

Judgment Against Babylon

51: 1-14

DIG: What will the effect be on the Jews (51: 5-6, 9-10)? Why were they told to run for their lives? Where do they go? What were those living in Babylon failing to take into account about the LORD's relationship to Isra'el? What is the golden cup? Who uses it? Why is it necessary? What **three groups** desert her? ADONAI will take vengeance, vengeance for His Temple. Where was this Temple located?

REFLECT: What does Babylon's judgment mean to you personally? What does it mean to you personally that ADONAI has already picked out a safe place for the Jews as they flee Babylon and run for their lives? What does it say about God's faithfulness?

These prophecies were made in 594-593 BC during the eleven-year reign of Zedekiah

This is the word ADONAI spoke through Yirmeyahu the prophet concerning **far eschatological** Babylon and the land of the Babylonians (50:1 and 51:1a):

The winnowing of Babylon: See, I will stir up the spirit of a destroyer (Jeremiah 51:1a; First Chronicles 5:26; Haggai 1:14). The Hebrew underlying this phrase is translated *aroused . . . the hostility of* in Second Chronicles 21:16. **Against Babylon and the people of Leb Kamai (51:1b).** Leb Kamai means *the heart of my adversaries*, but the expression is also an *atbash* for Chaldea or Babylon. An *atbash* was a code in which the letters of a name counted from the end of the alphabet are substituted for the corresponding letters from the beginning of the alphabet. For example, in English the letter "z" would replace the letter "a," the letter "y" would replace the letter "b," and so on. The name "Abby" as an *atbash* would become "zyyb." The consonants for *heart of my adversary* (*lbqmy*), when reversed in the Hebrew alphabet, spell **Chaldea** (*ksdym*). Why Jeremiah didn't simply say **Chaldeans** is a mystery, we just don't know.³⁰⁵

YHVH will send foreigners to Babylon to winnow her and to completely devastate her land; they will oppose her on every side in the day of disaster (51:2). This didn't happen in 539 BC when Cyrus captured Babylon unopposed (see Ez - **A Message Against Babylon**). This **far eschatological prophecy** could only happen at the end of the Great Tribulation. There is a play on the words **strangers** (Hebrew: *zarim*) and **oppose her** (Hebrew: *zeruha*). Normally when **winnowing**, one throws the wheat and the chaff up into the air and the wind blows the chaff away, while the wheat falls to the ground. But here, when the wheat and the chaff are thrown up into the air, both are blown away by the **devastating** wind.

Let not the archer string his bow, nor let him put on his armor (get ready for war). Do not spare her young men; completely destroy her for she is *cherem*, meaning *devoted to destruction* (see Fb - [The Destruction of Babylon and Restoration of Isra'el: three degrees of excommunication](#)). The winnowing will be total and the land of Babylon will be completely destroyed at the end of the Great Tribulation (see the commentary on [Revelation Er - Babylon Will Never Be Found Again](#)). This did not happen in 539 BC when Cyrus captured Babylon without any opposition. The results of the winnowing are that the Babylonians will fall down slain, fatally wounded in her streets (51:3-4).

The Jews are told to run for their lives: For neither Isra'el nor Judah will be forsaken by their God, ADONAI-Tzva'ot, though their land is full of guilt before the Holy One of Isra'el. The point here is that YHVH has not forsaken Isra'el (despite what replacement theology says). The word *forsaken* here is a Hebrew word meaning Isra'el is not *widowed* (from *alam*). She is looked upon in the TaNaKh as the wife of ADONAI. He is alive; therefore, she is not *widowed*. And this is in spite of the fact that her land is full of guilt. This is because God's unconditional covenants are not determined by Isra'el's failures . . . but on the LORD's faithfulness (see the commentary on [The Life of Christ Mv - The Eternal Security of the Believer](#)). ADONAI issues instructions to the Jewish remnant: **Flee from Babylon! Run for your lives** (The Jews in the exile of 586 BC were directed to go to Babylon to be protected and live safely. That's what Jeremiah had been consistently saying. They did not have to fear for their lives)! **Do not be destroyed because of Babylon's sins.** At the end of the Great Tribulation the city of Babylon will be destroyed (Revelation 18:4). That's why they will need to run for their lives. **It is time for God's vengeance; He will repay her what she deserves** (51:5-6). Where do they run to? To a place in the desert made ready for them (see the commentary on [Isaiah Kg - The Second Coming of Jesus Christ to Bozrah](#)).

Babylon the golden cup: Babylon was a gold cup in the LORD's hand; she made the whole earth drunk (Revelation 17:3-4, 18:6). In the Bible, whenever the cup is used symbolically, it's always a symbol of the wrath of Ha'Shem (51:7a). Here, the Ruach is saying that YHVH used Babylon as a tool against other Gentile nations. So in that sense God has been the golden cup. The nations drank her wine; therefore they have now gone mad (51:7b). Just as the Jews were disciplined by ADONAI (Deuteronomy 28:49), through Assyria (see the commentary on [Isaiah Fm - With Foreign Lips and Strange Tongues God Will Speak to This People](#)), and Babylon (Bb - [Judah's Invasion from a Distant Nation](#)), now Babylon herself will be disciplined by God through many nations.

At the end of the Great Tribulation Babylon will suddenly fall and be broken. The world will wail over her! **Get balm from Gilead** (see 8:22) for her pain; perhaps she can be healed. Then we see the response of foreigners (who made money from Babylon because she had become the economic center of world trade). These **three groups; the kings of the**

earth, the merchants of the earth, and the transporters of goods (see the commentary on **Revelation Ep - Woe! Woe, O Great City, In One Hour She Has Been Brought to Ruin**) would have tried to heal Babylon, but she could not be healed. It will be a fatal wound. They desert her, saying: Let us leave her and each go to our own land, for her judgment reaches to the skies, it raises as high as the heavens' (51:8-9). They realized that the destruction of Babylon was a sign of divine judgment.

The Jews run to Bozrah: ADONAI's people, knowing that He has vindicated them, will sing a song of praise, declaring: Come, let us tell the sons and daughters of Tziyon what the LORD our God has done (51:10). They head for Bozrah to tell the Jews there that Babylon, the oppressive capitol of the world, had been destroyed.

Judgment against Babylon: Sharpen the arrows, take up the shields (get ready for war)! Be prepared for the attack. The LORD has stirred up a **lead nation**, the kings of the Medes, their governors and all their officials, and all the countries they rule because His purpose is to destroy Babylon (51:11 and also see 51:28). ADONAI will take vengeance, vengeance for His Temple in Heaven (see the commentary on **Revelation Dx - the Seventh Trumpet: God's Temple in Heaven**).

Then the actual attack: Lift up the banner against the walls of Babylon! Reinforce the guard, station the watchmen, and prepare an ambush! ADONAI will carry out His purpose, His decree against the people of Babylon. Then the declaration: You who live by many waters and are rich in treasures (see **three groups** above), your end has come, the time for you to be destroyed. According to Babylonian mythology, Babylon was built on a great subterranean ocean. We also know from archeology and other historical records that the Euphrates, with its many canals, man-made dikes and trenches that surrounded the city, when viewed from a distance looked like it was sitting on many waters. ADONAI-Tzva'ot has sworn by Himself; I will surely fill you with troops, and figuratively, as with a swarm of locusts, and they will shout in triumph over you (51:12-14).