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Jeremiah 50 - 52



Jeremiah - Steve Gregg

In Jeremiah chapters 50-52, there is a prophecy about the fall of Babylon, which is compared to a golden cup that made the earth drunk. The prophecy includes a fierce battle, where the invaders will encamp against the city and attack it from all sides. The speaker also notes that Babylon's fall may be a type or shadow of a greater fulfillment in the future. Lastly, the prophecy reminds the people to listen to the counsel of the Lord and sin no more, as Babylon will be punished for its iniquities.

Transcript

We have three chapters left, three chapters left of the book of Jeremiah. Two of them, very long chapters, are taken up with the prophecy against Babylon. Beginning at chapter 46, we saw a series of shorter, though some of them quite long too, prophecies against different pagan nations.

The prophecies about those nations was that they would be defeated as a judgment against them from God, but the agent of that judgment would be Babylon. That was also made clear back in chapter 25, when Jeremiah was told to take a wine cup representing God's wrath and take it around to all these nations, all the ones mentioned here and more, and to make them drink of this cup, which would make them reel and stumble and fall like drunkards. This is simply a figure of speech saying that they're going down.

They're going down because of the wrath of God. In Jeremiah 25, it was in fact talking about the conquests that Babylon would make in those regions. In fact, in this prophecy, Babylon is actually referred to in chapter 51, verse 7, as a golden cup in the Lord's hand that made all the earth drunk.

In Jeremiah 51, verse 7, Babylon was a golden cup in the Lord's hand that made all the earth drunk. That, of course, is referring back to what we saw in chapter 25. It goes on in verse 7 here, saying, The nations drank her wine, therefore the nations are deranged.

Babylon is suddenly fallen and destroyed. Now Babylon's down. God used Babylon to make the other nations drink of his wrath.

Now it's Babylon's turn. Now, this long prophecy is going to have much repetition in it, and most of it we'll read through without very much comment. But I want to make a few observations, first of all.

One is that some of the things in this prophecy do not seem to have been fulfilled when historic Babylon fell. We know that Babylon fell to the Medes and the Persians under Cyrus, and Cyrus actually took the city without a fight. Some of the language of this prophecy sounds like there's quite a battle going on.

For example, chapter 50, verses 14 and 15. So this sounds like the walls are knocked down, like there's arrows shot, there's fierce warfare being fought. Likewise, in verse 29 of the same chapter.

Call together the archers against Babylon, all you who bend the bow, and camp against it all around. Let none of them escape. Repay her according to her work, according to all she has done to her, for she has been proud against the Lord.

Or if you look over at chapter 51, it says, Against her, let the archer bend his bow and lift himself up against her in his armor. Do not spare the young men, utterly destroy all her army. Thus the slain shall fall in the land of the Chaldeans and those thrust through in the streets.

And so we see this language of fierce warfare and conquest and slaughter and walls being knocked down and things like that. Things that often did happen, for example, happened to Jerusalem in AD 70, all those things. But not to Babylon when Cyrus conquered them.

Cyrus came upon Babylon when the king, Belshazzar, and all his military personnel of high rank were drunk. They were all having a party. They were celebrating their invincibility.

The Persians and the Medes were outside, threatening, but Babylon had walls that were invincible. Babylon's walls were like 300 feet high, according to Herodotus. It's like a 30-story building high and wide, thick walls.

There's a reference in this prophecy to the thick walls of Babylon. According to Herodotus, it was like an eight-lane highway on top of the walls. These walls, there was no military technology at the time that could conquer a city that had walls like that.

It had gates, of course, which were the points of entry, but they had strong bronze gates in the entryways. Likewise, the other point of vulnerability, potentially, was the river Euphrates, which ran through the city. Of course, it had to go under the wall going in and under the wall going out to the other side.

The river ran through the city under the wall, but there were gates in the riverbed also to

protect from invasion that way. We know there was, in Isaiah chapter 44 and 45, reference to Cyrus and his role in liberating the Jews from Babylon. At the end of Isaiah chapter 44, there was this mentioning of Cyrus, even by name, as the one that God would use to allow the Jews who were in captivity in Babylon to go back and rebuild Jerusalem.

It says in Isaiah 44, 28, that God says of Cyrus, he is my shepherd. He shall perform all my pleasure, even saying to Jerusalem, you shall be built, and to the temple, your foundation shall be laid. Then Isaiah 45, 1 says, thus says the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have held, to subdue nations before him and loose the armor of kings, to open before him the double doors, so that the gates will not be shut.

Now, what Cyrus did was reroute the river Euphrates so that the riverbed was dried up at the point where it entered Babylon under the wall. History tells us, not the Bible, the Bible actually doesn't even record this, but history tells us that the gates in the riverbed were opened, and that Cyrus and his troops marched under the wall and took the city without a fight, because they found the city totally unprepared. The city was not being watched.

I think there were probably some collaborators inside the city who may have opened the gates, although God may have opened them supernaturally. It's only predicted that they would not be shut. It does not say how they would come to be opened.

But the point is that there was not a bloody war. The walls were not pummeled down with battering rams. The soldiers were not slaughtered in great numbers, although Belshazzar the king and probably his high officials were slain with him.

But the description of the destruction of Babylon here in Jeremiah does not appear to be exactly like what happened in 539 BC when the Persians conquered the city. Now another thing about this prophecy that's peculiar is that twice or three times there is an exhortation to God's people in Babylon to flee, seemingly because of the great disaster that was coming on the city, as if they'd have to flee for their lives. In chapter 51, verse 6, it says, And then in verse 45, chapter 51, verse 45 says, Now when Babylon fell, there was no danger to the people of God.

They didn't have to run for their lives. As a matter of fact, they were delivered by that. They had been captives in Babylon, and the fall of Babylon was their deliverance.

However, this exhortation to flee for their lives may be related to really their national life. They were able to flee from Babylon, not in a hurry really, but they were able to escape from Babylon like they had escaped from Egypt. We could say they fled from Egypt from Pharaoh too.

In chapter 51, verse 50, it says, In other words, with Babylon fallen, the people of God

were to leave the city and to go to Jerusalem to rebuild it. Therefore, this business about fleeing from it, although it sounds like there's immediate danger to them, they better run as fast as they can from the falling bricks and stuff from the wall or from the bloodshed in the city, that's not really how it was, but the fall of Babylon did allow the captive Jews to flee or to return from captivity back to Jerusalem. And so it may be that the language is meaning something no more drastic than that.

On the other hand, there's another thing to consider here, and that is that this prophecy about Babylon merges into the prophecy against Babylon in Revelation. And the book of Revelation actually borrows imagery from this prophecy and from other prophecies in the Old Testament, but especially this one, because in Revelation chapter 18, there's this long lament over the fall of Babylon, and people are told to flee from there. In fact, the very words, practically the same words of Jeremiah 51 and verse 9 are found in Revelation 18.4. It says, And I heard another voice from heaven saying, Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues.

Now this call to come out of Babylon resembles a call that's issued twice in the verses we looked at in Jeremiah. And so we have some of the same ideas taken from this prophecy against Babylon and brought into the prophecy against Babylon in Revelation. And it is possible that we are to see this prophecy as having sort of both applications.

The fall of natural Babylon as a precursor to the fall of the Babylon in Revelation. Now this would not be the only case of this kind of thing happening. There are in fact a number of times in the prophets, and we will not look at them now, but we have looked at them previously when we were studying Isaiah, where the end of Babylon and the return of the exiles from Babylon was mentioned in prophecies, which then merged into a messianic scenario.

That the Jews are freed from Babylon to go home in Isaiah, many of Isaiah's prophecies, and then you've got this kind of intermixing of this with the messianic salvation. In fact, Jeremiah has done this already too in chapters 30 through 33. These chapters were also sort of in the context of returning from exile in Babylon, but they merged into the new covenant and the Messiah and all this stuff too.

And what I pointed out on previous occasions is that prophecies of deliverance, of God's deliverance of his people in the Old Testament, especially of deliverance from Babylon, which occurred at the fall of Babylon, are seen in the New Testament as precursors of the spiritual salvation, the creation of the church and its deliverance from its former bondage. And therefore, the fall of Babylon here, which is the same event that these other Old Testament prophecies are talking about, when the Jews are released, could be seen as merging two things, the fall of ancient Babylon with the New Testament fall of Babylon. Now, of course, many people, when they read Revelation, they think they're talking about the end of the world.

Babylon in Revelation is often mistaken, in my opinion, for some end times entity, in which case we would not be able to merge them in the same way, because the other prophecies that merge the end of Babylon with New Testament realities merge it with the beginning of the church age. That is, the rescue of the exiles from Babylon is like the Christians coming to Christ, beginning in the beginning of the church age. But if Babylon in Revelation is, let us say, a first century phenomenon, if preterism, in other words, is true about Revelation, and Babylon's not a last days entity, but an early days entity, and many commentators actually believe that Babylon in Revelation is Rome, which is a reasonable suggestion, but not the only reasonable suggestion.

Others, including myself, suspect that Babylon in Revelation is Jerusalem, that Jerusalem is the new Babylon, just as Jerusalem is the new Egypt in Revelation. You see, the deliverance of God's people from Egypt with Moses, or from Babylon through Cyrus, are both paradigms of rescue and salvation that are taken up as having fulfillment in Christ. And in the book of Revelation, Jerusalem is specifically called Egypt and Sodom.

In Revelation 11.8 it says the city where our Lord was crucified is spiritually called Egypt and Sodom. Why? Because the remnant of the church, the remnant of Israel, fled from Jerusalem before its fall, just like the Jews fled from Egypt in the Exodus. Well, this is the same thing as the Jews fleeing from Babylon, or at least very much like it.

And therefore it's quite natural for the same book that considers Jerusalem to be a new Egypt to also consider Jerusalem a new Babylon. Both are lands from which God's people escaped. And therefore the fall of Babylon in Revelation could be a reference to the fall of Jerusalem.

Now that would be a thesis that would have to be defended more than we can do here. Suffice it to say that I personally believe that can be defended. I personally believe that identifying Babylon in Revelation with Jerusalem is a reasonable, possibly the most reasonable synthesis of the evidence that Revelation itself gives about the city that it's talking about.

Now if that's true, well the fall of Jerusalem does coincide with the coming of the new covenant. The new covenant, the new Jerusalem is established and the old Jerusalem, the old covenant is destroyed. The juxtaposition of those two things is found together in many prophecies in the Old Testament and may be underlying this one.

I don't know for sure. I'm not being dogmatic, but there is a slight problem with this prophecy in that some of the things that are described in it appear to have occurred not to have occurred when the Persians conquered ancient Babylon. But they do come up as being true in Revelation 18 with the fall of this other Babylon.

As I mentioned, the falling of walls, the slaughter of people in the streets, the archers shooting and so forth are all things that happened when Jerusalem fell to the Romans

but did not happen when Babylon fell to the Persians. But if Babylon's fall in the Old Testament is a type and a shadow of the fall of the oppressing city Jerusalem, at the beginning of the New Testament age, then there could be a merging of the two. If this seems like a desperate expedient, well then so be it.

I don't think it's desperate. I don't know that it's something that could be nailed down as certain, but it strikes me as not unlike the way that certain other prophecies merge the idea of the end of Babylon and the return of the exiles on the one hand with the downfall of the old order and the establishment of a new order and salvation in the New Testament. I think that that is in fact what Revelation is about.

So the use of this prophecy as much as it is in fact used in Revelation may hint that this prophecy is looking beyond one event. The fall of ancient Babylon is merely a type and a shadow of something that is a greater fulfillment of this prophecy. Let me just show you real quickly areas in which this prophecy resembles the prophecy in Revelation.

Just a few of the ways. In chapter 50 of Jeremiah in verse 8, this move from the midst of Babylon, go out of the land of the Chaldeans, is very much like what we looked at in Revelation 18 form. Come out of her my people.

Likewise, we see the same in chapter 51 verse 6. Flee from the midst of Babylon. The idea of fleeing from Babylon is an exhortation here and also in Revelation 18 form. Also in chapter 51 of Jeremiah verse 7, it says in 51.7, Babylon was a golden cup in the Lord's hand that made all the earth drunk.

The nations drank of her wine. Therefore, the nations are deranged. In chapter 17 of Revelation where we're introduced to and receive a description of Babylon, it says in Revelation 17.4, the woman who is also referred to as Mystery Babylon, the mother of harlots, the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication.

And it's strange because, I mean, it's not the same imagery, but the golden cup is in both places. Babylon was a golden cup in the Old Testament. Babylon is holding a golden cup in Revelation.

In Jeremiah 51.9, it says at the end of verse 9, for her judgment reaches to heaven and is lifted up to the skies. Whereas in Revelation 18.5, it says for her sins have reached to heaven and God has remembered her iniquities. Her judgment has reached to heaven in Babylon, in Jeremiah, and her sins have reached to heaven in Revelation 18.5. Also, in Isaiah, excuse me, in Jeremiah 51, the closing verses of this oracle, actually after the oracle is complete, God gives instructions through Jeremiah to this man Sariah to go to Babylon with this prophecy and it says in verse 63, now it shall be when you have finished reading this book that you shall tie a stone to it and throw it out into the

Euphrates.

Then you shall say, thus Babylon shall sink and not rise from the catastrophe that I will bring upon her and they shall be weary. Now, he's to throw this book, this prophecy about Babylon into the river Euphrates tied to a rock and he's supposed to say that Babylon will fall and not rise. Well, in Revelation 18.21, it says then a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea saying thus with violence the great city Babylon shall be thrown down and shall not be found anymore.

The same kind of action, throwing a stone into the sea, announcing that Babylon will sink like a stone and will not rise again. It's interesting how the book of Revelation depends on Jeremiah but does not just mimic it, doesn't just pick up the same images and use them the same way. But it clearly has these echoes of Jeremiah which suggests that the prophecy of Jeremiah may be talking about both, ancient Babylon's fall and perhaps mystery Babylon's fall which could be seen as a reference to Jerusalem in AD 70.

Now, chapter 50, the word that the Lord spoke against Babylon against the land of the Chaldeans by Jeremiah the prophet, declare among the nations, proclaim and set up a standard, proclaim and do not conceal it, say Babylon is taken, Bell is ashamed, that's the Babylonian god, Merdok, another Babylonian god, Merdok, is broken in pieces, her idols are humiliated, her images are broken in pieces for out of the north a nation comes up against her which shall make her land desolate and no one shall dwell therein. They shall move, they shall depart, both man and beast. In those days and in that time.

Now, by the way, that expression, in those days and in that time, often refers to the messianic age in prophecy and we see the same expression in verse 20 of this chapter. Verse 20 says, in those days and in that time, says the Lord, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought but there shall be none and the sins of Judah but they shall not be found for I will pardon those whom I preserve. This obviously could be seen as being about the messianic age and it begins, verse 20, with the same phrase as we find at the beginning of verse 4, in those days and in that time, says the Lord, the children of Israel shall come, they and the children of Judah together with continual weeping, they shall come and seek the Lord their God.

They shall ask the way to Zion with their faces toward it saying, come and let us join ourselves to the Lord in perpetual covenant that will not be forgotten. Now, both of these statements, in verses 4 and 5 and verse 20, both of which begin with the term, in those days and in that time, can apply to the Jews returning from exile. They'll be inquiring, what's the way back to Zion? We want to go back to Zion, we want to go back with weeping and so forth and God will not see their sins anymore because they've been purged through the Babylonian exile so their sins, if you seek for them, will not be found because they've been essentially atoned for through the exile, the 70 years they spent in captivity.

Obviously, those terms can be referring to the return of the exiles from Babylon but also the language is the same language we find in the messianic passages elsewhere and the same effects, coming to Zion, having their sins forgiven. These are things that other passages in the Old Testament identify with the messianic age and so, again, we may be looking at two things at the same time here. We may be looking at the fall of Babylon with its subsequent return of the exiles to Jerusalem, on the one hand, and the messianic age with its consequent destruction of the old order with the fall of Jerusalem, a new Babylon.

Verse 6, My people have been lost sheep, their shepherds have led them astray, they have turned them away on the mountains, they have gone from mountain to hill, they have forgotten their resting place, all who found them have devoured them and their adversaries said, we have not offended because they have sinned against the Lord, the habitation of justice, the Lord, the hope of their fathers. So, I mean, that's what Nebuchadnezzar said to Jeremiah, your people, this happened to your people's city because they rebelled against God, and that was true. However, it's not true anymore at the end of the exile, it's now time to be forgiven and return.

Move from the midst of Babylon, go out of the land of the Chaldeans, and be like the rams before the flocks, for behold, I will raise and cause to come up against Babylon an assembly of great nations from the north country, and they shall array themselves against her. From there, she shall be captured, their arrows shall be like those of an expert warrior, none shall return in vain, and Chaldea shall become plunder, all who plunder her shall be satisfied, says the Lord. Because you were glad, because you rejoiced, you destroyers of my heritage, because you have grown fat like a heifer, threshing the grain, and you bellow like bulls, your mother shall be deeply ashamed, she who bore you shall be ashamed, behold, the least of the nations shall be a wilderness, a dry land and a desert, because of the wrath of the Lord, she shall not be inhabited, but she shall be wholly desolate.

Everyone who goes by Babylon shall be horrified and hiss at all her plagues. A lot of these things about Babylon were said about other countries earlier in some of the earlier oracles that we read and looked at last time. Put yourselves in array against Babylon all around, all you who bend the bow, shoot at her, spare no arrows, for she has sinned against the Lord, shout against her all around, she has given her hand, her foundations have fallen, her walls are thrown down, for it is the vengeance of the Lord, take vengeance on her, as she has done, so do to her.

Cut off the sower from Babylon, and him who handles the sickle at harvest time, for fear of oppressing sword, everyone shall turn to his own people, and everyone shall flee to his own land. Israel is like scattered sheep, the lions have driven him away, first the kings of Assyria devoured him, now at last this Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, has broken his bones. Therefore thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, behold, I will

punish the king of Babylon and his land, as I have punished the king of Assyria, and I will bring back Israel to his habitation, and he shall feed on Carmel and Bashan, his soul shall be satisfied on Mount Ephraim and Gilead, in those days and in that time, says the Lord, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought, but there shall be none, and the sins of Judah, but they shall not be found, for I will pardon those whom I preserve.

Go up against the land of Mithraim, against it, and against the inhabitants of Peacock, waste and utterly destroy them, says the Lord, and do according to all that I have commanded you, a sound of battle is in the land, and great destruction. How the hammer of the whole earth has been cut apart and broken, how Babylon has become a desolation among the nations, I have laid a snare for you, you have indeed been trapped, oh Babylon, and you were not aware, you have been found and also caught, because you have contended against the Lord. The Lord has opened his armory and has brought out the weapons of his indignation, for this is the work of the Lord God of hosts in the land of the Chaldeans.

Come against her from the farthest border, open her storehouses, cast her up as heaps of ruins and destroy her utterly, let nothing of her be left, slay all her bulls, let them go down to the slaughter, woe to them, for their day has come, the time of their punishment. The voice of those who flee and escape from the land of Babylon declares in Zion the vengeance of the Lord our God, the vengeance of his temple. Call together the archers against Babylon, all you who bend the bow and camp against it all around, let none of them escape, repay her according to her work, according to all that she has done due to her, for she has been proud against the Lord, against the Holy One of Israel.

Therefore the young men shall fall in the streets and all her men of war shall be cut off in that day, says the Lord. Behold, I am against you, O most proud, says the Lord God of hosts, for your day has come, the time that I will punish you. The most proud shall stumble and fall and no one will raise him up.

I will kindle a fire in his cities and it will devour all around him. Thus says the Lord of hosts, the children of Israel were oppressed along with the children of Judah. All who took them captive have held them fast.

They have refused to let them go. Their Redeemer is strong. The Lord of hosts is his name.

He will thoroughly plead their case that he may give rest to the land and disquiet the inhabitants of Babylon. A sword is against the Chaldeans, says the Lord, against the inhabitants of Babylon and against her princes and her wise men. A sword is against the soothsayers and they will be fools.

A sword is against her mighty men and they will be dismayed. A sword is against their horses, against their chariots, against all the mixed peoples who are in her midst and

they will become like women. A sword is against her treasures and they will be robbed.

A drought is against her waters and they will be dried up, for it is the land of carved images and they are insane with their idols. Therefore the wild desert beasts shall dwell there with the jackals and the ostriches shall dwell in it. It shall be inhabited no more forever, nor shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation.

As God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah and their neighboring cities, says the Lord, so no one shall reside there, nor son of man dwell in it. Behold, a people shall come from the north and a great nation and many kings shall be raised up from the ends of the earth and they shall hold the bow and the lance. They are cruel and shall not show mercy.

Their voice shall roar like the sea and they shall ride on horses set in array like a man for the battle against you, O daughter of Babylon. The king of Babylon has heard the report about them and his hands grow feeble. Anguish has taken hold of him, pangs as of a woman in childbirth.

These verses 41 through 43 actually are just a repeat of chapter 6, verses 22 through 24, where they're actually spoken of and to Zion, not Babylon. The very same words, with the exception that it says, against you, O daughter of Babylon here, it talks about against us, when it's talking about Zion, back in chapter 6, verses 22 through 24. Likewise, these verses next, 44 through 46, have been formally used also of Edom.

In chapter 49, verses 19 through 21, these very verses have been used against Edom. So verses that were once used against Zion and against Edom, who suffered at the hands of Babylonians, now are simply turned around on the Babylonians themselves. Behold, he shall come up like a lion from the flooding of the Jordan against the habitation of the strong.

But I will make them suddenly run away from her. And who is a chosen man that I may appoint over her? For who is like me, who will arraign me? And who is that shepherd who will withstand me? Therefore hear the counsel of the Lord that he has taken against Babylon and his purposes that he has proposed against the land of the Chaldeans. Surely the least of the flock shall draw them out.

Surely he will make their habitation desolate with them. At the noise of the taking of Babylon, the earth trembles and the cry is heard among the nations. You'll recognize those verses because we just read verses in the previous chapter like that, only they were applied to Edom at that time.

The prophecy continues, chapter 51. Thus says the Lord, Behold, I will raise up against Babylon, against those who dwell in Lebchem, a destroying wind, and I will send winnowers to Babylon who shall winnow her and empty her land. For in the day of doom

they shall be against her all around.

Against her let the archer bend his bow and lift himself up against her in his armor. Do not spare her young men. Utterly destroy all her army.

Thus the slain shall fall in the land of the Chaldeans and those thrust through in her streets. For Israel is not forsaken, nor Judah, but his God, the Lord of hosts, though their land was filled with sin against the Holy One of Israel. Okay, so I read that wrong.

Not forsaken by his God, the Lord of hosts. So Israel and Judah are not forsaken by God even though their land was filled with sin at one time. At the end of this captivity, their sin is no longer found.

Verse 6, flee from the midst of Babylon and everyone save his life. Do not be cut off in her iniquity for this is the time of the Lord's vengeance. He shall recompense her.

Babylon was a golden cup in the Lord's hand that made all the earth drunk. The nations drank her wine. Therefore nations are deranged.

Babylon has suddenly fallen and been destroyed. Wail for her. Take balm for her pain.

Perhaps she may be healed. We would have healed Babylon, but she is not healed. Forsake her and let us go, everyone, to his own country.

For her judgment reaches to heaven and is lifted up to the skies. The Lord has revealed our righteousness. Come and let us declare in Zion the work of the Lord our God.

Make the arrows bright. Gather the shields. The Lord has raised up the spirit of the kings of the Medes.

For his plan is against Babylon to destroy it because it is the vengeance of the Lord, the vengeance of his temple. Set up the standard on the walls of Babylon. Make the guards strong.

Set up the watchmen. Prepare the ambushes. For the Lord has devised and done what he spoke against the inhabitants of Babylon.

O you who dwell by many waters, abundant in treasures, your end has come. The measure of your covetousness the Lord of hosts has sworn by himself. Surely I will fill you with men as with locusts and they shall lift up a shout against you.

That is, the invaders will be as numerous as a locust plague. Now, the next few verses, 15 through 19, were originally also spoken to Israel, and it's word for word the same. From chapter 10, verses 12 through 16.

That is, Jeremiah 10, 12 through 16, was verbatim the same as verses 15 through 19

here, only now it's spoken to Babylon, not to Israel. He has made the earth by his power. He has established the world by his wisdom and stretched out the heaven by his understanding.

When he utters his voice, there is a multitude of waters in the heavens. He causes the vapors to ascend from the ends of the earth. He makes lightnings from the rain. He brings the wind out of his treasuries.

Everyone is dull-hearted, without knowledge. Every metalsmith is put to shame by the carved image. For his molded image is falsehood and there is no breath in them.

They are futile, a work of errors. In the time of their punishment, they shall perish. The portion of Jacob is not like them.

That is, God is not like the idols. For he is the maker of all things and Israel is the tribe of his inheritance. The Lord of hosts is his name.

Speaking apparently to Babylon, he says, You are my battle axe and weapons of war. This is, of course, what this is talking about the earlier career of Babylon when God was using them to conquer the nations. For with you, I will break the nations in pieces.

With you, I'll destroy kingdoms. With you, I'll break in pieces the horse and its rider. With you, I'll break in pieces the chariot and its rider.

With you, also, I will break in pieces man and woman. With you, I'll break in pieces old and young. With you, I'll break in pieces young man and maiden.

With you, also, I will break in pieces the shepherd and his flock. With you, I will break in pieces the farmer and his yoke of oxen. And with you, I will break in pieces governors and rulers.

And I will repay Babylon and all the inhabitants of Chaldea for all the evil that they have done in Zion in your sight, says the Lord. Behold, I am against you, O destroying mountain, who destroys all the earth, says the Lord. And I will stretch out my hand against you, roll you down from the rocks, and make you a burnt mountain.

A mountain is a symbol for a government or for a nation. We might remember that when the second seal was opened. No, when the second trumpet sounded in Revelation, that there was a burning mountain thrown into the sea, and the sea turned into blood, a third of it.

But I suggested at that time that that burning mountain might be Jerusalem. Here, it's Babylon. But, of course, Jerusalem could be the new Babylon.

He calls it a destroying mountain, and he makes it a burnt mountain. They shall not take from you a stone for a corner, nor a stone for a foundation. In other words, you'll be

reduced to such small pieces that your stones will be not useful for further construction.

But you shall be desolate forever, says the Lord. Set up a banner in the land. Blow the trumpet among the nations.

Prepare the nations against her. Call the kingdoms together against her, Ararat, Mene, and Ashkenaz. These are all kingdoms in the area of Armenia.

Appoint a marshal against her. Cause the horses to come up like bristling locusts. Prepare against her the nations with the kings of the Medes, its governors and its rulers, all the land of his dominion.

And the land will tremble in sorrow, for every purpose of the Lord shall be performed against Babylon to make the land of Babylon a desolation without inhabitants. The mighty men of Babylon have ceased fighting. Now, this section, verses 30 through 32, might suggest that Babylon falls without a fight.

There's been a lot of talk about warfare, but that could be applying to the second Babylon. The Babylon that fell to the Persians was not conquered by warfare, but this seems to refer to no fighting. The mighty men of Babylon have ceased fighting.

They have remained in their strongholds. Their might has failed. They became like women.

They have burned her dwelling places. The bars of her gate are broken. One runner will run to meet another, and one messenger meet another to show the king of Babylon that his city is taken on all sides.

The passages are blocked. The reeds they have burned with fire, and the men of war are terrified. For thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, our daughter, excuse me, the daughter of Babylon is like a threshing floor when it is time to thresh her, which is where wheat and chaff are separated, of course.

Yet a little while in the time of her harvest will come. Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, has devoured me. He has crushed me.

He has made me an empty vessel. He has swallowed me up like a monster. He has filled his stomach with my delicacies.

He has spit me out. Let the violence done to me and on my flesh be upon Babylon. The inhabitant of Zion will say, and my blood be upon the inhabitant of Chaldea.

Jerusalem will say. Now, we remember that Babylon in Revelation has all the blood of the saints, the prophets and apostles and so forth on her conscience. In her was found the righteous blood shed on the face of the land.

And so here Babylon is also said to be suffering for the blood of the innocent blood that was shed. Verse 36, Therefore thus says the Lord, Behold, I will plead your case and take vengeance for you. I will dry up her sea and make her springs dry.

Babylon shall become a heap, a dwelling place for jackals, an astonishment and a hissing without an inhabitant. They shall roar together like lions. They shall growl like lions' whelps in their excitement.

I will prepare their feasts. I will make them drink that they may rejoice and sleep a perpetual sleep and not awake, says the Lord. I will bring them down like lambs to the slaughter, like rams with male goats.

Oh, how Shishak is taken. We encountered this word Shishak at an earlier time, too, in Jeremiah 25, 26. It is a code word for Babylon itself.

The actual meaning of Shishak I've not been able to discover. I looked in a commentary, too, but they didn't mention. I'm sure it could be found.

Why it was a name for Babylon, I'm not sure. Oh, how the praise of the whole earth is seized. How Babylon has become desolate among the nations.

The sea has come up over Babylon. She is covered with a multitude of its waves. Her cities are a desolation, a dry land in a wilderness, a land where no one dwells, through which no son of man passes.

I will punish Bel, the god of Babylon, in Babylon, and I will bring out of his mouth what he has swallowed. And the nations shall not stream to him anymore. Yes, the wall of Babylon shall fall.

My people, go out from the midst of her, and let everyone deliver him out of the fierce anger of the Lord. And lest your heart faint and you fear for the rumor that will be heard in the land, a rumor will come one year, and after that, in another year, a rumor will come, and violence in the land, ruler against ruler, it's a hard verse to make a lot of sense of. Therefore, behold, the days are coming that I will bring judgment on the carved images of Babylon.

Her whole land shall be ashamed, and all her slain shall fall in her midst. Then the heavens and the earth and all that is in them shall sing joyously over Babylon. That certainly has an echo in Revelation 18 and verse 20, which is talking about the fall of Babylon.

Revelation 18, 20 says, Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you holy apostles and prophets, for God has avenged you on her. So heaven is encouraged to sing joyously over the fall of Babylon in both Revelation 18, 20 and here. For the plunderers shall come to her from the north, says the Lord.

Verse 49, As Babylon has caused the slain of Israel to fall, so Babylon, the slain of all the earth, shall fall. So at Babylon, the slain of all the earth, shall fall. You who have escaped the sword, get away.

Do not stand still. Remember the Lord afar off, and let Jerusalem come to your mind. Meaning the Jews should consider going back to Jerusalem now that they're set free.

We are ashamed because we have heard reproach. Shame has covered our faces, for strangers have come into our sanctuaries, into the Lord's house. Remembering how Babylon had destroyed the temple before.

Therefore, behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, that I will bring judgment on her carved images, and throughout all her land, the wounded shall groan. Though Babylon were to mount up to heaven, and though she were to fortify the height of her strength, yet from my plunderers would come to her, says the Lord. Remember the king of Babylon called Lucifer in Isaiah chapter 13, said he wanted to ascend into the heavens, above the stars, and so forth.

Here Babylon, hypothetically, is spoken of as being that way. Of course, the Tower of Babel was the beginning of Babylon, so there are references, no doubt, to that here, if Babylon were to mount up to heaven. Likewise, earlier, when it's said in chapter 51, verse 9, her judgment reaches to heaven and is lifted up to the skies, could be an allusion to the Tower of Babel, which was the founding of the city of Babylon, originally.

Okay, verse 54, the sound of a cry comes from Babylon and great destruction from the land of the Chaldeans, because the Lord is plundering Babylon and silencing her loud voice. Though her waves roar like great rivers, like great waters, excuse me, and the noise of their voice is uttered, because the plunderer comes against her, against Babylon, and her mighty men are taken. Every one of their bows is broken.

Their weapons are destroyed, in other words. For the Lord is God of recompense. He will surely repay.

And I will make drunk her princes and wise men, her governors, her deputies, and her mighty men, and they shall sleep a perpetual sleep and not awake, says the king, whose name is the Lord of hosts. Thus says the Lord of hosts, the broad walls of Babylon shall be utterly broken, and her high gates shall be burned with fire. The people will labor in vain, and the nations because of the fire, and they shall be weary.

Now there's this little acted parable that Jeremiah instructs Sariah to do. Sariah is actually Baruch's brother. They have the same father and grandfather, so this is Baruch's brother, Sariah, and as he gave Baruch an assignment earlier in chapter 36 to go and read the written words of God in the city at the house of the Lord, so this Sariah is going on a journey to Babylon with King Zedekiah.

This Sariah has a government post. He was a quartermaster under Zedekiah and was accompanying Zedekiah on some delegation to Babylon, probably to deliver tribute money or to reaffirm his loyalty or something, and since Sariah was going and he was a trusted man, Jeremiah gave him an assignment here. The word which Jeremiah the prophet commanded Sariah, the son of Neriah, the son of Maaziah, when he went with Zedekiah, the king of Judah, to Babylon in the fourth year of his reign, and Sariah was the quartermaster, so Jeremiah wrote in a book all the evil that would come upon Babylon, all these words that are written against Babylon, and Jeremiah said to Sariah, when you arrive in Babylon and see it, read all these words.

Then you shall say, O Lord, you have spoken against this place to cut it off so that no one shall remain in it, neither man nor beast, but it shall be desolate forever. Now it shall be when you have finished reading this book that you shall tie a stone to it and throw it out into the Euphrates. Then you shall say, thus Babylon shall sink and not rise from the catastrophe that I will bring upon her, and they shall be weary.

Thus far are the words of Jeremiah. In fact, that's the end of Jeremiah's speaking, which means the remaining chapter was not written by Jeremiah. It was about him, but it was a historical summary.

But Sariah was told to go and read the prophecies against Babylon in Babylon, but it doesn't say he had to read them in public. That may be implied, but it's not stated. Maybe he's just supposed to go by the river and read them out loud and throw them in the river, whether there's a big audience or not.

It seems like it would be rather dangerous to read those things in the court of Nebuchadnezzar to the king, and we're not told that he had to do that. Even Baruch didn't have to read the scriptures in the presence of Jehoiakim. He read it elsewhere, and the prophecy was taken by others to Jehoiakim.

Now, chapter 52 mostly is just parallel, some of it almost verbatim, to 2 Kings 24, verse 18, through chapter 25, verse 30. So 2 Kings 24, 18 to 25, 30 is the same material we read right here. There is a tradition that the Jews have that Jeremiah is the author of Kings.

He might be, but he may not even be the author of this chapter, but it's very close to the chapter of 2 Kings. Maybe Baruch was the author of both. In any case, Zedekiah was 21 years old when he became king, and he reigned 11 years in Jerusalem.

His mother's name was Hematol, the daughter of Jeremiah of Libna, a different Jeremiah, of course. He also did evil in the sight of the Lord, according to all that Jehoiakim had done. For because of the anger of the Lord, this happened in Jerusalem, in Judah, till he finally cast them out from his presence.

Then Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon. And the next verses, verses 4 through 11, have already been recounted. This information is already being given in chapter 39, verses 1 through 7. So it's just a repeat of what we already read there.

It tells about how when the Babylonians broke into the walls of Jerusalem, Zedekiah and his chief captains fled, but they were caught on the plain and brought back. And his sons were slain before him, and his eyes were put out by Nebuchadnezzar. That's verses 4 through 11 here.

It was also given in chapter 39, verses 1 through 7. Now, verse 12 through 23, we will not read simply because it is really mainly a catalog of the treasures from Jerusalem that Nebuchadnezzar, under Nebuchadnezzar, gathered up to take to Babylon. And it goes into detail about spoons and bowls and bronze bowls and other stuff that Solomon had made when the temple was destroyed and it was stripped bare. And all the treasures of Jerusalem were carried off.

This is simply, not simply, but primarily a listing of the things that got carried away into Babylon. We will not read it in detail, partly because our time is limited. But I would point out that this material in 12 through 23 documents the fulfillment of a prediction that Isaiah made in Isaiah 39 when he was speaking to Hezekiah.

When Hezekiah had recovered from his sickness, emissaries from Babylon, which at that time was not a very important nation. Babylon was not very powerful or intimidating or frightening in any way to Israel in the time of Hezekiah. This is 100 years before Jeremiah's time, before Nebuchadnezzar's time.

But emissaries from Babylon came to Judah to congratulate Hezekiah for recovering from his sickness. And he showed them all the treasures of his house and of the city. And when they were gone, Isaiah came to him and said, what did you show these people? He said, I showed them everything.

I didn't withhold anything from them. And in verse six, Isaiah 39, six, Isaiah said, behold, the days are coming when all that is in your house and what your fathers have accumulated until this day shall be carried to Babylon. Nothing shall be left, says the Lord.

So actually about 150 years before the fulfillment of this or 200 years before the fulfillment of it, about 150, I'd say. Isaiah predicted that all the stuff in Jerusalem would be carried away to Babylon. And Jeremiah chapter 52, verses 12 through 23 records that.

Actually, Jeremiah had also predicted it in Jeremiah chapter 27, verses 21 and 22. Jeremiah 27, 21, 22, Jeremiah said, yes, says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel concerning the vessels that remain in the house of the Lord and the house of the King of Judah and of Jerusalem, they shall be carried to Babylon and there they shall be until the

day that I visit them, says the Lord. So the carrying away of the vessels to Babylon is recorded as fulfilled here, as predicted.

Then in verse 24, it says, the captain of the guard took Sariah. Now this is not the man who was the friend of Jeremiah and the quartermaster, but this is the chief priest, the high priest at the time of the fall of Jerusalem was named Sariah. He was, by the way, the grandson of Hilkiah, the priest who had found the scroll during the time of Josiah.

The high priest in Jerusalem in the days of Josiah was Hilkiah and he was the grandfather of this man, Sariah. We know that because of the genealogy given for us in 1 Chronicles 6, verses 14 and 15. And this man was also the grandfather.

He's the grandson of Hilkiah, but he's the grandfather of Joshua, the son of Zedekiah, who was the priest coming back with the exiles with Zerubbabel. Remember, Zerubbabel was the governor and Joshua was the high priest at the time the exiles returned in the time of Cyrus. Well, Joshua, the high priest who returned to Zerubbabel was the grandson of this man, Sariah.

And Ezra was related to him also. Ezra was descended from this man too. So this man was significant.

Not only was he the high priest, but he was connected within a few generations of some other important high priests. He was killed on this occasion, however. The captain of the guard took Sariah, the chief priest, Zephaniah, the second priest, and the three doorkeepers.

These are temple officials. He also took out of the city an officer who had charge of the men of war, seven men of the king's close associates who were found in the city, the principal scribe of the army who mustered the people out of the land, and 60 men of the people of the land who were found in the midst of the city. And Nebuchadnezzar, the captain of the guard, took these and brought them to the king of Babylon at Riblah.

Then the king of Babylon struck them and put them to death at Riblah in the land of Hamath. Thus Judah was carried away captive from its own land. These are the people whom Nebuchadnezzar carried away captive in the seventh year, 3,023 Jews.

In the 18th year of Nebuchadnezzar, he carried away captive from Jerusalem 832 persons. In the 23rd year of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuchadnezzar, the captain of the guard, carried away captive of the Jews 745 persons. All the persons were 4,600.

Now some of these numbers differ in kings. For example, what's called here the seventh year and the 18th year, in kings, second kings, it's referred to as the eighth year and the 19th year. Instead of the seventh, it's the eighth.

Instead of the 18th, it's the 19th. But this is no doubt accounted for by the use of the

Babylonian reckoning, which, by the way, earlier, in chapter 25, we find that Jeremiah had used the Jerusalem reckoning, which reckons the beginning of a king's reign in a portion of a year as a full year. And the Babylonian reckoning did not do that.

So what the Jews would call the second year would actually be called the first year of the king's reign by the Babylonians. That's just the way they worked it out. And so it would appear that second kings follows the Jerusalem way of reckoning and Jeremiah here follows the Babylonian form of reckoning, so he gets different numbers.

But it's the same year. What's strange is that this would use the Babylonian reckoning here when Jeremiah earlier used the Jerusalem form, the Jewish form. And that may suggest that a later Babylonian scribe added this chapter and used the Babylonian reckoning instead.

Also, the numbers of the people are different here than in Kings. The number 3,023 Jews in verse 28 is a number that's not like the numbers in Kings. There is in Kings a number 10,000 and a number 8,000, which are not found here.

And scholars have suggested perhaps the Kings passages are talking about the whole families of these men, whereas Jeremiah is speaking only of the heads of the households, the number of households there were. We will not bother ourselves with that for lack of time right now. In fact, we're out of time, but let's take the last few verses.

This book ends the same way 2 Kings ends with a glimmer of light, and that is that even though the Jews are taken away into captivity, Jeconiah, who has been taken captive back in 597 BC, after 37 years of being a captive, he's elevated from prison. It says, Now it came to pass in the thirty-seventh year of the captivity of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, in the twelfth month, on the twenty-fifth day of the month, that evil Meredok, king of Babylon, he's a successor to Nebuchadnezzar, in the first year of his reign, lifted up the head of Jehoiakim, the king of Judah, and brought him out of prison. Now, the man had only reigned in Jerusalem for three months, but he got a 37-year prison term for rebelling.

He hadn't actually rebelled, he was just removed because he was suspected to be not loyal. And he spoke kindly to him and gave him a more prominent seat than those of the kings who were with him in Babylon, that is, the other captive kings. The Babylonians did show some measure of respect for the kings they conquered, but Jeconiolus was punished for 37 years in prison, but he was released and given a better position at the table than other kings who were of the conquered people.

So Jehoiakim changed from his prison garments and he ate bread regularly before the king all the days of his life. And as for his provisions, there was a regular ration given to him by the king of Babylon and a portion for each day until the day of his death, all the days of his life. So why does it mention this at the end? Perhaps to suggest that this

shows that God had not completely abandoned the exiles.

While they were still in exile, there was even this mercy shown to them by the king, Evil-Merdok, who treated the king of the Jews, Jeconiah, with greater deference than other pagan kings he had conquered. And maybe the suggestion, although it's not stated outright, is that this was the work of God showing mercy to his people even while they were in Babylon. Now when we study Daniel and Ezekiel, these books also tell of what God was doing with his people in Babylon because though Jeremiah did not go into Babylon, he lived to see the destruction of Jerusalem and the exile, but Ezekiel and Daniel had been carried into Babylon earlier.

Daniel earliest of all in 605 B.C. and Ezekiel later in 597 B.C. But the books of Ezekiel and Daniel belong to the Babylonian exile and are written by prophets who lived under the conditions of that exile before the return to Jerusalem. And so those books obviously fall into that particular chronological position.