

In our chapter today, God is predicting the demise of those who were going to level Jerusalem and abuse the people of Judah. It tells us something of God's ways of dealing with mankind. First, God expects those people who are called by His name to faithfully represent Him (1John 2:6). Secondly, if they don't, He warns them again and again of their idolatry and unwillingness to listen to Him. Thirdly, He sends calamity to get their attention when nothing else will cause them to turn. Finally, He holds accountable those He uses to judge His people. If the people He employs to discipline His children are brutal and use excessive force. He will punish them for their sins as well. God is ever the equal arbitrator of justice, regardless of the nationality of those on the receiving end of that justice. Reaping what we sow is a universal truism (Proverbs 22:8).

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. Isaiah 47:1 (ESV) Babylon is compared to a young, tender and delicate virgin. The idea conveys the picture of a pampered, self-indulgent life that the Babylonians were enjoying at the expense of the nations they had subjugated. The hanging gardens of Babylon were one of the wonders of the world paid for by oppression. The Lord is saying that instead of a throne to rule the nations and a luxurious lifestyle, the Babylonians would sit in the dust. They were going to be the subjugated. Their time of prosperity was about to end.

Instead of using foreigners for the hard labor that produced their luxury, it would be the Babylonians who had to do the menial tasks. *² Take the millstones and grind flour, put off your veil, strip off your robe, uncover your legs, pass through the rivers.* Isaiah 47:2 The book of Revelation uses Babylon as a foreshadow of the coming judgment on the world. This same sense of luxury is mentioned in John's prophecy. *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."* Revelation 18:2-3

The Babylon of Revelation does not represent Rome or the USA or any one city or country. It is the world in rebellion toward God, persecuting people of faith. The USA is increasingly becoming part of Babylon the Great. You may be aware that the USA is the most prolific exporter of pornography (James 1:21). We also export our entertainment that increasingly portrays Christians as the evil characters and immorality as a pleasure with no negative consequences. Hollywood is indoctrinating the world and getting rich doing it. (Isaiah 33:15).

Jonathan Cahn has written several books, *The Harbinger*, and the *Shemitah* about the soon coming judgment of God upon the United States. I don't know if his date

Commented [P1]: 1 John 2:6 (ESV)

⁶ whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.

Commented [P2]: Proverbs 22:8 (ESV)

⁸ Whoever sows injustice will reap calamity, and the rod of his fury will fail.

Commented [P3]: James 1:21 (ESV)

²¹ Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.

Commented [P4]: Isaiah 33:15 (ESV)

¹⁵ He who walks righteously and speaks uprightly, who despises the gain of oppressions, who shakes his hands, lest they hold a bribe, who stops his ears from hearing of bloodshed and shuts his eyes from looking on evil,

predictions are from God, but I do know his overall conclusions are Biblical. God will eventually judge this nation like the judgment upon Judah. Our nation was also founded upon godly principles. We have also turned to idols, the idols of sexual promiscuity, of luxury, the worship of wealth, the idol of leisure, just to name a few. Many churches openly promote things that God declares to be evil (Isaiah 48:1). Our legal system has been abandoning the rule of law and tyrannically punishing people because of their religious or political convictions, while those of their own persuasion can do the same things and be applauded.

I am apolitical. I am persuaded that while we still have the opportunity, if we still do, we should vote on the basis of godliness, against lawlessness, against condoning immorality. But if the direction of the nation does not turn, God will get our attention (Psalm 9:17). His hand of protection has already lifted to some extent. We are receiving so many warnings from God, warnings in weather, fires, financial, terrorism, judicial decisions; but the nation as a whole is ignoring the warnings. Our response will determine if we will experience what Babylon went through when this prophecy came to pass (Jeremiah 3:12).

A healthcare worker recently told me how difficult it was under Obamacare. They have to refer people to organizations known to profit from abortions. Now we know they also profit from selling the body parts of those unborn babies. This has nothing to do with politics. It's about how low our culture has sunk from God's standards of decency (Proverbs 28:13; Psalm 14:2-3).

³ Your nakedness shall be uncovered, and your disgrace shall be seen. I will take vengeance, and I will spare no one. Isaiah 47:3 God is just. He repays. It's a warning to turn and be saved. But if we will not turn, we will face His wrath (Isaiah 45:22). All Babylonians suffered the defeat and loss of their wealth. We saw an enormous loss of wealth in '08 when the market tanked due to corruption in politics and business. The naked truth about lying politicians and corrupt investment companies was laid bare. But what have we done in response? A few laws were passed, but that did not keep us from going right back to our old practices.

The crash of '08 was nothing like what will happen when we face our trillions of dollars of debt and 127 trillion in federal unfunded liabilities (more than twice the nation's total estimated assets). No one will be spared because the economy affects us all (Psalm 37:21; Proverbs 22:7). I'm not saying this to scare you but to prepare you. If Jesus is your highest priority, if you have the calm assurance that He will carry you through, you can lose every physical thing and be at peace.

⁴ Our Redeemer—the LORD of hosts is his name— is the Holy One of Israel. Isaiah 47:4 Isaiah keeps repeating this declaration. God was going to buy back His people out of captivity. He is Lord of the armies of heaven. He is the Holy One described throughout Israel's history. The fate of nations is not in the hands of Bel, or the USA, or the Supreme Court, or for that matter, it's not in any human hands. Our fate is in the hands

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¹ Hear this, O house of Jacob, who are called by the name of Israel, and who came from the waters of Judah, who swear by the name of the LORD and confess the God of Israel, but not in truth or right.

Commented [P6]: Psalm 9:17 (ESV)

¹⁷ The wicked shall return to Sheol, all the nations that forget God.

Commented [P7]: Psalm 9:17 (ESV)

¹⁷ The wicked shall return to Sheol, all the nations that forget God.

Commented [P8]: Proverbs 28:13 (ESV)

¹³ Whoever conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy.

Commented [P9]: Psalm 14:1-2 (ESV)

¹ The fool says in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, they do abominable deeds, there is none who does good.

² The LORD looks down from heaven on the children of man, to see if there are any who understand, who seek after God.

Commented [P10]: Isaiah 45:22 (ESV)

²² "Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other.

Commented [P11]: Psalm 37:21 (ESV)

²¹ The wicked borrows but does not pay back, but the righteous is generous and gives;

Commented [P12]: Psalm 37:21 (ESV)

²¹ The wicked borrows but does not pay back, but the righteous is generous and gives;

of Almighty God. If persecution will draw us to Him, then we will be persecuted. But He will also deal with those who persecute us.

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. Isaiah 47:6 God gave His reason for the coming judgment on Babylon. While God intended to judge His people through them, they abused their power. They went too far. They were merciless. There have been some real abuses of power against people of faith, but you can expect it to get much worse as the polarization deepens. The gray areas will disappear as we are forced to take sides.

There are those who love darkness and those who are in the light (Isaiah 5:20). The darkness is on the increase in our culture. It is becoming increasingly intolerant under the guise of tolerance. **It doesn't matter who is elected, unless the people turn to Christ and we quit executing the unborn and lauding perversion, unless our education system returns to education and abandons indoctrination and being the arbitrator of "correct thinking," we are going to end up with the state religion of secularism** (Habakkuk 1:4). Then we will see what merciless looks like. But in time we will also see God's judgment upon it.

⁷ You said, "I shall be mistress forever," so that you did not lay these things to heart or remember their end. Isaiah 47:7 That was Babylon, secure behind their huge impenetrable walls. But nothing can stop the justice of God. Is the attitude of America any different? Go back and listen to the speeches after 9/11. The leaders were unrepentant and arrogant. We did not lay these things to heart or remember their end. Our leaders declared again and again in various ways and through both parties, "We will be a mistress forever!" (Proverbs 21:24)

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": Isaiah 47:8 This is an arrogant disregard for God and the rest of the world. It's an underserved superiority that will not listen to those with a different persuasion, especially on the subject of what is moral. Anything that would interrupt that in which they find pleasure is labeled and slandered (Psalm 3:1-2).

But there is an eventual price to pay. *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.* Isaiah 47:9 Fake spirituality that justifies sin will not spare people from God's judgments. False gods will fail them. Eastern mysticism will not calm or protect them (Jeremiah 2:11).

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." Isaiah 47:10 Compromise the conscience in one area and it becomes easier to do so in another. Recently a web site that promoted adulterous relationships

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²⁰ Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter!

Commented [P14]: Habakkuk 1:4 (ESV)

⁴ So the law is paralyzed, and justice never goes forth. For the wicked surround the righteous; so justice goes forth perverted.

Commented [P15]: Proverbs 21:24 (NIV)

²⁴ The proud and arrogant man--"Mocker" is his name; he behaves with overweening pride.

Commented [P16]: Psalm 3:1-2 (NIV)

¹ O LORD, how many are my foes! How many rise up against me!

² Many are saying of me, "God will not deliver him." Selah

Commented [P17]: Jeremiah 2:11 (ESV)

¹¹ Has a nation changed its gods, even though they are no gods? But my people have changed their glory for that which does not profit.

was hacked and the names of the clients who thought “no one sees me” was made public. It was reported that only two zip codes in the entire U.S. were not included in the list of inquiries. The Scriptures warn us that our sin will be exposed eventually (Numbers 32:23). We think no one sees, but God sees. He will make it known because He loves you and doesn’t want to see that sin destroy you (Deuteronomy 10:13). How many people have we seen in the news who thought they were so smart they could fool everyone? They really do have the attitude now repeated again in this passage, “It’s all about 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 labored from your youth; perhaps you may be able to succeed; perhaps you may inspire terror. Isaiah 47:11-12 God is warning them of what will come to pass. They have sown evil and they will reap it (Hosea 8:7). They won’t see it coming. If they really believe what they proclaim, then stick with it. If you think the chants will get you through, then chant on. People need to experience the failure of what they put their hope in to realize its ineffectiveness to deliver (Proverbs 6:15).

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. Isaiah 47:13 We have so many fortune tellers, mystics, and prognosticators (Isaiah 8:19). Some people can’t get enough of them. Babylon had the fortune tellers and astrologers too. God mocks them, for they have only worn out their adherents with all their mumbo jumbo. When God brings His judgments, will you turn to them then? They are the luxury of an affluent society because they demand exorbitant fees.

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 labored, who have done business with you from your youth; they wander about, each in his own direction; there is no one to save you. Isaiah 47:14-15 Here is God’s estimation of their substance. They are like stubble. They can’t save themselves from the fire. And the fire that consumes them doesn’t produce enough heat to help anyone else. They are of no substance (Job 21:18). In the end these people who were looked to for guidance and trusted to tell the secrets of heaven will be just as desperate and lost as everyone else. Why? Because they are just as powerless as what they worship (Psalm 115:8).

In view of this cycle of nations that we have seen through Isaiah and history, the USA stands at a precipice. We went through revivals. We experienced prosperity. We have turned from God and are calling light darkness and darkness light (John 3:19). With the Supreme Court’s arrogant decision to redefine marriage, we will face persecution. The dissenting judges warned of that. We’ve already seen it even before the decision.

Commented [P18]: Numbers 32:23 (ESV)

²³ But if you will not do so, behold, you have sinned against the LORD, and be sure your sin will find you out.

Commented [P19]: Deuteronomy 10:13 (ESV)

¹³ and to keep the commandments and statutes of the LORD, which I am commanding you today for your good?

Commented [P20]: Hosea 8:7 (ESV)

⁷ For they sow the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind. The standing grain has no heads; it shall yield no flour; if it were to yield, strangers would devour it.

Commented [P21]: Proverbs 6:15 (ESV)

¹⁵ therefore calamity will come upon him suddenly; in a moment he will be broken beyond healing.

Commented [P22]: Isaiah 8:19 (ESV)

¹⁹ And when they say to you, “Inquire of the mediums and the necromancers who chirp and mutter,” should not a people inquire of their God? Should they inquire of the dead on behalf of the living?

Commented [P23]: Job 21:18 (ESV)

¹⁸ That they are like straw before the wind, and like chaff that the storm carries away?

Commented [P24]: Psalm 115:8 (ESV)

⁸ Those who make them become like them; so do all who trust in them.

Commented [P25]: John 3:19 (ESV)

¹⁹ And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil.

In the state of Washington, Barronelle is a florist who had a customer named Rob. She considered him a friend, did many arrangements for him, but when he asked her to be the florist for his wedding with a man, she had to gently and lovingly explain her Christian convictions about the sanctity of marriage. He hugged her and told her he understood. He had no problem finding another florist. His partner however was irate and posted the situation on Facebook. The new attorney general of the state took action. It was the place of the couple or the human rights commission to file a lawsuit, but the attorney general had an axe to grind and in a liberal state it advanced his political stature. Barronelle received lots of hate mail and calls. But then she started receiving support for her stand from believers around the world. The case is still in the legal system.

A Christian photographer in New Mexico, Elaine Huguenin, received an inquiry from a lesbian couple. She politely replied that they only did traditional marriages and gave her referrals to other photographers who would help. Two months later, after the lesbian couple had easily found another photographer, they asked again if she was refusing to shoot a same-gender wedding. She again politely thanked them for asking but said that was correct. Next she got a letter from the human rights commission of New Mexico. She lost in lower and state court and was ordered to pay \$7000 in legal fees. The US Supreme Court refused to hear the case. Elaine lost her livelihood for holding to her religious convictions.

I could give you case after case of Christians who politely refused to participate in something that violated their conscience and religious convictions, something that those who tout tolerance are intolerant of (Psalm 120:7). Some have lost their livelihood, while others have had to endure huge legal expenses and time consuming court cases. Are we losing the very reason for which our nation was founded?

Let me be very clear, because parts of this sermon will be taken out of context and used against us. We love everyone (Luke 6:27). Everyone is made in the image of God. Christians stand for equal rights of all. But we also stand for the freedom of religion that is now overruled by the so called human rights. It is rights for groups with special preferences. I can't ask some people to celebrate my religious convictions, but they will try to force me to celebrate theirs. I believe they are free to live as they please, though I believe there are natural and spiritual consequences, just as there are for abortions and every other sin (Romans 2:6-9). I am not advocating policing bedrooms as some absurdly claim to be the Christian agenda. I am simply saying that we live in a land where we were once free to hold our religious convictions as long as they did no harm to others. Having to find a different florist or caterer is not harmful. If the business was already booked, you would have to do so anyway. Live how you want to live according to what you think is right. Let Christians do the same.

Does tolerance only work in one direction? Some would say it is to compensate for past discrimination. How are these Christians that are deprived of their livelihood compensated for the persecution of their religious beliefs? Christians are the most persecuted people on the planet, martyred at a rate of over 150,000 a year. Of course

Commented [P26]: Psalm 120:7 (ESV)

⁷ I am for peace, but when I speak, they are for war!

Commented [P27]: Luke 6:27 (ESV)

²⁷ "But I say to you who hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you,

Commented [P28]: Romans 2:6-9 (ESV)

⁶ He will render to each one according to his works:
⁷ to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life;
⁸ but for those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and fury.
⁹ There will be tribulation and distress for every human being who does evil, the Jew first and also the Greek,

there are hateful people who claim to be Christians. There are hateful gays who don't represent their community as well. True Christians are commanded to love their neighbor as themselves (Matthew 22:39), and real love will speak the truth (Ephesians 4:15).

Be prepared to answer when asked of the hope that lies in you (1Peter 3:15). We need to know how to respond when confronted, because we will be confronted. Answer with love, honesty, gentleness, and kindness (2 Timothy 2:25). Then, by the grace of God, be prepared to face the wrath of an intolerant society.

Questions

- 1 Review the pattern of God's dealing with nations.
- 2 Describe the before and after of Babylon in verses 1 through 3.
- 3 What does it have in common with Babylon in Revelation 18?
- 4 What does America have in common with Babylon of Revelation 18?
- 5 What could save us from this course?
- 6 What happens to those who think no one sees?
- 7 To what does God liken the mystics?
- 8 Review the cases of persecution.
- 9 What do Christians believe about our fellow human beings?
- 10 How should we answer those who confront us about our faith?

Commented [P29]: Matthew 22:39 (ESV)

³⁹ And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.

Commented [P30]: Ephesians 4:15 (ESV)

¹⁵ Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ,

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Commented [P32]: 1 Peter 3:15 (ESV)

¹⁵ but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect,

Commented [P33]: 2 Timothy 2:25 (ESV)

²⁵ correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth,