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GROUP STUDY GUIDE

Peoples of the Bible – The Babylonians

TEACHING SUMMARY

The Bible primarily focuses on the people of Israel, but many other nations appear throughout the Scriptures. One of the most influential of these nations was Babylon.

Babylon was a powerful city located along the Euphrates River. The name Babylon comes from the Hebrew word *Bavel*, which is associated with confusion. This name connects to the event at the Tower of Babel when God confused the languages of humanity.

Babylon ruled two major empires in history: the Old Babylonian Empire and the Neo-Babylonian Empire. The Neo-Babylonian Empire reached its height under King Nebuchadnezzar.

The Babylonians were known for their advanced knowledge in mathematics and astronomy, as well as their impressive architecture. One of the most famous structures associated with Babylon was the Ishtar Gate. Nebuchadnezzar also built large temples, city walls, and a massive golden statue described in the book of Daniel.

Babylonian religion involved worshiping many gods, including Marduk and Ishtar. Their religious practices included divination, magic, astrology, and consulting omens to predict the future. These practices were strictly forbidden by YHWH.

Babylon had a strong influence on the surrounding nations, including Israel. Some Israelites adopted Babylonian religious customs, which led to idolatry and disobedience to God.

Eventually, Babylon conquered the kingdom of Judah. In 605 BC, many Jews were taken captive to Babylon, including Daniel. Later, in 586 BC, the Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple.

God had warned about these events through the prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah long before they occurred. The exile lasted seventy years until Babylon was conquered by the Medes and Persians under King Cyrus.

Babylon later became a symbol in Scripture for pride, idolatry, and opposition to God. The book of Revelation even uses the name “Babylon the Great” to describe a system that persecutes God’s people.

Through the story of Babylon, the Bible teaches that nations may prosper for a time while rejecting God, but their success only lasts as long as God allows it. True power and authority belong to God alone.

SUMMARY POINTS

- Babylon was a powerful ancient city along the Euphrates River.
 - The name Babylon is connected to the confusion of languages at Babel.
 - Babylon ruled major empires in ancient history.
 - King Nebuchadnezzar led the Neo-Babylonian Empire.
 - Babylonian religion involved idols, divination, and magic.
 - Babylon conquered Judah and destroyed Jerusalem.
 - The Jewish exile in Babylon lasted seventy years.
 - Babylon later became a symbol of pride and opposition to God.
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FILL-IN-THE-BLANK

Basic

1. The city of Babylon was located along the _____ River.
2. The Hebrew word for Babylon is _____.
3. The confusion of languages occurred at the Tower of _____.
4. The Neo-Babylonian Empire reached its height under King _____.

5. Babylon conquered the kingdom of _____.
 6. The Babylonians destroyed the _____ in Jerusalem.
 7. The Jewish exile lasted _____ years.
 8. Babylon later became a symbol of _____ and opposition to God.
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Challenging

1. Babylon may trace its ancestry to _____, the grandson of Noah.
 2. The Babylonians used wedge-shaped writing called _____.
 3. One of Babylon's most famous structures was the _____ Gate.
 4. Babylonian religion included practices such as _____ and magic.
 5. The Jewish exile ended when _____ of Persia conquered Babylon.
 6. King _____ had a dream of a great tree representing his kingdom.
 7. In Revelation, the symbol of _____ represents a system that opposes God.
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GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why did Babylon become such a powerful and influential nation?
 2. What made Babylonian religion different from worshiping YHWH?
 3. Why do you think God allowed Babylon to conquer Judah?
 4. What lessons can we learn from Nebuchadnezzar's pride?
 5. Why does the Bible use Babylon as a symbol of opposition to God?
 6. How can prosperity sometimes lead people away from trusting God?
 7. What does the story of Babylon teach us about God's sovereignty over nations?
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ANSWER KEY – GROUP GUIDE

Basic

1. Euphrates
2. Babel
3. Babel
4. Nebuchadnezzar
5. Judah
6. Temple
7. Seventy
8. Pride

Challenging

1. Cush
2. Cuneiform
3. Ishtar
4. Divination
5. Cyrus
6. Nebuchadnezzar
7. Babylon