

Babylon Will Be Captured, Bel Will Be Put to Shame, And Marduk Filled With Terror

50: 1-10

DIG: What feelings and actions do you think God wanted these verses to inspire in the exiled Jews in the near historical future? What did Jeremiah predict? What did Jeremiah predict would happen to Babylon in the far eschatological future when the Jews would flee Babylon to Bozrah, during the Great Tribulation in the time of the LORD's wrath (Isaiah 63:1-6)?

REFLECT: What feelings and actions does ADONAI want to inspire in you? How easy or how hard is it for you to trust in Jesus when your world is crumbling around you? It's easier said than done. How can you overcome your fear? How much time do you spend thinking about the return of the blessed Hope (Titus 2:13)?

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

Jeremiah's final prophecy against the Gentile nations concerns Babylon. Almost as much space is devoted to Babylon as to all the other nations combined. This gives us some indication of the tremendous importance of Babylon to the whole of western Asia at the close of the seventh and during the decades of the sixth century. This is the word ADONAI spoke through Jeremiah the prophet concerning Babylon and the land of the Babylonians (50:1). This verse is the superscription of the whole prophecy in Chapters 50 and 51.

Near historical prophecy: As long as Babylon ruled the world, fear silenced the tongue of the conquered nations. But when she was captured, there would be nothing to fear. Announce and proclaim among the nations who had suffered from Babylon's aggressive expansion, lift up a banner and proclaim it; keep nothing back, but say, in a moment, the Babylonian exile was over. Babylon will be captured and her gods will be put to shame. Bel was the principal god of the Babylonians (see the commentary on Isaiah Ig - Bel Bows Down, Nebo Stoops Low and They Go Off Together to Captivity). The name is generally supposed to be the Babylonian form of Ba'al (Numbers 22:41). Sacrifices offered to Bel consisted of adult cattle and their offspring together with incense.²⁹⁹

By the time of Nebuchadnezzar's rule, **Marduk** had become the supreme god of the Mesopotamian pantheon. In **Babylonian** myth, **Marduk** was credited with killing Tiamat, a monster who threatened the other gods. From this encounter, **Marduk** created order out of chaos that included the creation of humankind. It was such symbolic and political power that stood in the face of the oracles that proclaimed the doom of **Babylon**.³⁰⁰ Even **Marduk** will be filled with terror. The gods of **Babylon** seemed beyond challenge, but they will completely fail to protect her devotees from disaster. Her images (Hebrew: *gillulim*) will be put to shame and her idols (Hebrew: *'asabbim*) filled with terror (50:2), a play on the word idols, that means *balls of feces*.

Therefore, this **prophecy** blends both the **near** and the **far**. That is, the **near historical** fall of **Babylon** in 539 BC by General Cyrus (the Great) is blended with the **far eschatological** fall of **MYSTERY BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF PROSTITUTES AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH** (see the commentary **Isaiah Dk - Babylon, the Jewel of Kingdoms, Will Be Overthrown**) by Jesus Christ.

Far eschatological prophecy: An oracle in the prophetic perfect (meaning that it is just as assured as if it had already happened) announces that a nation from the north will attack her (50:3a). The source of the attack is not revealed at this time. But this did not happen to historical **Babylon**. When Cyrus attacked **Babylon**, it was from the east. An army is coming from the north. The roles are now reversed. Earlier, **Babylon** was the invading army from the north (6:22). Now what **Babylon** herself once did to **Jerusalem** will be done to **Babylon** in the future. Whereas one nation will come against **Tziyon**, many nations will come against **Babylon**. There will be a great lead nation (singular see 51:11, 28), but many are being stirred up from the ends of the earth (50:41). The many will be the sheep Gentiles of the world (see the commentary on **Revelation Fc - The Sheep and the Goats**).

This one lead nation will lay waste her land. **Cyrus the Great did not fulfill this because Babylon flourished for several centuries afterwards** (see **Ez - A Message Against Babylon**). But eventually the results of **Babylon's** judgment will be: **None will live in it; both people and animals will flee away** (50:3b). When will there be no people or animals in **Babylon**? During the Great Tribulation, for a thousand years, **Babylon** will be uninhabitable (see **Ad -The Owl as a Symbol of Judgment**).

On the one hand **Jeremiah** announces the destruction of **Babylon**, and on the other hand he announces the restoration of **Isra'el**. The final restoration of **Isra'el** in the messianic Kingdom will come in conjunction with the destruction of **Babylon** (see the commentary on **Revelation Ex - The Eight Stage Campaign of the Battle of Armageddon: 2. The**

Destruction of Babylon). Yeshua Messiah will return when He is invited back by the Jewish religious leaders, the shepherds of Isra'el, and there will be a national regeneration of the surviving Jewish remnant at the end of the Great Tribulation (see the commentary on **Revelation Ev - The Basis for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ**).

In those days, at that time, declares ADONAI. When Jeremiah (under the direction of the Ruach HaKodesh) uses the phrase **in the days to come; the days are coming; in those days; in that day, at that time; or for the time will surely come**, the context points either to the **near historical future** or **the far eschatological future** and which one should be used. This is the twentieth of twenty-five times that the Ruach HaKodesh uses one of **these phrases**. **In those days, at that time** points to the **far eschatological future** national regeneration of Isra'el. The people of Isra'el and the people of Judah together will go in tears to seek the LORD their God (50:4).

They will ask the way to Tziyon and turn their faces toward it. They will come and bind themselves to ADONAI in an everlasting Covenant (see Ep - **The Days are Coming, declares the LORD, When I Will Make a New Covenant with the People of Isra'el**) that will not be forgotten (50:5).

This will be a **New Covenant** to contrast her past condition. **My people have been lost sheep; their shepherds (the leaders, kings, priests, and prophets) have led them astray and caused them to roam on the mountains.** It was the Jewish leadership that was to blame for the diaspora and wandering over the centuries. **They wandered over mountain and hill and forgot their own resting place. Whoever found them devoured them, but claimed their innocence. Their enemies said: We are not guilty.** Why do they say this? This is really important to understand. When anti-Semites persecute Jews they defend themselves by saying, "Well, we're not *really* guilty . . . this is not *really* a sin . . . **Genesis 12:3 really doesn't apply . . . because Isra'el brought all this on herself by sinning against YHVH, their resting place of justice, the LORD, the hope of their ancestors (50:6-7).** And of course some will say, "Well, the Jews are Christ killers." **But no one who persecutes the Jews can use Jewish unbelief as an excuse because Ha'Shem is going to hold all of them responsible. The fact of Jewish unbelief does not grant Gentiles the right of anti-Semitism or persecution.**³⁰¹

Flee out of Babylon and go to Bozrah (see the commentary on **Isaiah Kg - The Second Coming of Jesus Christ to Bozrah**). Leave the land of the Babylonians and be like the goats that lead the flock. There is a call for the Jews to flee Babylon prior to its final destruction (see the commentary on **Revelation En - Come Out of Her, My People, So**

That You Will Not Share in Her Sins). Ha'Shem declares: For I will stir up and bring against Babylon an alliance of great nations from the land of the north (also see **Fe-Judgment Against Babylon**). The foe that will destroy Babylon will be just as invincible as Babylon was against Judah. They will take up their positions against her, and from the north she will be captured. Their arrows will be like skilled warriors who do not return **(shuwb)** empty-handed (50:8-9). The picture is of a warrior skilled at his art and returning from every battle with booty. To such warriors **Babylon** would become spoil (Hebrew: salal) and **their arrows** would have found **their** mark.³⁰²

The result is that **Babylonia will be plundered** (not by Cyrus); **all who plunder her will have their fill**, declares **ADONAI (50:10)**. During **Jeremiah's** day, it was the **Jews** who were devoured; but in the **far eschatological future** it will be the **Babylonians themselves** who will be devoured. Once again the principle of **Genesis 12:3a** holds true: **I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse.**