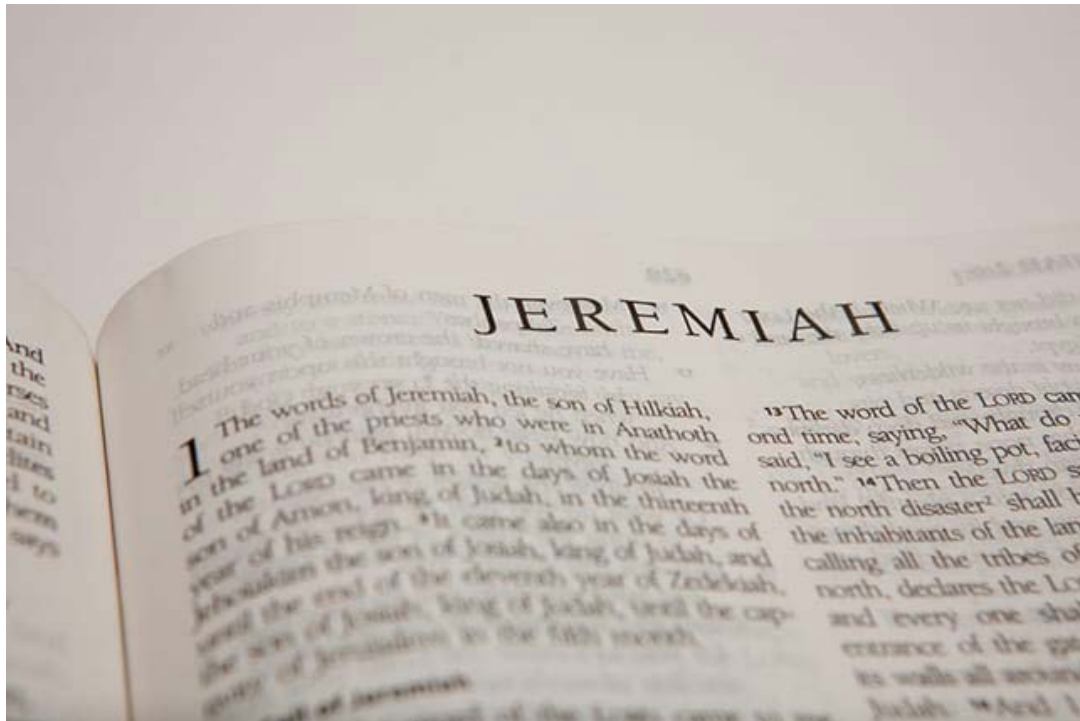


THE BOOK OF JEREMIAH  
JUDGMENT ON BABYLON (2)  
JEREMIAH 51



T. M. Moore

*A Scriptorium Study*

**The Fellowship of Ailbe**

*Judgment on Babylon (2): Jeremiah 51*

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## Introduction to Jeremiah 51

Jeremiah continues the Word of God to His people about the destruction of Babylon.

It takes two long chapters for God to express just how thorough the judgment of Babylon will be. But more important, the judgment of Babylon will signal the deliverance of Israel and their return to the land of promise. So the people in captivity, to whom Jeremiah's words are addressed, must be always making ready. They must believe the Word of God and not become so entangled in Babylonian life and ways that they fall under judgment with it.

Babylon will be threshed, trampled, and made desolate. But God's plan for His people will never fail.

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## 1 The Threshing of Babylon

*Pray Psalm 137.4-6.*

How shall we sing the LORD's song  
In a foreign land?  
If I forget you, O Jerusalem,  
Let my right hand forget *its skill!*  
If I do not remember you,  
Let my tongue cling to the roof of my mouth—  
If I do not exalt Jerusalem  
Above my chief joy.

*Sing Psalm 137.4-6.*

(Gift of Love: [\*Though I May Speak\*](#))  
How can we sing, exalt Your Name,  
or praises bring amid our shame?  
If we forget Your Church's fame,  
O Lord, then let our hands grow lame.

If ever praise forsake my tongue,  
if Zion's ways no more be sung,  
if greater joy by me be found,  
my lips destroy, no more to sound.

*Read and meditate on Jeremiah 51.1-4, 33-44.*

*Prepare.*

1. What image does God use to portray the destruction of Babylon?
2. What is suggested by this image?

*Meditate.*

Just when we thought God might have said all that could be said about the destruction of Babylon, He goes at them again. In these verses, God employs two new images to convey His designs. Babylon will be like the chaff on a threshing floor, which is dissipated in the “destroying wind” of the wrath of God (v. 1). The Medes and Persians will do the winnowing (v. 2), as their archers destroy the army and inhabitants of Babylon (vv. 3, 4). And Babylon will be like the threshing floor (vv. 33, 34), which is trampled underfoot to release its corn.

The destruction of Babylon will be as in the time of harvest (v. 33), when he who swallowed up the people of Judah and Jerusalem will be reaped, threshed, dissipated, and trampled by the wrath of God (v. 34). As oxen trampled out the harvest on a threshing floor, so Babylon would be trampled upon, to yield the fruit of its harvest – the captive people of God. Then Babylon will “spit out” the people of God whom Nebuchadnezzar devoured, and they will be free to return to their native land (v. 34).

God used these images from Psalm 1.4 and Deuteronomy 25.4 to prophesy the fate of all the ungodly. Those who will not embrace the Law of God, to plant themselves by His ever-flowing grace – all who dally in sin and find the comforts of the world more to be desired than the precepts, testimonies, rules, and commandments of God – will be “like the chaff which the wind drives away.” They “shall not stand in the judgment” or have any place “in the congregation of the righteous.” They will be ground into the floor of the

earth until they exist no longer.

Thus, all the terrifying wrath that God promised to inflict on the Babylonian Empire – and on the last days Babylon of Revelation 18 – He will also visit on those who neglect, despise, and scorn His Law, choosing to live by their own standards of goodness and truth, rather than God's.

The reference to Psalm 1 in this condemnation of Babylon would have cued up the people of God who were in captivity about how they must comport themselves in Babylon, if they wished to escape the winnowing that was to come. The same is true for us as well. Jesus said that true Kingdom servants, and all who desire to be great in His Kingdom, will do and teach His Law as the way into all the promises of God (Mk. 10.42-45; Matt. 5.17-19), and into His eternal Kingdom and glory. We're not saved by the Law of God, but we're not saved without it (Rom. 3.31).

*Reflect.*

1. Why is winnowing a particularly effective metaphor for divine judgment?
2. Read Psalm 1. Who should expect to escape divine winnowing?
3. What should we learn from God's plan to winnow and trample Babylon?

*He proceeds with the same subject. Jeremiah seems, indeed, to have used more words than necessary; but we have stated the reason why he dwelt at large on a matter so clear: His object was not only to teach, for this he might have done in a few words, and have thus included all that we have hitherto seen and shall find in the whole of this chapter; but as it was an event hardly credible, it was necessary to illustrate the prophecy respecting it with many figures, and to inculcate with many repetitions what had been already said, and also to confirm by many reasons what no one hardly admitted. John Calvin (1509-1564), *Commentary on Jeremiah 50.1**

*Lord, keep me near to You, that I may bear the fruit of praise and witness as I...*

*Pray Psalm 137.1-4, 7-9.*

A day of judgment is coming to the world. Pray for lost peoples and nations, that God may be gracious to deliver them from the wrath to come.

*Sing Psalm 137.1-4, 7-9.*

**Psalm 137.1-4, 7-9** (Gift of Love: [\*Though I May Speak\*](#))

We sit beside the waters deep  
in broken pride, to mourn and weep  
for Zion's woes and all our sin:  
How great our foes, without, within!

No songs have we of joy to sing.  
Our enemy, to taunt and sting,  
bids us rejoice, as they oppress:  
We have no voice to praise or bless.

Remember, Lord Your boasting foes,  
who hate Your Word and visit woes  
on your dear sheep that they may die:  
Cause them to weep and mourn and sigh.

How blessed are You, our sovereign Lord,  
Who judgment true shall soon accord

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to all who seek Your sheep to kill.  
Preserve the meek who serve You still.

## 2 Israel Not Forsaken

*Pray Psalm 146.5, 6.*

Happy *is he* who *has* the God of Jacob for his help,  
Whose hope *is* in the LORD his God,  
Who made heaven and earth,  
The sea, and all that is in them;  
Who keeps truth forever...

*Sing Psalm 146.5, 6, 10.*

(Hallelujah! What a Savior!: *Man of Sorrows*)  
Blessed are they whose hope resides in the Lord, Christ at His side.  
By Him heav'n and earth abide – God forever reigns in Zion!

*Read and meditate on Jeremiah 51.5-10, 45, 46.*

*Prepare.*

1. What instructions did God give His people?
2. Why must they be careful to obey Him?

*Meditate.*

The fall of Babylon would be a great calamity. Babylon was the greatest empire of its day. We can imagine the panic, confusion, and destruction that would attend to its fall.

But the fall of Babylon was the signal for God's people that their redemption was at hand. God would not forsake His people in this great upheaval (v. 5). Yes, they had sinned against Him and polluted the land of promise with idols and immorality (v. 5). But at the fall of Babylon their punishment and captivity would be complete, and God would return them to their land. Throughout this period of captivity, a remnant in Judah and Israel had been keeping the land and preparing it for their return. With Babylon's demise, God's servant, Cyrus, would send His people back to rebuild their city and temple.

So they must flee when instructed by Cyrus to do so (v. 6). They must go out from Babylon at the Lord's command, lest fear keep them from returning (vv. 45, 46). Probably most of those whom Cyrus would direct to return would have been born in Babylon, so we can imagine that some fear might have gripped them – not unlike it did Abraham, their forefather – to leave the only home they'd ever known for an unknown place.

But when Babylon fell, God would redeem His people and lead them to the place He had been preparing for them in their promised homeland. In the same way, when the Babylon of this world comes under the judgment of God, then Jesus – not some earthly ruler – will come to gather us to that place He has been preparing for us since He took His seat at the Father's right hand. We must not fear to see the world around us coming apart and coming under God's judgment. Look back to the promises of God and His work in the past. Look ahead for the coming of our Lord Jesus in power. And in the interim, look up to Jesus and into His Word, and seek His Kingdom and righteousness in every area of your life.

*Reflect.*

1. Why must we not fear to see the world coming under the judgment of God?
2. What work must we be about as we wait for the return of Jesus?

3. What does it mean to “look up” to Jesus for strength in the present?

*The Prophet shows here the cause why God had resolved to treat the Babylonians with so much severity, even because he would be the avenger of his own people. He also obviates a doubt which might have disturbed weak minds, for he seemed to have forsaken his people when he suffered them to be driven into exile. John Calvin (1509-1564), Commentary on Jeremiah 51.5*

*Help me to keep the eyes of my heart on You, Lord, as I...*

*Pray Psalm 146.1-4, 7-10.*

Let this psalm lead you to praise the Lord for His works in the past and His promises concerning the future.

*Sing Psalm 146.1-4, 6-10.*

**Psalm 146.1-4, 6-10** (Hallelujah! What a Savior!: *Man of Sorrows*)

Praise the Lord, my soul, give praise! While I live, His Name I'll raise!

And exalt Him all my days – God forever reigns in Zion!

Trust we not in prince or man – no salvation's in their hand;  
Death shall take them, breath and plans – God forever reigns in Zion!

He is faithful evermore; He gives justice to the poor,  
feeds the hungry from His store – God forever reigns in Zion!

Jesus sets the pris'ner free, heals blind eyes that they may see,  
lifts those burdened painfully – God forever reigns in Zion!

He the righteous loves the best; wand'ers in His grace are blessed;  
needy ones in Him find rest – God forever reigns in Zion!

But the wicked who defame His eternal blessed Name,  
Them He brings to ruin and shame – God forever reigns in Zion!

### 3 The Portion of Jacob

*Pray Psalm 135.1-4.*

Praise the LORD!  
Praise the name of the LORD;  
Praise Him, O you servants of the LORD!  
You who stand in the house of the LORD,  
In the courts of the house of our God,  
Praise the LORD, for the LORD is good;  
Sing praises to His name, for it is pleasant.  
For the LORD has chosen Jacob for Himself,  
Israel for His special treasure.

*Sing Psalm 135.1-4.*

(St. Gertrude: [\*Onward, Christian Soldiers\*](#))

Praise the Savior, praise Him, for His Name is good;  
sing, for it is pleasant, to our glorious God!  
All whom He has chosen and redeemed by grace,  
praise His Name together, praise Him in this holy place!

*Refrain v. 1*

Praise the Name of Jesus, you who serve His Word!  
Raise your voice and praise our good and glorious Lord!

*Read and meditate on Jeremiah 51.11-19.*

*Prepare.*

1. How does God identify Himself in these verses?
2. What reason for judgment does He provide here?

*Meditate.*

In these verses God declares His greatness and power, compared to the “futile” idols made by Babylonian craftsmen. The Babylonians are “dull-hearted, without knowledge” (v. 17), because they trust in vain idols. Their idols are “falsehoods” and “a work of errors” (v. 17). They have no life in them, and they will all perish with the Babylonians who kept them.

God, on the other hand, “the Portion of Jacob” (v. 19), is not like dumb idols. He is Creator and Sovereign over all things. By the power of His Word He sets the waters and brings the storms (vv. 15, 16, quoting from Psalm 135.7). He made the earth and “established” it; that is, He keeps it going. He stretched out the heavens (v. 15). He has chosen Israel as His own special people (v. 19). And He will bring vengeance against the Babylonians for destroying His temple (v. 11).

Here God gives His people yet another opportunity to turn from pagan idols to worship the one, true God. All that He had spoken through the prophets about their going into captivity had come to pass, just as He said. They must believe that what He says about the destruction of Babylon and their return to the land of promise will also come to pass. They have His Word on it, and they know Who He is. He is the LORD of hosts (v. 19).

The Hebrew word *חֵלֶק*, *cheleq*, can mean “portion, tract, or territory,” as well as “share” or “interest” or “possession.” God had said over and over that Israel would be His people and He would be their God. This

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is just another version of the same, but it incorporates the idea of being in the land (“tract”) and “possessing” all the promises made to Jacob (cf. Gen. 28.13-15). As God had been faithful to Jacob, so He would be faithful to His captive people. And so also He is faithful to us, giving us Jesus as our portion and the new heavens and new earth as our possession in Him.

*Reflect.*

1. What does it mean to know that Jesus is your Portion?
2. Why do you suppose God emphasized His work as Creator and Sovereign here? Are these works of God we should keep in mind as well? Explain.
3. Do people today still worship futile idols? Can you give some examples?

*The portion of Jacob then is God, who is not like fictitious gods; how so? because he is the framer of all things. It is indeed by a few words that he makes the distinction between the only true God and the fictitious gods; but in this brief sentence he includes what I have before explained, even that God is the fountain of life, and the life of all, and then that his essence is spiritual and also infinite; for as he has created the heaven and the earth, so of necessity he sustains both by his power. John Calvin (1509-1564), *Commentary on Jeremiah 51.19**

*Lord Jesus, You are my Portion and King; be with me today as I...*

*Pray Psalm 135.5-21.*

Praise God for His greatness, sovereignty, and compassion for His servants. Pray that the nations and peoples will turn from idols to seek Him.

*Sing Psalm 135.5-21.*

**Psalm 135.5-21** (St. Gertrude: [\*Onward, Christian Soldiers\*](#))

Great and sovereign, Jesus rules o'er all above,  
doing as He pleases, sovereign in His love.  
Clouds and seas obey Him, lightning, too, and rain;  
He the winds brings forth in pow'r and sends them back again.

*Refrain v. 1*

Praise the Name of Jesus, you who serve His Word!  
Raise your voice and praise our good and glorious Lord!

Egypt's firstborn fell to God's redeeming pow'r;  
kings and nations crumbled in redemption's hour.  
He the land of promise to His people gave;  
thus His Kingdom Jesus gives to all He's pleased to save.

*Refrain*

Evermore Your Name, O Savior, shall endure!  
Your renown throughout all ages is secure.  
For You have compassion, vindicating all  
those who serve Your Name and on Your saving mercy call.

*Refrain*

Vain the nations serve the idols of their hands;  
mouths and ears they have but cannot understand.  
Every idol vain is, lacking life or breath;  
all who serve them, like them, shall be lost to lasting death.

*Refrain*

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Bless the Lord you people, all who love the Lord!  
Bless Him, you who trust His sovereign, holy Word!  
Bless the Lord from Zion, Him Who in it dwells;  
praise Him! Lift your voices, all His grace and glory tell!  
*Refrain*

## 4 Calling All Nations

*Pray Psalm 2.11, 12.*

Serve the LORD with fear,  
And rejoice with trembling.  
Kiss the Son, lest He be angry,  
And you perish *in* the way,  
When His wrath is kindled but a little.  
Blessed *are* all those who put their trust in Him.

*Sing Psalm 2.11, 12.*

(Agincourt: [O Love, How Deep, How Broad, How High!](#))  
Rejoice with fear in Jesus' grace,  
and worship before His exalted face!  
Beware His anger and judgment grim:  
How blessed are all who rest in Him!

*Read and meditate on Jeremiah 51.20-32.*

*Prepare.*

1. What happens to the “hammer” that was Babylon?
2. How does God refer to the nations that come to destroy Babylon?

*Meditate.*

We recall that God referred to Babylon as the “hammer of the earth” (50.23). The repetition of that phrase “break in pieces” (vv. 20-23) recalls Psalm 2 (Ps. 2.9) and emphasizes that God will do Babylon what Babylon did to the nations, and especially to the people of Judah. The “you” mentioned in these verses refers to that coalition of nations that comes against Babylon, led by Cyrus the Persian. Cyrus will be the Lord’s “servant” to thresh, trample, and break Babylon in pieces (Is 44.28; 45.1-7).

Cyrus, by the way, had not been born at the time this prophecy was being read aloud in Babylon.

Babylon’s evil is returning upon their own head (v. 24). So complete will be the devastation of Babylon and the Babylonian Empire that it would “be desolate forever” (v. 24-26), “a desolation without inhabitant” (v. 29). God called the nations to join together in hammering the hammer of the earth (vv. 27, 28), a new coalition under one banner, led by the Medes and Persians.

Verse 31 gives a picture of runners from every sector of the city coming to the king reporting that the city has been taken and every way of exit has been blocked. The men of war are terrified and will not go out to fight (vv. 32, 30). Only hours before, the king had been told that his days were up and the judgment of God was upon him (Dan. 5). Little did he know it would be that very night (Dan. 5.30).

Just so, when Christ comes again, people will be going about their business, thinking themselves safe and secure, when suddenly the Lord will burst through the skies and be upon them in wrath. Even now, the handwriting is on the wall against this unbelieving age (Rom. 1.18-32). Christ is coming to break the rebellious nations in pieces, and it is our duty to read the signs and warn the wicked of the coming judgment of the King Who reigns in Zion.

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*Reflect.*

1. Why must the Good News of Christ and His Kingdom include the bad news of people and their sins?
2. How can you prepare each day for opportunities to tell the Good News of Jesus to the people in your Personal Mission Field?
3. How can you pray for the lost people in this world?

*He afterwards adds, that the men of war were broken in pieces. For though the fords were made dry, that is, the streams which were drawn from the Euphrates, yet the guards of the city might have still kept possession of a part of it, and have manfully resisted, so as to prevent the soldiers of Cyrus from advancing farther; but the city was so craftily taken, that the Babylonians were so terrified as not to dare to raise up a finger, when yet they might have defended a part of the city, though one part of it was taken. John Calvin (1509-1564), *Commentary on Jeremiah 51.32**

*Lord, created in me a sense of urgency about the Gospel, so that I...*

*Pray Psalm 2.1-10.*

The nations that reject Jesus are setting themselves up for a hammering. Pray that God will send a revival to His Church and a great awakening to the world.

*Sing Psalm 2.1-10.*

**Psalm 2.1-10** (Agincourt: [\*O Love, How Deep, How Broad, How High!\*](#))

Why do the nations vainly rage,  
conspiring together from age to age?  
Earth's kings and all of their counselors stand  
against the Lord and His Right Hand:

“Now let us cast His yoke below,  
His Kingdom authority overthrow!  
Throw off His Law, reject His Word;  
no more be governed by this Lord!”

The Lord in heaven laughs in wrath  
at all who embark on this cursèd path.  
His angry Word to them is plain:  
“Yet shall My King in Zion reign!”

Proclaim the message far and wide,  
that God has exalted the Crucified!  
From heav'n He sent us His only Son,  
Who has for us salvation won.

To Christ the Lord be given all  
who humbly embrace Him and on Him call.  
Be wise, be warned: His judgment comes  
to break the prideful, sinful ones.

## 5 Ready to Depart

*Pray Psalm 52.1, 2.*

Why do you boast in evil, O mighty man?  
The goodness of God *endures* continually.  
Your tongue devises destruction,  
Like a sharp razor, working deceitfully.

*Sing Psalm 52.1, 2.*

(Warrington: [\*Give to Our God Immortal Praise\*](#))

Why do the mighty boast in sin? God's love endures, it knows no end!  
They with their tongues vain boasts repeat, and like a razor, work deceit.

*Read and meditate on Jeremiah 51.47-58.*

*Prepare.*

1. What would the fall of Babylon signal to the people of Judah and Jerusalem captive there?
2. Who is the "plunderer" that is coming to Babylon?

*Meditate.*

Jeremiah spoke to the people of God in captivity, telling them that, when the fall of Babylon occurs, they should be ready to return to the land of promise.

There would be no mistaking Babylon's fall. Everything the Chaldeans had done to the people of Jerusalem would be inflicted on them and then some (vv. 48, 49). All who have survived until that time should "Get away! Do not stand still!" but be ready to move at the word from Cyrus. Jeremiah called them to begin thinking about Jerusalem even now, to envision what it would be like to return there and to rebuild according to the promises of God (v. 50).

The people may be feeling shame and reproach now (v. 51), but they must not wallow in it. Vindication and restoration are coming, and they know what they must be doing to prepare for it (Jer. 29).

God, Who brought judgment on Jerusalem, will bring judgment on Babylon (vv. 52-58), bringing her pride down and repaying her for her wickedness against His people. God calls His people to look ahead for the day of their deliverance, when the judgment comes on Babylon.

We too look forward to the day of our deliverance, as the judgment of God falls upon the Babylon which is our world. That judgment has already begun (Rom. 1.18ff), and it will accelerate, until the Lord Himself returns in His glory to destroy His foes, break down the present world, and bring His people to the new heavens and new earth where righteousness dwells.

*Reflect.*

1. What was the message of the fall of Babylon to the people in captivity there? What were they supposed to do?
2. What is the message to us in the promised fall of the Babylon of this age? How are we supposed to prepare?
3. Why is God justified in bringing such judgment against men and nations?

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*The Prophet again bids the faithful quickly to flee from Chaldea; but he says, They who remain from the sword. He then intimates that the slaughter would be such, that it would include many of God's people, and that they would be destroyed. And we know that many among them deserved such a sad end; but the Prophet now turns to address those who had been preserved through God's special favor. He then bids them to depart and not to stand still or stay. John Calvin (1509-1564), Commentary on Jeremiah 51.50*

*Help me to be ready for Your return, Lord, as I...*

*Pray Psalm 52.3-9.*

Pray for those who delight in evil more than in good. Pray that God will have mercy on them; thank Him that He will break down those who refuse to repent. Pray that God will make you a fruitful, green tree even in this wicked age of Babylon.

*Sing Psalm 52.3-9.*

**Psalm 52.3-9** (Warrington: [Give to Our God Immortal Praise](#))

Men more than good in evil delight, and lies prefer to what is right.

They utter words, both harsh and strong, with their devouring, deceitful tongue.

God will forever break them down, uproot, and cast them to the ground!

He from their safety tears them away, no more to know the light of day.

The righteous see and laugh and fear, and say, "Behold, what have we here?"

Such are all who at God conspire, and wealth and evil ways desire.

"But as for me may I be seen in God an olive ever green!

Ever in God, most kind and just, shall I with joy and gladness trust!"

Thanks evermore to our Savior be raised! His faithfulness be ever praised!

Here with Your people, loving God, I wait upon Your Name, so good!

## 6 The Book and the Stone

*Pray Psalm 83.1-3.*

Do not keep silent, O God!  
Do not hold Your peace,  
And do not be still, O God!  
For behold, Your enemies make a tumult;  
And those who hate You have lifted up their head.  
They have taken crafty counsel against Your people,  
And consulted together against Your sheltered ones.

*Sing Psalm 83.1-3.*

(St. Chrysostom: [\*We Have Not Known Thee As We Ought\*](#))

O God, do not be quiet now; do not be silent, nor be still!  
See how Your foes erupt in a row and those who hate You chafe at Your will.  
Shrewdly they plan, conspiring as one, against Your daughters and Your sons.

*Read and meditate on Jeremiah 51.59-64.*

*Prepare.*

1. What was Seraiah supposed to do with Jeremiah's book?
2. What did throwing the book in the river symbolize?

*Meditate.*

This seems a strange way for Jeremiah to wrap up his book: Have it read in Babylon, then tie a stone to it and throw it in the Euphrates (vv. 61, 63).

This a flashback, since it occurred four years into Zedekiah's reign, perhaps when he made some official trip to Babylon (v. 59). Zedekiah was taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar in the eleventh year of his reign; but there were already captives in Babylon when Zedekiah made this trip in the fourth year, so perhaps he had gone to check out their wellbeing.

At any rate, Seraiah was with him as quartermaster (v. 62), which means he was in charge of disbursing the food and other material resources needed for those on the journey. It seems a strange thing to commit the reading of Jeremiah's book to a quartermaster, rather than to a priest. But the quartermaster knew how to keep things safe and secure, so he was perhaps the right choice for the task.

He was to read the book aloud – perhaps only what we have as chapters 50 and 51, since what he was to read was “all the evil that would come upon Babylon, all these words that are written against Babylon” (v. 60). Undoubtedly, he was to read this to the captives already in Babylon, and probably in the hearing of King Zedekiah.

Then, he was to tie a stone to the book – which would have been a scroll – and heave it into the Euphrates. This would symbolize the sinking of Babylon, according to the Word of the Lord (v. 64). I can't help but wonder though, if when the Persians diverted the waters of the Euphrates, this book might have been exposed, thus jogging the memories of those who had heard it concerning the judgment of God against Babylon.

The Word of God, as it sinks deep within us, works out the purposes for which God sent it. And those

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purposes are for our good, not for evil, to give us a future and a hope.

*Reflect.*

1. What does it mean to let the Word of God dwell richly within us?
2. The scroll was hidden in the river, but the Word of God was working nonetheless. How should this encourage us as we feed on the Word of God (Jer. 15.16)?
3. When Babylon fell, that scroll may have been revealed. When the Babylon of this age falls, the Word of God will definitely be revealed. What should we do with His Word until then?

*Jeremiah, then, not only consulted the benefit of Seraiah alone, but that of all the godly; for though this was unknown for a long time, yet the messenger afterwards acknowledged that this command had been given him by Jeremiah, and that he took the book and cast it into the Euphrates. This, then, was given as a confirmation to all the godly.* John Calvin (1509-1564), *Commentary on Jeremiah 51.60-64*

*Let Your Word dwell richly in me, O Lord, so that I...*

*Pray Psalm 83.4-18.*

Pray for those who are enemies of God and His Church today, that the Lord might shame them into repentance, and sustain His people who are subject to their oppressions.

*Sing Psalm 83.4-18.*

**Psalm 83.4-18** (St. Chrysostom: [\*We Have Not Known Thee As We Ought\*](#))

“Come, let us wipe them out,” they say. “Let Israel’s name no more be heard!”

Bold they conspire to do us away, and covenant against You, O Lord.  
Peoples and nations cast in their lot for this ambitious, wicked plot.

Deal with them, Lord, and bring them down, as You against old foes prevailed,  
When You Midian cast to the ground and all her kings and princes assailed –  
all who Your pastures sought to possess You brought to ruin and deep distress.

Make them like whirling dust, O God! Scatter them like the windblown chaff!  
Rage like a fire consuming a wood, like flames that burn a mountain pass!  
Blow like a tempest, bring them to harm, and terrify them with Your storm!

Fill with dishonor every face that they may seek Your Name, O Lord.  
Bring them to shame, dismay, and disgrace, and let them perish under Your Word,  
that they may learn Your infinite worth, O God Most High of all the earth!

## 7 At last! Babylon!

*Pray Psalm 62.11, 12.*

God has spoken once,  
Twice I have heard this:  
That power *belongs* to God.  
Also to You, O Lord, *belongs* mercy;  
For You render to each one according to his work.

*Sing Psalm 62.11, 12.*

(Germany: *Jesus, Thy Blood and Righteousness*)

Once God has spoken, twice I have heard: Power belongs alone to the Lord!  
And lovingkindness, Lord, is Yours; You recompense us for our works.

*Review Jeremiah chapter 51; meditate on verse 5, 10.*

*Prepare.*

1. What was Jeremiah's message to the captives in Babylon concerning the fall of that empire?
2. How does God identify Himself to the people of Babylon?

*Meditate.*

In the book of Revelation, when the "Babylonian" world empire begins to crumble and fall, all those who profited by it will be distressed, and cry out, "Alas, Babylon!" (Rev. 18.9-18). Then the people of God will be called to come out from among that pagan world to escape the judgment against it that is coming (Rev. 18.4-6). Jesus was instructing John to recall the days of Jeremiah, when he pronounced the severest judgment on the greatest empire of the day. Jeremiah 51 completes the prophesy against Babylon that began in chapter 50, and that was meant to serve as a warning to the people of Israel, who were in captivity in Babylon, that they must prepare even now to avoid coming under God's wrath. They must be ready to leave the pagan world of Babylon, and not let themselves become entangled in it, lest in its fall, they fall as well.

The fall of Babylon which Jeremiah prophesied, while it would shock the world, would signal a time of deliverance and restoration for the people of God. They would have seen their nation and all the nations around them falling under the judgment of God. So that when the news reached them of Cyrus' victory over the city of Babylon, Jews around the empire would be able to cry out, "At last! Babylon!", knowing that in its fall, their deliverance was nigh.

And Cyrus would not disappoint. In his very first year as king over the new Medo/Persian world empire, Cyrus would fulfill Isaiah's prophesy (Is. 44, 45) and arrange for the Jews to return to their homes in the land of promise (Ez. 1.1-11). The fall of Babylon was the signal that redemption was at hand; and just as God had promised, so it came to pass.

We need not fear as the evidence increases of a new "Babylonian" world empire of politics and commerce, driven by material greed and power, and filled with corruption of every sort. It cannot last, and it will not stand against the judgment of God. For now, we seek the peace of this unbelieving world, and we work hard to realize the presence, promise, and power of Christ's Kingdom in its midst. Like Jeremiah, we encourage one another in the Word of the Lord, and we call the unbelieving world to repent and believe the Gospel of Christ and His Kingdom. But it will always be the case that weeds will fill the world/field of the Lord, and will trouble the good seed of the Kingdom which is growing there.

*Judgment on Babylon (2): Jeremiah 51*

But we do not despair. While all around, fearful voices may be crying, “Alas, Babylon!”, we look to the heavens and say, “At last! Babylon!”, for we know that the day of redemption is near, and the coming of the true Servant of the Lord means eternal blessedness for all who believe and prepare for His coming.

*Reflect.*

1. Why is Jeremiah’s prophesy against Babylon so important for us today?
2. How did Jeremiah hope to encourage the captives in Babylon? How should we be encouraged?
3. What must we be doing as we prepare for the coming judgment against the new “Babylonian” world empire?

*The Prophet here addresses the faithful, and especially shows, that the ruin of Babylon would be a sure evidence of God's paternal favor towards his Church. And it was no common consolation to the faithful, in their extreme miseries, to know, that so dear and precious to God was their salvation, that he would by no means spare the Babylonians, whom the whole world regarded as half gods; for, as I have said, the power of that monarchy filled the minds of men with astonishment. John Calvin (1509-1564), Commentary on Jeremiah 51.10*

*Guide me in my work today, O Lord, for I am preparing for Your coming as I...*

*Pray Psalm 62.1-10.*

What does it mean to wait on the Lord in prayer? Wait on Him in prayer now, and let your mind range forward to the day of His return. Give Him thanks and praise, and commit yourself afresh to Him.

*Sing Psalm 62.1-10.*

**Psalm 62.1-10** (Germany: *Jesus, Thy Blood and Righteousness*)

My soul in silence waits, O Lord – safely I stand within Your Word!  
You are my Rock, my Stronghold true, and my Salvation, Lord, are You!

How long will foes give me offense, striking me like a tottering fence?  
They counsel to destroy with lies; they bless, but all the while despise.

My soul in silence waits, O Lord, hoping in You, and in Your Word.  
You are my Rock, my Stronghold true, and my Salvation, Lord, are You!

On You my hope and glory rest, Rock of my strength, and Refuge best.  
Trust always in our God, the Lord; take refuge only in His Word.

Trust not in men of low degree; lighter are they than breath shall be.  
Do not rely on strength or gold; trust in the Lord, Who rules from old.

*Judgment on Babylon (2): Jeremiah 51*

*Questions for reflection or discussion*

1. Why did it take two long chapters to detail the Lord's judgment against Babylon?
2. What was the message to God's people embedded in this Word of judgment?
3. Why is the fall of ancient Babylon particularly important for us today?
4. How should we be preparing for the fall of the new "Babylonian" world order?
5. What's the most important lesson you've learned from Jeremiah 51? How are you putting that lesson to work in your life?

*For prayer:*

## The Fellowship of Ailbe

The Fellowship of Ailbe is a spiritual fellowship in the Celtic Christian tradition. Our goal is to promote revival, renewal, and awakening, following the teaching of Scripture and the example and heritage of our forebears in the faith.

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Thank you.