
Isaiah 47

As a number of exegetes point out, this is a taunt-song celebrating the future fall of arrogant and prideful Babylon. Govett has: “This is another of the sentences against Babylon, both the literal and the mystic.” Indeed, if we turn to Revelation (e.g., Revelation 2:23; 9:21; 13:2; 16:10; 17:15-16, 18; 18:4, 7-8, 15, 20, 22-23; 19:2—Gill), we see that several of our verses in ISAIAH are quoted there regarding the end of times. While the conquest by Cyrus was sudden, Keith suggests that: “[The prophecy about the collapse of Babylon] must therefore be understood of her gradual downfall, which was not effected until after repeated shocks, of which the attack of Cyrus was the first. It is a general prophecy of her fate.” Faussett explains: “The seat of empire was transferred [after the fall] to Shushan. Alexander intended to have made Babylon his seat of empire, but Providence defeated his design. He soon died; and Seleucia, being built near, robbed it of its inhabitants, and even of its name, which was applied to Seleucia.” Ironside says: “Babylon, by her sorceries, her enchantments, is said to have bewitched the nations. Nation after nation followed her in the practice of idolatry. She was called, ‘The Lady of Kingdoms.’” Babylon, today, stands for the antithesis of Zion. Even though Babylon has ceased to exist as a nation, mystical Babylon is given as a representation of Satan’s dominions. Israel is being gathered from mystical Babylon—the world—and brought into Zion. Baltzer says of ISAIAH 47, that we will find a “correspondence between Babylon’s deposition here and Zion’s installation in ISAIAH 51.” In ISAIAH 47 we learn much about false thinking and false reasoning typical of sinful behavior, and is rich with allusions to the fall of the adversary.

vv. 1-6. Babylon, being personified as a pampered young woman, is commanded to descend from her throne of opulence and sit on the bare ground. Before she was served; now she has the most menial of jobs, working the mill to grind cereal grains into flour. Babylon is depicted as having to remove her royal garments and show herself in public, fully humiliated. While before she might have crossed rivers in a wagon so that her delicate feet and legs may not have gotten bruised on the stones and gotten wet from the water, now she has to wade through on foot. Babylon’s punishment would come, in part, because she not only punished the children of Israel, but took joy in doing so. While she will be punished with exactness, with no one to rescue, the Holy One of Israel is both able and willing to redeem those who turn to Him.

1 ¶ COME down, and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon, sit on the ground: [there is] no throne, O daughter of the Chaldeans: for thou shalt no more be called tender and delicate.

COME down, and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon, sit on the ground: The Targum (Ⓢ) has, “Descend and sit on the dust, O kingdom of the congregation of Babylon; sit on the ground.” The LXX (Ⓣ) reads, “Come down, sit on the ground, Virgin daughter of Babylon!” The Masoretic text (Ⓜ) has *sit*

on [the] ground, שְׁבִי-לְאָרֶץ, while the DSS 1QIsa^a (Ⓚ) makes the explicit, *sit on the ground*, שְׁבִי עַל הָאָרֶץ. Sit on the dust as well as sit on the ground are synonymous ways of saying that Babylon is captive. Abarbanel, in Slotki/Rosenberg suggests that this sitting on the ground is not just mourning, but also humiliation. Young wonders: “Whether the word *dust* bears the connotation *grave*, signifying the full death of the once haughty Babylon, is difficult to say.” Because of the strong double meanings between literal and mystic Babylon, “For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places” (Ephesians 6:12). We might well say that the *second death* is here also partly intended. ¶ Whitehouse has: “The genitive is what is called an appositional genitive, the city or nation being personified (cf. ISAIAH 1:8).” Henderson says: “The Orientals are accustomed to speak of cities or empires that have never been conquered, as *virgins* . . . By *daughter* is meant the people or inhabitants” (emphasis added). Also see Rabbi Rosenberg, who leaning on Ibn Ezra and Redak, says: “Just as a virgin was never possessed by a man, so had Babylon never been conquered.” Alexander rejects this view and suggests it is a mental picture given: “Whether that power [i.e., the city or nation of Babylon] is described as a virgin because hitherto unconquered, is much more doubtful, as this explanation seems to mar the simplicity of the description by confounding the sign with the thing

signified¹.” So also Rawlinson who says: “‘Virgin’ does not mean ‘unconquered;’ for Babylon had been taken by the Assyrians some half-dozen times (‘Ancient Monarchies,’ 2:58, 130, 149, 157, 164, 175, etc.)” Kay, however, suggests: “Babylon boasted (Herodotus 1:191) that she had never been captured.” ¶ [There is] no throne, O daughter of the Chaldeans: for thou shalt no more be called tender and delicate. The Targum (Ⓣ) adds, “of glory” after *throne*. The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “Sit on the ground, daughter of the Chaldeans! for thou shalt no more be called tender and delicate!” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓣ) has, for the first half, “There is no throne for the daughter of the Chaldeans.” Benson says: “Imperial power is taken from thee, and translated to the Persians.” Skinner explains: “The parallel phrase *daughter of the Chaldeans* . . . describes Babylon as the city of (possessed by) the Chaldeans, the reigning dynasty.” The expression *tender and delicate*, רַפָּה וְעֲנִיָּה, as a number of exegetes point out, also appears in the *Rain in Due Season* chapters: *the tender among thee and the delicate* (Deuteronomy 28:56), רַפָּה בְּךָ וְהָעֲנִיָּה. For instance, compare with Leeser, “The most tender among thee, and the most delicate.” ¶ I would like to say a few words about this change in status. Members of The Church of Jesus Christ may one day serve as Bishops or Stake Presidents or Seventies, with great amounts of responsibility over a large number of people. And when released they go on to serve in other callings where they may command little notice or attention. This is the normal way in the Lord’s Church, for members learn they are serving the Lord when they serve each other. Position and rank do not matter to the true disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ. In the world, things are not quite like that. As a young man in Chile, I grew up in a home with four maids and a gardener. As a youth I never knew how to even saddle my own horse. For a time we had a special lady who came in to cut our fingernails and toenails. This all changed when life took me to California. I not only learned to saddle my own horse, but to saddle horses for others. I worked at a country club in which part of my duties were to clean the toilets. I noticed I was not even a person to be greeted. I also cleaned horse stables. One of my favorite movies of all time was *The Last Emperor*. In it we observe the life of Aisin-Gioro Pu Yi, the last emperor of China. In his youth he was sheltered and pampered, as he grew up in the palaces of the Forbidden City. Political revolt brought a huge change to his life and little by little, Pu Yi begins to understand and eventually embrace the change. At the end of his life he serves others as a gardener at the Botanical Gardens of Peking. He does so with great joy. Because I have been exposed to the

lives of the rich and powerful first hand, and I have seen how servants are sometimes considered less than human, this movie touched me very much. The more arrogant we have become, the greater the pain of the fall. Being humbled, then, is one of the greatest gifts that God can give us. Happy are those, like China’s last emperor, who learned this lesson here on earth. It is my *personal opinion*, that when we pass the veil from this mortality into the spirit world, we will begin to experience how others were affected by us. We will need to humble ourselves to see and understand the pain we have caused others. I believe that few things can be more painful than to really comprehend how we have hurt others. One final thought here, is that Christ Jesus willingly left His divine position as the son of God to become the lowliest servant² on this earth. Though Christ had the command of legions, He never did anything that would not meet the approval of His Father.

2 Take the millstones, and grind meal: uncover thy locks, make bare the leg, uncover the thigh, pass over the rivers.

Take the millstones, and grind meal: The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “Receive this calamity and go into servitude; put away the glory of thy kingdom, thy princes are overthrown.” The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “Take a millstone and grind corn.” The Peshitta (Ⓢ) also has “grind flour.” Wade explains: “The millstone here meant consisted of two circular stones, the lower having in its upper surface a metal pin fixed, round which the upper stone was made to revolve by a handle.” Barnes describes them as: “The mills which were there commonly used, and which are also extensively used to this day, consisted of two stones, of which the lower one was convex on the upper side, and the upper one was concave on the lower side, so that they fitted into each other. The hole for receiving the grain was in the centre of the upper stone, and in the process of grinding the lower one was fixed, and the upper one was turned round, usually by two women (see Matthew 24:41), with considerable velocity by means of a handle. Jenour has: “The business of grinding corn among the Jews was performed by two women; one sat on the ground and turned the stone, whilst the other supplied the corn [i.e., rather, the wheat or other cereal as corn as we know it today is native to the American continents—GB]. The same method is practiced in the east to this day. It was, however, the employment only of the lowest order of females (see Exodus 11:5)³.” Cowles

¹ See Alexander’s comments under ISAIAH 47:8.

² I love to read *The Ascension of Isaiah* in the *Pseudepigrapha*.

³ “And all the firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die, from the first born of Pharaoh that sitteth upon his throne, even unto the firstborn of

has: “[Babylon’s] debasement is compared to the change from being a queen to being an abject slave. As in ISAIAH 47:1, so here the prediction of this change takes the form of command. Go, virgin daughter, strip off every badge of royalty; put on the wretched covering of the female slave and do her menial service.—‘Take the mill-stones,’ *i.e.*, of the small hand-mill—a necessity in every oriental family, with which the grinding for each day’s use was done every morning, and always done by the lowest class of servants . . . always of the female sex.” ¶ *Uncover thy locks, make bare the leg, uncover the thigh, pass over the rivers.* The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “The people of thy armies are scattered, they have vanished away like waters of the river.” The LXX (Ⓟ) reads, “Doff thy veil; uncover thy grey locks. Make bare thy leg: wade through rivers.” The Peshitta (Ⓢ) has something like, “Remove your veil, cut your white hair, uncover your legs and ford the rivers.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓣ) has, “Uncover thy shame, strip thy shoulder, make bare thy legs, pass over the rivers.” LITV renders it: “Take millstones and grind meal; uncover your veil; strip off the skirt; uncover the leg; pass over rivers”; and YLT has: “Take millstones, and grind flour, Remove thy veil, draw up the skirt, Uncover the leg, pass over the floods.” At any rate, it is likely either the drawing up or removal of the *skirt* to cross the river, and thus expose the leg. Whether the word שָׁבֵל be translated as *skirt* (or some clothing, AMP, ASV, HCSB, JPS, NASB, LDS Reina Valera 2009⁴ or other versions; or in a number of other translations, *shoe*), or as leg (AV), it is given as singular in the Masoretic text (א), שָׁבֵל, and plural in the IQIsa^a, שוליים, *your skirts*. Cowles says, “‘Uncover thy locks,’ is precisely, *strip off thy veil* . . . The next phrase should have been translated, ‘Strip off

the maidservant that is behind the mill; and all the firstborn of beasts” (Exodus 11:5). The maidservant who is *behind the mill* is given as the lowest of people, in contrast to the Pharaoh. BBE renders it: “And death will come to every mother’s first male child in all the land of Egypt, from the child of Pharaoh on his seat of power, to the child of the *servant-girl crushing the grain*; and the first births of all the cattle” (emphasis added).

⁴ The Spanish LDS version, Reina Valera 2009, did not set out to give the literal meaning of the Hebrew Bible, but rather, to generally follow the text of the 1909 Reina Valera with as few changes as possible. Here is an example, however, of where the translators opted to follow the prevailing view of modern translations, rather than the KJV or the Reina Valera 1960 or the Reina Valera 1909. While the LDS edition is a remarkable and beautiful translation, especially given the speed with which it was accomplished, Church members should not think that it is better than the KJV or that it automatically renders better translations than other versions in every instance. The greatest contribution of the LDS edition, in my mind, was to have the priceless JST notes and LDS chapter headings. Contrary to the KJV, Reina Valera 1960 was copyrighted material. In this particular case, the LDS RV2009 translation, *levanta la falda*, coincides best with the YLT, *draw up the skirt*, which I believe is an excellent rendering. Literally, *levanta la falda* means *lift up the skirt*.

thy flowing robes,’ a dress with a long flowing train—another badge of the free and the honored class as opposed to the enslaved . . . Her exposure of person would indicate and measure her debasement, the utter change of the condition from queenly dignity to abject servility.” ¶ Luther says: “As a servant you will have neither ship nor wagon. You will have to wade.” Jenour has: “To add to her degradation and misery, this great princess, who, to use the words of Moses, ‘would not have adventured to set her sole of her foot upon the ground for delicateness and tenderness,’ is represented as reduced to the necessity of exposing her tender and delicate limbs to the inclemency of the weather and the rude gaze of every idle spectator; and as being compelled, in this wretched condition, to walk barefoot upon the rough ground, and to wade a captive through rivers—none but the lowest class of females in eastern countries ever go uncovered or travel on foot; those who cannot afford a carriage ride on bullocks, and completely covered from head to foot with a long shawl. It is impossible to imagine anything more expressive than this imagery; and whoever contrasts the grandeur of ancient Babylon with her present desolate condition, cannot but be struck with the awful manner in which this figurative prediction has been accomplished.” Orelli has: “Whereas women of position only go out veiled, in the case of a slave this excessive delicacy of manner, of course, ceases. In the same way she cannot carry a long train, but in going about her work must tuck up her dress and expose herself to a degree which was thought unseemly.” Clarke says: “This is repeatedly seen in Bengal, where there are few bridges, and both sexes, having neither shoes or stockings, truss up their loose garments, and walk across, where the waters are not deep. In the *deeper* water they are obliged to truss *very* high, to which there seems a reference in ISAIAH 47:3: *thy nakedness shall be uncovered*.” Faussett has: “. . . in the East the head is the seat of female modesty; the *face* of a woman is seldom, the whole *head* almost never, seen bare.”

3 Thy nakedness shall be uncovered, yea, thy shame shall be seen: I will take vengeance, and I will not meet [thee as] a man.

Thy nakedness shall be uncovered, yea, thy shame shall be seen: The LXX (Ⓟ) reads, “Thy shame shall be exposed; thy nakedness shall be seen.” As mentioned above, by having to cross the rivers with girded clothing, and by not being to wear the clothing of the rich and powerful. ¶ *I will take vengeance, and I will not meet [thee as] a man.* The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “I will take full vengeance on thee and I will change thy judgment from the children of men.” The LXX (Ⓟ)

reads, “This vengeance I will take on thy account and no more deliver thee up to men.” The Douay-Rheims (V) has, “I will take vengeance, and no man shall resist me.” Birks has: “*Man* (Adam, אָדָם) placed last, has its full emphatic contrast with God, and its proper meaning as the kind or race, not a class or individual. The ellipsis of the pronoun is common with the previous clause, and adds to the force, when the object is plain. The absence of the particle of comparison makes the thought still more expressive. ‘It is not man thou wilt meet, when I meet thee. Thou shalt suffer no common, or merely human retribution.’” ¶ Exegetes and translators render this clause differently, without the ellipsis given by the AV. For instance, we have: “I will take vengeance, and will spare no man” (ASV); “I will take vengeance, and will let no man intercede” (JPS); and YLT, which eliminates the ellipsis entirely: “Vengeance I take, and I meet not a man.” Wordsworth explains that there simply will be no man to resist: “None of the men of this once powerful and populous city, and of its countless allies and subjects will dare to resist Me (as Vulgate renders it).” Similarly, Alexander says: “The true sense is that expressed by Rosenmüller, *I shall encounter no man*, i.e., no man will be able to resist me. This simple explanation is at the same time one of the most ancient, as we find it distinctly expressed by Symmachus (οὐκ ἀντιστήσεται μοι ἄνθρωπος) and in the Vulgate (*non resistet mihi homo*).”

4 [As for] our redeemer, the LORD of hosts [is] his name, the Holy One of Israel.

The LXX (G) reads, “Thy deliverer is the Lord of Hosts, his name is the Holy One of Israel.” Cowles illustrates an important contrast: “. . . retributive judgment on Babylon was mercy and salvation to Zion. It was for the sake of saving Zion and punishing Babylon for her cruel oppression of God’s people that these terrible judgments came upon her.” Alexander suggests: “The fall of Babylon is brought into connection and subordination to the proof of God’s supremacy as shewn in the protection and salvation of his people.” Israel can be assured and call the Lord, our *Goel* (Cheyne), that is, *our redeemer*: גֹּאֲלֵנוּ. No one else can redeem but Jesus Christ. Babylon would not find salvation from her gods and superstitions, but those who lean upon the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, would. This important contrast is drawn out in the second half of ISAIAH 47.

5 Sit thou silent, and get thee into darkness, O daughter of the Chaldeans:

for thou shalt no more be called, The lady of kingdoms.

Sit thou silent, and get thee into darkness, O daughter of the Chaldeans: The Targum (C) has, for the last clause, “O glory (the Royal Polyglot omits קָדוֹשׁ, ‘glory’) of the kingdom of the Chaldeans.” The LXX (G) reads, “Sit in compunction: enter into darkness, daughter of the Chaldeans!” Henderson has: “Silence and darkness characterize a state of imprisonment. Captives were usually shut up in dark dungeons, far removed from the noisy scenes of life.” Gill says: “Here the speech is directed again to Babylon, which used to be a place of noise and hurry, as well as famous and much talked of all the world over.” Darkness is the opposite of the light of God: “And that which doth not edify is not of God, and is darkness. That which is of God is light; and he that receiveth light, and continueth in God, receiveth more light; and that light groweth brighter and brighter until the perfect day” (D&C 50:23-24). Finally, the extreme of darkness, is *outer darkness*. ¶ Calvin says: “When he bids her ‘sit’ and be ‘silent,’ it is an indication of shame or disgrace. Yet this silence may be contrasted with her former condition, while she reigned; for at that time not only did she speak loudly and authoritatively, but she cried with a loud voice, and by her commands terrified the whole of the East.” The time will come, also, when Satan will no longer have power over men, but will likewise be silenced. ¶ *For thou shalt no more be called, The lady of kingdoms*. The Targum (C) has, instead of *lady*, “mighty one.” The LXX (G) reads, “Thou shalt no more be called the strength of a kingdom.” Likewise, instead of *lady*, the Peshitta (S) has *mightiest* (Lamsa) / *strength* (BPE). Birks has: “Babylon, in the time of her disgrace, will seek to hide herself from the eyes of the world. A veil of oblivion must fall over the city, once so proud and haughty.” In ISAIAH 14:13-15 we read of the adversary: “For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit.”

6 I was wroth with my people, I have polluted mine inheritance, and given them into thine hand: thou didst shew them no mercy; upon the ancient hast thou very heavily laid thy yoke.

I was wroth with my people, I have polluted mine inheritance, and given them into thine hand: The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “I was angry with my people: thou didst pollute my heritage, I delivered them into thy hand.” Instead of *I have polluted*, the Peshitta (Ⓢ) has *for they have polluted*. The Douay-Rheims (Ⓣ) has *angry* instead of its synonym, *wroth*. The Masoretic text (Ⓜ) has *I have polluted my inheritance*, חָלַלְתִּי נַחֲלָתִי, while the DSS 1QIsa^a (Ⓟ) has *and I have polluted my inheritance*, וְחָלַלְתִּי נַחֲלָתִי. Other synonyms for polluted include *defiled* (LITV), *desecrated* (CJB), and *profaned* (ESV). Wade explains: “To *profane* is to ‘make common,’ the opposite of *sanctify* (i.e. set apart). The Lord had set apart Israel for Himself, and so long as it was faithful to its obligations, it was safe from aggression (cf. Jeremiah 2:3). But when the nation disregarded its duties, its privileges were cancelled and the land became ‘profane,’ at the mercy of any assailant (cf. Jeremiah 50:7; 12:7-8).” Vtringa (in Benson) has: “The metaphor in this verse is taken from a father, who, being angry with his children, delivers them up to chastisement; but his anger soon subsiding, and his affection reviving, he turns his indignation against those who had so executed his commands, as to punish immoderately and severely.” Calvin observes: “When he says that he ‘was angry,’ and that this was the reason why he ‘profaned his heritage,’ let us not imagine that he had changed his purpose, and was offended so far as to cast away the care of his people and the remembrance of his covenant. This is evident both from the event itself and from his deigning still to call them ‘his people’⁵ . . . that they who were the descendants of Abraham may be accounted the people of God, though very few of them actually belonged to him, and almost all boasted of an empty title . . . And yet, in the midst of anger, the Lord remembers his mercy, and mitigates the strokes by which he punishes his people, and at length even inflicts punishment on those by whom his people have been cruelly treated . . . It ought also to be carefully observed that no one should abuse victory so as to be cruel to captives, which we know is often done; for men, when they see that they are stronger, lay aside all humanity, and are changed into wild beasts, and spare neither age nor sex, and altogether forget their condition. After having abused their power, they shall not at length pass unpunished; for ‘judgment without mercy shall be experienced by those who shewed no mercy’ (James 2:13).” ¶ *Thou didst shew them no mercy; upon the ancient hast thou very heavily laid thy yoke.* The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “And thou didst shew them no mercy. The yoke of the aged thou madest very

heavy.” Lowth has: “God charges the Babylonians, though employed by himself to chastise his people, with cruelty in regard to them. They exceeded the bounds of justice and humanity in oppressing and destroying them; and though they were really executing the righteous decree of God, yet, as far as it regarded themselves, they were only indulging their own ambition and violence.” Birks writes: “The Chaldeans had no compassion (2Chronicles 36:17⁶). But now the judgment on Israel is to be reversed, and the oppressions of Babylon are to return on her own head.” So also Jenour: “There is a similar declaration to this in Zechariah 1:14-15. ‘Thus saith the Lord of hosts; I am jealous for Jerusalem, and for Sion with a great jealousy. And I am very sore displeased with the heathen that are at ease: for I was but a little displeased, and they helped forward the affliction.’ By comparing these two passages together the meaning of this in our prophet becomes evident. Jehovah made use of the Babylonians as instruments to punish his disobedient people. But they treated them with greater harshness and cruelty than he required; and this . . . because [the Babylonians] hated and despised them.” Throughout the Book of Lamentations we see the horrors of how the conquered peoples were treated, having to buy even their water, having their women raped, having their ancients or elderly abused (e.g., Lamentations 4:16; 5:12). This is a fulfillment of the *Rain in Due Season* prophecy: “Because thou servedst not the LORD thy God with joyfulness, and with gladness of heart, for the abundance of all things; Therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies which the LORD shall send against thee, in hunger, and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in want of all things: and he shall put a yoke of iron upon thy neck, until he have destroyed thee. The LORD shall bring a nation against thee from far, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flieth; a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand; A nation of fierce countenance, which shall not regard the person of the old, nor shew favour to the young” (Deuteronomy 28:47-50). Barnes says: ¶ *Laid the yoke*] The yoke in the Bible is an emblem of slavery or bondage, Leviticus 26:13; Deuteronomy 28:48 [Note that both of these scriptures come from the *Rain in Dues Season* chapters, but here applied to Babylon—GB]; of afflictions and crosses Lamentations 3:27; of punishment for sin Lamentations 1:14; of God’s commandments Matthew 11:29-30. Here it refers to the bondage and affliction which they experienced in Babylon.” In my life the Lord has greatly blessed me, and I have made an effort to

⁵ Code words from the *Rain in Due Season* promises: “And I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people” (Leviticus 26:12).

⁶ “Therefore he brought upon them the king of the Chaldees, who slew their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion upon young man or maiden, old man, or him that stooped for age: he gave them all into his hand” (2Chronicles 36:17).

remember this scripture, and to be kind to those who have fought against me, when I see them down.

vv. 7-15. Babylon had conceitedly thought that her power would have no end. Yet sudden and unexpected punishment would come. Babylon was also guilty of sorceries and putting faith in the arm of the adversary. She is sarcastically challenged to put her confidence in those evil things upon which she had leaned on and see if they would be of any help, now. Babylon would burn like stubble with none to save her.

7 ¶ And thou saidst, I shall be a lady for ever: [so] that thou didst not lay these [things] to thy heart, neither didst remember the latter end of it.

And thou saidst, I shall be a lady for ever: The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “And thou saidst, I shall be the mighty one of the kingdoms.” The LXX (ⓖ) reads, “And saidst, I shall be empress forever.” Instead of *lady*, the Peshitta (Ⓢ) has *mighty one* (Lamsa) / *strengthened* (BPE). Cowles has regarding this *lady* or *mistress* [גַּבְרִית]: “She was so confident of the perpetuity of this honor that she would not think of the natural consequences of such cruelty, would not consider the latter end and the sure though possibly distant results of such crimes.” Delitzsch says: “. . . the confidence of Babylon in the eternal continuance of its power was such, that ‘these things,’ i.e., such punishments as those which were now about to fall upon it according to the prophecy, had never come into its mind.” Benson has: “If we consider that the city of Babylon had no less than one hundred gates made of solid brass; that its walls were two hundred feet high, and fifty broad, according to the lowest account given of them by historians, and, according to some, three hundred and fifty feet in height, and eighty-seven in thickness, so that six chariots could go abreast upon them; that it was defended by the river Euphrates, and supplied with provisions for many years; it might well be deemed impregnable: and ‘such a city as this might, with less vanity than any other, boast that she should continue forever, if anything human could continue forever’ (Bishop Newton).” ¶ Calvin says: “Thus the children of this world are intoxicated by prosperity, and despise all men as compared with themselves; but Isaiah mocks at this confidence, and shews that God regards it with the greatest abhorrence.” President Brigham Young similarly said: “The worst fear that I have about this people is that they will get rich in this country, forget God and his people, wax fat, and kick themselves out of the Church and go to hell. This people will stand mobbing, robbing, poverty and all manner of

persecution, and be true. But my greater fear for them is that they cannot stand wealth; and yet they have to be tried with riches, for they will become the richest people on this earth.”⁷ With some concern, President Kimball, after quoting President Young, said, “To which I can hear many of you say, ‘Hasten the day.’” I have lived to see, sadly, this sort of pride manifested in intellectual arrogance on the part of a few ‘enlightened’ LDS, some of which trust more in the arm of the flesh than in the Brethren or in the Scriptures. ¶ [So] *that thou didst not lay these [things] to thy heart, neither didst remember the latter end of it.* The LXX (ⓖ) reads, “These things did not enter thy heart; nor didst thou call to mind what might at last befall thee.” The Douay-Rheims (ⓓ) has, for the second clause, “Neither hast thou remembered thy latter end.” Cowles says: “Thou saidst, Forever shall I be a queen—*until* thou didst not lay these things upon thy heart,’ i.e., thou didst repeat it with persistence and force *until* it produced this result, viz., to harden thy heart against all sense and fear of retribution. The Lord assumes that nations ought to know and consider that cruelty brings retribution in the latter end and that the violation of natural right is sure to react with righteous vengeance.—This law pertains to all nations through all times.” In Jeremiah, we read how the literal Babylonian captivity would be temporal, and last seventy years, after which many of the people of Judah (i.e., Judah and Benjamin) would return to the Holy Land, to Zion. “For thus saith the LORD, That after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place. For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end. Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you. And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart. And I will be found of you, saith the LORD: and I will turn away your captivity, and I will gather you from all the nations, and from all the places whither I have driven you, saith the LORD; and I will bring you again into the place whence I caused you to be carried away captive” (Jeremiah 29:10-14). The greater fulfillment of these verses in Jeremiah is taking place right now as the children of Israel are gathered into Zion from every corner of the world. ¶ Regarding the *end of it* Baltzer says: “‘Babylon’ has not considered the consequences of her arrogance. אֶת־רֵיִת is the ‘end’ (just as רֵאשִׁית is the ‘beginning’).”

⁷ Quoted by President Gordon B. Hinckley (Let Not Your Heart Be Troubled, BYU Speeches, October 29, 1974.), from Nibley, *Brigham Young*, p. 128. In that same talk, President Hinckley continues with these words of concern: “To which I can hear many of you say, ‘Hasten the day.’” I interpret this as people saying, “Bring on those riches.”

8 Therefore hear now this, [thou that art] given to pleasures, that dwellest carelessly, that sayest in thine heart, I [am], and none else beside me; I shall not sit [as] a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children:

Therefore hear now this, [thou that art] given to pleasures, that dwellest carelessly, that sayest in thine heart, I [am], and none else beside me. The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “Now, therefore, hear these things, thou voluptuary! thou who art seated at ease, who thinkest thyself secure; who sayest in thy heart; ‘I am and there is none else.’” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓛ) has, for the first half, “And now hear these things, thou that art delicate, and dwellest confidently.” Keith explains that one of the reasons why Babylon would be punished was “her pursuit of pleasures. This character belonged more or less to all the heathen cities of antiquity. Their prosperity has always been the mother of licentiousness; and abundant as have been the dissipation and sensuality of other capitals, in no case has the catalogue of vices been more foul than in that of Babylon, according to the testimony of Herodotus and others. Hence she is made the symbol of the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth (Revelation 17:5).” Skinner points us to Zephaniah 2:15, speaking of Nineveh, where we read similar sentiments: “This is the rejoicing city that dwelt carelessly, that said in her heart, I am, and there is none beside me: how is she become a desolation, a place for beasts to lie down in! every one that passeth by her shall hiss, and wag his hand.” Alexander eliminates the present ellipsis [i.e., though that art] and translates עַדְיָיָהּ as “*Oh voluptuous one!*” So also, “And now hear this, thou voluptuous one” (Darby); “Et maintenant, écoute ceci, voluptueuse” (FDB); “Ahora pues, oye esto, voluptuosa” (LBLA); “Oye, pues, ahora esto, mujer voluptuosa” (RV1960); and a few others. Leiser translates it as: “And now hear this, luxurious one.” ¶ Birks has: “The phrase in the second clause has caused some perplexity. It is literally, ‘I am, and the absence of me beside.’ All beside me, says the proud city, is so worthless in comparison, that ‘it is not Babylon, no part of her empire,’ is description enough. The words are a profane parody of the Divine saying, ‘I am the Lord, and there is none else,’ (ISAIAH 43:10-11; 44:6, 8; 45:5-6, 14, 18, 21; 46:9). These chapters are full of the contrast between the false pride of Babylon and the true glory of the living God.” ¶ *I shall not sit [as] a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children:* The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “I shall not sit a widow, nor shall I know the loss of children.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓛ)

has, for the last clause, “And I shall not know barrenness.” The Masoretic text (Ⓜ) has *and neither shall I know*, וְלֹא אֶדְעַ, while the DSS 1QIsa^a (Ⓢ) has *and neither shall I see*, וְלֹא אֶרְאֶה. A fragment of DSS 4QIsa^d (Ⓢ) shows אֶדְעַ, *shall I know*. Cowles observes: “The same Babylon, before shown under the figure of a virgin, is here by a slight change, a wife with children. She has been intensely pleasure-loving, dwelling in supposed security and saying, ‘None so great and mighty as I. I have put myself above the reach of great calamity.’—The loss of children and of husband are fitly named as the most fearful calamities that can befall a wife and mother. It is better to take them therefore as figures for the greatest calamities that can befall a nation, e.g., subjugation, captivity, and the sword, rather than to give them the more specific sense of the loss of her king (her husband) and of her soldiers or citizens (as her sons).” Skinner writes: “*widowhood* is simply a figure for desolation.” Whitehouse, in contrast, has: “The ‘childlessness’ refers to the depopulation caused by the sword, flight of inhabitants, or their captivity.” Several, including Redak (in Rabbi Rosenberg) suggest that widowhood, in this case, is a city left desolate without her king (see more in ISAIAH 47:9). Govett has: “‘I shall not sit as a widow, nor experience bereavement,’ is paralleled by St. John, ‘She saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow’ (Revelation 18:7).” Henderson has: “The metaphor of a virgin is now exchanged for that of a married woman, in order to admit of the introduction of a state of widowhood, and ἀτεκνία⁸. To this state Babylon was reduced when her king was slain, and her inhabitants were either massacred, or carried away captive.” Alexander says: “The figure of a virgin is now exchanged for that of a wife, a strong proof that the sign was, in the writer’s view, of less importance than the thing signified.” At the end Babylon would suffer both captivity, loss of a king, and of her population. And mystical Babylon would suffer eternal consequences.

9 But these two [things] shall come to thee in a moment in one day, the loss of children, and widowhood: they shall come upon thee in their perfection for the multitude of thy sorceries, [and] for the great abundance of thine enchantments.

But these two [things] shall come to thee in a moment in one day, the loss of children, and widowhood: The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “But now upon thee shall come these two

⁸ ἀτεκνία, childlessness (BDAG) or even bereavement (LEH LXX Lexicon, LALS)

things, suddenly, in one day. The loss of children and widowhood.” The Peshitta (S) fills in the ellipsis, *things with plagues* (Lamsa) / *wounds* (BPE). The Douay-Rheims (D) has, “These two things shall come upon thee suddenly in one day, barrenness and widowhood.” Rabbi Rosenberg points out that Babylon indeed lost her king: “For Belshazzar the king was killed at night, and the Persians and the Medes entered and captured the city (Daniel 5:30; 6:1).” Keith observes: “The wife deprived at once of husband and children, widowed and made childless in one day, is a touching illustration of utter bereavement.” Certainly, it reminds us of Job. Jenour writes: “The capture of Babylon, as has already been observed, was sudden and unexpected. The inhabitants were dissolved in mirth and festivity, and had not the smallest anticipation of the design of Cyrus until his army was in the city. Indeed, Herodotus says, that those who lived in the middle were dancing and making merry after the extremities had been taken.” Gill, leaning on Prideaux has: “Dr. Prideaux thinks this prophecy had its accomplishment when Babylon was besieged by Darius, who, to save provisions, slew all their own women, wives, sisters, daughters, and all their children, reserving only one wife and maidservant to a man; and when it was taken, Darius ordered three thousand of the principal inhabitants to be crucified⁹. And in much such language is the destruction of mystical Babylon expressed, when God shall ‘kill her children with death; her plagues shall come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine’ (Revelation 2:23; 18:8).” Govett writes: “As Isaiah also declares that ‘these two things shall come upon her in one day, bereavement and sorrow, and widowhood’ so St. John adds, ‘Therefore her plagues shall come in one day, death (pestilence), mourning, and famine.’ And as Isaiah reproaches her with her sorceries and enchantments, so St. John declares that ‘by her sorceries all nations were deceived,’ and that in her hand was a ‘golden cup full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication.’ Yet these shall not prevail to deliver her, when her iniquity is full and her hour of judgement arrived. Her end is the same as that predicted by St. John. Isaiah foretells of her wise men, that they ‘all shall be burnt up as stubble in the fire,’ and of Babylon that she ‘shall be utterly *burned with fire*, for strong is the Lord God that judgeth her’ . . . From which and similar passages the proof is convincing that the Babylon of the Old Testament is identical with that of the New.” Luther says that the Second Coming will come upon the arrogant in a similar way, and will be an unexpected shock. ¶ *They shall come upon thee in their perfection for the multitude of thy sorceries, [and] for the great abundance of thine enchantments.* The Targum (T) adds, “notwithstanding” to modify the

⁹ Faussett rather has, *impaled*.

comments about Babylon’s sorceries and enchantments. The LXX (G) reads, “Shall come suddenly on thee, in the midst of thy sorcery, in the full strength of thy mighty enchantments.” The Douay-Rheims (D) has, “All things are come upon thee, because of the multitude of thy sorceries, and for the great hardness of thy enchanters.” Cowles suggests that בְּרַבּ be rendered *despite* instead of *for* “the multitude of thy enchantments.” So also a number of versions, including Leeser, AMP, CJB, ESV, HCSB, ISV, NASB, Rotherham, and Reina Valera 1960. Lowth, for כְּתִמָּם prefers to lean on the LXX (G) and Syriac (S) and instead of *perfection* has *suddenly*. If it be *perfection*, it means to me that while Babylon was unrighteous in the punishments she meted out, God’s punishment are always perfect. The Savior says: “. . . that I might subdue all things unto myself—Retaining all power, even to the destroying of Satan and his works at the end of the world” (D&C 19:2b-3a). And furthermore, the Savior invites us to repent: “And surely every man must repent or suffer, for I, God, am endless. Wherefore, I revoke not the judgments which I shall pass, but woes shall go forth, weeping, wailing and gnashing of teeth, yea, to those who are found on my left hand. Nevertheless, it is not written that there shall be no end to this torment, but it is written *endless torment*. Again, it is written *eternal damnation*; wherefore it is more express than other scriptures, that it might work upon the hearts of the children of men, altogether for my name’s glory” (D&C 19:4-7, also see D&C:19:8-13). Furthermore we read another invitation to turn to Christ: “Therefore I command you to repent—repent, lest I smite you by the rod of my mouth, and by my wrath, and by my anger, and your sufferings be sore—how sore you know not, how exquisite you know not, yea, how hard to bear you know not” (D&C 19:15, as well as D&C 19:14-20).

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.

✓ or, caused thee to turn away

For thou hast trusted in thy wickedness: thou hast said, None seeth me. The Targum (T) has for the last clause, “None seeth thee (the Royal Polyglot reads תִּי, ‘me’).” The LXX (G) reads, “Confiding in thy wickedness thou indeed saidst; ‘I am and there is none else.’” The Douay-Rheims (D) has, “And thou best trusted in thy wickedness, and hast said: There is none that seeth me.”

The Masoretic text (מ) has *in thy wickedness*, בְּרַעְתָּךְ, while the DSS 1QIsa^a (Q) has *in thy knowledge*, בְּדַעְתָּךְ. Ibn Ezra says: “The prophet here alludes to that rationalism which denies the existence of God.” Delitzsch well suggests that by saying *none seeth me*, Babylon was “thus suppressing the voice of conscience.” Yet we read: “And the rebellious shall be pierced with much sorrow; for their iniquities shall be spoken upon the housetops, and their secret acts shall be revealed” (D&C 1:3, see also Luke 12:2-3). ¶ All those who trust in wickedness—or “astrology, divination, and magic” (Gill), or the *occult* (Skinner), or in evil in anyway—will be disappointed for “Behold, I say unto you, wickedness never was happiness” (Alma 41:10b). Once again, we must remember the underlying theme of leaving mystic Babylon and coming to the light of Zion. All that is darkness and evil bring unhappiness. The Prophet Joseph Smith taught, that there may be no mistaking the things of God: “There was nothing indecorous in the proceeding of the Lord’s prophets in any age; neither had the apostles nor prophets in the apostles’ day anything of this kind. Paul says, ‘Ye may all prophesy, one by one; and if anything be revealed to another let the first hold his peace, for the spirit of the prophets is subject to the prophets;’ but here we find that the prophets are subject to the spirit, and falling down, have twitchings, tumblings, and faintings through the influence of that [evil] spirit, being entirely under its control. Paul says, ‘Let everything be done decently and in order,’ but here we find the greatest disorder and indecency in the conduct of both men and women, as above described.”¹⁰ Just a week ago, a friend was invited to visit the congregation of an acquaintance of a different Christian denomination. The idea was that his acquaintance would then come to our Church. My friend described a scene just like that spoken by the Prophet Joseph Smith, above, as this congregation was trying, as they called it, “to bring down the Holy Ghost” upon the churchgoers. His wife, who had also gone, and who most likely is living closer to the Spirit, was very uneasy and decided to never step foot on such a place again. For we know the Holy Ghost imparts peace and light; not darkness. And returning to the words of the Prophet Joseph Smith, “. . . nothing is a greater injury to the children of men than to be under the influence of a false spirit when they think they have the Spirit of God.”¹¹ ¶ *Thy wisdom and thy knowledge, it hath perverted thee; and thou hast said in thine heart, I [am], and none else beside me.* The Targum (T) has for the first clause, “Thy wisdom and thy knowledge have

corrupted thee.” The LXX (G) reads, “Know thou, the consciousness of these things and thy whoredom shall be thy shame. Thou indeed saidst in thy heart, ‘I am and there is none else.’” Instead of *perverted*, the Peshitta (S) has *misled* (Lamsa) / *deviated* (BPE), much like the margin. The Douay-Rheims (D) has, “Thy wisdom, and thy knowledge, this hath deceived thee. And thou best said in thy heart: I am, and besides me there is no other.” ¶ בְּדַעְתָּךְ וְדַעְתָּךְ, *thy wisdom and thy knowledge*. Henderson suggests: “Babylon was proud, not only of her political wisdom, but also of her astronomical and mythological science. דַּעַת, γνῶσις¹², in connexion, as here, with הַכְּמָה *superior knowledge*, i. e., that of the [false] gods, &c.” Calvin has: “*In thy malice*] He gives the name of ‘malice’ to that which he will afterwards adorn with more plausible names, namely, *wisdom and knowledge*. In this manner do tyrants usually disguise their tricks, when they lay aside all regard to justice and equity, and cunningly deceive the people; but the Lord detests and exposes them; so that it becomes manifest that it served no purpose to cover their wickedness by useless veils. Thus Job, after having said that ‘wise men are taken in their own wisdom,’ explains this by calling it ‘craftiness’ (Job 5:13).” ¶ Henderson has, regarding *it hath perverted thee*, שׁוֹבְבָתְךָ: “שׁוֹבֵב [from the root, to *turn*, שׁוֹב] is used both in a good and a bad sense; here, as ISAIAH 57:7¹³, it indicates a determined *apostasy* from the true God” (emphasis added). As we have said before, at every instance we decide to either *turn* [שׁוֹב] to the Lord or give Him our *back*, i.e., turn away [שׁוֹב] from Him. BBE translates this expression: “. . . by your wisdom and knowledge you have been *turned* out of the way”; YLT, “Thy wisdom and thy knowledge, It is *turning* thee back.” ¶ Young says: “*No one is seeing me*] Babylon did not speak these words aloud, but thought them in her heart.” ¶ *And none else beside me.* Delitzsch writes: “אָפֵס signifies absolute non-existence [here] . . . The form in which the presumption of Babylon expresses itself, viz., ‘I (am it), and I am absolutely *nothing* further,’ sounds like self-deification, by the side of similar self-assertion on the part of Jehovah (ISAIAH 45:5-6; 14:21-22; 46:9).”

11 Therefore shall evil come upon thee;
thou shalt not know from whence it
riseth: ✓ and mischief shall fall upon thee;

¹⁰ *The Latter-day Saints' Millennial Star*, Volume III, No. 3, July 1842, p. 40 (pp. 36 ff., Try The Spirits).

¹¹ *The Latter-day Saints' Millennial Star*, Volume III, No. 3, July 1842, p. 38 (pp. 36 ff., Try The Spirits).

¹² γνῶσις, “comprehension or intellectual grasp of something” (BDAG).

¹³ ASV renders it: “. . . and he went on backsliding [שׁוֹבְבָתְךָ] in the way of his heart” (Isaiah 57:17b).

thou shalt not be able to put it off: [✓] [✓] and desolation shall come upon thee suddenly, [which] thou shalt not know.

- ✓ the morning thereof
- ✓ ✓ expiate

Young points out the rhythmical *ah* (אָה) endings of the three calamities that will befall Babylon: *evil*, *mischief*, and *desolation*, i.e., רָעָה, הָנָה, and שׂוֹאָה. Baltzer

observes about these (אָה) endings: “One can probably say that this is a triad of terms, but that these are treated as female personifications.” ¶ *Therefore shall evil come upon thee; thou shalt not know from whence it riseth:*

The Targum (ܬ) has, for the second clause, *thou shalt not know how to* “deprecate it” (Pauli), “pray against it” (Stenning), and “how to beseech” (Chilton) for

לְמַבְעֵי.¹⁴ The LXX (Ϛ) reads, “But upon thee shall come destruction, and thou shalt not know — a pit; and into it thou shalt fall.” Related to the margin, the

Peshitta (ܫ) has *morning* (BPE) / *early morning* (Lamsa), in association to when the evil would come upon her. The Masoretic text (מ) has *thou shalt know*

not, לֹא תִדְעֵי, while the DSS 1QIsa^a (Q) has *and thou shalt know not*, וְלֹא תִדְעֵי. Skinner well says: “*evil*] is the same word as ‘*wickedness*’ in ISAIAH 47:10; the play on the two meanings of the word is intentional.”

Wickedness, in *thy wickedness*, בְּרָעָתְךָ (from the root, רָעָה), and here in ISAIAH 47:11 verse: רָעָה.

Henderson explains that: “. . . after a night of calamity [speaking figuratively]” there will be no dawn of reprieve. Gill, following the margin has: “*thou shalt not know the morning of it*] that is, on what day, or at what time, it will be.” Following the margin, Cowles

suggests: “Since calamity suggests darkness and often appears in the scriptures under this figure, the probable sense of this phrase is, Thou shalt see no dawn beyond it. To you, no day shall follow this night of ruin. ¶ *And mischief shall fall upon thee; thou shalt not be able to put it off:* The LXX (Ϛ) reads, “Yes, upon thee shall come misery, of which thou shalt not be able to rid thyself.” The Douay-Rheims (D) has, “And calamity shall fall violently upon thee, which thou canst not keep off.” The Masoretic text (מ) has [to] *put it off* (literally, *cover, expiate or atone*, from קָפַר, see Gesenius, DBL,

HALOT), כָּפַרְהָ, while the DSS 1QIsa^a (Q) has *to put it off*, לְכַפְּרָה. McFadyen explains that all of these troubles that will beset Babylon, she will not be able to be put away through charms. Wade explains: “*put it*

away] Literally, *to propitiate it* (cf. the Latin *expiare prodigia*), i.e., to avert it by propitiatory offerings. Diodorus Siculus (2:29) states: “The Chaldeans are devoted to divination, and predict future occurrences, of which they seek to avert the unfavourable and to promote the favourable by means of purifications or sacrifices or spells.” The only true atonement can come through the Lord Jesus Christ. ¶ *And desolation shall come upon thee suddenly, [which] thou shalt not know.* The LXX (Ϛ) reads, “And destruction shall come upon thee suddenly of which thou wilt have no apprehension.” The Douay-Rheims (D) has, for the first clause, “Misery shall come upon thee suddenly.” The Masoretic text (מ) has *not know*, לֹא תִדְעֵי, while the DSS 1QIsa^a (Q) has *and not know*, וְלֹא תִדְעֵי. Lowth observes: “it is necessary to give the reader an exact verbal translation of the whole verse:—

‘And evil shall come upon thee, thou shalt not know how to deprecate it;

And mischief shall fall upon thee, thou shalt not be able to expiate it;

And destruction shall come suddenly upon thee, thou shalt not know’——

What? . . . But as the ancient versions retain no traces of it, and a wide field lies open to uncertain conjecture, I have not attempted to fill up the chasm [or ellipsis—GB] . . . which I cannot with any assurance pretend to supply.” Veiled threats are powerful, and perhaps this ellipsis is supposed to be filled out by the guilty party.

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.

Stand now with thine enchantments, and with the multitude of thy sorceries, wherein thou hast laboured from thy youth. The LXX (Ϛ) reads, “Persist now in thine incantations and in thy manifold sorcery, which thou hast learned from thy youth.” The Douay-Rheims (D) has *thy enchanters* instead of *thine enchantments*.

The Masoretic text (מ) has *stand now*, (נַן is often translated as *I pray thee*, or some other admonition or entreaty, so one might also render it, *stand, I pray thee*, see Gesenius, BDB), עֲמֹדֵי־נָא, while the DSS 1QIsa^a (Q) has *but stand now*, אָנֹכִי עֲמֹדֵי־נָא. This whole verse, as most exegetes point out, is extremely *ironic* and even deeply *sarcastic*. ¶ Nägelsbach and several others suggest that *from thy youth* is an allusion to the earliest days of the formation of Babylon as a nation. ¶ *If so be*

¹⁴ To petition, request, beg (CAL Targum Lexicon), from בְּעֵי.

thou shalt be able to profit, if so be thou mayest prevail. The Targum (T) only contains the second of these two clauses. The LXX (G) reads, “If thou canst be benefited by them.” Instead of *prevail*, the Peshitta (S) has *strengthen yourself* (Lamsa) / *be strengthened* (BPE). The Douay-Rheims (V) has, “If so be it may profit thee any thing, or if thou mayst become stronger.” The Lord is challenging Babylon. Keith says: “[Their diviners] are tauntingly urged to deliver Babylon if they could.” These verses are similar to the taunt we find in 1Kings 18 addressed at the Priests of Baal.

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.

- ✓ viewers of the heavens
- ✓ ✓ that give knowledge concerning the months

Thou art wearied in the multitude of thy counsels. The LXX (G) reads, “Thou hast wearied thyself with thy counsels.” Instead of *counsels*, the Peshitta (S) has *thoughts* (Lamsa) / *conspiring* (BPE). The Douay-Rheims (V) has, “Thou hast failed in the multitude of thy counsels.” While the Masoretic text (M) begins with *Thou art wearied* (נְלֵאִית) in [the] multitude (בְּרַב) &c, the DSS 1QIsa^a (Q) has dropped נְלֵאִית and begins with כְּרֹב, *As [a] multitude* &c. (with points, probably כְּרֹב, similar to Psalms 51:1, כְּרֹב). Although Cheyne does not think so himself, he refers to Sayce (*Transactions of Society of Biblical Archeology*, 3:150), who believes that “the ‘consultations’ . . . are astrological ones.” Keith explains: “The three classes [of diviners] enumerated here are generally supposed to be: (1) Those who divided the heavens for the purpose of auguries; (2) Those who judged from the appearances, the conjunctions, the colour, &c., of the stars; and, (3) Those who foretold what events might be expected in the course of each month. The term astrologers occurs only here. It signifies literally, dividers of the heavens.” Birks has: “These words describe the habitual state and character of Babylon before her calamity. She has abounded in wise men, diviners, interpreters of dreams, observers of the heavens, and has consulted them even to satiety. Such has been her wealth in counsellors, that to use them all has been even a toil and weariness. The clause . . . portrays the character of the people in days of prosperity, full of expedients of human science and worldly wisdom.” ¶ *Let now the astrologers, the*

stargazers, the monthly prognosticators, stand up, and save thee from [these things] that shall come upon thee. The Targum (T) has: “Let them now rise up, and save thee, who are familiar with the Zodiac of the heavens, who look at the stars, who make known appointed seasons: deceiving thee, saying, Thus it shall happen unto thee each month.” The LXX (G) reads, “Let the astrologers now stand up and save thee—let them who gaze on the stars tell thee what is instantly coming upon thee.” The Peshitta (S) has something like, “Let now the Chaldeans stand up and liberate you, those who observe the heavens and at the stars; let them foretell by the moon the things that shall come upon you.” The Douay-Rheims (V) has, “Let now the astrologers stand and save thee, they that gazed at the stars, and counted the months, that from them they might tell the things that shall come to thee.” Instead of the Masoretic text (M), astrologers (or, *dividers* [of the] heavens, הוֹבְרֵי שָׁמַיִם), the DSS 1QIsa^a (Q) has *binder*¹⁵ (i.e., *enchanter*) [of the] heavens, חוֹבְרֵי שָׁמַיִם. The Masoretic text (M) has *stargazers* (i.e., *the gazers in stars*¹⁶), הַחֹזִים בְּכּוֹכְבֵּי, while the DSS 1QIsa^a (Q) has *and stargazers* (i.e., *and the gazers in stars*, וְהַחֹזִים בְּכּוֹכְבֵּי. Jenour speaks about the irrationality of the horoscope: “. . . founded on the absurd idea that the events of a person’s life are connected, in an inexplicable manner, with the particular aspect of the stars and planets at the moment of his birth, so that, if this were known, his future destiny might be predicted. Hence, when a woman was about to be delivered, they were accustomed to *regard the stars* with the greatest attention, in order that they might be able to prognosticate the fate of the new-born infant.” Birks has: “‘Astrologers, &c.’ A threefold description of the same class, who divide the heavens into houses of the sun, moon, and planets, gaze into them to obtain horoscopes, and every month publish new predictions from the heavens. The order is contemptuous. Their titles of honour are added, like an afterthought, in the midst of a challenge to a work quite beyond their power. So pretentious are they, and still so worthless in the hour of trouble! . . . The ‘things that shall come upon thee,’ in this connexion, are not future things in the abstract, but the coming judgments.” Wade writes: “Babylonian astrology became so famous that *Chaldaei* became amongst the Romans a synonym for

¹⁵ From הִבְרָה, *binding* “applied to incantations,” or putting on spells on serpents or knots (see, Gesenius, הִבְרָה—2), or *charm, spell, enchantment* (HALOT, הִבְרָה—2).

¹⁶ The word for stars, or rather *the stars* (Hah-ko-kau-beam, the Prophet Joseph Smith’s transliteration for הַכּוֹכְבֵּי), should be very familiar to LDS, as we read it in Abraham 2, Facsimile 5, Pearl of Great Price.

all diviners who told fortunes by the stars (see Juv. *Sat.* 6:553, 10:94 ; cf. also *Hor.* Od. 1. 11: 2, *Babylonios ... numeros*.)” Rawlinson says of astrology that “[it] leads . . . into a labyrinth of absurdities.” Barnes calls it an “absurd science.” Elder McConkie says: “Ancient uninspired peoples were frequently deluded by the snares of the astrologers among them (ISAIAH 47; Dan. 1:20; 2:27; 4:7; 5:7), but it is difficult to understand why people in modern and supposedly enlightened and civilized nations should submit to these same stargazing absurdities. Enlightened people in and out of the Church shun them for the abominations they are . . . [and regarding sorcery] Frequently this power is used in divination, necromancy, and witchcraft. In effect a sorcerer worships Satan rather than God and uses such power as Satan can give him in a vain attempt to imitate the power of God.”¹⁷ I feel that horoscopes and satanic counterfeits of Patriarchal Blessings. The latter are *inspired revelations* pronounced through a Patriarch about *possibilities*. Patriarchal Blessings include a declaration of lineage; as well as blessings, cautions and admonitions to help us endure to the end in righteous living. All blessings are conditional to worthy living. I have a testimony of the inspiration of Patriarchal Blessings. I find it interesting that where true religion is absent from the lives of individuals, superstition takes its place.¹⁸

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.

✓ their souls

Behold, they shall be as stubble; the fire shall burn them. The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “Behold, they shall be weak as stubble. The nations which are as strong as fire shall consume them (the Royal Polyglot reads שְׂפִינִי, ‘each of the nations shall consume them’).” The LXX (Ⓟ) reads, “Behold like brambles on a fire they shall all be burned up.” Wordsworth has: “*the fire shall burn them*] When Cyrus and his forces made an irruption into Babylon, he ordered them to set fire to the houses, which were very combustible, the doors being made of palm wood, smeared over with bitumen, and the roofs

¹⁷ McConkie, Elder Bruce R. *Mormon Doctrine* (2nd ed.), pp., 56, 747.

¹⁸ So also Ironside, who says: “Wherever people turn away from the one, true and living GOD and refuse the Word of GOD, they are always ready to turn to other things . . . Astronomy is an exact science, astrology is a fraud, a fake. Yet how many people give heed to it . . . Men still believe in these worse than follies. They turn away from the Word of the living GOD to turn unto fables.”

covered with reeds {Xenophon, *Cyropaedia* 7:5). So it is foretold by St. John in the Apocalypse, concerning the mystical Babylon, that it will be burnt with fire.” Cowles has: “Instead of affording to Babylon the least help, these magicians are themselves awfully consumed. They are as stubble; fire devours them. They cannot even save themselves; much less the nation and the people.—The last clause seems to mean that the fire of this conflagration brings all the mischiefs and calamities of a fire with none of its uses. This fire is not the sort before which one may warm himself or sit by it to enjoy its light. It is simply a terrible conflagration, bearing nothing but destruction in its sweep.” Calvin observes: “For this reason he kindles into such indignation against the Babylonians, and says that they shall be burning ‘stubble,’ which is quickly consumed; for he does not compare them to wood, which is of some use for giving heat, but to ‘stubble,’ in order to shew that nothing is so light or useless.” As for *stubble*, Rawlinson says: “A favorite metaphor with Isaiah for extreme weakness and incapacity for resistance. In ISAIAH 5:24 it is connected, as here, with fire.” ¶ *They shall not deliver themselves from the power of the flame*: The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “They shall not deliver themselves from the hand of the slayers.” The LXX (Ⓟ) reads, “And shall not deliver their own life from the flame.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓛ) has *flames* instead of *flame*. Richard D. Draper observes: “John’s harlot [i.e., Babylon in the Book of Revelation—GB] is no commoner . . . she represents a priestly class. The Levitical punishment for adultery or harlotry for the daughter of a priest was burning (see Leviticus 21:9) . . . Babylon, as apostate—even idolatrous religion—deserves her fate.”¹⁹ ¶ *[There shall] not [be] a coal to warm at, [nor] fire to sit before it.* The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “There shall be no remnant nor escaped of them, yea, not a place, in which one might deliver himself.” The LXX (Ⓟ) reads, “Seeing thou hast coals of fire, sit upon them; will they give thee relief?” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓛ) has, “They shall not deliver themselves from the power of the flames: there are no coals wherewith they may be warmed, nor fire, that they may sit thereat.” Removing some of the ellipsis, HCSB renders it: “This is not a coal for warming themselves, or a fire to sit beside!” Wade explains: “*it shall not be a coal, etc.*] An ironical litotes,²⁰ suggestive of the real magnitude of the fire which will be kindled for Babylon.” As has already been said, wood is useful for controlled burning; stubble burns fast and hot and is useless form warming oneself or for cooking.

¹⁹ Draper, Richard D., *Opening the Seven Seals: The Visions of John the Revelator*, p.201.

²⁰ Litotes or understatement. To say it will *not be a small fire* to mean it will be a very large one. Too large to warm oneself or sit beside such as one would do at a campsite.

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.

Thus shall they be unto thee with whom thou hast laboured, [even] thy merchants, from thy youth: The Targum (Ⓢ) has, “Thus shall the workers of thy lies be in thee, with whom thou wast occupied from thy youth.” The LXX (Ⓛ) reads, “Thou hast wearied thyself with this traffic from thy youth.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓟ) has, “Such are all the things become to thee, in which thou best labored.” Cowles explains: “Such is the doom of those with whom thou hast wrought even to weariness to find help from them for thyself. The fire of God’s judgments has utterly consumed them.” Whitehouse says, “If we adhere . . . to the reading of our Hebrew text, ‘merchants,’ we should understand the term as referring to the magicians and soothsayers who trafficked in their arts with the deluded Babylonians.” This comment fits well with those about mystical Babylon, and the importance of escaping the grips of the adversary. So also Wade, leaning on and Duhm, Marti and Kittel: “Babylon’s commerce was famous. But the context seems to require a reference not to trade but to astrology or sorcery.” ¶ *They shall wander every one to his quarter; none shall save thee.* The Targum (Ⓢ) has, “The princes of thy power, shall go into captivity; each one straight before his face, none shall save thee.” The LXX (Ⓛ) reads, “The men have wandered away, everyone to his own home; but for thee there shall be no safety.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓟ) has, “Thy merchants from thy youth, every one hath erred in his own way, there is none that can save thee.” The expression, “They shall wonder each one to his quarter²¹,” means that the nations of the world would

have nothing to do with trying to help Babylon in her troubles, despite the fact that they had been involved in commercial intercourse with her in the past. It is, like in a way, when everyone runs away to his own country and leaves the battle field. Ibn Ezra has: “When thy fall cometh, they all forsake thee.” Certainly, Satan will forsake all who have leaned on him. The only one who will uphold us, in the end, will be the Holy One of Israel. Lowth warns: “. . . with equal truth, all that contributes to the commercial importance of New York, Philadelphia, Boston, London, or Paris, are under the control of God. By some secret causes he could make these cities a wide scene of ruins; and they may be, if they are like Babylon and Tyre and Tadmor in their character, yet like them in their doom. They should feel that the sources of their prosperity and their preservation are not in themselves, but in the favor and protection of God. Virtue, justice, and piety, will better preserve them than wealth; and without these they must be, in spite of their commercial advantages, what the once celebrated cities of antiquity now are.”

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²¹ Alexander and several others explain it that literally it means: “Each to the own quarter, side, direction; substantially synonymous with אֶל-עִבְרָה פְּנִי (Ezekiel 1:9, 12), and other phrases, all meaning *straight before him*, without turning to the right hand or the left.” Rotherham has, “every man stagger straight onwards.” Or, toward his own face. Here in ISAIAH 47:15, we have אִישׁ לְעִבְרוֹ תָעוּ, *each man wondering his way*.

