

the same themes as the previous chapters: God's mercy to Israel; condemnation of idolatry; emphasis on God's existence and power; and special stress on His ability to predict the future, as shown particularly by the prophecies about Cyrus.

The chapter is rather unique in that it has two brief phrases rebuking Israel (in vv. 8, 12), although the rest of its emphasis is entirely on His love and mercy.

All fifteen verses of chapter 47 are devoted to the destruction of Babylonian power and thus form a conclusion to Part 1 of this section of Isaiah. Everything has been leading up to the complete overthrow of this nation holding the Israelites in subjection. Babylon is thought of as a princess who, after ruling a great empire, is now to be reduced to the position of a servant girl. In verse 6 Babylon is particularly rebuked for having laid a very heavy yoke on God's people and shown them no mercy, even though God Himself had given Israel into Babylon's hands as a punishment for its sins. This thought is strikingly paralleled in Isaiah's discussion of the Assyrian power in Isaiah 10:5-19.

Verses 7-8 picture the pride of Babylon in its past accomplishments, ²³ during more than a thousand years, and declare that all this greatness will come to a sudden end. In succeeding verses much is said about the sorceries, the enchantments, the astrologers, and the stargazers of Babylon. During the last one hundred fifty years, discovery and decipherment of the writings of ancient Babylon have shown how large a part such practices played in its activities. Hundreds of clay tables describe alleged methods of determining the future by examining the entrails of animals ²⁴ and by other magical practices. Isaiah predicts that all of this will prove worthless.

The final verse deals with the merchants from many parts of the world who were accustomed to bring their products to Babylon. When the city loses its power they will give it no help, but will rapidly return to their homelands with no sympathy for the city from which they had formerly drawn so much of their profit.