

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,
Marshalled 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.

Jeremiah’s Prophecy Concerning the Nations: Babylon’s Coming Fall (c. 597–596 BC)

Jeremiah 51:1–58

The Lord’s Vengeance on Babylon

1 Thus says the LORD:

“Behold, I am going to arouse against Babylon
And against the inhabitants of Leb-kamai
The spirit of a destroyer.

2 “I will dispatch foreigners to Babylon that they may winnow her
And may devastate her land;
For on every side they will be opposed to her
In the day of *her* calamity.

3 “Let not him who bends his bow bend *it*,
Nor let him rise up in his scale-armor;
So do not spare her young men;
Devote all her army to destruction.

4 “They will fall down slain in the land of the Chaldeans,
And pierced through in their streets.”

5 For neither Israel nor Judah has been forsaken
By his God, the LORD of hosts,
Although their land is full of guilt
Before the Holy One of Israel.

6 Flee from the midst of Babylon,
And each of you save his life!

- Do not be destroyed in her punishment,
For this is the LORD's time of vengeance;
He is going to render recompense to her.
- 7 Babylon has been a golden cup in the hand of the LORD,
Intoxicating all the earth.
The nations have drunk of her wine;
Therefore the nations are going mad.
- 8 Suddenly Babylon has fallen and been broken;
Wail over her!
Bring balm for her pain;
Perhaps she may be healed.
- 9 We applied healing to Babylon, but she was not healed;
Forsake her and let us each go to his own country,
For her judgment has reached to heaven
And towers up to the very skies.
- 10 The LORD has brought about our vindication;
Come and let us recount in Zion
The work of the LORD our God!
- 11 Sharpen the arrows, fill the quivers!
The LORD has aroused the spirit of the kings of the Medes,
Because His purpose is against Babylon to destroy it;
For it is the vengeance of the LORD, vengeance for His temple.
- 12 Lift up a signal against the walls of Babylon;
Post a strong guard,
Station sentries,
Place men in ambush!
For the LORD has both purposed and performed
What He spoke concerning the inhabitants of Babylon.
- 13 O you who dwell by many waters,
Abundant in treasures,
Your end has come,
The measure of your end.
- 14 The LORD of hosts has sworn by Himself:
"Surely I will fill you with a population like locusts,
And they will cry out with shouts of victory over you."

A Hymn of Praise to the Lord

- 15 *It is* He who made the earth by His power,
Who established the world by His wisdom,
And by His understanding He stretched out the heavens.
- 16 When He utters His voice, *there is* a tumult of waters in the heavens,
And He causes the clouds to ascend from the end of the earth;
He makes lightning for the rain
And brings forth the wind from His storehouses.
- 17 All mankind is stupid, devoid of knowledge;
Every goldsmith is put to shame by his idols,
For his molten images are deceitful,
And there is no breath in them.
- 18 They are worthless, a work of mockery;
In the time of their punishment they will perish.
- 19 The portion of Jacob is not like these;
For the Maker of all is He,
And of the tribe of His inheritance;
The LORD of hosts is His name.

God's Power against Enemies

- 20 *He says*, "You are My war-club, My weapon of war;
And with you I shatter nations,
And with you I destroy kingdoms.

- 21 “With you I shatter the horse and his rider,
And with you I shatter the chariot and its rider,
22 And with you I shatter man and woman,
And with you I shatter old man and youth,
And with you I shatter young man and virgin,
23 And with you I shatter the shepherd and his flock,
And with you I shatter the farmer and his team,
And with you I shatter governors and prefects.
- 24 “But I will repay Babylon and all the inhabitants of Chaldea for all their evil that they have done in Zion before your eyes,”
declares the LORD.
- 25 “Behold, I am against you, O destroying mountain,
Who destroys the whole earth,” declares the LORD,
“And I will stretch out My hand against you,
And roll you down from the crags,
And I will make you a burnt out mountain.
- 26 “They will not take from you *even* a stone for a corner
Nor a stone for foundations,
But you will be desolate forever,” declares the LORD.

Nations Summoned against Babylon

- 27 Lift up a signal in the land,
Blow a trumpet among the nations!
Consecrate the nations against her,
Summon against her the kingdoms of Ararat, Minni and Ashkenaz;
Appoint a marshal against her,
Bring up the horses like bristly locusts.
- 28 Consecrate the nations against her,
The kings of the Medes,
Their governors and all their prefects,
And every land of their dominion.
- 29 So the land quakes and writhes,
For the purposes of the LORD against Babylon stand,
To make the land of Babylon
A desolation without inhabitants.
- 30 The mighty men of Babylon have ceased fighting,
They stay in the strongholds;
Their strength is exhausted,
They are becoming *like* women;
Their dwelling places are set on fire,
The bars of her *gates* are broken.
- 31 One courier runs to meet another,
And one messenger to meet another,
To tell the king of Babylon
That his city has been captured from end *to end*;
- 32 The fords also have been seized,
And they have burned the marshes with fire,
And the men of war are terrified.

A Call for Retribution

- 33 For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel:

“The daughter of Babylon is like a threshing floor
At the time it is stamped firm;
Yet in a little while the time of harvest will come for her.”
- 34 “Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon has devoured me *and* crushed me,
He has set me down *like* an empty vessel;
He has swallowed me like a monster,

He has filled his stomach with my delicacies;
He has washed me away.

- 35 “May the violence *done* to me and to my flesh be upon Babylon,”
The inhabitant of Zion will say;
And, “May my blood be upon the inhabitants of Chaldea,”
Jerusalem will say.

God Answers the Call—Payback Time!

36 Therefore thus says the LORD,

“Behold, I am going to plead your case
And exact full vengeance for you;
And I will dry up her sea
And make her fountain dry.

- 37 “Babylon will become a heap *of ruins*, a haunt of jackals,
An object of horror and hissing, without inhabitants.

- 38 “They will roar together like young lions,
They will growl like lions’ cubs.

- 39 “When they become heated up,
I will serve *them* their banquet
And make them drunk, that they may become jubilant
And may sleep a perpetual sleep
And not wake up,” declares the LORD.

- 40 “I will bring them down like lambs to the slaughter,
Like rams together with male goats.

- 41 “How Sheshak has been captured,
And the praise of the whole earth been seized!
How Babylon has become an object of horror among the nations!

- 42 “The sea has come up over Babylon;
She has been engulfed with its tumultuous waves.

- 43 “Her cities have become an object of horror,
A parched land and a desert,
A land in which no man lives
And through which no son of man passes.

- 44 “I will punish Bel in Babylon,
And I will make what he has swallowed come out of his mouth;
And the nations will no longer stream to him.
Even the wall of Babylon has fallen down!

An Appeal to Flee from Babylon

- 45 “Come forth from her midst, My people,
And each of you save yourselves
From the fierce anger of the LORD.

- 46 “Now so that your heart does not grow faint,
And you are not afraid at the report that *will be* heard in the land—
For the report will come one year,
And after that another report in another year,
And violence *will be* in the land
With ruler against ruler—

- 47 Therefore behold, days are coming
When I will punish the idols of Babylon;
And her whole land will be put to shame
And all her slain will fall in her midst.

- 48 “Then heaven and earth and all that is in them
Will shout for joy over Babylon,
For the destroyers will come to her from the north,”
Declares the LORD.

Another Warning of Babylon's Coming Destruction

- 49 Indeed Babylon is to fall *for* the slain of Israel,
As also for Babylon the slain of all the earth have fallen.
- 50 You who have escaped the sword,
Depart! Do not stay!
Remember the LORD from afar,
And let Jerusalem come to your mind.
- 51 We are ashamed because we have heard reproach;
Disgrace has covered our faces,
For aliens have entered
The holy places of the LORD's house.
- 52 "Therefore behold, the days are coming," declares the LORD,
"When I will punish her idols,
And the mortally wounded will groan throughout her land.
- 53 "Though Babylon should ascend to the heavens,
And though she should fortify her lofty stronghold,
From Me destroyers will come to her," declares the LORD.
- 54 The sound of an outcry from Babylon,
And of great destruction from the land of the Chaldeans!
- 55 For the LORD is going to destroy Babylon,
And He will make *her* loud noise vanish from her.
And their waves will roar like many waters;
The tumult of their voices sounds forth.
- 56 For the destroyer is coming against her, against Babylon,
And her mighty men will be captured,
Their bows are shattered;
For the LORD is a God of recompense,
He will fully repay.
- 57 "I will make her princes and her wise men drunk,
Her governors, her prefects and her mighty men,
That they may sleep a perpetual sleep and not wake up,"
Declares the King, whose name is the LORD of hosts.
- 58 Thus says the LORD of hosts,

"The broad wall of Babylon will be completely razed
And her high gates will be set on fire;
So the peoples will toil for nothing,
And the nations become exhausted *only* for fire."

Zedekiah Travels to Babylon / Jeremiah Sends the Babylon Prophecy (Tishri [October] 595–Adar [March] 594 BC)

Jeremiah 51:59–64

- 59 The message which Jeremiah the prophet commanded Seraiah the son of Neriah, the grandson of Mahseiah, when he went with Zedekiah the king of Judah to Babylon in the fourth year of his reign. (Now Seraiah was quartermaster.)
- 60 So Jeremiah wrote in a single scroll all the calamity which would come upon Babylon, *that is*, all these words which have been written concerning Babylon.
- 61 Then Jeremiah said to Seraiah, "As soon as you come to Babylon, then see that you read all these words aloud,
62 and say, 'You, O LORD, have promised concerning this place to cut it off, so that there will be nothing dwelling in it, whether man or beast, but it will be a perpetual desolation.'
- 63 "And as soon as you finish reading this scroll, you will tie a stone to it and throw it into the middle of the Euphrates,
64 and say, 'Just so shall Babylon sink down and not rise again because of the calamity that I am going to bring upon her; and they will become exhausted.'" Thus far are the words of Jeremiah.

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).