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The Owl as a Symbol of Judgment



In every single instance (without exception) **the owl** is a symbol of judgment in the Bible:

The following creatures of the air are to be detestable for you – they are not to be eaten, they are a detestable thing: the eagle, the vulture, the osprey, the screech-owl, the seagull, the various kinds of hawks, the little owl, the cormorant, the great owl, the horned owl, the pelican, the barn owl, the stork, the various kinds of herons, the hoopoe and the bat (Leviticus 11:13-18 CJB).

You may eat any clean bird; but these you are not to eat: eagles, vultures, ospreys, kites, any kind of buzzard, any kind of raven, ostriches, screech-owls, seagulls, any kind of hawk, little owls, great owls, horned owls, pelicans, barn owls, cormorants, storks, any kind of heron, hoopoes or bats (Deuteronomy 14:15-17 CJB).

When I hoped for good, evil came; when I looked for light, then came darkness. The churning inside me never stops; days of suffering confront me. I go about blackened, but not by the sun; I stand up in the assembly and cry for help. I have become a brother of jackals, a companion of owls. My skin grows black and peels; my body burns with fever. My lyre is tuned to morning, and my pipe to the sound of wailing (Job 30:26-31).

ADONAI, hear my prayer! Let my cry for help reach You! Don't hide Your face from me when I am in such distress! Turn Your ear toward me; when I call, be quick to reply! For my days are vanishing like smoke, my bones are burning like a furnace. I am stricken and withered like grass; I forget to eat my food. Because of my loud groaning, I am just skin and bones. I am like a great owl in the desert, I've become like an owl in the ruins (Psalm 102:1-6 CJB).

Babylon, the jewel of kingdoms, the pride and glory of the Babylonians, will be overthrown by God like Sodom and Gomorrah. She will never be inhabited or lived in through all generations; there no nomads will pitch their tents, there no shepherds will rest their flocks. But desert creatures will lie there, jackals will fill their houses; there the owls will dwell, and there the wild goats will leap about. Hyenas will inhabit their strongholds, jackals her luxurious palace. Her time is at hand, and her days will not be prolonged (Isaiah 13:19-22).

I will rise up against them, declares **the LORD almighty. I will wipe out Babylon's name and survivors, her offspring and descendants** says **ADONAI. I will turn her into a place for owls and into swampland; I will sweep her with the broom of destruction** declares **the LORD almighty. (Isaiah 14:22-23).**

For ADONAI has a day of vengeance, a year of retribution, to uphold Zion's cause. Edom's streams will be changed to tar, its dust to sulfur, its land burning tar that will not be quenched night or day; its smoke will rise forever. In all generations it will lie waste; no one will pass through it ever again. Horned owl and hawk will possess it, screech owl and raven will live there; he will stretch over it the measuring line of confusion and the plumbline of empty void. Of its nobles, none will be called to be king, and all its princes will be nothing. Thorns will overgrow its palaces, nettles and thistles its fortresses; it will become a lair for jackals, and enclosure for ostriches. Wildcats and hyenas will meet there; and billy goats call to each other; Lilit [the night monster] will lurk there and find herself a place to rest. There the hoot owl will nest, lay her eggs, hatch and gather her young in its shade (Isaiah 34:8-15 CJB).

A sword against the Babylonians declares ADONAI – a drought on her waters! They will dry up. For it is a land of idols, idols that will go mad

with terror. So desert creatures and hyenas will live there, and there the owl will dwell. It will never again be inhabited or lived in from generation to generation (Jeremiah 50:39).

After describing **God's** judgment against **Samaria** and **Jerusalem**, **Micah** said: **Because of this I will weep and wail; I will go about barefoot and naked. I will howl like a jackal and moan like an owl. For Samaria's plague is incurable; it has spread to Judah. It has reached the very gate of my people, even to Jerusalem itself (Micah 1:8).**

ADONAI will stretch out His hand against the north and destroy Assyria, leaving Nineveh utterly desolate and dry as the desert. Flocks and herds will lie down there, creatures of every kind. The desert owl and the screech owl will roost on her columns. Their hooting will echo through the windows, rubble will fill their doorways, the beams of cedar will be exposed. This is the city of revelry that lived in safety. She said to herself, "I am the one! And there is none beside me." What a ruin she has become, a lair for wild beasts! All who pass by her scoff and shake their fists (Zeph 2:13-15).

Yirmeyahu would see the tragic results of Judah's judgment first hand. The book of **Lamentations** gives us a glimpse of **his** devastation. **He** is called "the weeping prophet" for good reason. Secular historians would record **the near historical** judgment of **Babylon**. But **the far eschatological** judgment of **MYSTERY BABYLON** (see the commentary on **Revelation, to see link click Er – Babylon Will Never Be Found Again**) can be found in **Jeremiah** itself **(51:39-43** and **61-64).** And there we find **the owl**.