

ISAIAH

ISAIAH 47:8-10, BABYLON'S DOWNFALL, PART 3

God pronounces judgment on Babylon and in so doing provides additional information on the arrogant attitude of the pagan nation. The Babylonians convinced themselves that they were invincible, and they would never experience anything other than success for ages to come. This was true during the time of Isaiah, and it will be true when the Babylonian one world system is operating in full force during the end.

Isaiah 47:8 ⁸“Now, then, hear this, you sensual [עֲדִיין] one, Who dwells securely [בְּטָחָה], Who says in your heart [לִבְּךָ], ‘I am, and there is no one besides me. I will not sit as a widow, Nor know loss of children.’

Babylon is metaphorically described here as a sensual, voluptuous women living a luxurious lifestyle at the expense of other people and nations.

Sensual, עֲדִיין, means voluptuous, sensuous, or luxuriant. In terms of luxury, it has the sense of being luxurious and living in a state displaying luxury and furnishing gratification to the senses. Being voluptuous and sensual, pertains to being beautiful and desirable, implying sensuality and desirability. As a metaphor, it “refers figuratively to Babylon, a wanton, sensuous people, enamored with gold, silver, royal dominion, power, and banqueting” [Baker and Carpenter, s.v. “עֲדִיין,” *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: Old Testament*, 808]. It has the sense of being accustomed to the good life. It “conveys the air of thoughtless self-indulgence on the part of one who assumes that luxury is her right by reason of incomparable eminence” [John N. Oswalt, *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament: The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40-66*, 248].

The primary problem with Babylon, only behind being separated from God, is that she acquired the luxurious life she lived at the expense of other people and nations. These were not benign takeovers either; they were marked by violence and cruelty. Plundering and conquering nations, and the means used to accomplish the mission, so that one can live off of the wealth and the labor of others is an entirely evil way of life. It is obvious how covetousness and a mindset driven by violence and thievery are hallmarks of the Babylonian worldview. Cloaking it as a mark of the divine favor of pagan entities compounds the problem by replacing the Creator God with images of the creation that can do nothing, but are nevertheless worshiped in place of Yahweh. Idols, fashioned in the image of man and nature, are therefore morally challenged; they represent that which is fallen. Therefore, the worship of them involves that which is fallen. Pagan worship celebrates evil, not good. Eventually, God is going to have His fill of Babylon, her ways and her idol worship, and He will completely remove that entity and that worldview from the earth, but that will not happen until the end of the Tribulation. Babylon does not exist as a nation today, but the Babylonian worldview is still alive and active in the world. Immorality and evil are major components of that worldview. Furthermore, mankind, operating in concert on a worldwide basis, is united around the common goal of working together against God. What we are observing today is the Tower of Babel mindset still operative. Satan has been trying to reestablish that one-world mindset since God tore it apart at Babel,

and it will manifest itself once again, at the end of history as we know it, in a worldwide, dominating way.

The words “and now” or “and so then” begin this verse. This serves as a marker to emphasize that what has immediately preceded is true; therefore, heed what follows, because it is true as well.

“Hear this” is a command. God is speaking to Babylon and Babylon needs to listen up, but the nation does not care what God has to say to them. History proves that the Babylonians, operating out of their pagan, God-rebelling mindset, learned nothing from these words. They do not believe in Him, and they do not believe that this God has the ability to harm them. Besides the fact that they do not recognize Yahweh as the God of the universe, they are confident in their ability to be self-sufficient and immune from harm, but there is nothing that can keep them from facing God's judgment, which these verses are revealing.

First of all, the Babylonians think they dwell securely. Securely, *בְּטָחָה*, means security, securely, trust, and confidence that generates a feeling of security, i.e., a state of being free from anxiety or fear. It represents being in a state of calm assurance, well-being, and a feeling of security. This is generally a positive word, but in this context, it is a negative term relating to the fact that Babylon's smug reliance on her own ability to protect herself and to continue to abuse others and live a luxurious lifestyle is misplaced and overrated. Eventually, it will be proved to be a false sense of security based on the wrong things. What is also being presented here is the foolishness of rejecting reliance on God and replacing it with reliance on self, that is, on Babylon herself as a powerful political entity, which can only result in destruction.

These feelings of superiority and security based on power are firmly rooted in the deep, dark recesses of the psyche of Babylon and her people. The heart, *לֵבָב*, refers to the inner man regarding the soul and life, mind, will, and, of course, to the physical organ, the heart. The word has the sense of that which is internally the locus of a person's thoughts (mind), volition, emotions, and knowledge of right from wrong (conscience) understood as the heart. In this context, it is applied to the mode of thinking and acting that arises out of a perverse, Babylonian heart.

The concept of security extends to spiritual security as well. Marduk and Nebo were the primary pagan deities of Babylon, and they certainly placed their trust in those entities. It was misplaced trust to be sure, but they had faith in their false gods.

“I am” represents the fact that Babylon is claiming to be her own god. This is a claim to self-sufficiency, autonomy, and power; in other words, it is a claim that the attributes of God are found in Babylon. It is expressing their belief that they were the most formidable, unequalled nation in that region of the world at the time. It is a claim to the possession of such absolute power that no one could oppose them and their national ambitions in the region. “No one besides me” is a claim to superiority, autonomous authority, and self-sufficiency totally apart from God. This is the same claim that God made for Himself a number of times in Isaiah, but only He can proclaim it as truth. Remember, the Babylonian pagans did know the one true God because He has placed that knowledge in the heart

of every person (Rom. 1:18-20). That makes what they believe in their heart particularly grievous. "Babylon is claiming the same uniqueness that God claimed for himself, claiming the same sovereignty that only God has, and claiming such an absolute status that it leaves no room for God's role in this world. This is the height of foolish overconfidence, for any nation that claims to have absolute authority is sure to face the wrath of an angry God who will not share his glory with anyone else" [Gary V. Smith, *The New American Commentary: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture: Isaiah 40-66*, 305].

"Babylon speaks of herself in the most exalted of terms. As the true God, the Lord of hosts, had spoken of Himself, 'I am the Lord, and beside Me there is none else,' so Babylon adopted similar language, frivolously deifying herself. Here is the pinnacle of Babylon's pride; here is the self-confidence of the kingdom that sought to oppose itself to and exalt itself above the kingdom of God" [Edward J. Young, *The Book of Isaiah: A Commentary*, vol. 3, 3:237].

The notion that Babylon deliberately challenged God by the "I am" statement is probably a bit overdone. I doubt the Babylonians knew that, but it is nevertheless a claim to being their own god.

It is interesting to note that Assyria, the nation that destroyed the Northern Kingdom, also thought she was her own god.

Zephaniah 2:15 ¹⁵This is the exultant city [Nineveh] Which dwells securely, Who says in her heart, "I am, and there is no one besides me." ...

Babylon thought that she would never face the heartaches that are the normal consequences of being conquered by a hostile force. She thought that she would never be a widow, that she would never see her children killed, and that her luxurious world would never be rocked by anything unpleasant, certainly not by destruction of the city-state. This is really a metaphor for the totality of the Babylonian kingdom. "Having imaged Babylon as a woman, Isaiah is simply being consistent with the image, choosing the worst things that could happen to a woman in the ancient Near East to convey the character of Babylon's coming loss. She insists that she is above whatever the common herd might be liable to. The prophet says she is not" [John N. Oswalt, *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament: The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40-66*, 249]. The metaphor represents the thinking that the Babylonians would not be without support as widows were at that time, which was a terrible existence for most widows, and that they would not be alone in the world as being without children implies.

Babylon would no longer be the mistress of nations; instead, she herself would be subject to those nations. The Babylonians thought their kingdom would last forever and that they would never lose any of the nations that they conquered and subjugated, not to mention the wealth and the labor force they provided. They simply could not conceive of any scenario where their present situation would not continue on into the indefinite future.

Isaiah 47:9 ⁹“But these two things will come on you suddenly [רָגַעַ] in one day: Loss [שְׁכֹוֹל] of children and widowhood. They will come on you in full measure [לְמִם] In spite of your many sorceries [קְשָׁפִי], In spite of the great power [עֲצָמָה] of your spells [הַכָּרִי].

Despite Babylon's confidence in her ability to fend off any dangerous situations, she would be suddenly overcome. All that submitted to her authority were going to be freed from her dominion, and when it happens, it will happen suddenly.

Suddenly, רָגַעַ, means a wink, hence a moment in time, an instant, in a flash referring to a very brief period of time. It has the sense of an indefinitely short time, i.e., a moment as a period of time. In the NASB, the word is most often translated moment, suddenly, instant or instantly. It can also refer to a calm period of time.

We know that the city of Babylon was conquered by the Medo-Persians in a night, although they had been marching toward that goal and conquering the area around the city for some time, and the Babylonians were not, could not have been, unaware of it. The suddenness of what happened here involves the unexpected entry into the city that allowed it to be conquered in mere hours (Dan. 5). The Babylonians knew the Medo-Persian Army was just outside the walls, but they thought they could withstand a siege for a very prolonged period of time. The final destruction of Babylon will be even more immediate and unexpected (Rev. 18, 19:11-21), and it will also be complete and permanent, or at least “permanent” for 1,000 years.

Babylon was going to become a widow and lose her children in one day. According to this metaphor, that is a reference to the subservient client states that supported Babylon, but that were themselves destined to become part of the Medo-Persian empire once Babylon was defeated.

“Widowhood and the loss of children will unexpectedly come on her, leaving Babylon without material support and protection. To be childless was a great shame in the ancient Near Eastern world and was a threat to a woman's status, honor, and continued existence when she grew old. To have her citizens' taxes sent elsewhere and her vassals' tribute contribute to the wealth of another king meant that Babylon would be doomed” [Gary V. Smith, *The New American Commentary: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture: Isaiah 40-66*, 306].

Once the Persians, in turn, lost Babylon, Greece controlled it and then Rome. Since that time, various dictators and regimes have controlled the city, but it has never been completely destroyed as it will be at the end of the Tribulation. The Persians treated people better than the Babylonians, so Persian rule was presumably a step up from subjugation to Babylon, but these nations were still not free. They just changed one dictatorial king for another.

Loss, שְׁכֹוֹל, means bereavement, loss of children, or desolation. It is a word referring to bereavement over the loss of children, i.e., the state or condition of a parent losing children to death, a state associated with a needy class of citizens. It primarily refers to the loss of children, but may refer to other loved ones as well.

Babylon's defeat is going to be complete.

Full measure, מֵלֵא, means complete, wholeness, fullness, or perfection. What is going to happen to Babylon is intended by God to happen, and it will completely fulfill His will for the nation. Babylon was destroyed as a nation by the Medo-Persians, but the city still existed; the only thing that changed was the identity of the nation ruling over it. The spirit of the Babylonian worldview lived on and it still exists today. When Babylon is destroyed at the end of history by the Lord, Babylon will only then be completely removed from having any impact on other people and nations.

"I can find no time in history when it can be said conclusively that Babylon ceased to exist. Her population has risen and fallen through the ages, but there has never been a time when the city has been completely abandoned. Babylon declined in importance after the establishment of Seleucia, Ctesiphon, and Baghdad, but it retained its significance as a religious center. The worship of Marduk and other Babylonian religions continued through the centuries" [Charles H. Dyer, *The Rise of Babylon: Is Iraq at the Center of the Final Drama?* rev. ed., 109].

We do know that Babylon is going to be completely gone once the Babylonian world system is destroyed at the end of the Tribulation. We discussed this earlier in Isaiah 13. The complete and final destruction of Babylon will not be complete until the end of history.

Isaiah 13:20–22 ²⁰It [Babylon] will never be inhabited or lived in from generation to generation; Nor will the Arab pitch *his* tent there, Nor will shepherds make *their flocks* lie down there. ²¹But desert creatures will lie down there, And their houses will be full of owls; Ostriches also will live there, and shaggy goats will frolic there. ²²Hyenas will howl in their fortified towers And jackals in their luxurious palaces. Her *fateful* time also will soon come And her days will not be prolonged.

Jeremiah 50-51 also predicts the final destruction of Babylon.

Jeremiah 50:13, 39-40 ¹³"Because of the indignation of the LORD she will not be inhabited, But she will be completely desolate; Everyone who passes by Babylon will be horrified And will hiss because of all her wounds.... ³⁹"Therefore the desert creatures will live *there* along with the jackals; The ostriches also will live in it, And it will never again be inhabited Or dwell in from generation to generation. ⁴⁰"As when God overthrew Sodom And Gomorrah with its neighbors," declares the LORD, "No man will live there, Nor will *any* son of man reside in it.

Babylon's pagan gods will stand helpless before God when He completely defeats Babylon. Babylon has sorceries and powerful spells, but God is the most powerful being in existence and nothing can withstand the exercise of His power when He wields it.

We must not think that the sorceries of evil are not powerful and therefore not dangerous. Sorcerers wield real power, but it is power is exercised for evil and not for good. What makes sorcery a false display of power is not that it is trickery or fake, it isn't, but that it is powered and animated by an evil source. God's power is only and always used for good. Pagan displays of power point to evil and are therefore false.

Sorcery, כְּשָׁף, means sorcery, witchcraft, occult magic, or incantations. It is associated with enchantments and soothsaying. The word is always used in a plural form and often associated with the word "numerous." The plural form may represent different manners of manifestation, or it may be plurals of intensification. "Magic (sorcery and witchcraft) was common in the ANE [Ancient Near East] and inseparable from the practice of religion, involving the use of spells, incantations, charms/amulets, and special rituals to manipulate natural powers and to influence situations, people, and gods" [Willem A. VanGemeren, s.v. "כְּשָׁף," *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis*, 2:735]. Sorcery in all its forms was strictly forbidden in the Mosaic Law. If sorcery was simply some harmless practice, it doesn't seem likely that such strong prohibitions against sorcery would have been revealed. If sorcery was a harmless practice that had no adverse consequences in the lives of its adherents, then of what harm is it? It is harmful in many ways and is therefore prohibited.

Exodus 22:18 ¹⁸"You shall not allow a sorceress to live.

Leviticus 19:26 ²⁶"You shall not ... practice divination or soothsaying.

Deuteronomy 18:10–11 ¹⁰"There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, one who uses divination, one who practices witchcraft, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, ¹¹or one who casts a spell, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead.

In Babylon, the Chaldeans were the ruling class and, as part of that class, they were also astrologers which included not just a study of the heavenly bodies themselves, but also the relationship between the heavens and divination. Babylon and sorcery were intimately linked, but reliance on sorcery will not be enough to prevent Babylon's destruction.

Earlier I quoted Jeremiah to indicate that Babylon will never again be inhabited when Babylon and its world system is destroyed at the end. Leading up to that declaration are the reasons for it, and one of those reasons is the work of the oracle priests and the nation's idolatry.

Jeremiah 50:34–38 ³⁴"Their Redeemer is strong, the LORD of hosts is His name; He will vigorously plead their case So that He may bring rest to the earth, But turmoil to the inhabitants of Babylon. ³⁵"A sword against the Chaldeans," declares the LORD, "And against the inhabitants of Babylon And against her officials and her wise men! ³⁶"A sword against the oracle priests, and they will become fools! A sword against her mighty men, and they will be shattered! ³⁷"A sword against their horses and against their chariots And against all the foreigners who are in the midst of her, And they will become women! A sword against her treasures, and they will be plundered! ³⁸"A drought on her waters, and they will be dried up! For it is a land of idols, And they are mad over fearsome idols.

I would not get dogmatic about it, but there seems to be another clue in these verses that indicate an end times destruction of Babylon is the context. Notice that a "sword," singular, will be brought against Babylon. How will the end times' Babylon be destroyed?

It will not be destroyed by multiple swords wielded by a large army, but it will be by One wielding a sword, singular!

Revelation 19:21 ²¹And the rest were killed with the sword which came from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse ...

Using the singular in Jeremiah is grammatically correct in terms of referring to an army that is conquering a nation, but when we realize that it will be the Lord Himself and Him alone, armed with a sword, the Word of God (cf. Eph. 6:17), that destroys Babylon and the world system at the end, it seems at least prudent to consider the possibility that Jeremiah and Revelation should be considered as parallel passages to understand the final destruction of Babylon in both Scriptures.

The pagan nation thought their powerful spells could protect them from any threat they faced. They thought their nation was going to continue forever, and one of the reasons was their reliance on sorcery and on the spells that pagan priests cast.

Power, *עֲצָמָה*, means might, strength, or power. In this context, it refers to the possession of controlling influences, understood as manifesting influence over reality in a supernatural manner. It may refer to physical strength and power, or it may be used as a reference to social and political power. In this verse, it is referring to the power that is exercised by means of casting pagan spells.

Spells, *הַכֶּבֶר*, means an incantation, a charm, or a magic spell referring to a verbal formula believed to have magical force. It has the sense of an illicit religious charm to invoke power, either verbal or possibly by actions. It generally means to bind or cast a spell. "The usual translation is 'enchantments' referring to the means the charmers employed to influence people or the result of their charming efforts" [Harris, Archer, Jr., and Waltke, s.v. "הַכֶּבֶר," *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, 259-260]. The word also means company, association, or fellowship. "[T]he word translated *spells* means 'bonds', with the idea here of entering into 'associations' with occult powers in order to 'bind' the future; *sorceries* are the incantations used to invoke these powers" [J. Alec Motyer, *Isaiah: An Introduction & Commentary*, 298].

Archaeologists have discovered books that reveal details of the Babylonians' desire to understand the future by means of astrology and religious rituals. Their thinking was that the gods of nature were communicating things to people through created things. Such things as cities, animals, fire, houses and human relations all held some sort of message or meaning according to the gods that could be interpreted by the appropriate pagan authorities. Dreams, deformed animals or humans, rising smoke, the pattern formed when oil was dropped on water, or examining the entrails of sacrificed animals could be part of this process. Astrological signs were also interpreted as messages from the gods, and these included the movements of various heavenly bodies or an eclipse. Various events concerning weather such as thunderstorms and their related effects and cloud formations were open to interpretation [Gary V. Smith, *The New American Commentary: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Scripture: Isaiah 40-66*, 306].

“Isaiah indicates that these religious leaders, which Daniel calls magicians, diviners, Chaldeans, and enchanters (Dan 1:20; 2:2, 27), will not have any impact on God’s plans. They may cast many spells to attempt to remove dangers and use their broad knowledge of magic and charms to try to prevent the fall of Babylon, but their efforts will be a waste of time, for God has decreed the destiny of Babylon” [Gary V. Smith, *The New American Commentary: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Scripture: Isaiah 40-66*, 306].

The haughty Babylonian mindset is informed by wickedness even though they thought their worldview was informed by wisdom and knowledge. They were mistaken then, and those who hold to this same wicked, Babylonian worldview in the future will also be mistaken.

Isaiah 47:10 ¹⁰“You felt secure [בָּטַח] in your wickedness [רָעָה] and said, ‘No one sees me,’ Your wisdom [חָכְמָה] and your knowledge [דַּעַת], they have deluded you; For you have said in your heart, ‘I am, and there is no one besides me.’”

Secure, בָּטַח, means trust, to be confident, or to set one’s hope and confidence referring to having trust, relying on, or putting confidence in such that a person or object is believed in to the point of reliance upon. It has the sense trusting or having faith in relating to having strong confidence or reliance on someone or something. The concept of security enters the definition because “it expresses the feeling of safety and security that is felt when one can rely on someone or something else.... [T]his expression can also relate to the state of being confident, secure, without fear” [Baker and Carpenter, s.v. “בָּטַח,” *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: Old Testament*, 128]. The word expresses the feeling of being safe and secure.

Wickedness, רָעָה, means evil, bad, wickedness, wrongdoing, and depravity referring to that which is not morally good (as an opposite or perversion of goodness), so with an implication that the event or action is harmful in various ways. In this context, this is a reference to morally objectionable behavior.

Babylon was confident and secure in its position in the region. Their evil ways had served them well to this point in history. Every successful nation feels some degree of security in doing things that have been successful, and, of course, every politically and militarily successful nation always falls at some point as well. Babylon thought they would never fall; the godless, evil ways that had served them so well would continue to do so, or so they thought. No one, at least to the point here in the context, could stop them from acting that way, and they thought they could continue on their evil way forever. Their attitude was one of indifference to what other people and nations thought of them. They would bully, force, and conquer them into acquiescence. Babylon thought she was the epitome of nations, and she was therefore above any discipline or correction. Everyone saw them, of course, and everyone was well aware of what Babylon was doing to everyone else. The point is that Babylon thought no one could ever do to them what they had been doing to others, and they were above any sort of advice or chastisement related to changing their behavior, hence, “no one sees me.”

What is the wickedness in which Babylon was immersed? Certainly, pagan religion, including the sorceries and rituals associated with it, was wicked. “Ethics is of no religious

significance in such a world [the pagan world and its use of magic of manipulate the God created natural order]. For the biblical writers, who knew that God is not part of this world, and that ethics is at the heart of the divine-human relationship, magic was not so much a mistake as it was an abomination" [John N. Oswalt, *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament: The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40-66*, 250]. In terms of ethics, the Babylonians had no hesitancy to invade other nations and treat other people in brutal ways—killing, starving, raping, torturing, and enslaving them. In all fairness, that was standard operating procedure for all the armies of that time, but that simply highlights the lack of ethics commonly found within pagan worldviews. This too is part of the wicked nature of Babylon.

Another aspect of Babylon's wickedness is their rejection of the Creator God, only to replace Him with a satanic world view resulting in pagan thought and worship practices. That was true of the Babylon of old, and that will be true of the end times Babylonian world system as well. Because Babylon was so wise in and knowledgeable about occult practices, the nation thought she was above any reproach or advice from others. What everyone else might believe Babylon was doing was wicked, Babylon thought it was her right to do. Babylon had her own standards. The standards of others meant nothing to them.

A third aspect of Babylon's wickedness was their treatment of Israel (cf. Is. 47:6). God used them to impose His divine temporal discipline on the nation, but in so doing they apparently exceeded the boundaries of His will and were going to be themselves judged for so doing.

Pagan wisdom and knowledge would prove to be a faulty foundation for building a nation that the people think is going to exist in perpetuity.

Wisdom, *חָכְמָה*, primarily means wisdom, but it also may refer to technical skill, or shrewdness. It refers to the ability to apply knowledge, experience, understanding, or common sense and insight. It may also refer to wisdom that is accumulated knowledge, erudition, or enlightenment. Wisdom is thought of as the capacity to understand and so have skill in living implying adherence to a set of standards. Notice however, that the standards are not defined. Standards are what they are according to the people or culture that develops them, and they may or they may not be developed in a society according to God's standards; therefore, standards may or may not be moral, and they may or they may not be according to truth. True wisdom is moral and it is developed according to truth which makes true wisdom godly, because God is truth. The world's wisdom is amoral, developed according to lies, and ungodly.

People can be intelligent and, at the same time, incredibly lacking in wisdom. People may be incredibly smart and educated, but what they do with what they know is the real issue that indicates whether or not they are operating within the parameters of true wisdom.

"Wisdom in general, and worldly wisdom in particular, was universal to humankind created in the image of God; Babylonians, men of the East, Egyptians, and Edomites could obtain it or be found with it. Wrongly used, however, for self-adulation or self-

aggrandizement, this wisdom could be deadly" [Baker and Carpenter, s.v. "הַכְּמָה," *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: Old Testament*, 337].

Knowledge, דַעַת, means knowledge, knowing, learning, insight, or discernment. Knowing may come by means of experience, relationship, or encounter. As with wisdom, knowledge may be founded on what is good or on what is evil. Good knowledge may be used for good, or it can be misused or ignored, and bad knowledge can mislead and destroy.

Babylon had a lot of wisdom and knowledge, but these were not assets founded on the knowledge and wisdom of God. They had their astrology and their sorceries. They had a powerful, successful, and seemingly undefeatable army. They had wealth. They had political influence. This led to a haughty attitude of superiority and invincibility. All of these things enabled Babylon to become the powerful nation that she was, but the nation could not remain that way apart from God's divine permission. They seemingly had it all, but they lacked a relationship with the God who is the basis for wisdom and knowledge. We tend to think that wisdom and knowledge solve every problem we face, but they do not. When misused, they can create problems on their own.

Wisdom and knowledge not used according to the manner in which God originally designed man to use those attributes, are useless, even counterproductive.

Proverbs 1:7 ⁷The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; Fools despise wisdom and instruction.

The qualities that Babylon exalted were qualities that led the nation astray. The word translated "deluded" in the NASB is שׁוּב which simply means to turn back, to return. In this context, it relates to "turning aside from one way to another, the leading into a wrong path" [Edward J. Young, *The Book of Isaiah: A Commentary*, vol. 3, 3:240]. The kind of wisdom and knowledge that Babylon possessed were of the wrong kind. Wisdom and knowledge not used according to the manner in which God originally designed man to use those attributes, are useless, even counterproductive.

In the end, Babylon is turned aside to tread the wrong path because the nation thinks it is divine. In verse 8, the nation was described as having the attitude that it is a divine nation. The revelation here reveals that Babylon was secure in her wickedness because of her self-described divine status among the nations. As a god nation, Babylon believed she was beyond reproach and that no one was going to do anything about it. They didn't worry about the one true God and His judgment because they did not believe in Him. Because Babylon thought herself a divine nation, she also thought she was accountable to no one. This is part of the delusion under which Babylon was operating.