

## Jeremiah's Prophecy Concerning the Nations: Elam (c. 597–596 BC)

Jeremiah 49:34–39

34 That which came as the word of the LORD to Jeremiah the prophet concerning Elam, at the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah king of Judah, saying:

- 35 “Thus says the LORD of hosts,  
‘Behold, I am going to break the bow of Elam,  
The finest of their might.
- 36 ‘I will bring upon Elam the four winds  
From the four ends of heaven,  
And will scatter them to all these winds;  
And there will be no nation  
To which the outcasts of Elam will not go.
- 37 ‘So I will shatter Elam before their enemies  
And before those who seek their lives;  
And I will bring calamity upon them,  
Even My fierce anger,’ declares the LORD,  
‘And I will send out the sword after them  
Until I have consumed them.
- 38 ‘Then I will set My throne in Elam  
And destroy out of it king and princes,’  
Declares the LORD.
- 39 ‘But it will come about in the last days  
That I will restore the fortunes of Elam,’”  
Declares the LORD.

## Jeremiah's Prophecy Concerning the Nations: Babylon's Doom (c. 597–596 BC)

Jeremiah 50

### Announcement of Babylon's Doom

- 1 The word which the LORD spoke concerning Babylon, the land of the Chaldeans, through Jeremiah the prophet:
- 2 “Declare and proclaim among the nations.  
Proclaim it and lift up a standard.  
Do not conceal *it but* say,  
‘Babylon has been captured,  
Bel has been put to shame, Marduk has been shattered;  
Her images have been put to shame, her idols have been shattered.’
- 3 “For a nation has come up against her out of the north; it will make her land an object of horror, and there will be no inhabitant in it. Both man and beast have wandered off, they have gone away!
- 4 “In those days and at that time,” declares the LORD, “the sons of Israel will come, *both* they and the sons of Judah as well; they will go along weeping as they go, and it will be the LORD their God they will seek.
- 5 “They will ask for the way to Zion, *turning* their faces in its direction; they will come that they may join themselves to the LORD *in* an everlasting covenant that will not be forgotten.
- 6 “My people have become lost sheep;  
Their shepherds have led them astray.  
They have made them turn aside *on* the mountains;

- They have gone along from mountain to hill  
And have forgotten their resting place.
- 7 “All who came upon them have devoured them;  
And their adversaries have said, ‘We are not guilty,  
Inasmuch as they have sinned against the LORD *who is* the habitation of righteousness,  
Even the LORD, the hope of their fathers.’
- 8 “Wander away from the midst of Babylon  
And go forth from the land of the Chaldeans;  
Be also like male goats at the head of the flock.
- 9 “For behold, I am going to arouse and bring up against Babylon  
A horde of great nations from the land of the north,  
And they will draw up *their* battle lines against her;  
From there she will be taken captive.  
Their arrows will be like an expert warrior  
Who does not return empty-handed.
- 10 “Chaldea will become plunder;  
All who plunder her will have enough,” declares the LORD.

### Explanation for Its Punishment

- 11 “Because you are glad, because you are jubilant,  
O you who pillage My heritage,  
Because you skip about like a threshing heifer  
And neigh like stallions,
- 12 Your mother will be greatly ashamed,  
She who gave you birth will be humiliated.  
Behold, *she will be* the least of the nations,  
A wilderness, a parched land and a desert.
- 13 “Because of the indignation of the LORD she will not be inhabited,  
But she will be completely desolate;  
Everyone who passes by Babylon will be horrified  
And will hiss because of all her wounds.
- 14 “Draw up your battle lines against Babylon on every side,  
All you who bend the bow;  
Shoot at her, do not be sparing with *your* arrows,  
For she has sinned against the LORD.
- 15 “Raise your battle cry against her on every side!  
She has given herself up, her pillars have fallen,  
Her walls have been torn down.  
For this is the vengeance of the LORD:  
Take vengeance on her;  
As she has done *to others*, so do to her.
- 16 “Cut off the sower from Babylon  
And the one who wields the sickle at the time of harvest;  
From before the sword of the oppressor  
They will each turn back to his own people  
And they will each flee to his own land.
- 17 “Israel is a scattered flock, the lions have driven *them* away. The first one *who* devoured him was the king of Assyria, and this last one *who* has broken his bones is Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon.

**The Restoration of Israel**

- 18 “Therefore thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: ‘Behold, I am going to punish the king of Babylon and his land, just as I punished the king of Assyria.  
19 ‘And I will bring Israel back to his pasture and he will graze on Carmel and Bashan, and his desire will be satisfied in the hill country of Ephraim and Gilead.  
20 ‘In those days and at that time,’ declares the LORD, ‘search will be made for the iniquity of Israel, but there will be none; and for the sins of Judah, but they will not be found; for I will pardon those whom I leave as a remnant.’

**God’s Wrath against Babylon**

- 21 “Against the land of Merathaim, go up against it,  
And against the inhabitants of Pekod.  
Slay and utterly destroy them,” declares the LORD,  
“And do according to all that I have commanded you.  
22 “The noise of battle is in the land,  
And great destruction.  
23 “How the hammer of the whole earth  
Has been cut off and broken!  
How Babylon has become  
An object of horror among the nations!  
24 “I set a snare for you and you were also caught, O Babylon,  
While you yourself were not aware;  
You have been found and also seized  
Because you have engaged in conflict with the LORD.”  
25 The LORD has opened His armory  
And has brought forth the weapons of His indignation,  
For it is a work of the Lord GOD of hosts  
In the land of the Chaldeans.  
26 Come to her from the farthest border;  
Open up her barns,  
Pile her up like heaps  
And utterly destroy her,  
Let nothing be left to her.  
27 Put all her young bulls to the sword;  
Let them go down to the slaughter!  
Woe be upon them, for their day has come,  
The time of their punishment.  
28 There is a sound of fugitives and refugees from the land of Babylon,  
To declare in Zion the vengeance of the LORD our God,  
Vengeance for His temple.  
29 “Summon many against Babylon,  
All those who bend the bow:  
Encamp against her on every side,  
Let there be no escape.  
Repay her according to her work;  
According to all that she has done, so do to her;  
For she has become arrogant against the LORD,  
Against the Holy One of Israel.  
30 “Therefore her young men will fall in her streets,

And all her men of war will be silenced in that day,” declares the LORD.

31 “Behold, I am against you, O arrogant one,”

Declares the Lord GOD of hosts,

“For your day has come,

The time when I will punish you.

32 “The arrogant one will stumble and fall

With no one to raise him up;

And I will set fire to his cities

And it will devour all his environs.”

### **The Desolation of Babylon**

33 Thus says the LORD of hosts,

“The sons of Israel are oppressed,

And the sons of Judah as well;

And all who took them captive have held them fast,

They have refused to let them go.

34 “Their Redeemer is strong, the LORD of hosts is His name;

He will vigorously plead their case

So that He may bring rest to the earth,

But turmoil to the inhabitants of Babylon.

35 “A sword against the Chaldeans,” declares the LORD,

“And against the inhabitants of Babylon

And against her officials and her wise men!

36 “A sword against the oracle priests, and they will become fools!

A sword against her mighty men, and they will be shattered!

37 “A sword against their horses and against their chariots

And against all the foreigners who are in the midst of her,

And they will become women!

A sword against her treasures, and they will be plundered!

38 “A drought on her waters, and they will be dried up!

For it is a land of idols,

And they are mad over fearsome idols.

39 “Therefore the desert creatures will live *there* along with the jackals;

The ostriches also will live in it,

And it will never again be inhabited

Or dwelt in from generation to generation.

40 “As when God overthrew Sodom

And Gomorrah with its neighbors,” declares the LORD,

“No man will live there,

Nor will *any* son of man reside in it.

### **Babylon’s Helplessness**

41 “Behold, a people is coming from the north,

And a great nation and many kings

Will be aroused from the remote parts of the earth.

42 “They seize *their* bow and javelin;

They are cruel and have no mercy.

Their voice roars like the sea;

And they ride on horses,

Marshaled like a man for the battle  
Against you, O daughter of Babylon.

43 “The king of Babylon has heard the report about them,  
And his hands hang limp;  
Distress has gripped him,  
Agony like a woman in childbirth.

44 “Behold, one will come up like a lion from the thicket of the Jordan to a perennially watered pasture; for in an instant I will make them run away from it, and whoever is chosen I will appoint over it. For who is like Me, and who will summon Me *into court*? And who then is the shepherd who can stand before Me?”

45 Therefore hear the plan of the LORD which He has planned against Babylon, and His purposes which He has purposed against the land of the Chaldeans: surely they will drag them off, *even* the little ones of the flock; surely He will make their pasture desolate because of them.

46 At the shout, “Babylon has been seized!” the earth is shaken, and an outcry is heard among the nations.

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### **Chronological Notes**

- 1) The historical context of Jeremiah 50–51 is the early years of the reign of Zedekiah (cf. Jer 51:59–64). Jeremiah’s prophecies against Babylon were written on one scroll and taken to Babylon itself so they could be read aloud (51:60–61).