

SERMON OUTLINE

Speaker: Rev Peter Chan

Text : **Isaiah 46:1–47:15**

Title : **God's Message of Comfort and Condemnation!**

Introduction

Although today's sermon is the seventh of our series on Isaiah 40 to 66, it is still necessary for us to look again the historical contexts.

There is a 150-year gap between Isaiah 39 and 40. Isaiah looks to the future for comfort in the present.

ISAIAH 40 – 48: BOOK OF CYRUS ¹	
Reference	Theme
40:1–11	Prologue: God's Incomparable Word
40:12–41:29	A. God's Superiority
42:1–43:13	B. God's Servants
43:14–44:23	C. God's Grace
44:24–45:25	D. God's Agent Cyrus
46:1–47:15	E. God's Judgment
48:1–22	Epilogue: God's Incomparable Word

Jubilation For God's People (Isaiah 46)

Jubilation for God's people is predicated on:

- God's **power** over Babylonian idols (e.g. *Bel* and *Nebo*) (vv. 1 – 2)
- God's **pleasure** in upholding and bearing up Jacob; God is incomparable in His dealing with Israel (vv. 3 – 7)
- God's **purpose** as proclaimed in the past and are now being carried out, similarly His Word about His future plan will not fail; it will come to past; Israel needs to remember the events recounted in Isaiah 1 – 33 (vv. 8 – 11)
- God's **promise** to deliver Jerusalem and display His glory in among His people (vv. 12 – 13)

Two main contrasts/comparisons being made in this chapter:

(1) Babylonian idols that are being carried / supported and Israel being carried and cared for by God;

(2) God's purpose to use Cyrus to restore His people and Israel's objection to God's plan.

Restoration of God's people is assured and regardless of her objection, God's purpose will prevail!

To be continued on page 5.....

¹Smith, J. E. (1992). *Survey of the Old Testament: The Major Prophets*, Joplin, Mo.: College Press.

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Judgment Against God's Enemies (Isaiah 47)

Here's what God's judgment against Babylon entails:

- Babylon will be *shamed* as God's judgment (vv. 1 – 3)
- Israel *sing* in agreement with the Lord's judgment (vv. 4 – 5)
- Babylon and Israel – their status will be *switched* (vv. 6 – 7)
- Babylon will *suffer* “double tragedies” – loss of husband and children (vv. 8 – 9)
- Babylon will be *shocked* with disappointment that her “wisdom and spell” did not avert the calamity God will be bringing upon them (vv 10 – 11)
- God mocks Babylon – making *sarcastic* comments on Babylon's misplaced confidence in sage, sorcery, and spell (vv. 12 – 15)

Babylon is portrayed here as the symbol of humanity – our inclination towards sin (pride), self-delusion, and self-sufficiency, setting us up against God – His purpose and principles! The last Book of the Bible, Revelation, uses Babylon in the similar manner (16:19; 17:5; 18:10, 21). Thus, both the prophet Isaiah and apostle John (Revelation) see that God's judgment is not only directed against Babylon but against all that she stood for in the world.

Truth for Life

- God's ways are not our ways (Isaiah 55:8–9). Thus, we must entrust ourselves to His wisdom; after all, He is the God who sees the end from the beginning (Proverbs 3:5–6)!
- In whom or what do we place our confidence or security? If it's not God, then it's *God-less* – i.e. idolatry!
- Are we *spiritual descendants of Babylon*? Do we place our confidence in sage (gurus), stars and statistics? If we are *spiritual descendants of Abraham* (Romans 4), then we should live by God's wisdom and guidance – not by our senses and the stars (2 Corinthians 5:7)?