, 6 that people may know, from the rising of the sun and from the west, that there is none besides me. *I am Yahweh, and there is no other*.
- (d) **Is 45:14** 14 Thus says Yahweh: The wealth of Egypt and the merchandise of Cush, and the Sabeans, men of stature, shall come over to you and be yours. They shall follow you. They shall come over in chains and bow down to you. They will plead with you saying: Surely God is in you, *and there is no other, no god besides him*.
- (e) **Is 45:18** 18 For thus says Yahweh, who created the heavens (he is God!), who formed the earth and made it (he established it, he did not create it empty, he formed it to be inhabited!): *I am Yahweh, and there is no other*.
- (f) **Is 45:21-22** 21 Declare and present your case. Let them take counsel together! Who told this long ago? Who declared it of old? Was it not I, Yahweh? *And*

²¹ John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 248.

there is no other god besides me, a righteous God and a Savior. *There is none besides me*. 22 Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth! *For I am God, and there is no other*.

- (g) **Is 46:9** 9 Remember the former things of old. *For I am God, and there is no other*. I am God, and there is none like me.
- (4) When we place ourselves at the centre of our own reality, as in existentialism, we set ourselves on a collision course with God.
- d. She trusts in her sorceries and enchainments (v. 9b).
- (1) “Sorceries” (רַחֲשֵׁי) (vv. 9, 12) is a term used only here and in 2 Ki 9:22; Mic 5:12; and Nah 3:4. It suggests seeking information about the future by means of demonic forces.²²
- (2) Babylon was proverbial in the ancient world for its magical arts. “Chaldean” was a term for a magician (Da 1:20; 2:2, 27). The names given to the astrological constellations today are translations of the ones originated by the Babylonians.²³
- (3) **Re 18:21-24** 21 Then a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea saying, So will Babylon the great city be thrown down with violence, and will be found no more...., 23 for your merchants were the great ones of the earth, and all nations were deceived by your *sorcery*. 24 And in her was found the blood of prophets and of saints, and of all who have been slain on earth.
- e. Despite all this, Babylon will experience disaster in a single day (v. 9a).
- (1) Neither the occult nor astrology cannot avert the judgment of the Creator God.
- (2) **Re 18:8-19** 8 For this reason her plagues will come *in a single day*, death, mourning, and famine, and she will be burned up with fire, for mighty is the Lord God who has judged her. 9 And the kings of the earth, who committed sexual immorality and lived in luxury with her, will weep and wail over her when they see the smoke of her burning. 10 They will stand far off, in fear of her torment, and say, Alas! Alas! You great city, you mighty city, Babylon! For *in a single hour* your judgment has come. 11 And the merchants of the earth weep and mourn for her, because no one buys their cargo anymore, 12 cargo of gold, silver, jewels, pearls, fine linen, purple cloth, silk, scarlet cloth, all kinds of scented wood, all kinds of articles of ivory, all kinds of articles of costly wood, bronze, iron and marble, 13 cinnamon, spice, incense, myrrh, frankincense, wine, oil, fine flour, wheat, cattle and sheep, horses and chariots, and slaves, that is, human souls. 14 The fruit for which your soul longed has gone from you, and all your delicacies and your splendours are lost to you, never to be found again! 15 The merchants of these wares, who gained wealth from her, will stand far off, in fear of her torment, weeping and mourning aloud, 16 Alas, alas, for the great city that was clothed in fine linen, in purple and scarlet, adorned with gold, with jewels, and with pearls! 17 For *in a single hour* all this wealth has been laid waste. And all shipmasters and seafaring men, sailors and all whose trade is on the sea, stood far off 18 and cried out as they saw the smoke of her burning, What city was like the great city?

²² John A. Martin, “[Isaiah](#),” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 1102.

²³ John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 249.

19 And they threw dust on their heads as they wept and mourned, crying out, Alas, alas, for the great city where all who had ships at sea grew rich by her wealth! For *in a single hour* she has been laid waste.

6. Evil, Disaster, and Ruin (Is 47:10-11).

- a. **Is 47:10-11** 10 You felt secure in your wickedness (רָעָה). You said, No one sees me. Your wisdom (חָכְמָה) and your knowledge (דָּעָה) led you astray, and you said in your heart (לֵב), I am, and there is no one besides me (אֲנִי וְאִפְסֵי עוֹד). 11 But evil (רָעָה) will come upon you that you will not know how to charm away. Disaster (הָרָה) will fall upon you, for which you will not be able to atone (כַּפֵּר). And ruin (שׁוֹאָה) will come upon you suddenly, of which you know nothing.
- b. Babylon felt secure in her hidden wickedness (v. 10a).
 - (1) “No one sees me” is the voice of moral relativism. Such a position assumes whatever we want is morally permissible as long as we can get away with it. There is no one higher than us who is in a position to judge our actions.²⁴
- c. But her “wisdom” and “knowledge” led her astray (v. 10b).
 - (1) The Babylonian’s mastery of the astrology and the occult led them to believe they were immune from disaster.²⁵
- d. Babylon tells herself she is the centre and master of the universe (v. 10c).
 - (1) In modernism, man is objectively the centre of the public universe.
 - (2) In postmodernism, man is subjectively the centre of his own private universe.
 - (3) As Christians, we must thoroughly reject both modernism or postmodernism, for we as human being are not the centre of the universe.
- e. But evil, disaster, and ruin will come upon her, which she won’t be able to charm away, atone for, or understand (v. 11).
 - (1) God cannot be appeased with the blood of bulls and goats. He cannot be charmed out of his righteous anger. He transcends the space-time-matter universe, and he cannot be manipulated by occult practices.²⁶

7. Wise Men Cannot Deliver (Is 47:12-13).

- a. **Is 47:12-13** 12 Stand fast in your enchantments and your many sorceries, with which you have laboured from your youth. Perhaps you may be able to succeed. Perhaps you may inspire terror. 13 You are wearied with your many counsels. Let them stand forth and save you, those who divide the heavens, who gaze at the stars, who at the new moons make known what shall come upon you.
- b. Yahweh mockingly challenges Babylon to rely on her occult practices (v. 12).
 - (1) “The city that has made itself the equal of God has no alternative—it must trust its vaunted intelligence, there is nothing else. It has invested too much hard,

²⁴ John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 250-251.

²⁵ John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 250.

²⁶ John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 251.

exhausting labor for too many years (*from your youth*) to abandon the effort now.”²⁷

- (2) It is very difficult to unconvince an atheist. He has too much invested in his atheism (e.g., a typical Neo-Darwinist).
- c. Babylonia has grown tired of the counsels of her wise men who rely on astrology to predict the future. These wise men cannot save the nation (v. 13).
 - (1) Babylon was more obsessed with astrology and the occult than any other nation of the ancient world. Now is the time for her reliance on these things to pay off. But it can't. The astrologers and the enchanters won't be able to save her.²⁸
 - (2) Interestingly, in Daniel's day, Nebuchadnezzar grew tired of his own magicians.
 - (a) **Da 2:8-9** 8 The king answered and said, I know with certainty that you are trying to gain time, because you see that the word from me is firm— 9 if you do not make the dream known to me, there is but one sentence for you. You have agreed to speak lying and corrupt words before me till the times change. Therefore tell me the dream, and I shall know that you can show me its interpretation.
 - (b) **Da 2:12** 12 Because of this the king was angry and very furious, and commanded that all the wise men of Babylon be destroyed.

8. No One to Save (Is 47:14-15).

- a. **Is 47:14-15** 14 Behold, they [the wise men] are like stubble. The fire consumes them. They cannot deliver (לצל) themselves from the power of the flame. No coal for warming oneself is this, no fire to sit before! 15 Such to you are those [wise men] with whom you [Babylon] have laboured, who have done business with you [Babylon] from your youth. They [the wise men] wander (תעה) about, each in his own direction. There is no saviour (מישיע) for you [Babylon].
- b. Babylonia's wise men are like stubble consumed by fire. They cannot deliver themselves from the flame (v. 14).
 - (1) By contrast, Yahweh's servant Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were delivered by the preincarnate Yeshua from the Babylonian flame.
 - (a) **Da 3:24-25** 24 Then King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished and rose up in haste. He declared to his counsellors, Did we not cast three men bound into the fire? They answered and said to the king, True, O king. 25 He answered and said, But I see four men unbound, walking in the midst of the fire, and they are not hurt. And the appearance of the fourth is like a son of the gods.
- c. Babylonian has relied on these wise men from the beginning of her history (v. 15a).
 - (1) Babylon has “traded” with the sorcerers. They have been her true business for hundreds of years.²⁹

²⁷ John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 253.

²⁸ John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 253.

²⁹ John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 255.

- (2) Western man relies on the elite, the news media, and experts in academia to interpret and predict events.
 - (3) New Zealand has chosen the path of secular humanism and increasingly is choosing the path of socialism and postmodernism.
- d. Now these wise men wander about aimlessly, each in his own direction. They cannot save the nation (v. 15).
- (1) In the hour of disaster, Babylon's wise men abandon their posts. It's every man for himself. Instead of acting in the best interests of the nation, the wise men who led her astray now stray off to their own regions. Each person wanders off to seek his own survival.³⁰
 - (2) When Babylon's crisis comes, she has nowhere to turn but to herself, and that is not enough. When the crisis comes to Jerusalem, she has Someone outside herself, the Creator, the Holy One of Israel, the Saviour. "These few words at the end of v. 15 capture the whole argument of chs. 40–47: everybody needs a savior; the gods and the magical worldview on which they rest cannot save; the Lord who stands outside the cosmos and directs it according to his good purposes can save; which shall we choose?"³¹
 - (3) Israel's prophet Isaiah contrasts greatly with the Babylonian wise men. Isaiah doesn't consult the stars but the Creator of the stars. And unlike the Babylonian wise men who wander off when times get tough, the prophet of Israel loyally and selflessly stands his post, proclaiming comfort to Israel at what will prove to be great personal cost, with Manasseh sawing him in two (He 11:37). The prophets Jeremiah and Daniel are others good examples. God's men stand their posts when disaster strikes.

³⁰ John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 255.

³¹ John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 255-256.