

Isaiah Chapter 47, Hebrew Text with Translation and Footnotes

47:1¹ רָדִי וּשְׁבִי עַל-עֶפְרַיִם בְּתוֹלַת בֵּית-בְּבֻלָּה

¹Slotki entitles **chapter 47** “The Humiliation of Babylon.” (P. 229)

North entitles the chapter “Babylon’s Pride and Fall.”

He comments that “This magnificent taunt-song is a single poem...The first two paragraphs are obvious enough: in **verses 1-4** Babylon is a luxury-loving lady who is to be degraded to the status of the meanest slave; in **verses 5-7** she is a heartless tyrant; in **verses 8-9** bereavement, sudden and irreparable, is to come to her; in **verses 10-11** she is to be engulfed in utter ruin. In **verses 12-13** she is bidden to call her sorcerers and astrologers to save her, if they can! In vain, their only concern, and that of her ‘traffickers,’ is to save themselves, regardless of her fate (**verses 14-15**).

“The ‘tenses’ of the verbs indicate that the poem is predictive, not descriptive after the event. Babylon did, of course, fall to Cyrus, and Herodotus speaks of ‘the poverty which followed upon the conquest with its attendant hardship and general ruin.’ But it was still one of the wonder-cities of the world, rather like Venice in her decline...

“Babylon’s ill-treatment of the Jews is briefly described but does not stand in the foreground. The indictment is directed more against her overweening pride and utter heartlessness (compare **14:4-21**). This, perhaps, is the main reason why Babylon, not Assyria, came to be the type of Antichrist (compare **Revelation 17-18**). The Assyrians were ruthlessly cruel. Nineveh was sacked and passed into oblivion. Babylon lived on and even enjoyed a brief revival of her earlier splendor under Alexander the Great. Nebuchadrezzar was a great king, with qualities different from those of an Assyrian Tiglath-Pileser. But he survived in legend, not unjustly, as swell-headed and rather ridiculous (**Daniel 3-4**). And so Babylon went into a slow decline, to become the standing example of what happens to a civilization made rotten by wealth and self-indulgence.” (P. 169)

Oswalt entitles this chapter “God arraigns proud Babylon.” He entitles **verses 1-4** “Babylon’s humiliation.”

He comments on the chapter that “Having already illustrated God’s uniqueness and sovereignty by reference to the Gods of Babylon, the prophet now turns to Babylon itself. He represents the city and its empire as a beautiful and arrogant woman who is forced to abandon her pretensions and take the place of a slave. All the things on which she relied, not the least of which was her own self-confidence, will be shown to have been a false hope. The nations of earth have no hope, except in Israel’s God (compare **Isaiah 45:21-23**). Having refused Him by insisting that she is self-existent (**verses 7, 8, 10**), Babylon has no possibility of deliverance (**verse 15**.)” (P. 240)

Alexander states that in the 19th century literature commenting on **chapter 47**, “we again meet with the most discordant and unfounded assumptions, as to the

(continued...)

¹(...continued)

connection of this chapter with the context, and arising from the same misapprehension of the general design of the whole prophecy.” (P. 195)

He suggests the true analysis to be that “Having exemplified his general doctrine, as to God’s ability and purpose to do justice both to friends and foes, by exhibiting the downfall of the Babylonian idols, he now attains the same end by predicting the downfall of Babylon itself, and of the State to which it gave its name. Under the figure of a royal virgin, she is threatened with extreme degradation and exposure (**verses 1-3**). Connecting this event with Israel and Israel’s God, as the great themes which it was intended to illustrate (**verse 4**), he predicts the fall of the empire more distinctly (**verse 5**), and assigns as a reason the oppression of God’s people (**verse 6**), pride and self-confidence (**verses 7-9**), especially reliance upon human wisdom and upon superstitious arts, all which would prove entirely insufficient to prevent the great catastrophe (**verses 10-15**).” (P. 196)

Knight states that “This chapter belongs to a genre that occurs elsewhere in the **Old Testament**, for example at **Isaiah 13-14** and **Jeremiah 50-51**. It is an elegy [a poem of serious reflection, typically a lament for the dead] on the coming overthrow of Babylon. As such it is a unity, a single poem in several strophes...It follows naturally as the obverse [opposite or counterpart] of the promise which came at the last verse of the preceding chapter.”

Knight then brings up the matter of Babylon being addressed as a “Queen.” He states that “A queen is addressed as ‘thou’ in Hebrew. So here the queen city also is ‘thou’...for she is a corporate personality or a unitary identity in the sight of God. Moreover, she is called a *virgin* even though she is married, on the ground that she has not yet been exposed (**verse 3**)...”

“What kind of pampered and artificial existence did the queen lead in the royal quarters? **Deuteronomy 28:56** reads as follows of a lady: ‘The most tender and delicately bred woman among you, who would not venture to set the sole of her foot upon the ground because she is so delicate and tender.’ We can well imagine what this queen’s small-minded and circumscribed life would be like...”

“So the glittering civilization of Babylon was small-minded and artificial in the eyes of Israel’s God [or in the eyes of **Second Isaiah**?] Although she was the greatest city in the world, the mighty emporium of Eastern trade, beautiful and adorned with the riches of empire, her culture was describable only in terms of *tohu*, vanity [chaos], in respect of God’s plan. Archaeology has revealed just a little of Babylon’s former glory—her mighty temples, her exquisite palaces, the colonnaded streets of the sacred areas, the gate of Ishtar that pierced through the inner wall, the docks and warehouses along the river front, the homes of the nobles—but archaeology has produced not a trace of the slums of the rabble population...”

(continued...)

שְׁבִי־לָאָרֶץ אֵין־כֶּסֶף בַּת־כַּשְׂדִּים
כִּי לֹא תוֹסִיפִי יִקְרְאוּ־לְךָ רַכָּה וְעַנְיָה:

Go down,² and sit³ upon dust,⁴ virgin daughter of Babylon!⁵

¹(...continued)

“Evidently Israel’s God was more interested in Babylon’s proletariat than was her queen, for she—and her court—provided the ordinary man with only a hovel [a small, wretched, and often dirty house] to live in. It is evident that those clay homes of the poor must have collapsed just as soon as they were abandoned or disused.” (Pp. 107-08)

²Alexander translates by *Come down!*, and comments that “By a beautiful apostrophe [breaking off discourse to address some absent person or thing], the mighty power to be humbled is addressed directly, and the prediction of humiliation clothed in the form of a command to exhibit the external signs of it.” (Pp. 196-97)

North translates by “Get down,” and states that the translation “Come down” is “from the standpoint of someone at ground level, but the speaker is Yahweh.” (P. 170)

³Oswalt notes that the imperative of “sit,” שְׁבִי, **shebhiy**, is normally followed by לְ, **el**, “to” or עַל, (**al**, “upon,” instead of לְ, **le**, “to” as it is here (p. 239). We have observed many times that in later Hebrew the difference in meaning of prepositions begins to disappear, and prepositions are used somewhat interchangeably. This is probably an example of that. Perhaps the author would say, **el**, (**al**, **le** (three Hebrew prepositions), what’s the difference?

Alexander states that “The act of sitting on the ground is elsewhere mentioned as a customary sign of grief.” See:

Isaiah 3:26, where it is said of the vain women of Jerusalem,

And her gates will lament and groan,
and cleaned out / plundered, she will sit to / on the land / earth.

Lamentations 2:10,

They sat on the ground, they were silent, Daughter of Zion’s elders / officials;
they brought up dust upon their head(s);
they dressed (in) sack-cloth;
they brought their head(s) to the ground, virgins / young women of
Jerusalem!

(continued...)

³(...continued)

Job 2:13, where it is said of Job's three friends,

And they sat with him to / on the land / earth seven days and seven nights.
And there was no one saying a word to him,
because they saw that the pain was exceedingly great.

Alexander adds that "here it [the sitting on the ground] is designed, chiefly if not exclusively, to suggest the idea of dethronement which is afterwards expressed directly." (P. 197)

⁴Oswalt comments that "The language of the poem is harsh, almost brutal. Babylon has lorded it over the world as though it were somehow her right, but now she must come face-to-face with reality...Although Babylon thought itself destined for a throne, its rightful place is the dust." (P. 241)

Knight states that "Man cannot help but pride himself in the miracle of his great cities with their mighty stores and warehouses, their lighted streets and temples. Yet as we look back through history we note how in reality few of the world's big cities survived for long [is this the case? Have not most of the world's big cities continued to survive across the centuries, including Berlin, Rome, New York City, etc. etc.?]...

"Although the people of God were only transient citizens of Babylon [this was not the case. In fact, most of the Jewish exiles living in Babylon chose to remain there, rather than returning to Jerusalem and Judah in response to Cyrus' offer. Babylon in the ensuing centuries became the preeminent home of Israelite scholarship, and it was in Babylon that the greatest literary work of Israel was written and compiled—the 'Babylonian Talmud'], they supposed that the city itself would stand forever. Thus they still had much to learn about God's purpose for that other city which He had chosen in contrast to the impermanent and doomed city of Babylon. Under God, Deutero-Isaiah has to expound to his people how the chosen city, Jerusalem, is the type of a new kind of human society. This theme is taken up in **chapters 49; 60; 62; 65:17ff**. The Babylonians, however, supposed that their city was an end in itself. It had owed its origin in the first place to the God Marduk, and it would undoubtedly remain forever as queen of the nations, lording it over all the peoples of the earth [see the biblical story of the 'Tower of Babel / Babylon' in **Genesis 11:1-9**].

"This is a picture of human politics in all ages. But Deutero-Isaiah believes that the human city is, by virtue of its foundation, always under the judgment of God. Deutero-Isaiah's picture is quoted in the **New Testament at Revelation 13**. There the human *polis* [Greek word for 'city'], guided by the spirit of a God—such as Marduk—who is created by man to serve his own ends and aims, becomes known as the beast from the abyss. Yet it is here that the suffering of the servant takes place within that presumptuous city that God will use to unmask the spurious glory of the human city, as

(continued...)

Sit on the earth—there is no throne,⁶ daughter of Chaldeans!⁷

Because you will not again (hear) them call out to you, Tender One, and Delicate One!⁸

47:2⁹ קָמַח וְטַחֲנִי וְרַחֲמֵי רַחֲמֵי

⁴(...continued)

Deutero-Isaiah will proceed to show.” (Pp. 107–08)

See similar material in **Isaiah 25-27**, where the lofty city is brought low, while the stronghold city of the poor who trust in YHWH is exalted.

⁵North comments that “Babylon is personified as a woman...virgin, and as yet unconquered and unravished.” (P. 170)

⁶This phrase, “there is no throne,” is omitted by **Rahfs**.

⁷Alexander comments that this last phrase “is the common Hebrew name for the Chaldees or Chaldeans, the race introduced by the Assyrians, at an early period, into Babylonia...It may be understood to signify the government, or the collective members of this race.” (P. 197)

⁸The proud city of Babylon, which has occupied the throne of power and privilege, is commanded by YHWH (see **verse 6**), to descend from her throne to sit in the dust of the earth, without a throne any longer—she who was accustomed to being called “Tender One,” and “Delicate One.” Compare **Deuteronomy 28:56-57**,

- 56 The tender and the delicate woman among you
who would not attempt to place the sole of her foot upon the ground
because of her delicacy and tenderness,
will begrudge / make evil her eye to the husband of her embrace
and to her son and her daughter
- 57 even the afterbirth that goes forth from between her feet,
and (she will begrudge) her children whom she will bear—
because in lacking everything, she will eat them in secret, due to the lack,
and in (the) siege with which your enemy will besiege you in your gates.

Alexander comments that “All that is here meant is that the royal virgin must descend from the throne to the dust, and relinquish the luxuries and comforts of her former mode of life.” (P. 198)

⁹Slotki comments on **verse 2** that “The noble lady [so tender and delicate] must descend to the level of the female slave and dress and work like her.” (P. 230)

Oswalt likewise states that “The city and the empire are depicted as *delicate and dainty*, as a *virgin*, a young woman of fastidious and luxurious tastes, who has never

(continued...)

גְּלִי צִמְתָּךְ חֲשֵׁפֵי-שָׁבֶל

גְּלִי-שׁוֹק עֲבָרֵי נְהָרוֹת:

Take two millstones, and grind flour.¹⁰

⁹(...continued)

had to face the harsh side of life. Now that is all ending, and no one will ever describe her in those terms again.” (Pp. 241-42)

Compare **Isaiah 3:26-4:1**, where similar language is used concerning Jerusalem:

- 3:26 And your entrances shall mourn,
and empty, she will sit on the land / earth.
- 4:1 And seven women will seize / take hold of one man on that day,
saying, We will eat our bread / food, and will will dress in our clothes;
only let us call your name upon ourselves;
gather up our reproach!

Knight comments that “Deutero-Isaiah must have watched with pity the simple peasant who formed the proletarian [working-class] substructure of Babylonian society, as he or his womenfolk toiled in the filth of the suburban areas of the city. These areas were intersected by little irrigation canals, as in modern Egypt, where today the peasant women can be seen on the banks with their skirts tucked up to the waist as they ‘step through those ditches’ tramping on the family wash.” (P. 108)

¹⁰Compare **Exodus 11:5b** with its phrase הַשְּׂפֹתָה אֲשֶׁר אַחַר הַרְחִימִים, “the [Egyptian] slave-girl who (is) behind the two mill-stones.” Also see **Job 31:10** and **Matthew 24:41**.

As Alexander states, “Even among the Romans this was considered one of the most servile occupations. In the East it was especially the work of female slaves.” (P. 198)

Take off your veil,¹¹ strip off your skirt;¹²
uncover a leg, pass through rivers!¹³

¹¹Alexander comments that “One of the Arabian poets speaks of certain ladies as appearing unveiled so that they resembled slaves, which is exactly the idea here expressed.” (P. 198)

North states that “It was immodest and humiliating for a ‘dainty’ lady to uncover her hair: compare **1 Corinthians 11:2-13**. She therefore wore a veil to conceal it and could only uncover her hair by removing her veil.” (P. 170)

¹²Where our Hebrew text has שָׁבֵל, **shobel**, “flowing-skirt,” “train,” 1QIs^a has שְׁוֹלֵיךְ, **sholeyka**, “your skirts” a synonym in the plural rather than singular. **Rahlf**s has “uncover the white hairs,” as does the Syriac. The Aramaic targum has “your rulers,” while the Latin Vulgate has “your shoulders.”

Oswalt comments that “As a slave, the woman could no longer wear the veil and long gown characteristic of an upper-class woman...Such finery would only get in the way of what was now her sole reason for living: work for the slave owner.” (P. 242)

¹³Slotki holds that the discarding of finery of dress by the former queen is “because of the long journey on foot which confronted [Babylon as she was force-marched into captivity, having to cross rivers on the journey].”

Yes—but the picture of Babylon’s capture given in the **Cyrus Cylinder** is that of the city being taken by Cyrus under the guidance of Bel-Marduk without a struggle, and Cyrus’ being welcomed as a hero into the city. See **lines 12-19** of the **Cyrus Cylinder**:

Seeking for the upright king of His choice, He [Marduk] took the hand of Cyrus, king of the city of Anshan, and called him by his name, proclaiming him aloud for the kingship over all of everything. He made the land of Gutu and all the Median troops prostrate themselves at his feet, while he shepherded in justice and righteousness the black-headed people whom he had put under his care.

Marduk, the great Lord, who nurtures his people, saw with pleasure his fine deeds and true heart, and ordered that he should go to Babylon. He had him take the road to Tintir (Babylon), and, like a friend and companion, He walked at his side. His vast troops whose number, like the water in a river, could not be counted, were marching fully-armed at his side. He had him enter without fighting or battle right into Shuanna (Babylon); he saved his city Babylon from hardship. He handed over to him Nabonidus, the king who did not fear Him. All the people of Tintir (Babylon), of all Sumer and Akkad, nobles and governors, bowed down before him and kissed his feet, rejoicing over his kingship and their faces shone. The Lord [Marduk] through Whose help all were rescued from death and who saved them all from distress and hardship, they blessed Him

(continued...)

47:3 תִּגְלַ עֲרוֹתֶיךָ

גַּם תִּרְאֶה חֲרַפְתֶּךָ

נִקְמָ אִתִּי

וְלֹא אֶפְגַּע אָדָם:

Your nakedness will be uncovered,¹⁴

also your shame / reproach¹⁵ will be seen;

I will take vengeance!¹⁶

¹³(...continued)

sweetly and praised His name.

¹⁴Alexander comments on **verse 3** that “The same idea of exposure [in the preceding verse] is now carried out to a revolting extreme.” (P. 198)

Oswalt comments that “In biblical usage, ‘uncovering nakedness’ has, at the least, the connotation of extreme humiliation, and in some cases may connote rape (see **Leviticus 18; Jeremiah 13:26; Lamentations 1:8; Ezekiel 16:37; 23:10, 29; Nahum 3:5**). As here, it is often used figuratively of nations that have consorted with many different lovers (allies, or Gods, or both), but are finally humiliated by being made to appear naked (defenseless) before them all...

“But it is not merely historical processes that will humble mighty Babylon, insists Judah’s prophet. It is God, Judah’s God, the One Who demonstrated Himself trustworthy against Assyria and Who is not diminished by time, Who will call Babylon to account...because she has exalted herself to the place that He alone can hold.” (P. 242)

North translates the phrase תִּגְלַ עֲרוֹתֶיךָ, which is literally “your nakedness will be uncovered,” by “You will suffer rape.” He states that in the **Hebrew Bible** the phrase “to uncover the nakedness of” equals “to have intercourse with,” referring to **Leviticus 6:6-19**. We agree.

¹⁵North states, “For חֲרַפָּה as ‘disgrace’ consequent on sexual humiliation see **2 Samuel 13:13**.” (P. 171) This is the passage where Tamar, whose half-brother Amnon was about to rape her, asks him where she would be able to carry her “shame.”

¹⁶Knight comments that “Deutero-Isaiah here might almost be writing a commentary on his favorite source, the song of Moses: ‘Vengeance is Mine, and recompense, for the time when their foot shall slip; for the day of their calamity is at hand, and their

(continued...)

And I will not meet a human (with kindness)!¹⁷

47:4 נֶאֱלָנוּ יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת שְׁמוֹ

קְדוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל:

Our Redeemer / Next-of-Kin–YHWH of Armies (is) His name--

Set-apart One of Israel!¹⁸

¹⁶(...continued)

doom come swiftly' (**Deuteronomy 32:35**).” (P. 109) Compare **Luke 1:51-52**; **Romans 12:19**.

¹⁷As Oswalt notes, this last phrase “is obscure and has prompted a number of suggested interpretations and...emendations. פָּנַע, **pagha**(has the meaning of ‘meet, encounter,’ either in a friendly manner...or a hostile one...It can also mean ‘meet with a request, intercede’...If the text is to stand as is, then the meaning is either ‘I will befriend, spare, no man’...or ‘I will not meet anyone in conflict,’ i.e., ‘None can resist Me’...or perhaps ‘I will not let anyone intercede’ (Rashi).” (P. 240)

Rahfs has “no longer will I hand over / betray to men / people.” The Aramaic targum has “I will make your judgment different from the sons of men,” while the Latin Vulgate has “No man will prevent it.”

Alexander holds that the “true sense” of this variously explained clause is *I shall encounter no man*, that is, “no man will be able to resist me...It is clear that the whole clause is a laconic [brief, concise] explanation of the figures which precede, and which are summed up in the simple but terrific notion of resistless and inexorable vengeance.” (Pp. 198-99)

¹⁸Slotki thinks that this identification of YHWH is “an exclamation by the prophet or by the redeemed Israelites at the sight of Babylon’s fall.” (P. 230)

Oswalt states that “This introductory segment ends with an ejaculation [ejecting semen from the body] of praise, which is much like that found in **12:6...Isaiah 46:13** is a promise of salvation for Zion, but that promise is only so much air if proud Babylon remains on the throne. But God, Zion’s God, has said that Babylon must, that she will, come down off that throne in humiliation.” (P. 242)

Knight comments that “Well might we ask the question: How could Deutero-Isaiah’s God do otherwise? If He is indeed the *Holy One*, then sin must be anathema [something to be vigorously denounced, excommunicated] to Him, and He must necessarily extirpate [root out and destroy completely] it from His presence, even when that sin is enfleshed in the corporate body of the queen city of the world.” (P. 109)

שְׁבִי דוֹיָמָם וּבְאֵי בְחֹשֶׁךְ בֵּת־כְּשָׁדִים 47:5¹⁹

כִּי לֹא תוֹסִיפִי יִקְרְאוּ-לְךָ וְגִבְרַת מַמְלָכוֹת:

Sit (in) silence,²⁰ and come into the darkness,²¹ daughter of Chaldeans!

Because you will not again (hear) them call to you, Queen of kingdoms!²²

¹⁹Slotki comments on **verses 5-7** that “Babylon is again addressed. Her ill-treatment of God’s people is the cause of her humiliation.” (P. 230)

Oswalt entitles **verses 5-11** “Babylon’s false pride.” He comments that “This section...details the Lord’s charges against Babylon. Above everything else, her fault is the claim to be immortal and self-existent (**verses 7, 8, 10**), something no part of creation can rightfully claim. Not taking her own contingency into account, she has behaved with unpardonable arrogance toward her subject nations (**verses 6-7**). She has thought that, if nothing else, her fabled skill in magic would keep her from undergoing the fate of others (**verses 9-10**). But her assumptions will not save her in the day of judgment. In fact, she is no different from anything else in creation...The wisest thing I can do is to acknowledge that if there is someone immortal and independent, it is not me. ‘The beginning of knowledge is the fear of the Lord’ (**Proverbs 1:7**).” (Pp. 245-46)

²⁰Ortlund comments that “Babylon is left with nothing to say. God used the Babylonians to discipline His Own people, as He said He would (compare **Deuteronomy 28: 49-50**), but God still held Babylon accountable for their cruel abuses and unthinking arrogance (compare **Isaiah 10:5-19** [spoken concerning Assyria, the conqueror of Northern Israel]).” (P. 1327)

²¹Oswalt comments that **verse 5** “reprises [repeats] the opening verse of the poem [47:1] and develops the theme farther. Here it is not merely that the great queen sits on the ground. Now she sits in darkness and silence...Some [North, p. 171, ‘dark = imprisonment’]...have suggested that the signification is of prison and captivity... [or] death and the underworld...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).” (P. 246)

²²Oswalt states that *lady of kingdoms*, our “Queen of kingdoms,” “refers to the imperial city, which ruled over a hundred lesser kingdoms subjugated by the city’s armies.” (P. 246)

Knight comments that “The future holds a kind of poetic justice for Babylon. At the present time it is Israel that is sitting in silence and in the darkness of the dungeon (**42:22**; compare **Lamentations 3:2**). Paradoxically, however, it is Israel’s calling to bring forth the prisoners from that same darkness and from that very dungeon (**42:7**).

(continued...)

קִצַּפְתִּי עַל-עַמִּי חִלְלֵתִי נִחַלְתִּי 47:6²³

וְאַתֶּנֶם בְּיַדְךָ

לֹא-שָׁמַתְּ לָהֶם רַחֲמִים

עַל-זִקְוֹן הַכְּבֹדֶת עֲלֶיךָ מְאֹד:

I was angry against My people; I polluted / profaned My inheritance.²⁴

²²(...continued)

“At the present moment Babylon’s heart is hardened, and so she cannot discern the good news that God is revealing to her through His servant Israel. God must therefore act to break Babylon’s pride, for pride is the root of all sin. It is the barrier to her reception of Israel’s news. God will therefore bring Babylon down to the dust and overwhelm her in her turn with the darkness of the dungeon and despair. For in His wise providence, God has so ordained it—that only when a man is walking in darkness can the light shine upon him. In other words, Babylon’s eyes must first be blinded before God can use His instrument Israel to open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, and from the prison those who sit in darkness (**42:7**). Moreover, God is no respecter of persons. Even the queen of nations must travel by this same terrible road if her soul is ever to be saved. God has been using her for fifty years now for His Own purposes and ends.” (Pp. 109-10)

²³Oswalt comments on **verse 6** that “Like Assyria before her (**Isaiah 10:5-11**), Babylon may have prided herself on having captured many nations, including Judah. But at least in the case of the latter, the pride was misplaced. The only reason Babylon had been able to capture Judah, says the prophet, was that God permitted it. Babylon was not the mistress of her own fate, let alone Judah’s...The only reason Babylon had been able to desecrate Jerusalem was that God had already done so.” (P. 246) We say there is no reason to say “at least in the case of Judah,” because the author is depicting YHWH as being in charge of the history of all nations and peoples.

²⁴Slotki holds that the phrase חִלְלֵתִי נִחַלְתִּי, “I profaned My inheritance,” may signify Israel [the nation] (compare **Isaiah 19:25**) the temple (**Jeremiah 12:7**...) or the Holy Land (**Jeremiah 2:7**.)” (Pp. 230-31) We think it means the nation Israel, as the continuation makes clear, “I gave them into your hand.”

North states that “As Yahweh’s property Israel is sacred or ‘holy’ to Him (**Jeremiah 2:3**) and under His inviolable [never to be broken] protection...Yahweh’s people have forfeited their sacrosanctity [state of being extremely sacred or inviolable], and He no longer treats them as ‘holy.’” (P. 171)

Alexander comments that this phrase means “I suffered My chosen and conse-

(continued...)

And I gave them into your²⁵ hand.²⁶
You did not give to them compassions;
upon an old person you made your yoke exceedingly heavy!²⁷

²⁴(...continued)
crated people to be treated as something common and unclean.”

He adds that “Israel is called [YHWH’s] *heritage*, as being His perpetual possession, continued from one generation to another.” (P. 199)

²⁵It is the 2nd person feminine singular, referring to “Queen Babylon.”

²⁶Alexander holds that YHWH’s giving Israel into Babylon’s hand means that Babylon’s hand was YHWH’s instrument of chastisement. (P. 199)

²⁷Alexander states that Babylon, “though unconsciously promoting [YHWH’s] designs, their own ends and motives were entirely corrupt...The general charge is strengthened by a specific aggravation, *On the aged thou didst aggravate thy yoke (or make it heavy) exceedingly.*” (P. 200)

Compare:

Lamentations 4:16,

YHWH’s face scattered them;
he will not again look at / regard them.
(The) face of priests, they did not lift up / respect;
and elderly people / officials they showed no favor.

Lamentations 5:12,

Princes were hung by their hand;
faces of elderly people were not honored.

Alexander comments that “The essential meaning of the clause [is] a description of inordinate severity to those least capable of retaliation or resistance.” (P. 200)

Oswalt states that the phrase “*You did not have compassion* and the lack of concern for the *aged* might suggest that a main charge against Babylon was cruelty. But, apart from history, which shows that in the catalogue of empires Babylon’s was not especially cruel, the context [see **verse 7**] 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.” (P. 247)

(continued...)

47:7 וַתֹּאמְרֵי לְעוֹלָם אֱהִיָּה גְבוּרָת
עַד לֹא-שָׁמַת אֱלֹה עַל-לִבָּךְ

²⁷(...continued)

We say, The issue is cruelty and arrogance. Is it not the arrogance of dictators that lead them to cruel treatment of their victims? And does not the **Book of Isaiah**, along with the other writing prophets of Israel, teach that empires are held accountable to YHWH for their ethics?

Knight comments on **verse 6** that “Israel had refused her calling to be the servant of the Lord, and so fifty years previously Yahweh had had to profane His *heritage*, and destroy the land and people of His choice...Yahweh had to deal with Israel’s pride in exactly the same manner as He was now about to deal with the pride of Babylon...

“Now, Deutero-Isaiah said, Babylon had actually overstepped her duty as the instrument of God’s righteous and saving wrath. Babylon had in fact overdone the punishing she had been called upon to administer, because she was naturally a cruel tyrant.” (P. 110) Compare:

Jeremiah 50:17,

A sheep / flock scattered (is) Israel-
lions thrust him out.
The first one (who) ate him—Assyria’s king;
and this (is) the last one (who) broke his bones—
Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon.

Jeremiah 51:34,

He ate me, He vexed / confused / drained me—Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon;
he set / made me an empty vessel;
he swallowed me like the dragon / sea monster;
he filled his belly with my delicacies;
he cleaned me out!

Lamentations 4:16,

YHWH’s face scattered them;
he will not again look at / regard them.
(The) face of priests, they did not lift up / respect;
and (to) elderly people / officials they showed no favor.

Lamentations 5:12,

Princes were hung by their hand(s);
faces of elderly people were not honored.

לֹא זְכוֹרָתָ אַחֲרֵיתֶיהָ:

And you said, To long-lasting time I will be a queen--²⁸

until²⁹ you did not place these things upon your heart.

You did not remember her future / end.³⁰

²⁸Oswalt comments that “Because of the lack of historical and theological perspective ...Babylon assumed that she would be mistress of the world *forever*...Because Babylon had entered a wrong assumption, the assumption of self-existence and self-perpetuation, into the equation, everything else in that equation was thrown off.” (Pp. 247-48)

²⁹This noun עַד, (**adh**, “as far as, until” is omitted by **Rahfs**.

Alexander states that the word “has its proper sense of *until*...and the meaning of the clause is, that she had persisted in this evil course *until* at last it had its natural effect of blinding the mind and hardening the heart.” (P. 200)

³⁰The last phrase, אַחֲרֵיתֶיהָ, “her latter part / end,” and we wonder whose latter part / end is meant? Is it Israel’s, or Jerusalem’s, Babylon’s captive, or is it her own “Queen’s”? **Rahfs** has “the last things,” omitting the pronominal suffix “her.”

North translates this line, לֹא זְכוֹרָתָ אַחֲרֵיתֶיהָ, you (feminine singular) did not remember her end, by “you gave not a thought to how it would end,” and states that “One cannot ‘remember’ the future except in the original sense of ‘bear in mind.’” (P. 171)

Oswalt comments that “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.” (P. 248)

And we wonder, How could Babylon be expected to remember Israel’s latter part or end? Or is it that Babylon didn’t take into consideration that a future (latter part / end) was coming for Israel, in which there would be a complete reversal of present conditions?

We know of no other primary religious document among world religions that speaks so openly and boldly to dominant nations at the time of their dominance as does the **Hebrew Bible**, especially the writing prophets of Israel, challenging their ethical behavior, predicting their overthrow, including their own nation, Israel, along with its temple and religion.

Muslims point to the **Quran Sura 30**, and its prediction made by Muhammad that

(continued...)

³⁰(...continued)

while Rome would suffer defeat at the hands of the Persians, she would soon recover and conquer the Persians, which happened as Muhammad predicted. But this prediction is in no way comparable to the on-going challenges of Israel's prophets of the most powerful nations of their time, including their own nation, on an ethical / religious basis, and says nothing concerning Islam itself or its holy place, the Kaaba in Mecca.

Knight comments on **verse 7** that “Deutero-Isaiah now declares that Babylon has actually committed the ultimate blasphemy of supposing that she herself is God. The Hebrew at this point for the words *I shall be* is אֲהִיָּהּ. [This] is the ‘I am’ [no-‘I will be’] of God’s Self-revelation in **Exodus 3:14**. Deutero-Isaiah has used it about Yahweh more than once before, primarily in those cases where Yahweh has declared ‘I am, and there is no other, there is nothing else’ (e.g., **43:11; 45:5, 6, 18, 22**). Babylon here is virtually taking the word of Divine Self-revelation out of the mouth of God and applying it to her own evil and proud self. It is in the light of the succeeding verse that this parallel can be drawn. Then again, the words forever [it is the Hebrew preposition עַד, which means ‘until,’ or ‘as far as,’ stretched by English translators to mean ‘forever’; **Rahlf**s has εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα, ‘into the age / extended period of time’] are part of the title of the living God.” (P. 110)

While we agree that Queen Babylon is being depicted as claiming at least semi-Divine status for herself, we question Knight’s use of the phrase “I am” which is literally “I will be”; and we also question his use of the preposition עַד in his argument.

Knight goes on to state that “Deutero-Isaiah has shown again and again in his argument that Babylon ‘didn’t try to realize the significance of these things’ nor ‘remember that it (Cyrus’ advance) must have an outcome’ (‘end’). If only she had done so, Deutero-Isaiah wishes us to understand as the climax to his argument, then Babylon would have acknowledged that Yahweh alone is Lord, and she herself was but dust and ashes in His sight.” (Pp. 110-11)

³¹Slotki comments on **verses 8-9** that “Babylon’s over-confidence in her power and vitality will be suddenly shattered by a twofold calamity.” (P. 231)

Knight comments on these two verses that “‘You voluptuous [curvaceous and sexually attractive] woman’ is how Deutero-Isaiah conceives of the Babylonian ‘idea,’ the Zeitgeist [German, meaning the defining mood or spirit of a particular period in history] or way of life, of the Fertile Crescent [James Henry Breasted’s phrase, meaning the region in the Middle East which curves, like a quarter-moon shape, from the Persian Gulf through modern-day southern Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Israel and northern Egypt]...

“The lifeblood of the area has naturally been a peasant economy. The peasant

(continued...)

³¹(...continued)

has always lived a life very close to the soil. His virtual survival depends upon his annual crop. From earliest times he has been aware that the forces of nature seem to die in the heat of summer. Rains do not fall at all in that part of the world until about October. The peasant therefore has always supposed that the personalized forces of nature had gone below the ground into the realm of death; thus he lives in the fear that nature might not return to life again should the autumn rains not return punctually.

“Arising from the sympathetic rapport with nature which the landsman seems to feel, an understandable practice became woven into the cult. It rested upon the fact that to man is given the power to create life. By analogy man could, through sympathetic magic, create or procreate life even in inanimate nature...

“From earliest biblical times the ‘high place’...(e.g. **1 Samuel 9:12; Ezekiel 16:23-24**) was a feature of the peasant’s cult. On it he worshiped Asherah, the Goddess of sex and procreation, particularly at the end of the summer, by means of sacred prostitution. By means of this act he believed that Mother Earth would bring forth once again the plant life which had drooped and died in the summer heat. Such cultic actions were of course performed in all earnestness and sincerity of purpose...

“On the other hand, human nature being what it is, these festivals degenerated into licentious orgies. Here it is the apotheosis [the elevation of someone or something to Divine status, deification] of this whole degenerate cult who exclaims ‘I shall be forever and ever, Queen’ (**verse 7**), ‘I am, and there is no one besides me.’ This is a parody [an imitation, with exaggeration for comic effect] of the words that the living God had used to manifest His nature to His chosen people [see our criticism of Knight’s use of ‘I am’ and ‘forever’ in footnote 30]...

“No wonder the queen of Babylon [we think the queen is a personification of Babylon itself] believed that she would never be a widow, worshiped as she was in such sexual orgies, for she had at her command male consorts without number. So Deutero-Isaiah saw the coming judgment of God upon the city of Babylon as God’s answer to this all-pervading sex cult which so dominated the lives of men and women [yes—even in Israel; and we add, led to their ritual murder of innocent children].” (Pp. 111-12)

Even though we question Knight’s use of the supposed Hebrew phrases “I am” and “forever,” we certainly agree with his overall comment, and his profound statement concerning the worship of Asherah, Mother Nature, throughout the Middle East in biblical times. We have often wondered how the Israelites, with their **Torah** and with their prophets—who so powerfully denounced such worship, especially with its accompanying murder of children—could have continually been caught up in this nature worship. But the Israelites, like the Babylonians, were “people of the land,” whose livelihood depended on the fertility of the soil—and who were constantly tempted by their surrounding culture to participate in such practices, even though they violated their basic religious

(continued...)

הַאֲמָרָה בְּלִבָּהּ אֲנִי וְאֶפְסִי עוֹד
 לֹא אֵשֵׁב אֶלְמָנָה וְלֹא אֲדַע שְׂכוּל:

And now, listen to this, pleasure-lover,³² who sits (enthroned) securely,
 the one who says in her heart,³³ I (am), and no other;³⁴

³¹(...continued)
 teaching.

Oswalt comments on **verses 8-11** that “The prophet now contrasts Babylon’s arrogant self-confidence with the sudden and complete humiliation that will come on her.” (P. 248)

³²Oswalt translates by *lover of luxury*, stating that 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.” (P. 248)

The adjective used here, עֲרִינָה, is defined by **Brown-Driver-Briggs** as “voluptuous,” which means “characterized by luxury and sensual pleasure.” Oswalt states that “it conveys the idea of one who is used to delicacies, not common things (**Genesis 49:20; Jeremiah 51:34; Lamentations 4:5**).” (*Ibid.*) But in these passages it is not the adjective עֲרִינָה, but the nouns מְעַרְן, “dainty food,” and עֵרֶן, “luxury / dainty / delight.” North translates by “pampered jade [‘hard’?], “in the original sense of ‘crammed with food.’” (P. 171) Compare **Nehemiah 9:25**. See

Zephaniah 2:15, where it is said of Nineveh:

This (is) the city, the jubilant one, the one sitting / dwelling securely,
 the one saying in her heart I (am), and a ceasing / no one else!
 How she became a waste / horror, a lair / resting-place for the wild animal(s)!
 Everyone passing by her will hiss; he will shake his hand / fist.

Alexander states that “This corruption of morals, as in other like cases, is supposed to have been aggravated by the wealth of Babylon, its teeming population, and the vast concourse of foreign visitors and residents. After all, however, as this charge is not repeated or insisted on, it may be doubted whether the epithet in question was intended to express more than the fact of her abundant prosperity about to be exchanged for desolation and disgrace.” (P. 201)

³³Where **Codex Leningradensis** spells בְּלִבָּהּ, with a *dagesh / mappiq* in the final *he*, a large number of Hebrew manuscripts and editions of the **Hebrew Bible** omit the *dagesh / mappiq*.

(continued...)

I will not sit a widow, and I will not know loss of children!³⁵

47:9³⁶ וְתִבְאֲנָה לִי שְׂתֵי־אֱלֹהֵי רְגַע
בְּיוֹם אֶחָד שְׂכּוּל וְאַלְמָן

³³(...continued)

Alexander holds that “saying in her heart” may mean “saying to herself.” (P. 201)

³⁴The words of Queen Babylon sound very much like the Self-identifications that are attributed to YHWH. She thinks she is God! Alexander calls this “an assumption of Divine supremacy.” (P. 201)

Similar language is placed on the lips of Nineveh in **Zephaniah 2:15**:

This—the city, the jubilant one—the one dwelling securely,
the one saying in her heart, I, and no other!
How she became for a waste / horror, a sleeping-place for the wild animal!
Everyone passing by her will hiss—he will shake his fist!

North comments that in the light of **Isaiah 45:5-6** and the earlier statements of **Isaiah 14:13-14** and **Ezekiel 28:1-10** (Tyre), we should think in terms of “self-deification. Babylon had no standard except herself by which to judge herself.” (P. 171)

³⁵Slotki comments on these last two lines of **verse 8** that the phrase “a widow,” when “applied to a nation...denotes the lack of a king, as *loss of children* means depopulation by a conqueror.” (P. 231)

Alexander states that “It is not the city or the state of which widowhood is directly predicated, but the royal personage that represents it. The same comparison is used by Jeremiah of Jerusalem (**Lamentations 1:1**; compare **Isaiah 51:18-20, 54:1, 4, 5; Revelation 14:7**).” (P. 201)

Oswalt comments that “Having imagined 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.” (P. 249)

³⁶Slotki comments on **verse 9** that “The magical arts were highly cultivated in Babylon, but they were incapable of averting disaster.” (P. 232)

We hold that what Slotki calls “magical arts” were in fact the basic religion of Babylon, which, as Knight so powerfully describes it, was the attempt to sexually manipulate Mother Nature—a religion that dominated the Middle East, and that the Israelites so often succumbed to.

כְּתָמָם בָּאוּ עֲלֶיךָ בְּרֹב כְּשָׁפִיךָ

בְּעֲצָמַת חֲבָרֶיךָ מְאֹד:

And these two things will come / came to you suddenly,
in one day, loss of children and widowhood,
like completeness³⁷ they came³⁸ upon you, with your many sorceries,³⁹
with / in spite of your magic's exceeding strength.⁴⁰

³⁷Alexander holds that this phrase כְּתָמָם means “in the fullest measure possible, implying total loss and destitution.” (P. 202)

North translates the phrase כְּתָמָם by “at one fell stroke,” holding that the Hebrew means literally “according to their completeness.” But he adds that “a possible meaning is ‘all unawares’ (to themselves)...In that case loss of children and widowhood are forces which strike Babylon without...premeditation on their part.” (Pp. 171-72)

Compare the Hebrew of **1 Kings 22:34**.

וְאִישׁ מִשָּׁךְ בִּקְשָׁת׃ לְתָמוֹ
וַיִּכֶה אֶת־מֶלֶךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל בֵּין הַדְּבָקִים וּבֵין הַשְּׂרָיִן
וַיֹּאמֶר לְרֹכְבוֹ הֲפֹךְ יָדְךָ וְהוֹצֵאֵנִי מִן־הַמַּחֲנֶה
כִּי הִחַלִּיתִי:

And a man / person drew / pulled on the bow at random / without definite aim,
and he struck Israel's king between the scale-armor and the breastplate.
And he said to his charioteer, turn your hand, and bring me out from the camp,
because I am wounded / made sick.

³⁸Where our Hebrew text has the 3rd person plural, qal perfect / past tense, בָּאוּ, “they came,” **Rahfs** has the 3rd person singular future tense “it (loss of children) will come.”

³⁹North comments that “The *incantations* [our ‘sorceries’], כְּשָׁפִים, here were protective, intended to ward off disaster.” (P. 172)

For this matter of magical practices see **Deuteronomy 18:10-11**.

⁴⁰Oswalt comments on **verse 9** that “The very kinds of loss and humiliation that
(continued...)

⁴⁰(...continued)

Babylon insisted could never overtake her will do so, and with terrifying suddenness... This humiliation and loss will come to Babylon *in* her sorceries and spells. Like the rest of the Hebrew prepositions, בְּ has a large number of possible usages. The most likely choice here is ‘in the midst of’ with the sense of ‘in spite of.’ In the very midst of all the magical rituals designed to prevent loss and humiliation, they will come anyway. Babylon was proverbial in the ancient world for its development of the magical arts. So firm was this association that in the **Book of Daniel**, ‘Chaldean’ is a term for magician (**1: 20; 2:2, 27**, etc.)...The prophet says that however great Babylonian skill and knowledge in the magical arts might be, it will be helpless to avert the disaster that comes from having tried to usurp the place of God.” (P. 249)

He adds that “Israel was forbidden to practice magic for this reason (**Deuteronomy 18:10-14**). They were not to try to read the future or manipulate it by magic. Instead they were to listen to the word of God in the **Torah** and as it came by the prophets.” (**Ibid.**)

Alexander comments that “They should perish in the very act of using these unlawful and unprofitable means of preservation...The prevalence of these [magical] arts in ancient Babylon is explicitly affirmed by Diodorus Siculus [90-30 B.C.E., from Sicily, who wrote a monumental world history, **Bibliotheca historica**], and assumed as a notorious fact by other ancient writers.” (Pp. 202-203)

⁴¹Slotki comments on **verses 10-11** that “The ideas embodied in **verses 8-9** are repeated with the addition of further illustrations.” (P. 232)

Knight comments on **verse 10** that “The Babylonians were no atheists—far from it. But in this sentence they implicitly admit the non-reality of their Gods. ‘No one sees me,’ says Babylon, just like the adulterer at all times. Let us take that particular sin as our example, since the **Septuagint** [our **Rahlfs**] translates *knowledge* by πορνεία [sexual immorality], ‘lasciviousness,’ ‘carnal knowledge.’ No wonder the author of **Revelation 18** can build his picture of the scarlet woman from Deutero-Isaiah’s incisive description of Babylon personified.

“Moreover, as a concomitant of this practical atheism, there goes also a deep intellectual pride...The whole ancient world knew of the wisdom of [Babylon’s] wise men. Yet the more cultured the state of Babylon became, the less could her people realize how it was that ‘your philosophy and learning are what have led you astray,’ to the extent that you declare with pride: ‘I am, and there is no one besides me.’ Deutero-Isaiah has now revealed the heart of what idolatry really is, for it is not the worship of wood- and gilt-covered images: it is in reality a trusting not in God but in human ideologies. Suddenly, in the broad daylight of Babylon’s exalted pride and glory, the night of

(continued...)

אִמְרַתְּ אֵין רֹאֵנִי
 חֲכָמְתְּךָ וְדַעְתְּךָ הִיא שׁוֹבְבֶתְךָ
 וְהִיא מְרִי בְלִבְךָ אֲנִי וְאַפְסֵי עוֹד:

And you trusted⁴² in your evil (practices).⁴³
 You said There is no one seeing me!⁴⁴
 Your wisdom and your knowledge,⁴⁵ it is leading you astray!⁴⁶

⁴¹(...continued)

the soul can fall. God has many means at His disposal to bring this darkness near: an economic collapse, a plague, or a pagan king from Persia by the name of Cyrus.” (P. 112)

⁴²Translations of this opening phrase vary from “you trusted in,” to “your felt secure in,” to **Rahlf’s** “in the hope of the evil of yours.”

⁴³Where our Hebrew text has בְּרַעְיֶתְךָ, “in your evil,” 1QIs^a has בְּדַעְתְּךָ, “in your knowledge.” It is very easy when reading Hebrew to read the Hebrew letter *resh* as a *daleth*, and this is probably an instance of this happening.

Slotki translates by “wickedness,” and comments that it refers to “the tyrannical use made by Babylon of her power.” (P. 232) Compare **Nahum 3:19**,

There is no cessation to your crushing!
 Your wound was made sick.
 All those hearing your report clapped (their) hand(s) over you—
 because over whom did your evil / wickedness not cross over constantly?

Oswalt asks, “Why did Babylon feel secure in her wickedness?” Then he answers his question by saying, “Because her great learning and wisdom had led her astray. Their mastery of the magical arts had led the Babylonians to believe that they understood the workings of the world so well that they were proof against any disaster.” (P. 250)

⁴⁴That is, Babylon thinks she is God, and that there is no higher Power observing her. Compare **Psalm 10:11**, where the wicked person is depicted:

He said in his heart, God has forgotten!
 He has hidden His face, He has never seen!

⁴⁵Slotki states that this wisdom and knowledge are “of the wrong type, such as sorcery and witchcraft.” (P. 232)

(continued...)

And you said in your heart, I (am) and no other!⁴⁷

47:11 וַבֵּא עֲלֶיךָ רָעָה
לֹא תִדְעֵי שְׁחָרָה
וְתִפְּל עֲלֶיךָ הַזֶּה

⁴⁵(...continued)

Alexander says that “It was probably not merely the conceit of knowledge but its actual possession that had led the Babylonians astray.” (P. 204)

⁴⁶North translates שׁוֹבְבָתְךָ by “misled you,” which he says means “‘turned you back,’ almost ‘led you by the nose.’ Compare **Ezekiel 38:4**, ‘I [YHWH, speaking to Gog] will turn you back (from your intended course) and put hooks into your jaws.’” (P. 172)

⁴⁷Alexander comments that “The arrogant presumption is ascribed to their wisdom and knowledge, not as its legitimate effect, but as a necessary consequence of its perversion and abuse, as well as of men’s native disposition to exaggerate the force and authority of unresisted reason.” (P. 204)

Alexander adds this statement concerning the perversion and abuse of wisdom and knowledge, but there is nothing in the text to this effect. Obviously he believes that human wisdom and knowledge would have led Babylon in a different course, unless they had been perverted. But we believe that human wisdom and knowledge apart from the fear / reverence for God will always lead people and nations in the wrong direction, and that Babylon is an example of what happens whenever nations seek to guide their course apart from genuine reverence for, and seeking the wisdom of God, for example, what happened in Hitler’s Third Reich and in Stalin’s Soviet Union, etc. etc. What do you think?

And, how should we understand this biblical teaching in the light of the modern jihadist movement in Islam, with its suicide bombers going to their murderous deaths with the shouts of Allah is great! upon their lips? What about the Ku Klux Klansmen who put innocent black people to death in the light of burning crosses, and with their devout belief that they were serving Jesus Christ? Are those examples of reverence for God?

From my standpoint, the jihadists and the Klansmen are being terribly misled in their religious teaching, and are not examples of genuine reverence for Allah or for Jesus Christ. The question comes down to whether or not these extremists are in fact following the teaching of the **Koran** or the **New Testament**—and we insist they are not.

לֹא תוֹכֵלִי כִפְרֶהָ
 וְתָבֵא עָלֶיךָ פְּתָאִים
 שׁוֹאָה לֹא תִדְעֵי:

And evil will come⁴⁸ upon you;

you will not know (enough) to bribe / charm it away / its dawn.⁴⁹

And ruin / disaster will fall upon you—

you will not be able to cover it / atone for it.⁵⁰

⁴⁸Where our Hebrew text has וְבָא, “and it (masculine singular) will come,” 1QIs^a corrects to the feminine singular, וְבָאָה, “and it (feminine singular—the subject of the verb is רָעָה, evil (which is feminine in Hebrew).”

Alexander states that the phrase וְבָא should be translated in the past tense, “and it came,” since the waw cannot be considered “conversive,” as it does not depend on a preceding imperfect. He adds that “the strict sense of the preterite [past tense] is perfectly consistent with the context and usage of the Prophet, who continually depicts occurrences still future, first as coming, then as come, not in fact but in vision, both as certain to occur and as historically represented to his own mind.” (P. 204)

⁴⁹This second line of **verse 11** is given varying translations:

King James, “thou shalt not know from whence it riseth”...;

Tanakh, “Which you will not know how to charm away” (followed by our other English translations);

Rahfs, καὶ οὐ μὴ γυνῶς βόθυνος καὶ ἐμπροσθὴ εἰς αὐτόν, “and you will not know a pit / hole and you will fall into it.”

Alexander shows how the word שְׁחֲרֶהָ has been understood by some to mean “its’ dawn,” and the sense of the whole phrase has been taken to mean “not a preceding but a following dawn; it which case the evil is described not as a day without a dawn before it, but as a night with a dawning after it—a figure natural and striking in itself, and very strongly recommended by the use of שִׁחַר in the same sense by Isaiah elsewhere.” (P. 205)

⁵⁰Alexander states that “the exact meaning of the last phrase [כִּפְרֶהָ] is ‘atone for,’ ‘expiate,’ and in this connection, to avert by expiation, whether in the strict sense of atoning sacrifice or in the wider one of satisfaction and propitiation...In any case, the

(continued...)

And it will come upon you suddenly—
a devastation you will not know!⁵¹

⁵⁰(...continued)

clause describes the threatened judgment as inexorable [impossible to stop or prevent] and inevitable.” (P. 205)

North says that here it means “buy off by payment of a ransom,” and that “expiate,” the more usual sense of the verb, “is surely wrong here.” (P. 172) See:

Genesis 32:21, the story of Jacob’s gift / present / bribe sent before his family to Esau, to “buy off” his vengeance for Jacob’s trickery;

Proverbs 16:14,

Wrath of a king—messengers of death;
and a wise man will pacify it.

(Hebrew **יְכַפֵּרְנָהּ**, “will cover it over,” i.e., buy it off by payment of a bribe / ransom.)

⁵¹Oswalt comments that “Once again comes the contrasting point. The Babylon that has felt secure in her wickedness (**רָעָהּ**) will find evil (**רָעָהּ**) coming on her. When that happens all her magical arts will prove useless. This God cannot be appeased with the blood of bulls and goats; He cannot be charmed out of His just anger. He is transcendent and no amount of manipulation of His creation can produce automatic results for the manipulator. Sin has been a matter of ethical choice, and apart from a freely chosen turning away from the sin and the determination to enter into a new ethical relationship with God, ritual is worse than useless. For a sense of how important this matter is to Isaiah, note that this same thought appears in both the opening (**1:10-20**) and closing (**66:1-4, 17**) of the **Book of Isaiah**.” (P. 251)

As Oswalt points out, the **Book of Isaiah** rejects Israel’s Levitical rituals of animal sacrifice just as it rejects Babylon’s magical arts. According to the the **Book of Isaiah**, what YHWH wants is genuine ethical living along with heart-felt, honest relationship to Him. Nothing else will avail. Animal sacrifice is equated with magical attempts to manipulate God in **Isaiah 66:3**.

Knight comments on **verse 11** that “Deutero-Isaiah is certain that for the clay arrogantly to rebel against the Potter is for the creature to call down upon itself the wrath of God.” (P. 112) Yes, but this verse says nothing about the “Potter and the clay.”

עֲמִדִי-נָא בְּחִבְרוֹךְ וּבְרַב כְּשָׁפִיךְ 47:12⁵²

בְּאִשֶׁר יִגְעַת מִנְעוּרֶיךָ

אוֹלֵי תוֹכְלֵי הוֹעִיל

אוֹלֵי תַעְרוּצֵי:

Stand now,⁵³ in the magic spells of yours, and in your many sorceries,
in which you toiled / grew weary from your youth.⁵⁴, ¹

⁵²Slotki comments on **verses 12-15** that they contain “ironical encouragement of Babylon, passing over into pathetic commiseration [expressions of sympathy and sorrow] over her pitiable disappointment.” (P. 232)

Oswalt entitles these verses “Babylon’s helplessness.” He comments that “In these final four verses the denunciation of Babylon comes to a powerful climax. Following on the attack on sorcery that appeared in **verses 9-11**, the prophet calls on Babylon to see what all her magical wisdom can do for her in the hour of crisis. In fact, he says, it will all be for naught.” (P. 253)

He states concerning **verses 12-13** that “Since he has said forcefully in the immediately preceding verses (**9-11**) that destruction will come in spite of all the magical wisdom...it seems most likely that he intends sarcasm here. It is as though the prophet is saying, ‘If you don’t believe me, go ahead and put your trust in this foolishness. Who knows, maybe it will help you?’ The city that has made itself the equal of God has no alternative—it must trust its vaunted intelligence, there is nothing else. It has invested too much hard, exhausting labor (יִגְעַת) for too many years (*from your youth*) to abandon the effort now.” (P. 253)

⁵³Slotki states that “stand now” means “persist in.” (P. 232)

Alexander states that “It must be borne in mind that נָא is not a particle of time but of entreaty, very often corresponding to *I pray*, or *if you please*. In this case it indicates a kind of concession to the people, if they still choose to try the virtue of their superstitious arts which he had already denounced as worthless.” His translation is “Stand now in thy spells (or charms).” (P. 205)

⁵⁴For occurrences of the noun נְעוּרִים, “youth” in the **Hebrew Bible**, see our end-note 1.

Perhaps you will be able to profit,⁵⁵

perhaps you will cause trembling / inspire awe!⁵⁶

47:13⁵⁷ נְלֵאִית בְּרַב עֲצָתֶיךָ

⁵⁵Alexander comments that “This faint suggestion of a possibility is more expressive than a positive denial.” (P. 206)

⁵⁶Oswalt comments that “In the final clause of **verse 12**, the sarcasm seems clearest. Maybe all that hard work will pay off after all; maybe the sorcerers can do some ritual that will provoke an irrational terror in the enemy and make them run away... All this time and effort, and for what? Ludicrous results! If they want terror, they need only continue in their sorcerous and idolatrous ways until they one day confront the living God. The Holy One of Israel. Then they will know terror (compare **Isaiah 2:18-21**)!...”

“Babylon had sought wisdom to guide its future (counsel) more assiduously than any nation in the ancient world. It had looked everywhere, from the entrails of sacrificial animals to the movements of the constellations. Now was the time for all that effort and exercise of talent to pay off, if ever it would. Those who divided the heavens into ‘houses’ and carefully calculated when the stars and the moon were in propitious locations should now step forward. Those who created an almanac for each month should now show their mettle. Their city and empire were at their last extremity; if these spiritual technicians had any skill whatever in divining the future and helping their clients avoid evil consequences, this was the time to put that skill to good effect.” (Pp. 253-54)

See our end-note 2 for a **Wikipedia** article on Financial Astrology. Do you think consulting your horoscope is the way to make decisions concerning the investment of your money? Is it the way to determine national policy?

Knight comments on **verse 12** that “Some nations even as they fall have struck out in fury with all the sorceries of science at their command still hoping thereby to *inspire terror* in their enemies. But neither the mathematics of the magi then nor the atomic energy of the scientist now can avail to avert the outcome of events.” (P. 113)

But we ask, Is this the case? Did not the atomic energy of the American scientists avert the impending death of hundreds of thousands of American marines and soldiers by its implementation at the close of World War II, becoming the means of Divine judgment on Hirohito’s Japan? And did not the mathematics of the eastern magi lead them to the birthplace of Jesus Christ? Is not Knight’s conclusion overstated? How would you improve on it?

⁵⁷Knight comments on **verses 13-14** that “Finally Deutero-Isaiah takes up the figure which Isaiah of Jerusalem had used so effectively before to declare the true nature of Israel’s God. Isaiah had believed that God has a plan, or עֲצָה, for the redemption of the world. Deutero-Isaiah now declares that Babylon has *many coun-*

(continued...)

יַעֲמְדוּ-נָא וַיּוֹשִׁיעֵךְ (הַבְּרִי) שְׁמַיִם
 הַחַיִּים בְּכּוֹכְבֵי מוֹדִיעַם לְחַדְשֵׁים
 מֵאֲשֶׁר יִבְאוּ עֲלֶיךָ:

You tired yourself with your many counsels,⁵⁸

let them stand now and save / deliver you--those dividing⁵⁹ (the) heavens,^{60, 2}

⁵⁷(...continued)

se/s, especially those give by her astrologers, but has grown weary of them all. At **10:17**, Isaiah had declared that the light of Israel would be a fire, and her Holy One a flame. At **30:30** he had likened once again the wrath of God to the flame of a devouring fire; and at **33:14** he had solemnly asked ‘Who among us can dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us can dwell with everlasting burnings?’ Isaiah thus agreed with Deuteronomy 4:24: ‘The Lord your God is a devouring fire.’ Let us note that this latter statement equates the concept of God’s fire with His zeal, that is to say, with His burning, loving purpose, eager for the goal He has in view. No genial glow is this at which they warm themselves, nor is it a fire to sit in front of (verse 14c). We have already seen what Deutero-Isaiah believes that goal to be (**Isaiah 45:23**,

By Myself I have sworn;
 righteousness has gone forth from My mouth,
 a word—and it will not return--
 that to Me every knee will bend;
 every tongue will swear!)” (P. 113)

⁵⁸North comments that “Babylon is *worn out*...to the point of impatience...by conflicting counsels.” (P. 172) Compare a similar statement by Job in **Job 16:7**.

⁵⁹The Masoretes offer two readings: first, the *kethibh*, “what is written,” הַבְּרִי, “they divided” (qal perfect, 3rd masculine plural); second, the *qere*, “to be read,” הַבְּרִי, “ones dividing” (qal active participle, masculine plural construct).

⁶⁰Slotki’s translation is “the astrologers.” He states that it is literally “dividers of the heavens,” which is “a reference to the astrological division of the heavens into four quarters, from which the location of the stars was supposed to give information about inauspicious [ill-omened, ominous] days or months, or the opposite, to undertake an enterprise.” (P. 233)

North states the meaning is, “Let the astrologers (*those who divide up the heavens, etc.*) stand to and save her!”

He adds that “Many omens were based on terrestrial (of, on, or relating to the

(continued...)

⁶⁰(...continued)

earth) phenomena such as eclipses, planetary conjunctions and the like...For the Babylonians, what happened on earth was determined by the motions of the heavenly bodies. For the Prophet, the courses of the stars and the course of history were alike under the control of Yahweh.” (Pp 171-72)

Modern astrologers claim their “science” is based on the words of the third line of **Genesis 1:14**,

And God said, Let light-bearers be in the expanse of the heavens,
to divide between the day and the night.
And they will be for signs, and for appointed seasons,
and for days and years.

Under the heading “dividing the heavens,” the Internet references a modern book, **Dividing The Heavens: A Manual For Horoscope Wheel Calculations**, published on May 22, 2009 by Leonard Williams, which explains the complex trigonometry of erecting a precise horoscope wheel from raw data. (8/14/2015)

Basic for astrology is the zodiac--a belt of the heavens within about 8° either side of the ecliptic (the apparent path of the Sun on the celestial sphere), including all apparent positions of the sun, moon, and most familiar planets. It is divided into twelve equal divisions or signs (Aries, Taurus, Gemini, Cancer, Leo, Virgo, Libra, Scorpio, Sagittarius, Capricorn, Aquarius, Pisces). These are, according to astrologers, the “signs” mentioned in **Genesis 1:14**.

Evidently the Babylonians put great faith in astrology, and had priests who taught the people how to read the future on the basis of the signs of the zodiac. “In Babylon as well as in Assyria as a direct offshoot of Babylonian culture, astrology takes its place as one of the two chief means at the disposal of the priests (who were called *bare* or “inspectors”) for ascertaining the will and intention of the Gods, the other being through the inspection of the livers of sacrificial animals.

“Babylonian astrology was the first organized system of astrology, arising in the second millennium B.C.E...By the 16th century B.C. the extensive employment of omen-based astrology can be evidenced in the compilation of a comprehensive reference work known as *Enuma Anu Enlil*. Its contents consisted of 70 cuneiform tablets comprising 7,000 celestial omens. Texts from this time also refer to an oral tradition--the origin and content of which can only be speculated upon. At this time Babylonian astrology was solely mundane, and prior to the 7th century B.C.E. the practitioners' understanding of astronomy was fairly rudimentary. Because of their inability to accurately predict future celestial phenomena and planetary movement very far in advance, interpretations were done as the phenomena occurred or slightly before. By the 4th century B.C.E., however, their mathematical methods had progressed enough to calculate future planetary positions with reasonable accuracy, at which point

(continued...)

those seeing visions among (the) stars, making known by (the) months,
some of what will come upon you!⁶¹

47:14⁶² תִּנְיָה הָיָו כְּקֶשׁ אֵשׁ שְׂרַפְתָּם

⁶⁰(...continued)

extensive ephemerides [tables or data file giving the calculated positions of a celestial object at regular intervals throughout a period] began to appear.” (Wikipedia, 8/14/2015)

⁶¹See the preceding footnote. These two lines sum up the work of the Babylonian astrologer-priests on the people.

The prophet does not say the astrologers cannot foretell anything—if fact, he affirms that they were able to make known to the people some events that would come upon them. But their feeble attempts at discerning the future were as nothing compared to the ability of Israel’s God to guide Israel through its history, foretelling accurately the major events that would happen to them, as well as giving them wise, unerring counsel.

⁶²North comments on **verse 14** that “So far from the astrologers being able to save Babylon, they will be powerless to save themselves. They will be like stubble consumed by fire.” (P. 173)

Oswalt comments on **verses 14-15** that in them “Isaiah reveals the outcome of Babylon’s dependence on the magical sciences: complete disaster. The magicians are no more substantial than stubble. When the fire of trouble comes, they will be devoured in an instant, unable to save even themselves, let alone anyone else, from the hand (power) of the flame...”

“**Verse 15** specifies further the failure of those who had misled Babylon into trusting their skills [specifically, those of ‘traders’]...To be sure, Babylon was a great trade center, and trade provided a major portion of the city’s wealth...On the other hand, the recurrence of ‘laboring from youth’ (from **verse 12**, where it clearly refers to sorcerers) argues for a metaphorical usage here. Babylon has ‘traded’ with the sorcerers: they have been her true business for hundreds of years. Now it has come time to balance the books, to see what profit (see **verse 12**) has been gained from all that enterprise. The answer is: bankruptcy.

“In the hour of disaster, all Babylon’s ‘traders’ can do is to abandon their posts... Instead of looking out for the great concerns of city and country, these who have led the city astray (**verse 10**) now themselves stray off to their own region(s). This is the picture of the dissolution of an army: as defeat overtakes it, discipline begins to break down, and what was once a great force simply dissipates...These few words at the end of **verse 15** capture the whole argument of **chapters 40-47**: everybody needs a savior;

(continued...)

לֹא־יִצְּלוּ אֶת־נַפְשָׁם מִיַּד לֵהֲבָה

אֵין־נִחַלְתָּ לְחַמָּם אוֹר לְשֶׁבֶת נִגְדָּו:

Look—they were like stubble / chaff—a fire burned them up.⁶³

They will not deliver their own innermost-beings from (the) power of a flame!⁶⁴

There are no hot coals for warming them, a flame to sit near.⁶⁵

47:15⁶⁶ כֵּן הָיְוָה לְךָ אֲשֶׁר יִגְעָה

סַחֲרִיךָ מִנְּעוֹרֶיךָ

אִישׁ לְעִבְרֹו תָעוּ

אֵין מוֹשִׁיעֶךָ:

So / in this way they were to you—with whom you toiled / grew weary--

⁶²(...continued)

the Gods and the magical world-view on which they rest cannot save; the Lord Who stands outside the cosmos and directs it according to His good purposes can save; which shall we choose?" (Pp. 255-56)

⁶³Alexander comments that "*Behold* brings their destruction into view as something present... He not only prophesies that they shall be burnt, but sees them burning." (P. 207)

⁶⁴Alexander translates by "They cannot deliver themselves from the hand (i.e. the power) of the flame"...There is at least much less significance and point in saying that they cannot save their lives, than in saying that they cannot even save themselves, much less their votaries [devout or zealous worshipers] and dependents." (Pp. 207-08)

⁶⁵Alexander comments that "The destruction of the fuel will be so complete, that nothing will be left at which a man can sit and warm himself." (P. 208)

⁶⁶North comments on **verse 15** that "Babylon will be left alone to her fate...

"Nowhere is the association of trafficking, luxury, and wantonness so vividly described as in **Revelation 18** (where Babylon = Rome), which is obviously based on **Isaiah 47**. Babylon's 'traffickers' [those dealing or trading in commodities or services, often of an illegal nature, usually followed by something like 'in opium'] have only dealt with her for what they themselves could get out of it, and when disaster comes they leave her to her fate without scruple." (P. 173)

your fellow-travelers since your youth.⁶⁷
Each one to his passing by, they went astray--⁶⁸
there is no one (to be) your savior!⁶⁹

⁶⁷Alexander states that this is “as if he had said, ‘Thy astrologers, etc., are utterly destroyed, and as for thy dealers, they wander home, etc., widely different in fate, but both alike in this, that they leave thee defenseless in the hour of extremity. *Thy traders* may then be taken either in the strict sense, as denoting foreign merchants, or in its wider sense, as comprehending all, whether states or individuals, with whom she had intercourse, commercial or political.” (P. 209)

⁶⁸Alexander comments that “These [traders] are described as thinking only of their own security [as they go] *each to his own quarter*, side, direction...*straight before him* without turning to the right hand or the left—(*they wander or have wandered*), a term implying not only flight, but confusion.” (P. 209)

⁶⁹Alexander translates by “*There is no one helping thee*, or still more strongly, *saving thee*, thou has no savior,” and comments that this has “particular reference to those just mentioned [the ‘traders’], who, instead of thinking upon her, or bringing her assistance, would be wholly engrossed by a sense of their own danger and the effort to escape it.” (P. 209)

Knight comments on verse 15 that “Deutero-Isaiah therefore is sure that Babylon must first experience the fires of the zeal of God upon her flesh if the hardness of her heart is to be broken. And so in a final picture of a besieged city whose defendants are crazed with thirst and blood, he describes men surrendering to the attackers as they advance from opposite them, but finding no one to save them from the attacker’s wrath. (See **Revelation 18** for an interpretation of **Isaiah 47** made in the light of God’s zeal towards all human institutions that say of themselves ‘I am.’ Nebo, the savior God, now lets Babylon down just when she needs him most—but then Nebo is merely nonbeing, *tohu*, negation [chaos]...

“So wisdom fails the philosopher; the study of economics and the practice of trade fail the merchant; even Babylon’s religion fails her in the day of wrath. For it is only the power of Israel’s God that can preserve a body from atomizing, from splitting up into its component parts. So ‘each individual will stagger off straight before him’—each man is seeking to save himself. The end of the story of Babylon is therefore a dreadful *saive qui peut* [French for ‘save yourself if you can,’ literally ‘may he save himself, whoever can,’ or ‘everyone for himself’]. It is a representation of the elemental truth about ordinary, unredeemed human nature, for in the final debacle [failure, catastrophe], whether it is to be in nuclear warfare or in the face of disease or self-appointed ruin, sinful man finds himself utterly alone even as his little world tumbles about his ears, and as he recognizes that he has to face nemesis [the inescapable agent of one’s downfall] as a disintegrated soul.” (Pp. 113-14)

(continued...)

1. **Occurrences of the Noun נְעוּרִים, “Youth” in the Hebrew Bible**

Genesis 8:21, YHWH says in His heart, the נְעוּרָיו, intention / purpose of man’s heart is evil from his youth;

Genesis 46:34, Joseph’s brothers tell Pharaoh that they have been cattlemen from their youth;

Leviticus 22:13, a priest’s daughter, in her youth;

Numbers 30:4, a woman, in her youth;

Numbers 30:17^{Heb} / **16**^{Eng}, a daughter, in her youth;

1 Samuel 12:2, Samuel had walked before Israel from his youth until he was old and gray;

1 Samuel 17:33, Saul tells David he cannot fight Goliath, for he is only a youth;

2 Samuel 19:8^{Heb} / **7**^{Eng}, Joab speaks about the time when his soldiers were youths;

1 Kings 18:12, Obadiah tells Elijah that he has feared YHWH from his youth;

Isaiah 47:12, the Babylonians have practiced magic arts from their youth; **Isaiah 47:15**, same;

Isaiah 54:6, a wife married in her youth, and now cast off / divorced;

Jeremiah 2:2, YHWH remembers Israel’s devotion in its youth;

Jeremiah 3:4, the disobedient people of Judah have called YHWH their Father and Friend from their youth;

Jeremiah 3:24, from their youth, the shameful thing has devoured everything for which their fathers labored;

⁶⁹(...continued)

Jeremiah 3:25, the confession is that from our youth we have sinned against YHWH;

Jeremiah 22:21, the people of Judah from their youth have not obeyed YHWH's voice;

Jeremiah 31:19, having repented, Ephraim bore the disgrace of his youth;

Jeremiah 48:11, Moab has been at each since his youth;

Ezekiel 4:14, Ezekiel claims that from his youth he has never eaten unclean things;

Ezekiel 16:22, the proud prostitute Jerusalem has forgotten her youth, when she was naked, wallowing in her blood; **Ezekiel 16:43**, similar;

Ezekiel 16:60, YHWH promises to remember His covenant which He made with Jerusalem in her youth;

Ezekiel 23:3, two sisters, who in their youth were sexually promiscuous; **Ezekiel 23:8**, similar; **Ezekiel 23:19**, similar; **Ezekiel 23:21**, similar;

Hosea 2:17, the days of Israel's youth, when she came out of Egypt;

Joel 1:8, a call to lament like a virgin, who has lost the bridegroom of her youth;

Zechariah 13:5, a prophet claims he was bought and sold in his youth;

Malachi 2:14, the Jewish men have been unfaithful to the wife of their youth; **Malachi 2:15**, same;

Psalms 25:7, prayer for YHWH not to remember the sins of one's youth;

Psalms 71:5, YHWH is the psalmist's hope and trust from his youth;

Psalms 71:17, from the psalmist's youth, YHWH has taught him;

Psalms 103:5, YHWH satisfies with good, so that one's youth is renewed like the vulture's;

Psalms 127:4, like arrows in the hand of a warrior, are the children of one's youth;

Psalms 129:1, Israel is to say it has been afflicted from its youth; **Psalms 129:2**, same;

Psalms 144:12, prayer for sons in their youth to be like plants fully grown;

Job 13:26, Job complains that El (Supreme God) make him inherit the iniquities of his youth;

Job 31:18, Job claims that from his youth, the fatherless have grown up with him as a

father;

Proverbs 2:17, the adulteress forsake the companion of her youth;

Proverbs 5:18, instead of sexual promiscuity, rejoice in the wife of your youth!;

Lamentations 3:27, It is good for the man that he lifts up a yoke in his youth.

2. **Financial Astrology (from Wikipedia)**

“Financial astrology (also known as business astrology, economic astrology, and / or astro-economics) is the practice of relating the movements of celestial bodies to events in financial markets. The use of astrology in financial markets is not consistent with standard economic or financial theory, but might be considered heterodox economics. The practice has been used in various formats since 463B.C.E.

“The scientific community considers astrology to be a pseudoscience. Hard dates are rarely given, rather, advice is given based on which astrological sign is 'rising'. Long term predictions are made using more traditional methods of looking at prior history and making mathematical predictions based on patterns relative to astronomical events. Critics have pointed out that some astrological events that have been used in predictions occur so rarely that they may have never happened before within a human lifetime, thus having no precedent on which to predict results.

“In 1992, 1994 and 2008, a magazine by the name of Wall Street Forecaster was named as one of the top forecasters on Wall Street, as the superstition was being leaned on for luck. It was also rated the second best performing forecaster in 2002. It was reported that some clients asked for their copies to be delivered in 'brown paper' to avoid mockery. As of 2001 the Astro fund trading company, which handled \$3.5-5 million worth of investor assets, claimed 10-15% of fund managers were using their service or a similar company. The majority of the market demand for this service has come from the US and Japan respectively. In 2000, Bloomberg News was host to a weekly show dedicated to financial astrology. The 2000 financial crash led to a surge in companies and investment bankers using the services of financial astrologers.

“Tellingly, large firms such as J. P. Morgan, refuse to take a stance for or against the practice, though the founder of the bank, John Pierpont Morgan, had a personal

astrologer on staff, and he was attributed as saying "Millionaires don't use astrologers, but billionaires do." In 2000, the chief technical analyst for HSBC was quoted as saying; "most astrology stuff doesn't check out, but some of it does." Similarly, in 1997, the treasurer for The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development admitted that they used the practice in their financial planning and described the correlation between astrological events and financial events as "uncanny." The practice was used by Goldman Sachs in a paper released in 1999, focusing specifically on the correlation between eclipses and the state of the financial market at that time. Though floated as an idea by the company at the time, analysis showed that random data produced similar results. A 2007 study by The British Association for the Advancement of Science conducted an experiment wherein a financial astrology, professional investor, and five-year-old child, were asked to invest £5,000 on the FTSE100 [Financial Times Stock Exchange 100, a hundred companies on the London Stock Exchange]. The child earned the most money, with the financial astrologer taking the heaviest losses." (8/19/2015)