

his character. In himself, however, he is indeed "a ravenous bird," one who is never satisfied but who is anxious to conquer more and more territory and who thinks that he is doing it for his own aggrandizement. How often it is true that the characters who strut their little part upon the stage of life think that they are carrying out their own purposes and plans when actually they are only doing what God has determined to perform through them!

In verses 12 and 13 there is an exhortation to those whose hearts are hardened and who are not ready to believe God's righteous plan. They are assured that God's salvation will not tarry but that He will accomplish His great purposes.

Isaiah 47

Chapter 47 is largely devoted to development of the theme which was stressed in the first two verses of chapter 46. There we were told that Nebo and Bel will not be able to deliver Babylon from destruction. Here Babylon herself is addressed under the figure of a woman. This one who is used to Luxurious living, enjoying the fruits of all the nations, is to be humbled to the very dust and made to perform menial labors. No more is Babylon to be called "the lady of kingdoms" (v. 5). She is to be conquered and to become weak. At various times in previous centuries Babylon had appeared as a great mistress of nations. Now her rule has come to an end; from this time on she will be subject to foreign powers. The downfall of Babylon was indeed sudden. She seemed to be at the very apex of her strength when suddenly Cyrus attacked her and ended her rule. Verses 12 and 13 speak of her enchantments and astrologers. All these are to prove of no avail. How silly it is for a nation to trust to its knowledge of secrets -- even the secret of how to make an atomic bomb. These things cannot give lasting security. Only in obeying God and carrying out His commands can a nation live in security and have any expectation of lasting peace.

The chapter is a vivid picture of a nation used to luxury and supremacy but suddenly reduced to captivity and feebleness. Such is the fate eventually of all those who oppose God.