

ISAIAH

ISAIAH 47:5-7, BABYLON'S DOWNFALL, PART 2

Babylon continues to be the subject of God's discourse through the prophet. These Scriptures will reveal that Babylon thought that she was a nation without end. What Babylon, and all the nations operating according to the dictates of Satan's world system, do not realize is that nothing in the creation, including the nations, are permanent without the sustaining power of God allowing that which He created to continue. Throughout history, nations have come and gone and it is no different today. Babylon thought that her pagan gods and her associated sorceries and spells would protect her from adversity and even calamity. The fact is that Babylon, just like every other nation, is subject to temporal judgment at the hands of other nations in general, at the hands of other specific nations as they are directed by God to do His will whether they know it or not which is the situation here with Cyrus, and by means of physical destruction imposed directly by the hand of God as it will be following this dispensation during the Tribulation.

It does seem that as a type of the Satanic world system, Babylon has never disappeared from the stage that we think of as world history. Obviously, Babylon has not existed as an independent nation since they were conquered by Medo-Persia, but the city has never completely gone away either. It has been ruled by various kings and empires, but the ultimate ruler of Babylon, Satan, is still ruling it. At this point in time, we could say the spirit of Babylon has lived on throughout world history, and it is still with us. There is a reason why Babylon is a predominate figure in the one world government of the Tribulation which is still future. Babylon, and Rome, have never gone away as concepts that are part of the world system and help shape it and control it at all times. That is why Babylon and Rome, in the form of what Daniel's vision identified as the revived Roman Empire (Dan. 2:40-43), are significant players at the end of this dispensation.

Isaiah 47:5 ⁵"Sit silently, and go into darkness, O daughter of the Chaldeans, For you will no longer be called The queen [מְלִיקָה] of kingdoms.

"Sit" and "go" are in imperative verb forms, that is, they are commands. Once Babylon is destroyed as an independent political entity and reduced to being a subservient nation to another, the nation and her people are going to be in mourning. According to Buksbazen, "In the Hebrew mind sitting in silence and darkness is associated with deep mourning" [Victor Buksbazen, *The Prophet Isaiah: A Commentary*, 373]. This isn't a choice; it will happen when Babylon falls to King Cyrus. The entire world will mourn Babylon's destruction at the end of history as well (Rev. 17-18). Many non-Jewish commentators assign a different meaning to these words, probably due to the fact that they are not thinking from a Jewish perspective. "Babylon loses authority (*silence* replaces dictating the rules to others) [and] liberty (the *darkness* of the dungeon, cf. 42:7)" [Alec J. Motyer, *Isaiah: An Introduction & Commentary*, 297]. There are probably elements of both lines of thought in this verse. Losing one's nation along with the authority and the liberty that accompany national independence are certainly things to mourn over when they are lost. Whether that amounts to imprisonment or not is not stated in the text. It is a bit difficult to put an entire far-flung population in prison. "Whether it [darkness] actually means prison is

difficult to tell. Alexander thinks that darkness as a metaphor for prison does not here suit the context" [Edward J. Young, *The Book of Isaiah: A Commentary*, vol. 3, 3:234]. Conquering kings of that era put people they conquered to work, usually as slaves; they didn't put them in jail. Babylon was a powerful nation with many vassal states under its influence containing far too many people to imprison. Babylon was no ordinary nation; it was the most powerful nation in the region at the time she was conquered by Medo-Persia. They were used to bullying people and nations to get their way. They were a brash, braggart type of controlling nation over those under their influence whether they were part of the Babylonian Empire or not. The fall from being a leader to being a nation under the control of a foreign king and his army is a bitter pill to swallow. They lost a lot and that was certainly a cause for deep mourning. That had to be a dark time in the history of the nation, just as the world will think it a dark time when Babylon is destroyed in the Tribulation.

Certainly, the concept of mourning is strongly implied in this verse, and going beyond that is probably not warranted. To do so is to import some assumptions about what it means to be conquered that are not in this text. It is not obvious that conquered people automatically go to prison; some do, but many do not. "The language seems to refer to the absolute dejection that comes over someone whose shame has been exposed. Yet there is gradation in the stages of degradation. Babylon is to go into darkness, a word suggestive of grief and anguish.... The word does, however, connote the deepest obscurity. Babylon had ruled with a high hand, confident that her power and might over the kingdoms would endure forever. She was at the center of attention, with the light focused upon her. Now, however, the daughter of the Chaldeans is to be so abased that she will be covered over with darkness and no longer seen" [Edward J. Young, *The Book of Isaiah: A Commentary*, vol. 3, 3:234]. The darkness of prison does not seem to be an appropriate understanding of the text.

Other commentators think the concept of darkness in this verse refers to consignment to the underworld in death. While Babylon as a national entity could be said to have died, only a few people actually died when Cyrus conquered the nation. In terms of action, it was not much of a war; therefore, not many people died. That was particularly true in the city of Babylon itself, but in terms of historical significance pertaining to Israel and to God's plan for world history, what happened to Babylon was huge. I do not think consignment to the underworld is a viable understanding of the text.

Queen, *גְּבִירָה*, means mistress, lady, queen, or queen mother. As a mistress, it refers to a woman master who has a degree of control over something. A queen is a female ruler by marriage. The root for this word is *גָּבַר* which means to prevail, to be mighty, to have strength, or to be great. Most translations read "mistress" in this verse, which is probably a more accurate translation in this context (ASV, CSB, LEB, ESV, YLT, LSV, TANAKH). The KJV and the NKJV translate it "The Lady of Kingdoms." The lady of a kingdom is one who is known as the queen. The point is not royalty represented by a queen, it is that Babylon was an imperial city that ruled over many other cities and kingdoms that were forcibly annexed into the Babylonian Empire. Some commentators have reported that Babylon conquered and ruled over more than one-hundred other kingdoms of various sizes and strengths that could not withstand the might of the Babylonian Army. The concept is that

of a powerful mistress that has control over something, in this case, other people and nations, fits the concept that is represented by Babylon very well.

My position would be that mourning and grieving are the primary issues at play in this verse. "Given the absence of any indications in the text itself, however, it seems likely that no specific connections are intended, but only that sense of abject despair and utter humiliation that has come to one who has fallen from 'the glory and blare of world-dominion' (Westermann)" [John N. Oswalt, *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament: The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40-66*, 246].

The reason, or at least one very important reason, for God's judgment on Babylon is revealed. Even though they were God's instrument used to impose His divine temporal discipline on Israel, they exceeded His desires in terms of their harsh treatment of the Israelites.

Isaiah 47:6 "I was angry [קָצַפְתִּי] with My people [עַם], I profaned [הִלַּלְתִּי] My heritage [נַחֲלָה] And gave them into your hand. You did not show mercy to them, On the aged you made your yoke [עֹל] very heavy.

It is significant that God refers to the Israelites as "My" people and "My" heritage. Even at the point when He is so angry with them that He delivers them over to Babylon for divine temporal discipline, He still claims them as His own. He is a God of holy, righteous, and truthful attributes, and He can be nothing other than faithful to the unconditional covenant promises He made with Israel that are solely dependent on His veracity and on His faithfulness for fulfillment. He will never disown the Israelites; God alone will fulfill the covenant promises to and with the faithful remnant which consists of those who have believed in Him and who therefore fall under the blessing stipulations of His promises.

People, עַם, means people, nation, the body of citizens. It refers to a nation or a people, that is, a very large kinship group, regarded as related biologically as well as by language and other cultural common features. In this context, it is a reference to the people of Israel, believers and unbelievers, who are God's people, together as a nation, appointed to His service (Ex. 19:5-6).

Heritage, נַחֲלָה, means hereditary property, possession, property, inheritance. The primary meaning is inheritance which refers to any piece of property that passes by law to an heir on the death of the owner; sometimes regarding God's promises to His people like the land of Israel or a heavenly kingdom. The word "heavenly" in this definition is unnecessary; Kingdom is sufficient and entirely accurate without the modifier. The word is not necessarily incorrect, Matthew consistently refers to the Messianic Kingdom as the Kingdom of heaven, but in terms of defining the word "heritage," a kingdom on earth in the land of Israel is the subject. This word represents the special relationship God has with Israel; the nation was His specifically created nation assigned to His service. Israel was not God's heritage in the sense that she was property that could be passed along when the owner died. Israel was God's perpetual possession, a holy nation set apart for His purposes and therefore His heritage.

Angry, קָצַף, means to be or to become angry, to be furious, to be enraged, or to rouse to anger referring to being or becoming angry and feeling aversion and antipathy for something. This word may have connotations of extreme anger referring to being angry, having wrath, being furious, that is, in a state of strong displeasure with a focus that an action of anger often follows. Because this is a word used in terms of relationships, provoking to anger due to the fact that people fail to properly perform their duties is a major issue in the use of this word. That results in anger due to frustrated expectation. It “refers to the relationship developed, held or expressed in various ways when there is anger, heat, displeasure held or felt within one because of what another has said or done” [Harris, Archer, Jr., and Waltke, s.v. “קָצַף,” *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, 808].

I am surprised that all the translations use the English word “anger” to translate this Hebrew word in this verse. The context suggests something stronger than anger on the part of God over His reaction to the people’s failure to obediently follow the Mosaic Law. After all, the Israelites had been disobedient for centuries, and God had patiently dealt with them, but by this time, He had run out of patience to the point that His anger or fury had grown to the point of serious discipline. I would have thought that “fury” or “wrath” more definitively expresses God’s attitude towards Israel whose rebellion brought Him to the point of destroying the nation and the Temple at the hands of Babylon. Furthermore, if we consider the Babylonian judgment on Judah, the Temple and the Davidic Throne to be a type of the Tribulation judgment, which I do, then it is significant that God, through the prophet Ezekiel, did call that judgment an exercise in God’s wrath (Ezek. 20:33-34). The Tribulation is described as a time when God’s “wrath [is] poured out.”

Profane, הָלַל, means to pollute, to defile, to desecrate, or to profane. In this situation, it is not the Israelites profaning God or the things of God, which is the usual context when the word is used, but it is God subjecting His people to desecration, defilement, and pollution by delivering them over to a pagan people for punishment. This is part of His divine program for Israel which included blessings for obedience and curses for disobedience and rebellion. Israel was fully warned by Moses that this sort of thing would take place if they failed to obey the Law (Lv. 26; Dt. 28). “The word profaned is used in a similar context in Lam. 2:2, where it is said that Yahweh ‘has brought her kingdom and its princes down to the ground in dishonor.’ According to Whybray it means that Yahweh ‘took away from them the status of a people especially consecrated to his service, with the privileges consequent upon it” [Willem A. VanGemeren, gen. ed., s.v. “הָלַל,” *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis*, 149]. While it is true that Israel was warned that these things would happen to them for rebellion, it is equally true that they never thought that these things would, in fact, happen. After all, they were God’s people, they had the Temple, and they therefore thought they were immune from total destruction.

God’s role in this situation is explicitly revealed when He says, “And I [God] gave them into your [Babylon’s] hand.” The personal pronoun “I” is not included in some translations (including the NASB), although it is included in many of the other translations, some of which are also the more literal translations (LEB, LSV, YLT, CSB, ESV, TANAKH), but it is important to note that as a point of emphasis it is God who gave the nation over to Babylon. The personal pronoun is in the text as part of the construction of the verb, “gave.” Babylon, a pagan nation, could never have destroyed Judah, the Davidic throne, and the Temple without the fact that God gave Judah and the Israelites over to destruction. It is

true that when the pronoun is part of the verb, it is not always translated in the English text, and it is true that the first two clauses in the verse are sufficient to imply that it is God who gave the nation over to destruction at the hands of Babylon. However, given God's relationship to Israel and the warnings He gave them concerning blessing and cursing, it is important to fully understand that God brought this situation about, He caused the Babylonian captivity, and the destruction of both nation and Temple. He did not simply allow it to happen; He caused it to happen. It is a situation totally consistent with His attributes and His plan for history as it involves Israel.

In terms of their treatment of God's people, Babylon went beyond what was necessary to conquer Judah and deport the captives to Babylon. The Bible does not seem to place limits on Babylon's treatment of the people, and the armies of that time and place were viciously cruel. The very nature of siege warfare was exceedingly cruel. God Himself said that the disciplinary measures He imposed on Israel through pagan nations in fulfillment of the curses promises for rebellion would be very harsh (cf. Lv. 26; Dt. 28). It is also true that after Babylon conquered Judah, they did not treat the Jewish captives nearly as badly as other conquering nations would have done if they had conquered Judah. Because of that, Constable believes the issue was not so much the Babylonian's physical cruelty as it was their mental attitude of arrogance [Thomas L. Constable, *Thomas Constable's Notes on the Bible, Volume IV: Isaiah-Daniel*, 4:133]. Oswalt said the same thing. "[History] shows that in the catalogue of empires Babylon's was not especially cruel, the context shows that her real problem was the assumption that since it was her power that had secured her various conquests and since there was none to call her to account, therefore her actions toward the captives, Judean and otherwise, need come before no court of review. Thus the issue is not cruelty but arrogance" [John V. Oswalt, *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament: The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40-66*, 247]. That is comparing apples to oranges. Just because the Babylonians arrogantly thought that they would not be held accountable for mistreating the Israelites does not mean they didn't employ harsh, even cruel, methods in the conquering and subjugation of the Israelites. Furthermore, that thinking seems to be out of line with the concept of a heavy yoke that was laid on the elderly Israelites, and it also seems out of line with other Scriptures that describe the horrors of siege warfare. Jeremiah revealed some of those horrors in Lamentations after Babylon captured the city and razed it.

Lamentations 1:19 ¹⁹"I called to my lovers, *but* they deceived me; My priests and my elders perished in the city While they sought food to restore their strength themselves.

Lamentations 2:21 ²¹On the ground in the streets Lie young and old; My virgins and my young men Have fallen by the sword. You have slain *them* in the day of Your anger, You have slaughtered, not sparing.

Lamentations 5:12 ¹²Princes were hung by their hands; Elders were not respected.

There is no doubt that Babylon did not believe that she would be held accountable for her cruelty, but she was mistaken. "Believing that she would rule the world forever, she did not consider that she might be held accountable for the way she treated captive peoples. Believing that she herself was the highest tribunal, she paid no attention to the results of the choices she was making day by day.... Babylon has forgotten to think about

future accountability, having become totally absorbed in self-aggrandizement and pleasure" [John N. Oswalt, *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament: The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40-66*, 248, 248 n. 32]. The region's secular authorities were not in a position to hold Babylon accountable, but the Creator God of the universe was, and that was exactly what He was going to do. Babylon was indeed a powerful nation and there was no other power in the region that could overcome her, or so she thought. The truth is that Babylon was not nearly in control of her destiny as she thought she was. That was true then, and it will be true in the Tribulation as well. "This is the problem of a people whose gods are simply themselves written large. They have no one outside themselves, over against themselves, to remind them that even if they are the greatest the world has ever seen, they are not the standard of greatness. God is the standard, and all of us, from the greatest human to the least, are measured against him, not ourselves" [John N. Oswalt, *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament: The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40-66*, 247].

Unlike the aforementioned commentators, I think Babylon's cruelty, and not just the nation's mental attitude of arrogance, is an issue in God's judgment of the nation. He used Babylon for His purposes, but He also judged them for their evil methods of operation. "She [Babylon] misused her privilege and opportunity and exhibited cruelty in her dealings, and so she must be humbled. Unawares, Babylon was carrying out the designs and intents of God, yet her own motives were sinful and corrupt" [Edward J. Young, *The Book of Isaiah: A Commentary*, vol. 3, 3:235].

Babylon's cruelty is specifically related to their army's treatment of the elderly Israelites, which was called out in retrospect in Lamentations 5:8. What form that took is not identified, but it was not acceptable, whatever it was. We should not think that this type of cruelty, i.e., elder abuse, was the only cruelty imposed on the Israelites by the Babylonians; it was not. It was used to represent the cruelty in general.

Yoke, עֵל, refers to a piece of equipment that joins two draft animals together at the neck so they can work together as a team. "A yoke was a piece of timber or a heavy wooden pole, shaped to fit over the neck with curved pieces of wood around the neck fastened to a pole, and was used to hitch together a team of draft animals so that they could pull heavy loads evenly" [L. M. Peterson, s.v. "yoke," *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, vol. 5, Q-Z, Merrill C. Tenney, gen. ed., 5:1022]. It is used in a figurative way to refer to something that is a burden to bear such as slavery, heavy burdens, bondage, or hardship that people must endure. Most elderly people cannot bear heavy burdens—figurative or not, and this was apparently a particularly grievous affront to God.

The arrogant attitude of Babylon was exposed. It is nothing but arrogance to suppose that one's nation will last forever in whatever form it happens to take at the time. Certainly, the geography does not change and the people living in the area remain, presuming they are not killed or deported, but history testifies to the fact that nations come and go. Even the most powerful, long-lasting nations in the history of the world have been destroyed and reformed, often in inferior ways.

Isaiah 47:7 ⁷"Yet you said, 'I will be [הַיְהִי] a queen forever [עוֹלָם].' These things you did not consider [שִׁוּם] Nor remember the outcome [אַחֲרֵיתָ] of them.

Not only were other nations and people groups calling Babylon the “queen of kingdoms” (v. 5), but Babylon was calling herself a “queen forever,” or, my preference, a “mistress forever.”

Forever, עולם, may refer to the ancient past, to an indeterminate duration of time, or to everlasting or eternal. In this verse, it refers to perpetuity, i.e., the property of being perpetual or seemingly ceaseless. That is a way of saying that the Babylonians were presuming they were a nation that would last forever; they do not seem to see any end to the nation as they knew it at the time. Obviously, God's true eternal perspective trumps man's faulty temporal perspective every time. Babylon was going to find that out the hard way.

In the NASB translation, there is a Hebrew word in the text that is left untranslated; that word is עַד. It is a preposition meaning, in this context, perpetuity or eternal. The word denotes the unforeseeable future.

“I will be,” הָיְהִי, meaning to come to pass, to become, and to be carries the sense of having the quality of being. It is the same word, אֶהְיֶה, translated “I AM” in Exodus 3:14, God's name, (אֶהְיֶה אֲשֶׁר אֶהְיֶה, “I AM WHO I AM”). Some theologians believe that this is a claim to divinity on the part of Babylon, but that is going beyond what the text is revealing. Instead, this should be understood as a boastful claim on the part of Babylon that the nation controls her own fate as well as the fate of any other nation they want to control. God is informing them that this attitude is wrong and rebellious.

Literal translation:

עַד	גַּבְרַת	אֶהְיֶה	לְעוֹלָם	וַתֹּאמְרִי
eternal	mistress	I will be (or continue)	to eternity	And you said,

There are better ways to translate this clause into English that do not omit any of the Hebrew words and still make sense in English:

Isaiah 47:7 ⁷And you said, “I shall be an eternal mistress forever!” ... (LEB)

Isaiah 47:7 ⁷ You thought, “I shall always be The mistress still.” (TANAKH)

“The mark of Babylon's arrogance was that she assumed that she would continue to rule the world forever. She had defeated Assyria, which had the most powerful world ruler for 300 years, and there was no power on the horizon that Babylon could see that would threaten her sovereignty. She had not considered that all nations are subject to Yahweh's sovereignty, and that no nation is self-sufficient or self-existent. She had failed to consider that someone more powerful than herself could call her to account for her treatment of the people she had conquered” [Thomas L. Constable, “Isaiah” in *Thomas Constable's Notes on the Bible, Volume IV: Isaiah-Daniel, 4:133*].

Every nation that develops into a regional or world power always seems to develop grandiose expectations for the future of their nation. Egypt lasted for a very long time under the rule of the Pharaohs, but it eventually ceased to be a powerful player in Middle Eastern and North African politics. Rome lasted for centuries, but was eventually overrun by ruthless pagan hordes. Hitler thought his Reich was going to last for 1,000 years. More recently, Nikita Khrushchev boasted that communist Russia would bury the USA; twenty years later the Iron Curtain fell. Furthermore, no one thinks their nation is going to end tomorrow, especially if they are a very powerful nation in relation to others. When it happens, it usually happens quite suddenly. That happened to Babylon when Cyrus conquered the city-state, and it will happen quite suddenly to the end times Babylonian world system when it is destroyed by the Messiah King. "It seems that the great tyrants of history are so blinded by their temporary enormous might, that they do not suspect how fragile and vulnerable it really is. They never think that disaster may be lurking just around the corner" [Victor Buksbazen, *The Prophet Isaiah: A Commentary*, 373]. The irony is that Babylon, as an independent superpower who thought she was going to last in perpetuity, lasted for less than a century as an independent national entity.

This kind of thinking is not out of the ordinary for the nations of the world because they all operate according to the standard operating procedures of the world system. It should not really surprise us that nations think this way, including our own. There is no nation in the history of the world that has operated according to a biblical worldview. Some, particularly in Western Civilization because they have had the most exposure to the Word of God, have operated according to Judeo/Christian values of morality and ethics, the category I would put the USA in, but they have not been operated according to a biblical worldview. Some have done that to a greater degree than others, but the nations of the world, no exceptions, are working according to a worldview that is largely informed by a fallen world system of thought and behavior. Whether they don't know or understand a biblical worldview out of benign neglect, they reject it outright due to rebellion, or a combination of both makes no difference; they cannot comprehend what they are doing either way. Operating apart from a biblical worldview is to operate according to the lie rather than to the truth, which results in reasoning skills that are faulty and in a perspective that is warped.

Just as individuals are called to know and obey the will of God, nations are expected to do the same. Babylon did not do that, nor will the Babylon of the future. They never considered that there could be adverse consequences for their behavior. It never entered their mind, or literally their heart, to consider consequences. Who could impose consequences on the mighty Babylon?

Consider, שָׁבַע, means to put, to set, and to place referring to placing or putting by causing an object (single, collection, or mass) to be located in a certain space, often implying the object was moved to the new location. It has the sense of putting or placing by moving or setting into a certain place or abstract location.

A literal translation of this clause in the verse could be: Isaiah 47:7 ⁷Not you set these [matters/things/issues] upon your heart [mind].

Isaiah 47:7 ⁷... You did not set these *things* upon your heart ... (LEB)

“Did not consider” (NASB) or “did not think about” (NET Bible) represent the meaning of the clause in this verse very well, and there is nothing untoward about using them.

Babylon was all about themselves; they thought they were going to continue on forever, and they never considered that there could be an alternative. While Babylon had yet to conquer Judah, the plot to do so may well have been in their mind at this time. Babylonian ambassadors had visited Hezekiah in Jerusalem after they heard about his illness and recovery. Hezekiah foolishly showed them all the treasures of Judah which ultimately led to Judah's demise (2 Kings 20:12-19; Is. 39:1-8). While the Babylonians must have known of Sennacherib's defeat by God in Judah, they also knew that Assyria had defeated the Northern Kingdom and destroyed them as a sovereign Israelite nation. As a result, they may have presumed the same scenario would play out on their behalf when they invaded Judah. Of course, that is exactly what happened, but not because God favored Babylon. He simply used them as His instrument to discipline Judah.

Babylon, however, failed to realize that God works in ways that man cannot comprehend, and the might of Babylon would ultimately prove to be no match for Him. “Would not Babylon's victory demonstrate that while God was able to deliver [Judah] from Assyria, he could not deliver [Judah] from Babylon? ... Babylon, no less than Assyria, would be acting at God's behest, and this being the case, God is not inferior to Babylon. He is the same God, and is able to deliver, whether before the conquest or after. He who is above history is not threatened or diminished by its changing circumstances” [John V. Oswalt, *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament: The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40-66*, 247, n. 29]. These are things Babylon failed to consider.

This prophecy played out exactly as predicted when Belshazzar was partying while the enemy at his gate was about to ruin his reign and conquer his country. He should have learned from his grandfather Nebuchadnezzar who encountered God and came out of it as a wiser king and as a believer.

Daniel 4:34–37 ³⁴“But at the end of that period, I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven and my reason returned to me, and I blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him who lives forever; For His dominion is an everlasting dominion, And His kingdom endures from generation to generation. ³⁵“All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, But He does according to His will in the host of heaven And among the inhabitants of earth; And no one can ward off His hand Or say to Him, ‘What have You done?’ ³⁶“At that time my reason returned to me. And my majesty and splendor were restored to me for the glory of my kingdom, and my counselors and my nobles began seeking me out; so I was reestablished in my sovereignty, and surpassing greatness was added to me. ³⁷“Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise, exalt and honor the King of heaven, for all His works are true and His ways just, and He is able to humble those who walk in pride.”

When the facts are ignored and rejected, it becomes impossible to reckon the end of the issue.

Outcome, אֶחָרִית, means following, outcome, the latter part, last, or the end referring to the last point of a period of time. It has the sense of a final state, hence it is a reference to the future. The word is used here in a chronological sense. Babylon is incapable of discerning the future of the nation from the standpoint of the present.

"Babylon's hubris grew to the point that the nation boasted about its permanence. The nation, however, neglected to evaluate the consequences of their actions against God's people. They did not recognize that Israel was God's special possession and that even in punishment Israel was to be treated with respect" [Michael Rydelnik and James Spencer, "Isaiah" in *The Moody Bible Commentary*, 1077].

"... 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; such, indeed, that it had not called to remembrance as even possible 'the latter end of it,' i.e., the inevitably evil termination of its tyranny and presumption" [C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament: Isaiah*, vol. 7, 7:457].

The lesson here seems to be that God will use pagans to accomplish His purposes, but that does not mean they will not suffer the consequences their pagan behavior merits. Pagans don't get brownie points for being an entity that God uses to advance His plan for history; they will face a righteous judgment based on the merits just like everyone else.

Young recognized the eschatological significance of Babylon's destruction and linked it to the Second Coming. "Babylon should have remembered (i.e., been mindful of) the latter part of the events that were transpiring. Babylon would have a future to which she should have given thought. That future would be destruction. She would be deposed from her throne, whereas the captive daughter of Zion would once more be exalted and the period of her salvation would dawn. Babylon's *latter end* is the prelude to Israel's dawn when the Dayspring from on high will visit the earth" [Edward J. Young, *The Book of Isaiah: A Commentary*, vol. 3, 3:36-37].