

SHRINKING GODS

Isaiah 46-47

INTRODUCTION:

Predicting the coming of Cyrus in advance of 150 years was amazing, (but) to include along with it the certain fall of Babylon along with her deities was beyond understanding.

How did the Prophet know this?

Where did he get his information?

Babylon was just a rising power, but he tells of her greatness, and concludes with her collapse.

Part of his promise to give Salvation to those that looked - 45:22.

45:23 "I have sworn" - strong words.

Every Knee.

" Tongue.

Attempt two chapters in this sermon.

46 - Fall of False Deities.

47 - Fall of Nation Babylon.

Outline:

- I. Shrinking Gods - V. 1-7.
- II. Sufficiency In True God. V. 8-13.
- III. Seduced Nation. V. 47:1-10.
- IV. Sorceries Are Stubble. V. 47:11-15.

I. Shrinking Gods. 46:1-7.

Verse 1 - Idols of Babylon not save her. Certain to fall. Enfeebled - unable to protect.

Bel - ideas: abbreviation of Baal, meaning Lord. Beel - Zebub - in Gospels called Prince of Demons.

Principle god of Kings - (Bel - Merodoch; Bel Shazzar; Bel - Lush; Bel - Kudur - Azur; Bel - ipni; and Bel - Zakir - Iskun.

Nebo - means "prophet or speaker" - deified Prophet. So Bel and Nebo thought of as their Jupiter and Mercury (Greek).

Heathen of Lycaonia thought (Barnabas to be Bel- or Jupiter, more silent, the Greek prince of demons, and Paul to be Nebo, or the Greek Mercury, as being chief speaker.

Nebo - God of learning - idols, thought to take the names of Kings - (Nebuchadnezzar; Nebuzaradan's.

Idea - These Gods too hard or much for God. God tells what will happen to these idols.

Upon Beast - idols torn from their temples or shrines and placed upon the backs of beasts of burden - carried off by the conqueror. God images, precious spoils.

A Burden - Heavy load in the wagons for horses and mules to pull.

Contrast - light hearted way in which some of the idols were carried during a festival.

Verse 2 - Stoop - Idols go into captivity. They can not help against the enemy - Their images laid upon a beast.

Mount - Temple of Bel - Plain 140', 200 years long, 140 broad - inscribed on the bricks. Nebuchadnezzar's name.

(Different) - When Ark of God was taken prisoner by the Philistines - proved to be a burden, not a beast, but to them!

Verse 3 - Contrast - Idols that fall with Jehovah.

Jacob - Founded - As (a nurse) tenderly carrying a child. Helpless weeping infant.

Never cast away as a nation. Shepherd his sheep. He will bear - He will carry. He will deliver. Moses. - Num. 11:12.

Verse 4 - How long this promise will last.

(Old age) - wilderness of life, sorrow, tears, opportunities lost, shameful wandering of the heart.

"Knoweth our frame, and remembereth that we are dust". Psa. 103:14. He will never leave or forsake.

If death cannot separate us from Christ, then the frailties of age, mental disease cannot.

Cyrus will bring desolation upon Babylon and her gods - aged saints, cared for.

I will be your friend in old age.

Long life promised. Ex. 20:12.

Old age is a time of reflections - infirmities, changes. Mr. Jay if I had heard the sermon preached by a young man, I should not have thought so much of it, but there appeared such depth in it, because it came from an old man, standing on the borders of the grave, it was like an echo of the past coming to me, to let me hear my God's faithfulness, that I might trust for the future." Spurgeon.

Testimony of God's faithfulness is the duty of the aged men and women.

God will not cast you off when your strength fails, or when your mind fails. The mental are not forgotten of our Lord. "I will hear them up".

Verse 5 - Doctrine taught by the Prophet - God Incomparable.

(Folly) of Idols - inability of idols.

Challenge - make any comparison!

Psa. 73:25.

Verse 6 - Lavish Gold - Spare no expense - Take gold out of their purses.

Note - shameful way some Christians worship God. They give nothing. Their religion costs them nothing.

Those with idols deprive family to give gold to goldsmith and he makes object of worship.

The Power of Gold! Was there ever a day when it was worshipped more than today?
Was then there ever a time when it had more power?

Gold used to endow colleges and colleges often produce infidelity.

Contrast a dollar bill with an idol - may buy pleasure - ease - comfort - but still life may be empty. Vanity of vanity.

Trouble in the church often - "Money and the love of it". Discord due to money.

New York Times - man commits suicide and leaves 15 million dollars behind him.
Can you compare God to silver or gold.

Verse 7 - Took great care of the idol - carrying about - put on a pedestal.

No power to move - motionless - until pushed. Cry - not hear or help. 45:20.

II. Sufficiency In True God - V. 8-13.

Verse 8 - Call To Reason

Remember - Those who waver between true religion and idolatry - remember you are a Transgressor. Do not be drawn by an idol - Transgressor to turn from God.
Senseless, helpless idol.

I John 4:1 "Try the spirits - because many false prophets are gone out into the world".

Eph. 6.

Verse 9 - Remember (Things of Old.)

History - Exo. 15:11 - Miracles of Egypt - Red Sea - Deliverances from Midian, Philistines, Sennacherib.

Strong evidence - history.

Verse 10 - Remember He Prophesied (His Counsel.)

Beginning to the end - whole History!

Foretell at the very beginning that which will be - "What had not been done".

Enoch prophesied - Deut. 32:20,29.

Gen. 3:15.

Gen. 16:12; 21:18.

My Counsel - Rather my purpose - My plan. Job. 23:13.

Gods pleasure will not be frustrated.

The plans of man depend upon the pleasure of God.

Shall stand - satisfaction these prophesies will be fulfilled.

Don't miss - God had determined to deliver his people from their bondage in Babylon and He was strong enough to carry out this purpose.

History tells us those divine promises were literally fulfilled.

Nothing exist without the pleasure of God.

Verse 11 - Remember God used Cyrus

Ravenous bird from the East.

Standard of Cyrus was a golden eagle on a spear.

Some think Cyrus had a nose like the beak of a hawk or eagle, others, the eagle standard.

He came from East.

I have spoken - purposed it - it will be done.

Verse 12 - Remember you cant Resist this Plan.

Stout - Hearted - Proud -

Acts 4:4. "That a notable
it spread no further, let us s

Unbelieving - murmuring.

Verse 13 - Whatever you think,

No compromise - will give s

Lord waits - you poor wande

This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it. Psalm 118:24.

One Saturday night a dignitary rushed into a Georgian town with important papers. William McKinley used to spend his winters in Thomasville, and on Sunday morning the call was received by Mr. McKinley who said, "These have to do with your candidacy for the presidency. You must approve them today so that I can leave to-night for Washington." Mr. McKinley replied that he intended to observe the Lord's Day in a proper manner adding, "and if I am to become president by forgetting that fact, then I'll not be president." Little wonder when this martyred president lay dying, and mind and memory were slipping away, that he was heard to sing softly beneath his breath

"Asleep in Jesus! Blessed sleep,
From which none ever wakes to weep."

III. Seduced Nation - 47:1-14.

Verse 1 - Sit in the Dust. Queen. Humiliation. There is no throne - without a Throne - ruling nations after Cyrus captured Babylon, she was never again to be capital of a Kingdom.

Throne transferred to Shushan.

Alexander intended to make Babylon his seat of Empire but providence defeated his design. He soon died.

Tender and delicate - referring to prostitution at banquets and religious rites. Called the golden city - revelry and feasting - drunkenness. Shameless licensed debanchery.

Have we interest in Babylon?

Rev. 14:8; 18:2.

Spiritual character as vs. Babylon material.

Babylon mother of Harlots.

Verse 2 - Discriptive of the abuse of woman.

Puts off her head dress. Uncovers her locks. Forced to wade in water to uncover her legs.

Verse 3 - Reduced to the condition of a slave (Israel). I will not meet Thee as a man. Not in the strength of a man - Power - Hos. 11:9.

Verse 4 - Some feel this verse is like a chorus breaking in with Praise, "Our Redeemer".

No mere man meets Thee, our redeemer, Lord of Hosts. Power both in Heaven and on earth. Holy one, has made a covenant with us, faithful to promise.

Verse 5 - Lady of Kingdoms - Babylon - Mistress of the world. 13:19. (Could not have been called this in Isaiah's time.)

Sit in Silence - Mourning - misery of darkness. End of her power, sit in the dust. Dignity and power gone. Liberty gone. Clothes gone as they had treated captives. V. 3.

Shrinking gods now shrinking nation! Prosperity gone!

Verse 6 - Gave them over to pollution. Ref. to the conquest of Judea by Nebuchadnezzar.

At first he had little mercy on youth or old age.

Historical knowledge tells us that some received good treatment and given positions in government. Daniel and the three children. Dan. 1:19, 2:48-49, 3:30.

Jehoiachin underwent imprisonment of 37 years. 2 K. 25:27.

Verse 7 "I shall be a lady forever". Queen - mistress of the world - expectation of Queen forever.

To Thy Heart - Human nature - Things continue as today, a lady forever, capital of nations. Human pride. God knows the heart. False security, boasting, luxury and spiritual blindness.

Verse 8 - Lovers of Pleasure - In no city were there so many incentives to licentiousness. Slave too.

Dwellest Carelessly - Imagined security. Safe out of danger - lulled to sleep - sayest in Thine heart - I am a lady and sit on the Queen's Throne, thought of being a widow or bereaved at loss of children, is thought impossible.

Verse 9 - Trust in (1) Wickedness
(2) Own Knowledge (2 Things).

One Day (1) Widow and (2) Loss of Children (2 Things.)

Suddenly - moment.

Enchantments - magic. A stone or object worn on the person. A charm to drive away demons.

Verse 10 - Trusted In Wickedness - Incantations - Work of secret magic. Sorceries - Enchantments.

None seeth me - Sinners not safe, though seeming secret.

Real Atheism - God is indifferent to our sins. Repeat Apostles creed and then act as though God does not see.

Gen. 16:13 "Thou God seest me".

Warning to wicked - restrain from evil - live a useful life.

Complete ruin and quick destruction.

IV. Sorceries As Stubble - 11-15.

Verse 11 - Evil will come and you will not be able to charm it away - remove - expiration - deliver from penalty of sin - get rid of by ritual or rites.

Verse 12 - Stand - Babylon may use all the resources of her magical art - works of the Devil - Unseen spirit - powers. Can all these powers aid - Let King Belshazzar cry aloud for his astrologers, chaldeans and soothsayers - see if they can profit.

Verse 13 - Weariness of Many Counselors

Man seeks advice in modern clubs. Opinions. Not consult conscience. Prov. 11:14.

Kind of counselors are important and seeking the will of God.

Enchantments

Sorceries

Astrologers - special attention to heavens.

Star Gazers - Observers of the stars.

Prognosticators - Almanac Makers - News of weather and facts of each month - monthly prognosticators. Mapping out.

All of us have our star gazers advisors. They interpret our destiny in terms of our heredity, culture and education.

Our Sorcerers encourage us to gamble on chance or advice the principle of luck. False foundations.

Man is not to depend upon luck, but trust God. Is this my best. Commit thy way unto him.

Dan. 5:8. All were nonpleased night of hand writing on the walls.

If they can foretell calamities, they should be able to save them. Witchcraft is a sin.

Verse 14 - As Stubble - Idols shrinking. Weakness. Not save from judgment, incapacity of resistance. "Not rescue their soul from the clutch of the flame". Mr. Cheyne. Like those caught in midst of prairie or jungle fire, they have no escape, flame on all sides. Figure of judgment.

Stubble - burn to a dead ash, not leaving a live coal or cinder. Nothing in Hell to give sinner one moment of comfort.

Proof is in the eating! False counselors not able to assist, not a coal left to warm by.

Examine your advisors! Have they succeeded where they promise that you can?

What kind of life is the person living who recommends?

Bacon: May give good admonition and be a bad example. Build with one hand and pull down with the other.

All of us get our share of the wrong advice.

Man taking (Mt. climb) - One follow main path. Second, take side by-paths shorter road. Third, I am authorized guide. I will go with you all the way. Jesus.

Verse 15 - Judgement not pass by those that labored with Babylon.

Merchants, foreign ones (Jer. 1:6) will flee to his own land. Each man shift for own safety. Rev. 18:15.

Fortune telling trade - best trade, not help.

Our day is dark and difficult.

Be occupied with the Lord Jesus.

At that time ye were . . . aliens . . . and strangers . . . But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. Ephesians 2:12, 13.

A Frenchman who lived in England a number of years, desired to become naturalized. He accordingly went to London, went through the necessary ceremony, and paid the customary fees. When he returned to his friends, one of them said, "Well, I suppose you are an Englishman now, but I don't see any difference." "Ah! but there is a difference," he said, "Yesterday Waterloo was a defeat, today it is a victory." So those who have changed, not their country but their nature, obtain victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

As strangers once to God we lived, filled with enmity and fear;
Our souls from death He has reprieved, love revealed and brought us near.
Quickened, raised, and in Him seated, we a full deliverance know;
Every foe has been defeated, every enemy laid low. G. W. Frazer.