

## The Prophecies of Isaiah <sup>61</sup>

### Lesson 28

At the end of the last chapter, the Lord promises that one day every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that He is Lord. It follows the prophecy that Cyrus will one day conquer Babylon and release the exiles to rebuild Jerusalem and the Temple as an unmistakable blatant sign that He is the only God that exists and that the idols created by man do not exist and therefore they cannot prophesy, interpret, rescue, release or save their worshipers.

Still in the first section of Vision 22, which deals with reveals the many facets of the majesty of the Lord, He continues to answer His own questions concerning the idols of Babylon.

*Near Prophecy*

#### **LORD'S ANSWER – IDOLS CANNOT RESCUE**

**Isaiah 46:1** Bel has bowed down, Nebo stoops over; Their images are *consigned* to the beasts and the cattle. The things that you carry are burdensome, A load for the weary *beast*. <sup>2</sup>They stooped over, they have bowed down together; They could not rescue the burden, But have themselves gone into captivity.



Figure 53: The god Bel

Bel is a title rather than the name of a Babylonian god; it means lord or master and is seen attached to several gods of the Babylonian religious practice. Belit refers to the female lady or mistress attached to the male counterpart. Bel is found in Greek as Belos and in Latin as Belus. In the Akkadian language the god is called Enlil but in the Babylonian translations he is called Bel. In Assyrian, he is Marduk but when translated into Babylonian, it is also Bel. In the Semitic languages, as Hebrew, it is called Baal and all mean lord or master.

Nebo, Nabu or Nebu are variation of the western Semitic god introduced by the Amorites shortly after 2000 BC and associated in other language translations as Marduk. Later, he becomes a principle god in Assyria and as scribe, the keeper of the Tablets of Destiny. Then, for a while, he becomes the supreme god in Babylonian upstart and empire as the deity of all wisdom. At his ascension to the throne upon his father's death, Nebuchadnezzar takes the name that incorporates Nebu at the beginning. The full name means O god Nabu, preserver and defender of my firstborn son. By this time, man has evolved the name Nabu to be the beloved and favored son of Marduk. Later, Babylon will associate his name with the planet Mercury and when translated into Greek, he will be Apollo and in Roman, Hermes.

In both cases, the gods of Babylon have bowed to the God of Israel. They cannot rescue Babylon from its fate foretold by the Lord and delivered at the hands of Cyrus. The Lord's people will go free but the Babylonians will take their place in the Persian captivity. The numerous images of Bel and Nebo are cast into the fields to rot.

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Near Prophecy

### **LORD'S ANSWER – THE LORD IS THE SAME**

**Isaiah 46:3** " Listen to Me, O house of Jacob, And all the remnant of the house of Israel, You who have been borne by Me from birth, And have been carried from the womb; <sup>4</sup> Even to your old age, I shall be the same, And even to your graying years I shall bear *you!* I have done *it*, and I shall carry *you*; And I shall bear *you*, and I shall deliver *you*. <sup>5</sup> " To whom would you liken Me, And make Me equal and compare Me, That we should be alike? <sup>6</sup> "Those who lavish gold from the purse and weigh silver on the scale, hire a goldsmith, and he makes it *into* a god; They bow down, indeed they worship it. <sup>7</sup> "They lift it upon the shoulder and carry it; They set it in its place and it stands *there*. It does not move from its place. Though one may cry to it, it cannot answer; It cannot deliver him from his distress. <sup>8</sup> " Remember this, and be assured; Recall it to mind, you transgressors. <sup>9</sup> "Remember the former things long past, For I am God, and there is no other; *I am* God, and there is no one like Me,

This passage is easy to understand. From the inception of the nation of Israel, the Lord has carefully protected her through Egypt, the judges, Saul, David, Solomon, the divided kingdom, the exile of the Northern Kingdom and during Hezekiah's reign, the thwarting of Assyria's desires. On into the future, the Lord warns of their forthcoming infatuation with idols and His need to remove the Southern Kingdom from the land for that transgression. Even then, the Lord will not forget them. He will provide for them. He has made a promise to the patriarchs of the nation and He will not break His promise. He has also given a warning while they were in the wilderness journey that idols can not save Israel from the transgression of worshipping a lifeless creation of man.

<b>The Majesty of the Lord</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• He will always be the same.</li><li>• He will deliver Israel.</li><li>• He is the only God.</li></ul>

Near Prophecy

### **LORD'S ANSWER – LORD'S PURPOSE ESTABLISHED**

**Isaiah 46:10** Declaring the end from the beginning And from ancient times things which have not been done, Saying, ' My purpose will be established, And I will accomplish all My good pleasure'; <sup>11</sup> Calling a bird of prey from the east, The man of My purpose from a far country. Truly I have spoken; truly I will bring it to pass. I have planned *it*, surely I will do it.

The Lord knew that Israel would fail in staying true to Him so he foretold their fate while they were in the wilderness and through other prophets prior to Isaiah. Now, He is proclaim the arrival of Cyrus who will be born 110 years after this prophecy, and fulfill it 64 years later. Because He has spoken, it will occur as all part of His plan.

<b>The Majesty of the Lord</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• He declares the end from the beginning.</li><li>• He proclaimed things in ancient times, which will still be accomplished.</li><li>• He will accomplish His good pleasure.</li><li>• He has planned to bring a man from the east, Cyrus, to fulfill His prophecy.</li></ul>

Far Prophecy

### **LORD'S ANSWER – RIGHTEOUSNESS NEAR**

**Isaiah 46:12** " Listen to Me, you stubborn-minded, Who are far from righteousness. <sup>13</sup> "I bring near My righteousness, it is not far off; And My salvation will not delay. And I will grant salvation in Zion, *And* My glory for Israel.

Adding to the miraculous prophecy of Cyrus' arrival, the Lord promises the arrival of Israel's salvation in the city of Zion. He is speaking of His arrival a Jesus to die for the salvation of Israel and anyone who will believe in Him. In God's timing it is near. In man's timing, it is 737 years away. But Israel is already stubborn-minded in Isaiah's day and she will become even more so by the time of the Lord's arrival to be baptized, minister, die and prove His

deity by resurrecting from the grave and ascending into heaven to take His place on the throne next to God the Father.

Passage	Summary	Time of Fulfillment
Isa. 46:12-13	<i>Far Prophecy</i> The Lord will offer salvation in Zion.	Fulfilled April of 30 AD

*Near Prophecy*

**BABYLON'S DESTRUCTION – A CALL TO MOURN**

**Isaiah 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 longer be called tender and delicate. <sup>2</sup> "Take the millstones and grind meal. Remove your veil, strip off the skirt, Uncover the leg, cross the rivers. <sup>3</sup> "Your nakedness will be uncovered, Your shame also will be exposed; I will take vengeance and will not spare a man." <sup>4</sup> Our Redeemer, the LORD of hosts is His name, The Holy One of Israel.

Bible students must remember that at the time of this prophecy, Babylon is still a weak section of the Assyrian empire. Yet, the Lord calls for the nation to sit in the dust, a sign of mourning. All the glory of the neo-Babylonian Empire with its magnificent King Nebuchadnezzar is still 104 years away. The Lord calls for Babylon to mourn because it has not king on the throne. On the night of Babylon's fall, the nation will be stripped naked of all the trappings of its weak government and not one man of the organization will survive. Daniel foretells the details of that night in chapter 5 of his prophecy.

*Near Prophecy*

**BABYLON'S DESTRUCTION – A QUEEN NO MORE**

**Isaiah 47:5** " Sit silently, and go into darkness, O daughter of the Chaldeans; For you will no more be called The queen of kingdoms. <sup>6</sup> "I was angry with My people, I profaned My heritage, And gave them into your hand. You did not show mercy to them, On the aged you made your yoke very heavy. <sup>7</sup> "Yet you said, 'I shall be a queen forever.' These things you did not consider, Nor remember the outcome of them.

In the first year of Babylon's power and overthrow of the Assyrian Empire, Nebuchadnezzar begins carrying the Southern Kingdom off into exile. Within the year, Nebuchadnezzar recognizes the worth of the exiles and elevates them to positions of power within his kingdom as recorded in Daniel 1 and 2. The Lord selects Nebuchadnezzar to do the work of the Lord to administer punishment on Israel because of her great sin. During the life of Nebuchadnezzar, the Lord grants with the distinction of being the greatest king ever to live up to that time and his empire is considered the queen of all kingdoms. After Nebuchadnezzar's death, the kingdom will stray from the principles of its first king while at the same time pompously declare that no other kingdom will ever take her place. After Nebuchadnezzar, the kings of Babylon will control the exiles with a heavy hand. Isaiah is prophesying them and later Ezekiel and Daniel will repeat and confirm her fate.

*Near Prophecy*

**BABYLON'S DESTRUCTION – A POMPOUS AND DELUDED NATION**

**Isaiah 47:8** "Now, then, hear this, you sensual one, Who dwells securely, Who says in your heart, ' I am, and there is no one besides me. I shall not sit as a widow, Nor shall I know loss of children.' <sup>9</sup> "But these two things shall come on you suddenly in one day: Loss of children and widowhood. They shall come on you in full measure In spite of your many sorceries, In spite of the great power of your spells. <sup>10</sup> "And you felt secure in your wickedness and said, ' No one sees me,' Your wisdom and your

knowledge, they have deluded you; For you have said in your heart, ' I am, and there is no one besides me.'

At the end of the ordained 70-year term of the Babylonian Empire, the young co-king, Belshazzar, truly believes that his kingdom cannot be toppled. He has no respect for the things of God nor the articles of His Temple placed in safe keeping by his grandfather, Nebuchadnezzar. Brazened, Belshazzar worships idols and participates in sensual activities in opposition to the Word of the Lord. Two things will happen to Babylon as a result Cyrus's overthrow of the kingdom. First, the governmental officials will die and make their parents childless. Remember, Belshazzar is the co-king of Babylon. His mother and father are on vacation at an oasis in the Arabian Peninsula. They will become childless that night as well as many of the other parents of the young co-kings cabinet of nobles. Second, the wives of the nobles will not be hurt that night; they will become widows as the Persians kill their husbands in the garden of the palace. Despite the warning of this passage and that of Daniel on the night, the Babylonian Empire is doomed.

*Near Prophecy*

**BABYLON'S DESTRUCTION – A SUDDEN DISASTER**

**Isaiah 47:11** "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. <sup>12</sup>"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. <sup>13</sup>"You are wearied with your many counsels; Let now the astrologers, Those who prophesy by the stars, Those who predict by the new moons, Stand up and save you from what will come upon you. <sup>14</sup>"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! <sup>15</sup>"So have those become to you with whom you have labored, Who have trafficked with you from your youth; Each has wandered in his own way. There is none to save you.

As Belshazzar gathers in the palace garden with his thousand nobles in September of 536 BC, he is completely unaware of the Persian danger just outside his walls. Darius is leading the army for Cyrus that night. Cyrus will arrive at the location a few days later. The first sign of trouble for Belshazzar is finger of the Lord as it writes on the wall. Belshazzar can read the words because they are in his native language but he does not understand their meaning; they are a play on words not common to his tongue. Daniel is called into to interpret the meaning. Daniel gives Belshazzar the warning that the co-king has been weighed in the balance and found wanting. For the warning, Belshazzar offers Daniel a gift and a new position in the kingdom. Daniel turns both down. None of Belshazzar's sorcerers, magicians, counselors or astrologers can give produce the true interpretation. It requires the blessing of the true God on the righteous faithful servant Daniel, now in his mid-eighties. That night, sometime between September 25 and 28, Darius enters the palace garden and easily conquers Babylon.

<b>Passage</b>	<b>Summary</b>	<b>Time of Fulfillment</b>
Isa. 47	<i>Near Prophecy</i> The destruction of the Babylonian Empire occurs suddenly, in one evening under the instruction of God's anointed Persian ruler, Cyrus.	Fulfilled in September of 536 BC