

Isaiah 47:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Thy nakedness shall be uncovered, yea, thy shame shall be seen: I will take vengeance, and I will not meet thee as a man.

Analysis

Thy nakedness shall be uncovered, yea, thy shame shall be seen. The Hebrew *ervah* (nakedness) carries connotations of sexual vulnerability and covenant violation (Leviticus 18:6-18). God promises complete exposure of Babylon's sins and degradation. The parallel term *cherpah* (shame, disgrace) indicates public humiliation before nations. What Babylon concealed through propaganda and intimidation will be revealed in judgment.

"I will take vengeance, and I will not meet thee as a man" declares God's uniquely divine justice. The phrase is interpretively challenging; most likely meaning God will not be pacified through human negotiation or bribery. When God executes judgment, no diplomacy, wealth, or military strength can avert consequences. The verb *naqam* (take vengeance) affirms God's prerogative to punish wickedness - vengeance belongs to the LORD (Deuteronomy 32:35, Romans 12:19).

Reformed theology recognizes here both God's justice and mercy paradoxically displayed. Justice demands exposure and punishment of sin; mercy provides Christ who was 'uncovered' and shamed in our place (Hebrews 12:2). Babylon received justice without mercy; believers receive mercy without compromising justice - Christ satisfied both divine attributes at Calvary. The certainty of judgment for the impenitent underscores the preciousness of the gospel for the elect.

Historical Context

Babylon's fall in 539 BC involved the humiliation of her priesthood, nobility, and religious system. The Nabonidus Chronicle records the capture of Babylon's king and the cessation of festival rituals. The city that dominated the ancient Near East for centuries became a Persian province overnight. Isaiah's prophecy written 150+ years earlier demonstrated God's sovereign control over history - Babylon's judgment was certain because God decreed it long before Babylon reached its zenith.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How does the certainty of divine judgment on unrepentant sinners intensify your urgency to proclaim the gospel?
2. In what ways does Christ's willingness to have His shame exposed (nakedness on the cross) cover your shame and guilt?
3. What contemporary 'Babylons' - empires, ideologies, or power structures - appear invincible yet face certain divine judgment?

Interlinear Text

תגל	ערוּתִי	ג	תראֵה	חַרְפִּי	נָקָם
shall be uncovered	Thy nakedness	H1571	shall be seen	yea thy shame	vengeance
H1540	H6172		H7200	H2781	H5359
אֶקֶח	וְלֹא	אֶפְגֵּעַ	אִדָּם:		
I will take	H3808	and I will not meet	thee as a man		
H3947		H6293	H120		

Additional Cross-References

Nahum 3:5 (Parallel theme): Behold, I am against thee, saith the LORD of hosts; and I will discover thy skirts upon thy face, and I will shew the nations thy nakedness, and the kingdoms thy shame.