

Isaiah 46 and 47

The idols of Babylon and the one true God

46¹ Bel bows down; Nebo stoops;
their idols are on beasts and livestock;
these things you carry are borne
as burdens on weary beasts.

² They stoop; they bow down together;
they cannot save the burden,
but themselves go into captivity.

³ “Listen to me, O house of Jacob,
all the remnant of the house of Israel,
who have been borne by me from before your birth,
carried from the womb;

⁴ even to your old age I am he,
and to grey hairs I will carry you.
I have made, and I will bear;
I will carry and will save.

⁵ “To whom will you liken me and make me equal,
and compare me, that we may be alike?

⁶ Those who lavish gold from the purse,
and weigh out silver in the scales,
hire a goldsmith, and he makes it into a god;
then they fall down and worship!

⁷ They lift it to their shoulders, they carry it,
they set it in its place, and it stands there;
it cannot move from its place.

If one cries to it, it does not answer
or save him from his trouble.

⁸ “Remember this and stand firm,
recall it to mind, you transgressors,

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,
¹⁰ declaring the end from the beginning
and from ancient times things not yet done,
saying, ‘My counsel shall stand,
and I will accomplish all my purpose,’

¹¹ calling a bird of prey from the east,
the man of my counsel from a far country.

I have spoken, and I will bring it to pass;
I have purposed, and I will do it.

¹²“Listen to me, you stubborn of heart,
you who are far from righteousness:
¹³I bring near my righteousness; it is not far off,
and my salvation will not delay;
I will put salvation in Zion,
for Israel my glory.”

The humiliation of Babylon

47 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 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 shall be uncovered,
and your disgrace shall be seen.
I will take vengeance,
and I will spare no one.
⁴ Our Redeemer—the LORD of hosts is his name—
is the Holy One of Israel.

⁵ Sit in silence, and go into darkness,
O daughter of the Chaldeans;
for you shall no more be called
the mistress of kingdoms.
⁶ I was angry with my people;
I profaned my heritage;
I gave them into your hand;
you showed them no mercy;
on the aged you made your yoke exceedingly heavy.
⁷ You said, “I shall be mistress forever,”
so that you did not lay these things to heart
or remember their end.

⁸ Now therefore hear this, you lover of pleasures,
who sit securely,
who say in your heart,
“I am, 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
and the great power of your enchantments.

¹⁰ You felt secure in your wickedness;
you said, “No one sees me”;
your wisdom and your knowledge led you astray,
and you said in your heart,
“I am, and there is no one besides me.”

¹¹ But evil shall come upon you,
which you will not know how to charm away;
disaster shall fall upon you,
for which you will not be able to atone;
and ruin shall come upon you suddenly,
of which you know nothing.

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.

¹⁴ Behold, they are like stubble;
the fire consumes them;
they cannot deliver 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 with whom you have laboured,
who have done business with you from your youth;
they wander about, each in his own direction;
there is no one to save you.

Cross References

Luke 12 v 6, 7: ⁶ Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? And not one of them is forgotten before God. ⁷ Why, even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not; you are of more value than many sparrows.

Revelation 18 v 7:

As she glorified herself and lived in luxury,
so give her a like measure of torment and mourning,
since in her heart she says,
‘I sit as a queen,
I am no widow,
and mourning I shall never see.’

Lamentations 1 v 1:

How lonely sits the city
that was full of people!
How like a widow has she become,
she who was great among the nations!
She who was a princess among the provinces
has become a slave.

Proverbs 3 v 34:

Toward the scorners he is scornful,
but to the humble he gives favour.

James 4 v 6: But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.”

1 Peter 5 v 5: Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.”