

The Greatness of the God of Isra'el

51: 15-26

DIG: In what sense is YHVH omnipotent? Omniscient? Sovereign? How did Jeremiah contrast the God of Isra'el with the mindless idols of the other nations? How is the war club like the gold cup? How do we know that this is a far eschatological prophecy? What is the mountain? Why will Babylon be left with no stone for a foundation?

REFLECT: How has Elohim shown His omnipotence in your life? In what way is He omniscient? Is He the sovereign Lord of your life? Who has their hands on the steering wheel of your life? You or God? Who is in charge of your checkbook? You or ADONAI? Who controls your sex life? You or the Great King?

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):

ADONAI-Tzva'ot has sworn by Himself; He made the earth by His power; He is omnipotent (51:15a). God is all powerful, limitless in ability, within the range of His holy character (Psalm 62:11; Genesis 17:1; Jeremiah 32:27; Job 26:7). Christ is omnipotent (Romans 1:4; John 10:18; Isaiah 9:6 Matthew 28:18). As far as the application to the unbeliever, there is no way out of God's righteous judgment. As far as the application to the believer, there is nothing to fear (Psalm 118:6), we can be fully assured that He will perform His promises (Romans 4:21), with God all things are possible (Matthew 19:26).

He founded the world by His wisdom (omniscience) and stretched out the heavens by His understanding (51:15b). God's power is infinite, or limitless. YHVH is all knowing in the sense that He is aware of the past, present, and future. Nothing takes Him by surprise and He does not have to develop contingency plans. His knowledge is total (Job 37:16). The writer of Proverbs says that the eyes of the LORD are everywhere (Proverbs 15:3); Jesus said that not one sparrow will fall to the ground without the Father's will, and even the very hairs of the apostle's heads were all numbered (Matthew 10:29-30). Hebrews 4:13 says that before Him no creature is hidden, but all are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do. Consequently, we are completely transparent before ADONAI. He sees and knows us totally. He knows every truth, even those not yet discovered by mankind, for it was He who created us.³⁰⁶

YHVH is **sovereign**. When He thunders, the waters in the heavens roar; He makes clouds rise from the ends of the earth. He sends lightning with the rain and brings out the wind from His storehouses (51:16). What do we mean by the sovereignty of God? We mean the supremacy of God, the kingship of God, the godhood of God. To say that God is **Sovereign** is to declare that God is God. To say that God is **Sovereign** is to declare that He is the **Most High**, doing according to His will in the army of Heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth, so that none can restrain His hand or say to Him what are You doing (Dani'el 4:35)? To say that God is **Sovereign** is to declare that He is the **Almighty**, the **Possessor** of all power in Heaven and earth, so that none can defeat His counsels, thwart His purpose, or resist His will (Psalm 115:3). To say that God is **Sovereign** is to declare that He **rules over the nations** (Psalm 22:28), setting up kingdoms, overthrowing empires, and determining the course of dynasties as He pleases. To say that God is **Sovereign** is to declare that He is the **only Ruler**, the **King of kings**, and **Lord of lords** (First Timothy 6:15). This is the God of the Bible.³⁰⁷

When contrasted with mindless idols, Yirmeyahu reminds us that **everyone is senseless and without knowledge; every goldsmith is shamed by his idols. The images he makes are a fraud; they have no breath in them. They are worthless, impotent objects of mockery; when their judgment comes, they will perish (51:17-18)**. During the Great Tribulation, **people will continue to worship idols: The rest of mankind who were not killed by these plagues still did not repent of the work of their hands; they did not stop worshiping demons, and idols of gold, silver, bronze, stone and wood - idols that cannot see or hear or walk (Revelation 9:20)**.

The **Portion (the God) of Jacob**, however, is not like these, for He is the **Maker of all things** (preexistent before all things), including His chosen people **Isra'el (10:16)**, the **people of His inheritance - ADONAI-Tzva'ot is His name (51:19)**. In human affairs a woman's **portion is the inheritance** she receives from her father. It is hers by legal and moral right. So on the one hand, YHVH is especially the rightful, proper **inheritance** of **Isra'el**. On the other hand, **God has chosen Isra'el as His very own people . . . the people of His inheritance**. So there is an intimate relationship between **ADONAI** and His **people** that could never exist between the counterfeit idols made with human hands.³⁰⁸

[Babylon] you are **My war club and weapon of war**. The Hebrew root of **club and weapon of war** is used here as a verb of action, or *destroying thing*. Earlier **God** used the example of **Babylon** as an instrument of *destruction*, a **gold cup in the LORD's hand (51:7a)**, to render His vengeance. **Ha'Shem** is saying the same thing here, only now He is using a different figure of a **shattering war club**. But as with the **gold cup**, after He had used it to

make the nations drunk, He then shatters them (51:8). Now in this passage, the shattering war club itself will be shattered. The repetition here (with an added verb at the beginning) emphasizes divine power and simulates the sound of a shattering war club (onomatopoeia).

With you I shatter nations;
with you I destroy kingdoms;
with you I shatter horses and their riders;
with you I shatter husbands and wives;
with you I shatter old and young;
with you I shatter young men and virgins;
with you I shatter farmers and their teams;
with you I shatter governors and officials (51:20-23 CJB).

Then the shattering of Babylon. Before your eyes I will repay Babylon and all who live in Babylonia for all the wrong they have done in Tziyon, declares ADONAI (51:24). The reason is her treatment of the Jews, the same reason that the golden cup was shattered. The Abrahamic Covenant was, and is, still in effect: I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse (Genesis 12:3a). The Babylonians actually treated the Jews quite well during the Babylonian Captivity. Many rose to prominent positions like Dani'el and Ezekiel. So this prophecy could only happen in the far eschatological future.

This is what the LORD says: I am against you, you destroying mountain, you who destroy the whole earth, declares the LORD. Whenever the Bible uses symbols, it uses them consistently. Every time the word mountain is used symbolically it is always a symbol of a kingdom. Here it is the symbol of the worldwide kingdom of the antichrist. Nebuchadnezzar's Babylon did not destroy the whole earth, but the antichrist will. I will stretch out My hand against you, roll you off the cliffs, and make you a burned-out mountain (51:25).

The destruction of the land of Babylon will be so complete that ADONAI declares: No rock will be taken from you for a cornerstone, nor any stone for a foundation, for you will be desolate forever (51:26 also see the commentary Isaiah Dk - Babylon, the Jewel of Kingdoms, Will Be Overthrown). Once again, this did not happen after Cyrus took Babylon without a fight (see Ez - A Message to Babylon). In fact, Babylon continued to flourish for centuries. It is only after her defeat at the end of the Great Tribulation that she will be desolate forever. So this can only be a far eschatological prophecy.