

Exposition of Jeremiah - Lesson 51

“A Prophecy of Judgment Upon Babylon-Part Two”

By:

Dr. Troy S. Welch, Pastor - Teacher
Spheres of Grace Ministries, Inc.
6809 E Hudlow Road
Hayden, ID 83835
(805) 701-6643

Applicational Text: Revelation 18:1-2 *And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory.² And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.*

Expositional Text: Jeremiah 51:59 *The word which Jeremiah the prophet commanded Seraiah the son of Neriah, the son of Maaseiah, when he went with Zedekiah the king of Judah into Babylon in the fourth year of his reign. And this Seraiah was a quiet prince.*

Introduction:

You can see from the Expositional Text that the prophesy against Babylon which we are examining in this fifty-first chapter of Jeremiah's prophecy was given at the time of the mass exile of the Children of Israel when the Babylonians took most of the Children of Israel to Babylon. Jeremiah had written it in a book, Jeremiah 51:61-64 ⁶¹ *And Jeremiah said to Seraiah, When thou comest to Babylon, and shalt see, and shalt read all these words;* ⁶² *Then shalt thou say, O LORD, thou hast spoken against this place, to cut it off, that none shall remain in it, neither man nor beast, but that it shall be desolate forever.* ⁶³ *And it shall be, when thou hast made an end of reading this book, that thou shalt bind a stone to it, and cast it into the midst of Euphrates:* ⁶⁴ *And thou shalt say, Thus shall Babylon sink, and shall not rise from the evil that I will bring upon her: and they shall be weary. Thus far are the words of Jeremiah.*

Therefore, God had revealed to the captives that although the Babylonians had taken them out of their own land and into Babylon, God had appointed a day of judgment against the Babylonians. And, like so much of Bible prophecy, there would be both a near and a far fulfillment of this prophecy as is seen in our applicational text in **Revelation 18:1-2** *And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.* Babylon in the days of Jeremiah, becomes an example of the attempt to establish a one world government during the seven-year completion of the Age of Israel in the Tribulation that will come upon the world following the Rapture of the Church. The near fulfillment of the fall of Babylon in Jeremiah's day would

be in seventy years. The far fulfillment of that prophecy is yet to be fulfilled but will be fulfilled seven years after the Rapture of the Church. The Revived Roman Empire is referred to in the Book of Revelation as Mystery Babylon the Great. It derives its name by the similarity of characteristics of Babylon in Jeremiah's day. The word **"Mystery"** is based on the Greek word **"musterion"** which means **"secrets know only to those in the organization."** A harmony of Scripture reveals the Lord has given us a glimpse into the last days of the Jewish Administration.

Remember! Our purpose for studying the Book of Jeremiah is to learn from their divine discipline in order to avoid our own personal and national pain, loss, and suffering, and to be reminded that **"...The powers that be are ordained of God...."** **"Mystery Babylon"** is a biblical symbol of godless depravity, and we are quickly approaching that degree of civil depravity in our society today. The celebration on university campuses and in other areas of our society as a response to the October seven massacre in Israel was shocking to us. But we have seen an escalation of that depravity in the celebration of the assassination of Charlie Kirk across a broad scope of our society, media, politicians, educators, and students. We are quickly approaching that level of godlessness that brought down Babylon and later the Roman Empire. Recent surveys show between 25 and 35 percent (depending on the survey) believe that the use of violence against government or political adversaries is justified today. Therefore, our study of this Book of Jeremiah is appropriate in an attempt to understand our applicational text last week that stated **"...the powers that be are ordained of God...."** In these last few chapters we have seen God's authority and judgment justified over the gentile nations even as He was disciplining His own people, The Children of Israel.

This fifty first chapter of Jeremiah reveals, ahead of time, the pending judgment of Babylon and instruction to the Children of Israel.

I. The Judgment of Babylon: (51:1-14)

Jeremiah 51:1-14: ¹*Thus saith the LORD; Behold, I will raise up against Babylon, and against them that dwell in the midst of them that rise up against me, a destroying wind;* ²*And will send unto Babylon fanners, that shall fan her, and shall empty her land: for in the day of trouble they shall be against her round about.* ³*Against him that bendeth let the archer bend his bow, and against him that lifteth himself up in his brigandine: and spare ye not her young men; destroy ye utterly all her host.* ⁴*Thus the slain shall fall in the land of the Chaldeans, and they that are thrust through in her streets.* ⁵*For Israel hath not been forsaken, nor Judah of his God, of the LORD of hosts; though their land was filled with sin against the Holy One of Israel.* ⁶*Flee out of the midst of Babylon, and deliver every man his soul: be not cut off in her iniquity; for this is the time of the LORD's vengeance; he will render unto her a recompence.* ⁷*Babylon hath been a golden cup in the LORD's hand, that made all the earth drunken: the nations have drunken of her wine; therefore the nations are mad.* ⁸*Babylon is suddenly fallen and destroyed: howl for her; take balm for her pain, if so be she may be healed.* ⁹*We would have healed Babylon, but she is not healed: forsake her, and let us go every one into his own country: for her judgment reacheth unto heaven, and is lifted up even to the skies.* ¹⁰*The LORD hath brought forth our righteousness: come, and let us declare in Zion the work of*

the LORD our God. ¹¹ Make bright the arrows; gather the shields: the LORD hath raised up the spirit of the kings of the Medes: for his device is against Babylon, to destroy it; because it is the vengeance of the LORD, the vengeance of his temple. ¹² Set up the standard upon the walls of Babylon, make the watch strong, set up the watchmen, prepare the ambushes: for the LORD hath both devised and done that which he spake against the inhabitants of Babylon. ¹³ O thou that dwellest upon many waters, abundant in treasures, thine end is come, and the measure of thy covetousness. ¹⁴ The LORD of hosts hath sworn by himself, saying, Surely I will fill thee with men, as with caterpillers; and they shall lift up a shout against thee.

This chapter is an **“I told you so”** passage. Although this appears to be a continuation of the judgments we examined in chapter fifty, this is really an earlier indictment in which the Lord had told them. This prophecy had been given before the Children of Israel were taken to Babylon. The Lord’s message had been, **“Surrender and live.”** Then as they are beginning to be marched some 800 miles away by an enemy nation, God provides this revelation of how it is all going to turn out with a challenge for them to know God, to know why He is doing this and for them to understand what He has planned for the future.

God’s assurance is sent with them as they are sent to Babylon for discipline and He says, ⁵ *For Israel hath not been forsaken, nor Judah of his God, of the LORD of hosts; though their land was filled with sin against the Holy One of Israel.* When their discipline is complete and their “time out” is done they are instructed to ⁶ *Flee out of the midst of Babylon, and deliver every man his soul: be not cut off in her iniquity; for this is the time of the LORD’s vengeance; he will render unto her a recompence.*” Yes! There will be a deliverance after their time of discipline is done.

We do have an advantage over them in that we don’t have to try to figure out when we should get out, He is coming to get us.

I Thessalonians 4:13-18: ¹³ *But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. ¹⁴ For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. ¹⁵ For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: ¹⁷ Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. ¹⁸ Wherefore comfort one another with these words.*

Babylon had been His instrument of bringing discipline upon His own people, but He wants them to know He has a plan. It is in accordance with our knowledge of God’s plan that we have peace in the midst of the battle.

Here in the Church Age we have been given the Book of Revelation to reveal to us what God has planned for the future. Knowing What God has planned will sustain us in a time of attack by the forces of evil.

In the midst of this prophecy of judgment and deliverance they are reminded who God is and are provided with a tribute of praise to reflect on who is in charge.

II. Selah: Let's Just Praise The Lord: (51:15-19)

Jeremiah 51:15-19: ¹⁵ *He hath made the earth by his power, he hath established the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched out the heaven by his understanding.* ¹⁶ *When he uttereth his voice, there is a multitude of waters in the heavens; and he causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth: he maketh lightnings with rain, and bringeth forth the wind out of his treasures.* ¹⁷ *Every man is brutish by his knowledge; every founder is confounded by the graven image: for his molten image is falsehood, and there is no breath in them.* ¹⁸ *They are vanity, the work of errors: in the time of their visitation they shall perish.* ¹⁹ *The portion of Jacob is not like them; for he is the former of all things: and Israel is the rod of his inheritance: the LORD of hosts is his name.*

Although the word Selah is not in the text, I have used it to make a point because it is the Hebrew word which says, **“Stop and think about it.”** Here, in the midst of this prophetic judgment of Babylon, God reminds them of who He is to establish the validity of the prophecy and give them confidence. We would always do well to stop and think about who God is and what He has revealed.

In the midst of God's prophecy of what He is going to do to Babylon, He inserts this moment of praise which identifies who He is, in order for them to know that He can and will deliver them. It is God's character, the attributes of Sovereignty, Omnipotence, Righteousness, Eternalness, Omniscience, Omnipresence, and Love that ascertain that the victory is His and when it is over we are free indeed.

III. God Has Commissioned the Medes and the Persians: (51:20-35)

Jeremiah 51:20-35 ²⁰ *Thou art my battle axe and weapons of war: for with thee will I break in pieces the nations, and with thee will I destroy kingdoms;* ²¹ *And with thee will I break in pieces the horse and his rider; and with thee will I break in pieces the chariot and his rider;* ²² *With thee also will I break in pieces man and woman; and with thee will I break in pieces old and young; and with thee will I break in pieces the young man and the maid;* ²³ *I will also break in pieces with thee the shepherd and his flock; and with thee will I break in pieces the husbandman and his yoke of oxen; and with thee will I break in pieces captains and rulers.* ²⁴ *And I will render unto Babylon and to all the inhabitants of Chaldea all their evil that they have done in Zion in your sight, saith the LORD.* ²⁵ *Behold, I am against thee, O destroying mountain, saith the LORD, which destroyest all the earth: and I will stretch out mine hand upon thee, and roll thee down from the rocks, and will make thee a burnt mountain.* ²⁶ *And they shall not take of thee a*

stone for a corner, nor a stone for foundations; but thou shalt be desolate for ever, saith the LORD. ²⁷ Set ye up a standard in the land, blow the trumpet among the nations, prepare the nations against her, call together against her the kingdoms of Ararat, Minni, and Ashchenaz; appoint a captain against her; cause the horses to come up as the rough caterpillers. ²⁸ Prepare against her the nations with the kings of the Medes, the captains thereof, and all the rulers thereof, and all the land of his dominion. ²⁹ And the land shall tremble and sorrow: for every purpose of the LORD shall be performed against Babylon, to make the land of Babylon a desolation without an inhabitant. ³⁰ The mighty men of Babylon have forborn to fight, they have remained in their holds: their might hath failed; they became as women: they have burned her dwelling places; her bars are broken. ³¹ One post shall run to meet another, and one messenger to meet another, to shew the king of Babylon that his city is taken at one end, ³² And that the passages are stopped, and the reeds they have burned with fire, and the men of war are affrighted. ³³ For thus floor, it is time to thresh her: yet a little while, and the time of her harvest shall come. ³⁴ Nebuchadrezzar the king of Babylon hath devoured me, he hath crushed me, he hath made me an empty vessel, he hath swallowed me up like a dragon, he hath filled his belly with my delicates, he hath cast me out. ³⁵ The violence done to me and to my flesh be upon Babylon, shall the inhabitant of Zion say; and my blood upon the inhabitants of Chaldea, shall Jerusalem say...

As a result of the fall of man and our inherent nature, God does not have to put war into the hearts of men, it is there due to our fallen nature. Oh, I know, there are some of you whose Area of Strength is dominant and the trend in your Old Sin Nature is toward do-goodism. However, on the other hand there are those of us whose Area of Weakness is dominant, and we are rabble rousers. With Nebuchadnezzar as well as Darius and Cyrus, God simply needed to remove His restraints and allow these men to do what they naturally desired to do. That being the case, God can intervene at any time and over-rule them and He reveals here His plan to bring about His judgment upon Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonian Chaldean empire. The Medes and the Persians will become the Lord's *"...battle ax and weapons of war...."*

Notice the language in the text, ³⁴ *Nebuchadrezzar the king of Babylon hath devoured me, he hath crushed me, he hath made me an empty vessel, he hath swallowed me up like a dragon, he hath filled his belly with my delicates, he hath cast me out. ³⁵ The violence done to me and to my flesh be upon Babylon, shall the inhabitant of Zion say; and my blood upon the inhabitants of Chaldea, shall Jerusalem say...* the "me" and the "my" of the text refers to the Children of Israel, but God takes it personal and so we have, *"...Therefore this saith the Lord..."* as God in His sovereignty promises to deliver Israel.

IV. His Sovereignty Will Deliver Israel: (51:36-49)

Jeremiah 51:36-49 ³⁶ *Therefore thus saith the LORD; Behold, I will plead thy cause, and take vengeance for thee; and I will dry up her sea, and make her springs dry. ³⁷ And Babylon shall become heaps, a dwellingplace for dragons, an astonishment, and an hissing, without an inhabitant. ³⁸ They shall roar together like lions: they shall yell as*

lions' whelps. ³⁹ In their heat I will make their feasts, and I will make them drunken, that they may rejoice, and sleep a perpetual sleep, and not wake, saith the LORD. ⁴⁰ I will bring them down like lambs to the slaughter, like rams with he goats. ⁴¹ How is Sheshach taken! and how is the praise of the whole earth surprised! how is Babylon become an astonishment among the nations! ⁴² The sea is come up upon Babylon: she is covered with the multitude of the waves thereof. ⁴³ Her cities are a desolation, a dry land, and a wilderness, a land wherein no man dwelleth, neither doth any son of man pass thereby. ⁴⁴ And I will punish Bel in Babylon, and I will bring forth out of his mouth that which he hath swallowed up: and the nations shall not flow together any more unto him: yea, the wall of Babylon shall fall. ⁴⁵ My people, go ye out of the midst of her, and deliver ye every man his soul from the fierce anger of the LORD. ⁴⁶ And lest your heart faint, and ye fear for the rumour that shall be heard in the land; a rumour shall both come one year, and after that in another year shall come a rumour, and violence in the land, ruler against ruler. ⁴⁷ Therefore, behold, the days come, that I will do judgment upon the graven images of Babylon: and her whole land shall be confounded, and all her slain shall fall in the midst of her. ⁴⁸ Then the heaven and the earth, and all that is therein, shall sing for Babylon: for the spoilers shall come unto her from the north, saith the LORD. ⁴⁹ As Babylon hath caused the slain of Israel to fall, so at Babylon shall fall the slain of all the earth.

Because of the repentance of the Children of Israel we observed in the previous chapter, we now see God intervening and in the same way God had used Babylon as his means of vengeance against Israel, now He will get vengeance upon Babylon by means of the Medes and Persians. Yes! I Know! Vengeance is still in the hands of God. *“Vengeance is mine, I will repay saith the Lord.” (Romans 12:19).* My old nature would relish to embrace the first part of the verse alone, *“Vengeance is mine”* but, alas, only God is qualified to be a fair and righteous judge. However, there is assurance that God will right the matter. Here, He gives encouragement to Israel.

V. A Message of Encouragement For Israel (51:50-58)

Jeremiah 51:50-58 ⁵⁰ Ye that have escaped the sword, go away, stand not still: remember the LORD afar off, and let Jerusalem come into your mind. ⁵¹ We are confounded, because we have heard reproach: shame hath covered our faces: for strangers are come into the sanctuaries of the LORD's house. ⁵² Wherefore, behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will do judgment upon her graven images: and through all her land the wounded shall groan. ⁵³ Though Babylon should mount up to heaven, and though she should fortify the height of her strength, yet from me shall spoilers come unto her, saith the LORD. ⁵⁴ A sound of a cry cometh from Babylon, and great destruction from the land of the Chaldeans: ⁵⁵ Because the LORD hath spoiled Babylon, and destroyed out of her the great voice; when her waves do roar like great waters, a noise of their voice is uttered: ⁵⁶ Because the spoiler is come upon her, even upon Babylon, and her mighty men are taken, every one of their bows is broken: for the LORD God of recompences shall surely requite. ⁵⁷ And I will make drunk her princes, and her wise men, her captains, and her rulers, and her mighty men: and they shall sleep a perpetual sleep, and not wake, saith the King, whose name is the LORD of hosts. ⁵⁸ Thus saith the LORD of hosts; The broad

walls of Babylon shall be utterly broken, and her high gates shall be burned with fire; and the people shall labour in vain, and the folk in the fire, and they shall be weary.

They have arrived in a foreign land, their homes have been destroyed, it is going to be seventy years before they are allowed to return but the Lord assures them this too will end. He is able to provide that assurance because He has orchestrated the whole thing. That knowledge can produce bitterness, or it can lead to redemption. The choice is ours.

The walls of Babylon were forty feet wide and had been used for chariot races, but they *shall be utterly broken, and her high gates shall be burned with fire;* and all of the Babylonian's efforts to stop it will be in vain.

VI. Concluding Affirmation and Instruction: (51:59-64)

Then we come to the affirmation that these things will occur and the instructions for the Children of Israel as they receive their discipline. Remember that this information was given to them as they were being forcibly removed from their own land and were going to be captives in Babylon for seventy years. God wanted them to know why they were going into captivity, but He also wanted them to understand this was not the end of their relationship. Look at the text that follows...

Jeremiah 51:59-64 ⁵⁹ *The word which Jeremiah the prophet commanded Seraiah the son of Neriah, the son of Maaseiah, when he went with Zedekiah the king of Judah into Babylon in the fourth year of his reign. And this Seraiah was a quiet prince.* ⁶⁰ *So Jeremiah wrote in a book all the evil that should come upon Babylon, even all these words that are written against Babylon.* ⁶¹ *And Jeremiah said to Seraiah, When thou comest to Babylon, and shalt see, and shalt read all these words;* ⁶² *Then shalt thou say, O LORD, thou hast spoken against this place, to cut it off, that none shall remain in it, neither man nor beast, but that it shall be desolate for ever.* ⁶³ *And it shall be, when thou hast made an end of reading this book, that thou shalt bind a stone to it, and cast it into the midst of Euphrates:* ⁶⁴ *And thou shalt say, Thus shall Babylon sink, and shall not rise from the evil that I will bring upon her: and they shall be weary. Thus far are the words of Jeremiah.*

The time of this writing was when Zedekiah was in his fourth year and was taken into Babylonian captivity with his people. Seraiah who was the brother of Baruch, Jeremiah's secretary, was given a book containing the pending judgment of Babylon. Jeremiah wrote in this book the judgment God had given him concerning His pending judgment of Babylon and told him to read it when he got to Babylon. This information was provided to assure them while they were in captivity that God had not forsaken them but would let them know judgment was coming at the appointed hour.

After reading the book, Seraiah was to tie it to stone and throw it into the Euphrates River and tell the people that Babylon was going to sink in the same way they had seen the book sink, but it would be according to God's schedule,

Conclusion:

Seraiah, brother to Baruch who was Jeremiah's secretary, was given this revelation of God's plan to read to them and then to place it in the river Euphrates as an act of faith that God would perform it.

We have been given the Old Testament to reveal God's plan. We have been given the New Testament to understand the fulfillment of the plan and reveal the details for the application of the plan.

The text closes with, “...*Thus far are the words of Jeremiah...*” Remember, these words were written just as they began a seventy-year period of discipline. There would be other words, but this is all that Jeremiah had for them at the time of their departure into captivity. However, regardless of what was to come, they would have God's timetable and God's plan.

The marvelous grace of God reveals a plan. That plan includes realization, repentance, redemption, and restoration.

It is through the word of God that we can come to a realization of who God is, who we are, and how we are to relate to Him and to one another. Through His word we realize we *have all sinned and come short of the glory of God*. Through His word we discover His grace plan of redemption. Through His word we realize the means by which we can be restored to oneness with Him. Through His word we are given the techniques and mechanics by which we can avoid discipline and experience the fulness of what He has designed for us.

But it all Begins at Salvation:

- *For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God...*
- *The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life...*
- *With the heart man believes unto righteousness...*
- *But with the mouth confession is made unto salvation...*
- *For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved...*
-

*Let Us Learn From The Failure of Others and Avoid
The Pain, Loss, Or Suffering of Personal
Discipline!*