

## JEREMIAH 50

## THE FALL OF BABYLON, PART 1

In this chapter and the one which follows, we have the prophet's foretelling of the Lord's judgments upon Babylon. It is put last among Jeremiah's prophecies against the foreign nations because it was the last to be accomplished; when the cup of God's judgment went around, the king of Babylon drank it last. Babylon was employed as the rod in God's hand for the chastising of all the other nations; and now, at length, that rod was to be thrown into the fire. Although that kingdom, to the human eye, was flourishing and prosperous; yet at the same time, the prophet's eye of faith foresaw it withered and cut down. Just as Isaiah's prophecies of the destruction of Babylon and the deliverance of Israel seem to typify the evangelical triumphs of all believers over the powers of darkness, as well as the great salvation worked out by our Lord Jesus; so also, Jeremiah's prophecies of the same events seem to have been intended to point at the triumphs of the Gospel-Church over the great spiritual Babylon. Many passages in the Book of Revelation are borrowed from here.

Since the influence of the empire of Babylon was much larger and stronger than any of the other kingdoms that were here prophesied against, its fall was very considerable in itself; and since the Babylonians had been more oppressive to God's people than any of the other nations, the prophet is very copious upon this subject, for the comfort of the Jewish captives. The terrible judgments which God had in store for Babylon, and the glorious blessings which He had in store for His own children who were captives there, are here intermixed in the prophecy of this chapter; for Babylon was destroyed in order to make way for the returning of the Lord's exiled people who were captives there.

The destruction of Babylon is spoken of as being done thoroughly and completely (verses 1-4), but the Lord takes care to insert words of comfort for His captive people (verses 5-7). What a beautiful description is here given of the exiles' return – with weeping – to their beloved homeland! They are first described as seeking the Lord, their covenant-God. This is the first work of grace that is worked in the heart of each and every person who is born again, and the second work is similar to the first: they shall ask the way to God's Church – to Zion. And what are their intentions in both of these actions, except that the covenant may never again be broken on their part – for the Lord has never broken it on His! Was there ever a more lovely representation than this? How exactly does it describe our own heart, and the heart of every poor returning prodigal who, by sin, has run away from God, and is now brought back by sovereign grace to seek the Lord's face with repentant sorrow! (Luke 15:17-24) O how gracious for the Lord to incline the heart of any of us to do this; for without that

Outline of the chapter:

- ❖ The fall of Babylon is foretold – verses 1-3, 9-16, 21-32, and 35-46
- ❖ The redemption of the Lord's people is promised – verses 4-8, 17-20, and 33-34



grace, no heart would ever be inclined toward Him! How merciful it is of Him to receive back again His wandering but returning son or daughter, when they have nothing to bring and nothing to offer!

The desolation that was to be brought upon Babylon is set forth, in verses 8-16, under a variety of expressions. Babylon would be totally desolated, for she had sinned against the Lord; and sin always makes people a target for the arrows of God's judgments. However, mercy for the people of God would not only accompany the destruction of Babylon, but it would even arise therefrom. In Belshazzar's time, that great and mighty empire of the world was brought to its ruin by the Medes and Persians; and it was at that very moment that God's exiled people would be set free from their captivity that they had been brought under for their sins!



Observe, in verses 17-20, how the Lord speaks tenderly on behalf of His people, and contemptuously of their enemies. Although His scattered sheep had fallen into the jaws of the lion of the king of Babylon, yet these verses make it clear that the Lord is everlastingly watching over His people, and He takes particular notice of everyone who hurts them. O that every child of God would keep this in remembrance! Do not forget to mark this down in the tablet of your own heart: such is the perpetual, unceasing, and soul-cleansing efficacy of Christ's blood, that when the sins of His people are sought for, they shall not be found! In the eye of the Father, the Bride of Jesus – by virtue of her marriage-union with Him – is altogether beautiful and lovely! He beholds no iniquity or perverseness in His people (Num. 23:21). Jesus Himself declares of His Bride that she is all fair, and that there is no spot in her (Song of Sol. 4:7). And He will present her to Himself as a glorious Church – not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing – so that she may be forever unblameable and unproveable in His sight (Eph. 5:27).

In the rest of the chapter, beginning at verse 21, we read of the Lord's call to the forces that He Himself mustered and empowered to destroy Babylon. Babylon's kings and people had lifted up their hearts in pride against the Holy One of Israel, and who is able to uphold those whom God is throwing down? Whether the desolation comes in the form of the sword, drought, wild beasts, or foreign invasion – the Lord's appointed counsels against rebellious individuals and nations shall be fulfilled (verse 45). However, despite all the ruin and destruction that goes on around them, the children of God may still find comfort in distress; for although they are weak, their Redeemer is strong (verses 33-34), and He will give them that rest which remains in store for the people of God!

*Lord, we repent of our sinful pride, whereby we have lifted up our hearts against You – just as the ancient Babylonians did. We beseech You to pour out upon us Your grace to continually cultivate a spirit of humility before You! Amen.*