3/15/26
Sunday 1st

Babylon's Fate

Isaiah 47:1-11

1. **Babylon's Fate**
    1) Today's passage records the destruction of Babylon. The Book of Isaiah was written more than 100 years before Israel was taken captive to Babylon, so the event had not yet happened, yet it prophesies that Babylon would fall. This is possible because it is God who spoke it, and it happened exactly as He said. According to verse 6, Babylon treated Israel very harshly. It was not because Babylon was great that it conquered God's people. Rather, God had been angry with His people and handed them over to Babylon. But Babylon did not understand this. Instead, they became intoxicated with the power that God had granted them and treated Israel with excessive cruelty. Therefore, God declared that Babylon would now be judged and destroyed. This is the fate of Babylon. It is the same for Satan.
    2) From Babylon's perspective, this may seem unfair. They might say, "We only did what we were allowed to do, and now we are punished for doing it too harshly." From Babylon's point of view, they might ask, "Then what were we supposed to do?" Verse 7 explains that because Babylon conquered many surrounding nations, it acted without much thought, doing whatever came its way when they were conquering without considering the consequences. Because of this arrogance and because they showed no regard for God's people and treated them cruelly, God said He would judge them. Verse 9 says that no matter how many sorceries or enchantments Babylon uses, it will not be able to prevent the disaster God brings. In one day it will lose its children and husband, becoming like a widow.
    3) Verse 11 says that when evil comes, Babylon will not know the cause; when disaster comes, it will have no power to repel it. Because ruin will come suddenly, they will know nothing about it. In the end, there will be no answer except to suffer it. Verse 10 says, "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.'" Because of this, God said He would bring disaster upon them.
    4) In summary, Babylon received God's destruction for two reasons. First, although God allowed it, Babylon treated Israel too harshly. Second, Babylon became arrogant, thinking, "There is no one besides me." Arrogance rightfully deserves judgment, so there is no need to think on it further. However, Babylon might feel it has something to say regarding being punished for treating Israel too harshly. From Babylon's perspective, God might appear unreasonable. Yet the Bible contains many records of similar events. In Genesis 12, when Abraham went down to Egypt, it was Abraham who made the mistake, yet God struck the king of Egypt with plagues.
    5) Why does God deal with worldly affairs in this way? It may seem unreasonable. The reason is that God must protect the gospel of Abraham. In God's eyes, Abraham is far more important than the king of Egypt. Ethically speaking, the Egyptian king had done nothing wrong—if anything, Abraham fell into disbelief. But what is more important than ethics or disbelief is the gospel. Therefore Abraham and his household had to be protected, because God still had many works to do through him.
    6) There is nothing more reasonable than saving people. The more people are saved, the more reasonable it is. Since there is no way to save mankind apart from the gospel, the one who possesses the gospel is most precious, and the work of saving people with the gospel is the

most reasonable work. God Himself gave His life for this work, so everything He does is always reasonable and rational.

7) In God's eyes, Israel was far more important than Babylon. Although God temporarily became angry with Israel because of their idol worship, He never abandoned Israel. Considering the future works He would do through Israel, Babylon could not even compare. Yet when Babylon was given some power, it treated God's people mercilessly.
8) God is unconditionally on our side and remains on our side to the end. In God's eyes, there is nothing more precious than us. In 1 Samuel chapters 4–6, there is a record of the Ark of the Covenant being captured by the Philistines. Because of this, the high priest Eli fell backward from his chair and died with a broken neck, and his two sons, who were priests, also died that day in battle. The Philistines celebrated, thinking they had captured Israel's god. But the following events tell a completely different story. When they placed the Ark of the Covenant in the temple of their god Dagon, the head and both hands of the statue of Dagon were cut off and lay before the Ark on the threshold of the temple, leaving only the torso.
9) Then a severe plague of tumors struck the people of that region. When they moved the ark to another city, the same thing happened there. They could not bear it any longer. So the Philistine priests and diviners gathered together to discuss what to do with the ark and they decided to return it to Israel.
10) They had mistakenly thought that by capturing Israel's God they had conquered the God of Israel. Instead, their entire nation suffered destruction and death. Their god lost its head and hands and was left with only a body.
11) Although the Philistines celebrated when they captured the ark, nothing had changed for God. God was essentially saying, "What does it have to do with you if I inquire my people of their sin? It is only you who will perish. I am still the God of Israel, and you are still enemies of mine." And to Israel He was saying, "This is my ark of the covenant. Why do you keep turning to idols? If you live within My covenant, will I not destroy your enemies?"
12) Therefore God is saying that even if Babylon, the Philistines or the king of Egypt are temporarily entrusted with His people, they must treat the Israelites humbly. "I am still the God of my people, and I will never be on your side. Be careful; if you become arrogant thinking the power is yours, disaster will come upon you."
13) And to His people He says, "Listen carefully. You do not need Babylon or the king of Egypt. The Philistines are nothing to you. Enter into the covenant that I have given you. Never leave this covenant no matter what arises. If you hold onto it, I will protect you and destroy your enemies. Simply hold onto the covenant and be within prayer. I will send the people you need and change the circumstances for you. With just the ark of the covenant, I can destroy even a nation." This is the message God gives us today.
14) God is unconditionally on our side and remains on our side until the end. God's decisions do not change. No matter what it is, one incident of any kind cannot change God's heart. Even if we become captives in Babylon, even if it seems that a king may take our wife, even if our enemies capture the ark of the covenant, God's heart toward us never changes. Let us not forget this truth. May all of us receive the blessing of holding firmly to the covenant, gaining victory, and becoming witnesses.