

Isaiah 47:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Stand now with thine enchantments, and with the multitude of thy sorceries, wherein thou hast laboured from thy youth; if so be thou shalt be able to profit, if so be thou mayest prevail.

Analysis

The sarcastic challenge 'Stand now with thine enchantments' invites Babylon to test her occult powers against God's judgment. The mocking 'if so be thou shalt be able to profit' questions whether sorceries ever provided real benefit, or only illusion. This exposes all false religion's impotence before the true God - when crisis comes, idols cannot help (Jeremiah 2:28).

Historical Context

Babylon's fall happened during a festival when defenses were lowered. No amount of divination predicted or prevented Cyrus's entry. The inability of Babylonian wise men to interpret Belshazzar's handwriting (Daniel 5) symbolized this bankruptcy.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. What 'enchantments' (habits, securities, relationships) do you stand in that cannot actually help when trials come?

2. How does the impotence of Babylon's wisdom in crisis expose the futility of trusting anything but God?

Interlinear Text

עֲמִדֵּי	נָ א	בְּחִבֵּי יְיָ	וְכָר ב	כְּשֹׁפֵי יְיָ
Stand	H4994	now with thine enchantments	and with the multitude	of thy sorceries
H5975		H2267	H7230	H3785
בְּאֵשׁ ר	יְג עֵת	מִנְעוּרֵי יְיָ	אוֹלֵי י	תּוֹכֵל י
wherein	thou hast laboured	from thy youth	H194	if so be thou shalt be able
H834	H3021	H5271		H3201
הוֹעֵ יל	אוֹלֵי י	תַּעֲרֹצִי:		
to profit	H194	if so be thou mayest prevail		
H3276		H6206		

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 2:28 (Parallel theme): But where are thy gods that thou hast made thee? let them arise, if they can save thee in the time of thy trouble: for according to the number of thy cities are thy gods, O Judah.

Nahum 3:4 (Parallel theme): Because of the multitude of the whoredoms of the wellfavoured harlot, the mistress of witchcrafts, that selleth nations through her whoredoms, and families through her witchcrafts.