

Nowhere to Run

General Topic: God Delivers and Restores

Sunday, June 5th, 2022

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Lesson Text: Isaiah 47:10-15

Background Scripture: Isaiah 47

Isaiah 47:10 For thou hast trusted in thy wickedness: thou hast said, None seeth me. Thy wisdom and thy knowledge, it hath perverted thee; and thou hast said in thine heart, I am, and none else beside me.

11 Therefore shall evil come upon thee; thou shalt not know from whence it riseth: and mischief shall fall upon thee; thou shalt not be able to put it off: and desolation shall come upon thee suddenly, which thou shalt not know.

12 Stand now with thine enchantments, and with the multitude of thy sorceries, wherein thou hast laboured from thy youth; if so be thou shalt be able to profit, if so be thou mayest prevail.

13 Thou art wearied in the multitude of thy counsels. Let now the astrologers, the stargazers, the monthly prognosticators, stand up, and save thee from these things that shall come upon thee.

14 Behold, they shall be as stubble; the fire shall burn them; they shall not deliver themselves from the power of the flame: there shall not be a coal to warm at, nor fire to sit before it.

15 Thus shall they be unto thee with whom thou hast laboured, even thy merchants, from thy youth: they shall wander every one to his quarter; none shall save thee.

Lesson Objective(s):

By the end of this lesson, we will come to understand the uncompromising will of God and learn to turn away from thoughts, actions, and feelings that separate us from Him.

Teaching Tools:

Word puzzles may be developed from the following site: www.puzzlemaker.com. Also, www.dtlk.com has several visual aids that may be beneficial, as well as www.kidssundayschool.com which provide other helps for teaching.

Bible Journaling may be an interesting way to involve older teens in self-expression of the lessons they are taught. Visit www.lifeway.com/Articles/how-to-start-bible-journaling-in-six-easy-steps to find ways to use this valuable tool to learn and reinforce Scripture.

The Lesson:

God is not controlled by time or situations; He controls them both. In His wisdom, He knows what is going to happen and when it is going to happen. Unlike man who only sees something after it takes place, God sees everything before it even exists. Such is the story of Babylon in this week's lesson. The Babylonians took God's people into captivity and through the prophet Isaiah God declared His judgment upon Babylon even before the nation became a world power. This week's lesson gives us some insight into the judgment of Babylon as prophesied by Isaiah.

Background

Isaiah prophesies the demise of Babylon (Isaiah 45). Isaiah announces the conquest of Babylon by King Cyrus of the Medo-Persian Empire. This prophecy is linked to the salvation and restoration of Israel as they return from exile under Cyrus' reign. Babylon is condemned for its idolatry (Isaiah 46). The idols of Babylon are deemed powerless. They are made from created things and cannot save their worshipers. The reign of Babylon is over, and its gods cannot protect its people. God calls the Babylonian sorcerers and astrologers to account (Isaiah 47).

Their knowledge is world renowned, but it is powerless against the sovereign judgment of the Lord. None of their astrological understanding or spells of witchcraft can prevent the disaster coming upon them. The once-proud city will be humbled through the divine arrangement of its conquest by a foreign power. What is bad news for the Babylonians is good news for the Jews. Because of Babylon's conquest, they will gain an ally in Cyrus who will give them freedom to return to their homeland and rebuild their capital Jerusalem as well as their Temple. God assures them no idol could have foretold these things and establishes His superiority over the gods and idols of other nations (Isaiah 48). He is God and He is in control of the destiny of not only Israel but all the nations of the globe.

The Doomed Pride of Babylon (Isaiah 47:10–11)

God through Isaiah calls out Babylon's prideful attitude. They have committed wickedness brazenly as if they were accountable to no one. The Babylonians were renowned for their knowledge, and this knowledge was the source of Babylon's pride. Because of this, they put themselves in the place of God by saying, "I am, and none else beside me" (Isaiah 47:10). These are proud,

blasphemous words which display the inward attitude of the heart. God would not allow Babylon to remain unpunished for this sin of pride. Calamity and disaster would come upon the city in the form of the Medo-Persian Empire and King Cyrus.

None of Babylon's sorcery and knowledge could conjure an escape from the Medes and Persians. Their kingdom would be taken over, and they could do nothing about it. As believers, we have no reason to despair when proud and wicked rulers or leaders are in power. Eventually, all of us will come before the judgment seat of God. There, none of our knowledge, wealth or social standing will be of any use; only whether we were righteous and humble before Him.

The Destructive Practices of Babylon (Isaiah 47:12–13)

Isaiah mocks the knowledge and abilities of Babylon's sorcerers and astrologers. No matter what they did, they could not stop the judgment of God. Isaiah taunts them by pointing out that although they are experienced in enchantments and sorceries, they still will not withstand God's disaster. Astrology and sorcery were ways to control destiny. Babylon would soon face the truth that it was not in control of its destiny. With all of their counselors, they weary themselves. They cannot figure a way out of their situation. Their astrologers try to predict an overturning of their fate, but it will not make a difference.

Babylon's wisdom and knowledge will not be able to help it. Nothing they take pride in will pull them out of the ditch they dug for themselves through blasphemous pride and wickedness. This same understanding of reality needs to be imprinted on our own hearts and minds. We are not in control, and any attempt to control our destiny is empty and vain. God is sovereign over our lives, and we need to look to Him for help. He controls our future and our destiny.

The Demised Path of Babylon (Isaiah 47:14–15)

The astrologers and sorcerers of Babylon are compared to straw or stubble burning in the fire. They will not be able to save Babylon. Their fate was with the city and its empire. Looking to them for help would be fruitless. Sitting by their fire would bring no warmth. They can't save Babylon because they can't save themselves. The nations who have dealt with Babylon since its origin will turn their backs on it. They will not help Babylon when calamity strikes. The pride of Babylon will be broken by the sovereign will of God. Babylon will have no way to escape it, no one to turn to, and no resources to meet this disaster.

Final Thoughts

This week's lesson teaches us that every nation of the world is under God's control, and He will use any of them to accomplish His purposes. Even before Babylon became a world power, God declared that He would use them to discipline His people and then destroy the Babylonians for how they treated them. God has not changed. He already knows what will happen tomorrow and even in the next century, and any nation that opposes His will and His way will face destruction. If God said it, it will come to pass! (Isaiah 48:3)

Be Salt! Be Light! Be Blessed!