

JEREMIAH 51

THE FALL OF BABYLON, PART 2

Shortly after King Nebuchadnezzar had taken King Jeconiah into captivity to Babylon, and established Josiah's son Zedekiah as a vassal-king upon the throne of Judah; the kingdom was violently agitated by rumors which encouraged the hope that the power of Babylon would soon be broken, and that the Jewish exiles would speedily return. But Jeremiah repeatedly asserted that this would not come to pass. "Nebuchadnezzar," said he, "is doing the will of Jehovah. All the nations are to serve him, and his son, and his son's son" (chapter 27:6-7). Perhaps it was at the prophet's suggestion that King Zedekiah, in the fourth year of his reign (593 BC), made a journey to Babylon to pay homage to his superior and assure him of his loyalty to him. Surely it must have often seemed to Jeremiah's friends and countrymen as though his teachings were timid and cowardly. Did he really favor Babylon above Jerusalem? Was he traitorous to the best interests of his own people? But if they ever entertained such questionings, they must have been suddenly and completely surprised when the prophet summoned them to hear the tremendous indictment that the Lord had given him against Babylon, as well as a graphic description of its fall and ruin. A copy of this prophecy was entrusted to Seraiah, the chief chamberlain, who accompanied his master Zedekiah to Babylon. Seraiah was given instructions to read it privately to the exiles who were already in captivity; and then, with a stone, he was to weight down the scroll containing those words, and cast it into the Euphrates River with these solemn words: "Thus shall Babylon sink, and shall not rise again, because of the evil which God will bring upon her!" (verse 64)

The Lord had used Babylon for great purposes of destruction among the nations. But she had abused the power which God had entrusted to her, and used it for her own unrighteous and selfish purposes. Her fulfillment of the Divine will had been cruel in the extreme, leaving behind nothing except ruined wasteland and ruthless bloodshed. But God specifically had a controversy against Babylon for her treatment of His people in particular. And now the Most High would take up their cause, and execute vengeance on their behalf. In the prophetic words of His servant Jeremiah, the fall of this great wonder of the world is vividly portrayed.

The battle-flag is raised, the trumpet sounds, and the nations of the world assemble. The tide of invasion begins to flow against and around the massive walls of the great city of Babylon. Now the battle-shout is heard, and an assault is made against her walls. Behold! Her bulwarks are falling! Her gates are broken

Outline of the chapter:

- ❖ A prophecy of the fall of Babylon, intermixed with the grounds of the Lord's controversy with her, and encouragements for God's suffering people – verses 1-58
- ❖ A copy of this prophecy is given to Seraiah, to be read in Babylon and then thrown into the Euphrates River – verses 59-64

through! Her walls are being thrown down! The mighty men of Babylon have ceased to fight; their strength has failed. The fire breaks out amidst her dwelling-places. The captured city is given up to the savage soldiers. Numberless and nameless wrongs are inflicted upon the defenseless and the weak. Her granaries are spoiled, her treasuries are ransacked, and her storehouses are raided. All the captive people who had been held in cruel bondage by Babylon are allowed to go free – especially the Jews. And now her cities become “a desolation, a dry land, and a wilderness, a land wherein no man dwelleth.” Such were the predictions of Jeremiah concerning one of the greatest cities which the world has ever seen, and which – at that very time – was rising to the zenith of her power and glory. Seventy years were to pass before the prophet’s words would be fulfilled, but history itself could hardly be more definite and precise. Those who can compare this prophecy with the historical narratives concerning the fall of Babylon – and also with the archaeological discoveries of men such as Henry Austin Layard – will find out how exactly every detail was fulfilled!

In every age of the world, Babylon has had its counterpart. Ever since the Fall, the Lord’s people have always had the seed of the serpent rising in opposition against them. Even to this day, against the Bride of the Lamb, there rides the scarlet-clothed woman with the name of “Babylon the Great” written upon her forehead (Rev. 17:1-6). Wherever God has built up His Kingdom, the devil has always counterfeited it by some travesty of his own.

But Jeremiah and those among the Jewish exiles who trusted in the Lord were able to comfort their hearts amidst the desolations which fell heavily upon their beloved fatherland, by anticipating the inevitable doom of their oppressor. The Lord had assured them that Babylon’s tyranny over them would not last forever, and His promises did not fail in their fulfillment. In the reign of King Belshazzar (537 BC), the city of Babylon was captured by the Medes and the Persians; and her glory departed to return no more. Every detail of the Lord’s words, which were given through the mouths of both Isaiah and Jeremiah, came to pass. And in the same manner, every great world-power that rises in opposition to the government of the Most High shall fall and perish. The right to reign over all nations does not belong to kings, priests, or popes; but to the Son of God, and to Him alone! Death and ruin shall be the outcome of every kingdom, individual, and organization that does not bow the knee to the all-conquering might of Immanuel! He is commissioned to destroy all the works of the devil; and sooner or later, all enemies shall be put under His feet – either here on earth, or else at the great Day of Judgment. Let us strengthen our confidence in the certain victory of good over evil, of the Church over the world, and of Christ over Satan, as we consider the precise fulfillment of Jeremiah’s words about Babylon!

Thank You, Jesus, for delivering us from the worse-than-Babylonian slavery of sin, death, and Satan! Amen.

