

## Journey through Jeremiah Part 53, Judgment Against Babylon Pt.1

A sermon series by Pastor Byron Chesney, Th.D. – Wednesday, Jan. 03, 2018

### † Jeremiah 50:1-5

1 The word that the LORD spake against Babylon *and* against the land of the Chaldeans by Jeremiah the prophet.

Tonight, we begin looking at the final nation in the judgment of the Gentile nations, and just like the old saying goes, God saves the best for last... well, depending on how you look at it, in this case he saves the worst for last, Babylon.

Babylon is mentioned by name 294 times in our King James Bible. It is more than just a city, it is a nation, and also a religious system.

As you know, Babylon technically began approximately 100-years after the great flood. Its founder was the great grandson of Noah, a man named Nimrod.

**Genesis 10:8-12:** And Cush begat Nimrod: he began to be a mighty one in the earth. 9 He was a mighty hunter before the LORD: wherefore it is said, Even as Nimrod the mighty hunter before the LORD. 10 And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar. 11 Out of that land went forth Asshur, and builded Nineveh, and the city Rehoboth, and Calah, 12 And Resen between Nineveh and Calah: the same *is* a great city.

When it says that Nimrod was a “**mighty hunter**,” it isn’t talking about hunting wabbits, it means **he was a hunter of men**. He was a murderer and rebellious, he was a wicked man. So wicked that he even got the notice of God and therefore was called a mighty hunter. All the lands that sprang out of Nimrod were wicked, but perhaps the most wicked was a place that God called “**Babel**.”

We all know the story but let’s take the time to read of its beginning: **Genesis 11:1-9**

1 And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech.

2 And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there.

3 And they said one to another, Go to, let us make brick, and burn them thoroughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar.

4 And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top *may reach* unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.

5 And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded.

6 And the LORD said, Behold, the people *is* one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do.

7 Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech.

8 So the LORD scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city.

9 Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the LORD did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did the LORD scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth.

After this, Babel is not mentioned again until we see the name “Babylon” appear in 2 Kings 17:24, when the king of Assyria brought men from Babylon into Samaria to populate the land in place of the Jews that he had taken out and placed into captivity.

Babylon has always been the enemy of God. From their founder, Nimrod, whom after he died **his wife, Semiramis**, made him out to be a god and people began worshiping idols of him, and then into their greatest time period when they rose to world dominance beginning with **a king named Nabopolassar** – he is accredited with being **the founder of the Chaldeans**. He is also the father of Babylon’s most infamous king, **Nebuchadnezzar** who began reigning in 604 B.C. He reigned for 43-years and was one of the most bloodthirsty, evil, tyrants to ever walk the face of God’s green earth.

Of all the pagan kings mentioned in the Bible, the LORD speaks of Nebuchadnezzar more than any other. It was under his reign that the LORD allowed his mighty Chaldean army to invade the Land of Judah and take captive all of God’s people for 70-years. Throughout the Book of Jeremiah Nebuchadnezzar is called God’s “**servant**.” You will find that in Jeremiah 25:9, Jeremiah 27:6, and Jeremiah 43:10. The reason being, God used this evil man to chasten His people.

Most of us remember the account of Nebuchadnezzar in the Book of Daniel chapter 4, when because of Nebuchadnezzar’s pride, God forced him into the field like an animal to eat grass for 7-years. After the 7-years God restored him to the throne and then that pagan, evil, dictator of a king prayed one of the greatest prayers you will read in the entire Bible. However, the Bible is silent on what became of Nebuchadnezzar after that. We all would like to think he remained a believer in God but history does not bear that fact. It is well known that he was a worshiper of the **Babylonian gods, Nabu and Merodach (the equivalent of Baal or Bel)**, and the fact is, he is still known to this day to be one of the most brutal kings in the history of man.

You may recall back in the 80’s and 90’s there was another evil dictator who claimed to be a **reincarnated Nebuchadnezzar**. That man’s name was **Saddam Hussein** – also known as “**The Butcher of Baghdad**.” It was Hussein’s plan to restore Babylon to it’s glorious state as it was in the days of Nebuchadnezzar. He sent archeologist there to restore it, even its hanging gardens which once was one of the 7-wonders of the ancient world. As they started restoring things they noticed that all the bricks they dug up had the name of Nebuchadnezzar inscribed upon them. Saddam had all new bricks inscribed with his name.

Also during the restoration, archaeologists uncovered a plaque on the ancient city gate proclaiming Nebuchadnezzar’s greatness. Saddam ordered stonemasons to place another plaque on the opposite side of the gate -- glorifying the greatness of Saddam Hussein.<sup>‡</sup> What many do not know is the thing that drove Saddam Hussein to imitate his hero Nebuchadnezzar, was the fact that Nebuchadnezzar had successfully sieged Jerusalem and destroyed the Temple of Solomon. It was Saddam’s dream to overtake Jerusalem himself.

Of course, Saddam met with a terrible death. In 2003 the United States under president George W. Bush and British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, accused Saddam of possessing **weapons of mass destruction** and Saddam was arrested and put on trial and found guilty of “**crimes against humanity**,” and sentenced to death. He was executed by hanging on December 30, 2006.

Well, this Bible study isn’t about Saddam Hussein, however, I wanted us to get a feel for some of the history of Babylon so we can have an understanding of why they came under the judgment of God. The fact remains, Babylon is the seat of idolatry and wickedness.

2 Declare ye among the nations, and publish, and set up a standard; publish, *and* conceal not: say, Babylon is taken, Bel is confounded, Merodach is broken in pieces; her idols are confounded, her images are broken in pieces.

The first pronouncement of judgment upon Babylon is centered upon their false gods. Merodach (or Marduk) was their chief god. He later became known as “Bel.” Which means “Lord.”

In this prophecy the LORD God Jehovah declares that he will break all of the idols and images of these false Babylonian gods into pieces.

3 For out of the north there cometh up a nation against her, which shall make her land desolate, and none shall dwell therein: they shall remove, they shall depart, both man and beast.

Babylon will be defeated by an enemy coming from the North. This is in reference to the Medes and the Persians with their fearless leader, King Cyrus. We read of how that happened in the Book of Daniel. The Medes diverted the Euphrates River, which flowed under the city walls and through the city. Then they entered the city by the dry river bed under the wall. Once they got on the inside, they opened the city gates and took the Babylonians by surprise. **Daniel 5:30: In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain.** Of course, by this time Nebuchadnezzar had been dead for quite some time – approximately 67 years and 5 other kings had reigned. But the last king of Babylon was Belshazzar and his reign ended in 538 B.C. when the Medes and Persians invaded.

4 In those days, and in that time, saith the LORD, the children of Israel shall come, they and the children of Judah together, going and weeping: they shall go, and seek the LORD their God.

5 They shall ask the way to Zion with their faces thitherward, saying, Come, and let us join ourselves to the LORD in a perpetual covenant *that* shall not be forgotten.

Along with the defeat of Babylon, God will also restore His people back to their land. We know in that day, this began with the edict from King Cyrus, however, just like with much of the Book of Jeremiah as well as the other prophets, there is a double prophecy given here to a time in the future at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming of Christ.

The Book of Revelation is also filled with the prophecy of the final destruction of Babylon, both the city and the Babylonian one-world system which will be dominate in the end of times. The Prophet Isaiah also prophesied its doom: **Isaiah 13:19-22: And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. 20 It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation: neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall the shepherds make their fold there. 21 But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there. 22 And the wild beasts of the islands shall cry in their desolate houses, and dragons in their pleasant palaces: and her time is near to come, and her days shall not be prolonged.**

And, of course, the Book of Revelation also gives the final judgment against them:

**Revelation 18:1-2:** And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. 2 And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.

The rest of Revelation 18 speaks of how the world and the merchants all weep and mourn over the destruction of Babylon because they are so heavily tied up into it. They rely upon this evil anti-Christ system for livelihood. Listen to what the Bible says:

**Revelation 18:18-24:** And cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What *city is* like unto this great city! 19 And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas, that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate.

Listen friends, the influence of Babylon is a great one. The spirit of Babylon is alive and well today and it will only continue to grow until the LORD puts a final end to it.

And when He does, listen to what He says: **Revelation 18:20-24:** Rejoice over her, *thou* heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her.

21 And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast *it* into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all. 22 And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft *he be*, shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee; 23 And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived. 24 And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth.

The casting the millstone into the sea is a phrase that means the city is forever gone. This is a type of punishment. In the ancient days of Greece, Rome, and Syria, this was the means of capital punishment for crimes, they would tie a large millstone around your neck and throw you into the sea.

Jesus uses a similar statement in the Gospels. In Matthew 18:6 he says: *But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea* In other words that person would be better off dead than to hinder the spreading of the Gospel.

The Bible often refers to the sea as being a place that things are forever forgotten. Similar to the Bible telling us in **Micah 7:19:** *He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.*

So this angel doing this represents Babylon finally forever being destroyed, just as prophesied by the prophets of old.

I know we weren't able to cover much of our Jeremiah verses tonight but we will pick this back up next Wednesday, Lord willing, and finish up this chapter with verses 6-46.

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† All Scripture from the Authorized King James Version of the Bible

‡ Babylon's Fallen Tyrant, by Rabbi Shraga Simmons, electronically retrieved on 1/3/2018: <https://tinyurl.com/yaan8b27>