

Jeremiah 50-52 • Judgment on Babylon and final summary

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Jeremiah chapter 50 and we are getting into these... Really, we have 3 chapters left here in the book, but only 2 chapters remain of the prophecies of Jeremiah because the last chapter is kind of a summary of how Jerusalem fell to the Babylonians. But these last 2 prophetic chapters of the Book of Jeremiah are all about how the Lord turned now in judgment to judge the very nation whom He had used to judge Israel and the surrounding nations during this period of time.

Babylon, you'll remember, was the Lord's instrument to bring judgment against the nations, but now the time has come for the judgment upon Babylon. And God is going to tell, you'll see how God tells Jeremiah in these verses to announce to the nations that the time of Babylon's judgment and time of reckoning has come. And if you pay attention, and I'll do my best to point these out as we go through them, but if you pay attention as we read these final 2 prophetic chapters, you're going to hear the Lord gives very specific reasons as to why He is judging Babylon and He will bring those out in these verses.

So let's begin reading here in chapter 50, verse 1, it says, *“The word that the LORD spoke concerning Babylon, concerning the land of the Chaldeans, by Jeremiah the prophet: ² “Declare among the nations (God tells Jeremiah) and proclaim, set up a banner and proclaim, (God wants this known, He says,) conceal it not, and say: ‘Babylon is taken, Bel is put to shame, Merodach is dismayed. ...’ (ESV) Bell and Merodach are, we believe they're the name of the same pagan god, but like many of the pagan nations, they would have their unique and probably most prominent pagan deity. And in Babylon's case, it was Bel and the Lord speaks of this god figuratively being put to shame.*

He says, *“²...Her images are put to shame, her idols are dismayed.’ ³ “For out of the north a nation has come up against her, which shall make her land a desolation, and none shall dwell in it; both man and beast shall flee away.”*”
Now I need to stop you right there at verse 3, because we need to talk for a moment. Verse 3 is very important and it's important that we see what verse 3 is saying and what it's not saying, and how it applies to the rest of prophetic scripture. Because the Lord is making some critical statements here about Babylon's forthcoming judgment and I'm going to put these up on the screen for you so you can see them.

There's 3 basic points that He's saying here in verse 3.

- An enemy will come from out of the north
- The enemy will make Babylon a desolation
- The land will be devoid of human and animal life

First, He says, an enemy will come from out of the north. Secondly, He says the enemy will make Babylon a desolation, you'll notice that, and then thirdly, He says the land will actually be devoid of human and animal life. Now you look at those 3 things..., but I need to tell you something in all historic honesty.

The nation that is going to conquer Babylon is a Medo-Persian connection, we call them the Medes and the Persians, we call it the Medo-Persian Empire, but they don't fit this bill entirely. Number 1, they don't come out of the north, they come out of the east. Number 2, they don't destroy Babylon, they actually take it over and keep it up quite nicely. And thirdly, of course, the land will not be devoid of human and animal life during the takeover of the land of Babylon by the Medo-Persians. In fact, we know that people kept living there because Daniel continued to serve under the Medo-Persian kings. And it was the Medo-Persian king Cyrus who actually released the Jews after their 70 years of captivity to go back to their homeland and rebuild the temple, and then later on to go back during the time of Nehemiah and rebuild the walls of the city of Jerusalem.

So what we're telling you here is, the prophecy that we've just read in verse 3 is not entirely accurate as it relates to the Medo-Persian Empire taking over and conquering Babylon. So we're left with the understanding here that Jeremiah's prophecy, is looking beyond the initial overthrow of the Babylonian empire by the Medo-Persians and it speaks of an eventual overthrow of that nation which we refer to as the prophetic principle of double reference.

Now, we've talked about this before, we've dealt with it as it relates to other prophecies in the New Testament and in the Old Testament. And I want to share with you, I guess a definition of what I'm talking about when I refer to as the principle of double reference.

The Principle of Double Reference

The idea that a single prophetic message will focus on both the immediate historical context of events while pointing to a more complete fulfillment later on. This tendency to speak of more than one event separated by time, as though they are occurring simultaneously is called the principle of double reference.

We have this all throughout the Bible and if you don't understand this principle of double reference, you're going to be confused by prophetic scripture. One of the most popular reference, or I guess examples of this principle of double reference, are the prophetic statements made about the coming of Elijah before the day of the Lord.

Now we know that John the Baptist fulfilled, was a partial fulfillment of the coming of Elijah, Jesus said so. But we also know that Elijah comes before the great and dreadful day of the Lord, that's actually what Malachi says. Behold, I send the prophet Elijah before the great and terrible or dreadful day of the Lord (Malachi 4:5). That doesn't apply to the first coming of Jesus, that was not great and dreadful. The second coming of Jesus, where wrath is poured out upon the earth, is a great and dreadful day of the Lord. And so you see, we are given an understanding in scripture of this double reference, sort of a connotation that applies to many passages.

Also, when Jesus is giving prophecies concerning the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, some of the prophecies that He speaks in the same breath practically, also make reference to the Great Tribulation. And we know that because there are things He says in there that don't apply to the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, but only could apply in a more cataclysmic, global sort of a outpouring of God's wrath during the period of the Great Tribulation. But those are all encompassed in the same prophetic statements, again, the law of double reference.

So, this is what we're dealing with, I found, my colleague David Guzik, gave a great explanation of this. He says,

The fall of Babylon prophesied by Jeremiah was partially fulfilled when the Medes and Persians conquered ancient Babylon. Yet the connection between this fall of Babylon and Revelation 18:2 shows that there is an ultimate fall of Babylon that is yet to come. —**David Guzik**

The fall of Babylon prophesied by Jeremiah was partially fulfilled when the Medes and Persians conquered ancient Babylon. Yet the connection between this fall of Babylon and Revelation 18:2 (remember where the angels declaring Babylon is fallen) shows that there is an ultimate fall of Babylon that is yet to come. —**David Guzik**

And we see that actually in a broader, even somewhat more figurative sense in the Book of Revelation. So, once again, we're dealing with this principle of double reference.

Let's keep going on here in verse 4 and following. It says, *“In those days and in that time, declares the LORD, the people of Israel and the people of Judah shall come together, weeping as they come, and they shall seek the Lord their God. ⁵ They shall ask the way to Zion, with faces turned toward it, saying, ‘Come, let us join ourselves to the Lord in an everlasting covenant that will never be forgotten.’”* Now, so what we're hearing here is that even as the Lord is predicting the fall of Babylon, you'll notice that He speaks of the blessing and the restoration of Israel. And in fact, this is one of 6 times in these 2 chapters where the Lord will pause His prophecy about the destruction of Babylon and He will speak words of comfort and restoration concerning the nation of Israel.

Let's keep going, verse 6, *“My people have been lost sheep. Their shepherds have led them astray, turning them away on the mountains. (you'll remember that it was on top of the mountains that the people worshiped their pagan gods) From mountain to hill they have gone. They have forgotten their fold. ⁷ All who found them have devoured them, and their enemies have said, ‘We are not guilty, for they have sinned against the Lord, their habitation of righteousness, the Lord, the hope of their fathers.’”* Stop there, stop there. This is the first place where the Lord begins to explain why judgment ultimately comes against those nations whom God raised up to judge Israel.

Because God raised up Babylon, but He raised up several other nations as well to actually spank His holy people and to bring judgment because of their own disobedience. And why is that? Notice He begins to talk about this attitude that these nations had. They knew that they were being used of the Lord, they knew! And we know that they knew, because we know that the commander of the Babylonian army, Nebuzaradan, actually spoke those things to Jeremiah. He said, the reason your city has fallen is because you were disobedient to the Lord your God. They knew that God was using them to bring judgment upon Israel. And so what was their attitude? They said, we are not guilty, because we're being used by God.

Now, this is really interesting. What that means is they became self righteous because they knew they were being used by the Lord. And what's interesting about that is that can not only happen to nations, it can happen to people. When we know that we've been used by God, it can give us a sense of self-righteousness and we begin to think that we're the one who's handing out all of the warnings. We're the one who's handing out all of the statements, you know, of blessing and comfort and that must be because other people just don't have their acts together, but obviously we do. Because we're the ones who are kind of handing out all of these statements from the Lord, right? It can very subtly

begin to slip into people who are being used powerfully by the Lord. Have you ever wondered why people...?

We hear about these men getting involved in these worldwide ministries and they rise to such incredible fame, such incredible popularity, such incredible wealth and then we come to find out, they've been messing around in the background and doing things that are just horrific. And we shake our heads and we go, what happened? Now, let me tell you something, when you are used by God, it can be a pretty heady thing and it can create an aura of self-righteousness.

I'm the one who prays for people, all right, it puts me in a different orbit. You're in a smaller orbit, I'm in a bigger orbit because I pray for you. You see how that's very subtle? It's deadly, it is absolutely deadly. Do you know, and Sue can attest to this, I become distressed when people ask me personally to pray for things going on in their life, I'll just tell you that right now. And not just because they asked me to pray, it's fine to ask someone to pray. But I can see in their eyes that they think I've got some kind of special connection to God, which I do not have. My prayers are no more effective than are yours, not even a little. And so when people come to me and I've even had people say to me straight out in a note, "I'm asking you to pray because you're a man of God."

And I'm just thinking, oh, mercy, just get me out of here. It's not where I want to live it and it's not true. I'm a teacher and that's all I am and I have no more special access to God than do you. We all access the throne of grace by the Blood of the Lamb and He has covered all of us the same, right? So important that we understand that, it's so important that I maintain control of that understanding, you know. Because that attitude that God is talking about here concerning the nations who He used to punish Israel can overtake any of us when God uses us for His purposes. We start to think we're something, we're not anything. We have to go back and remember Jesus saying, apart from me, you can do nothing, you know. (John 15:5) So important reminders.

Verse 8, "*Flee from the midst of Babylon, and go out of the land of the Chaldeans, and be as male goats before the flock.*" How many of you guys know anything about goats? I had to look this one up, I've never raised goats, I don't particularly like goats. So when it says here that He's telling his people to flee like, as male goats do, I actually looked it up. And I found out that when you've got a flock of goats in a penned area and you open up the gate, I'm told that the males will dart for the opening even before the females. That's what I read, okay, if you know something different, this is just what I've learned. So anyway, it's interesting, isn't it? God is saying, be like that.

It's kind of an interesting way, you know, when you're talking to people who raise animals, you probably use examples of animals to get your point across. And so, we might say, you know, be as a 355 Hemi, is that anything you know, you know what I'm saying? No, that's actually nothing Paul, but you know what I'm saying? Be like a really fast race car or something like that. He's telling them to get out of the area because judgment's coming, right. That's the simple thing.

Verse 9, *“For behold, I am stirring up and bringing against Babylon a gathering of great nations, (again) from the north country. (now, again, this is talking about something beyond the Medo-Persian invasion of the land) And they shall array themselves against her. From there she shall be taken. Their arrows are like a skilled warrior who does not return empty-handed. ¹⁰ Chaldea shall be plundered; all who plunder her shall be sated, (or satisfied) declares the Lord.”*

Verse 11, *“Though you rejoice, though you exult, O plunderers of my heritage, (my heritage referring to Israel) though you frolic like a heifer in the pasture, and neigh like stallions, (speaking of pride and joy at the fall of Jerusalem) ¹² your mother shall be utterly shamed, and she who bore you shall be disgraced. Behold, she shall be the last of the nations, a wilderness, a dry land, and a desert. ¹³ Because of the wrath of the Lord she shall not be inhabited but shall be an utter desolation; everyone who passes by Babylon shall be appalled, and hiss because of all her wounds.”* Again, these prophecies move beyond the Medo-Persian invasion because it was inhabited when the Medes and the Persians came into the land.

“¹⁴ Set 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. ¹⁵ Raise a shout against her all around; she has surrendered; her bulwarks have fallen; her walls are thrown down. For this is the vengeance of the Lord: take vengeance on her; do to her (look at this) as she has done.” So, Babylon is getting what she has given. *“¹⁶ Cut off from Babylon the sower, and the one who handles the sickle in time of harvest; because of the sword of the oppressor, every one shall turn to his own people, and every one shall flee to his own land.”*

And now again, a reference to Israel, verse 17, *“Israel (the Lord says) is a hunted sheep driven away by lions. First the king of Assyria devoured him, (and that speaks of the fall of the northern kingdom of Israel) and now at last Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon has gnawed his bones. ¹⁸ Therefore, thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Behold, I am bringing punishment on*

the king of Babylon and his land, as I punished the king of Assyria. ¹⁹ I will restore Israel to his pasture, and he shall feed on Carmel and in Bashan, and his desire shall be satisfied on the hills of Ephraim and in Gilead.

²⁰ *In those days and in that time, declares the LORD, iniquity shall be sought in Israel, and there shall be none, and sin in Judah, and none shall be found, for I will pardon those whom I leave as a remnant.*” Now, this is surely a statement looking toward the Messianic or the Millennial Kingdom because, as you can see here, in verse 20, He says, in those days, I will even search out for iniquity in the land, and there shall be none. So we're talking about a time period that is much farther in the future. We know that even when the Israelites came back to the land, when Cyrus allowed them to come back after the 70 years, there was still sin in the land. You'll remember that Ezra and Nehemiah had to deal with issues of the people not following the Lord as they ought and so forth. So this is looking forward to a time of great forgiveness and the Blood of the Lamb covering them.

Verse 21, *“Go up against the land of Merathaim, and against the inhabitants of Pekod. (now talking about specific regions of Babylon called out here) Kill, and devote them to destruction, declares the LORD, and do all that I have commanded you. ²² The noise of battle is in the land, and great destruction! ²³ How the hammer of the whole earth is cut down and broken! How Babylon has become a horror among the nations! ²⁴ I set a snare for you and you were taken, O Babylon, and you did not know it; you were found and caught, because you opposed the LORD.”* Now, here again, He reveals why judgment has come upon Babylon. Why is God judging Babylon? It says it right there at the end of verse 24, you opposed the Lord, it's very simple, you opposed the Lord.

Verse 25, *“The LORD has opened his armory and brought out the weapons of his wrath, for the LORD God of hosts has a work to do in the land of the Chaldeans. ²⁶ Come against her from every quarter; open her granaries; pile her up like heaps of grain, and devote her to destruction; let nothing be left of her. ²⁷ Kill all her bulls; let them go down to the slaughter. Woe to them, for their day has come, the time of their punishment. ²⁸ “A voice! They flee and escape from the land of Babylon, to declare in Zion the vengeance of the LORD our God, vengeance for his temple.”* You'll remember that it was the Babylonians that destroyed the temple and God is now taking vengeance because it's His to take.

²⁹ *“Summon archers against Babylon, all those who bend the bow. Encamp around her; let no one escape. Repay her according to her deeds; do to her*

according to all that she has done. (check out this next sentence) *For she has proudly defied the LORD, the Holy One of Israel. (there it is again)*
³⁰ *Therefore her young men shall fall in her squares, and all her soldiers shall be destroyed on that day, declares the LORD.* ³¹ *“Behold, I am against you, O proud one, declares the LORD God of hosts, for your day has come, the time when I will punish you.* ³² *The proud one shall stumble and fall, with none to raise him up, and I will kindle a fire in his cities, and it will devour all that is around him.*

³³ *“Thus says the LORD of hosts: The people of Israel are oppressed, and the people of Judah with them. All who took them captive have held them fast; they refuse to let them go.* ³⁴ *Their Redeemer is strong; the LORD of hosts is his name. He will surely plead their cause, that he may give rest to the earth, but unrest to the inhabitants of Babylon.* ³⁵ *“A sword against the Chaldeans, declares the LORD, and against the inhabitants of Babylon, and against her officials and her wise men!*

³⁶ *A sword against the diviners, that they may become fools! A sword against her warriors, that they may be destroyed!* ³⁷ *A sword against her horses and against her chariots, and against all the foreign troops in her midst, that they may become women! ...”* Now, I totally get that this kind of statement wouldn't fly today but you need to understand that it basically just refers to men becoming fearful and running away from the battle. That's what it's talking about. So, God can get away with this kind of stuff, we can't, but, you know.

“...A sword (middle of verse 37) against all her treasures, that they may be plundered! ³⁸ *A drought against her waters, that they may be dried up! For it is a land of images, and they are mad over idols.* ³⁹ *“Therefore wild beasts shall dwell with hyenas in Babylon, and ostriches shall dwell in her. She shall never again have people, nor be inhabited for all generations.* ⁴⁰ *As when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah and their neighboring cities, declares the LORD, so no man shall dwell there, and no son of man shall sojourn in her.*

⁴¹ *“Behold, a people comes from the north; a mighty nation and many kings are stirring from the farthest parts of the earth.* ⁴² *They lay hold of bow and spear; they are cruel and have no mercy. The sound of them is like the roaring of the sea; they ride on horses, arrayed as a man for battle against you, O daughter of Babylon!* ⁴³ *“The king of Babylon heard the report of them, and his hands fell helpless; anguish seized him, pain as of a woman in labor.* ⁴⁴ *“Behold, like a lion coming up from the thicket of the Jordan against a perennial pasture, I will suddenly make them run away from her, and I will appoint over her whomever I*

choose. For who is like me? Who will summon me? What shepherd can stand before me?

⁴⁵ Therefore hear the plan that the LORD has made against Babylon, and the purposes that he has formed against the land of the Chaldeans: Surely the little ones of their flock shall be dragged away; surely their fold shall be appalled at their fate. ⁴⁶ At the sound of the capture of Babylon the earth shall tremble, and her cry shall be heard among the nations.” Boy, that last statement is pretty huge, isn't it? I mean, think about it, He says, “At the sound of the capture of Babylon the earth is going to tremble, and her cry will be heard among all of the nations.”

Kind of reminds us, as a familiar echo to a statement that is made concerning Babylon in the Book of revelation. Let me show you on the screen from Revelation chapter 18, verse 2,

Revelation 18:2 (ESV)

And he called out with a mighty voice, “Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! She has become a dwelling place for demons, a haunt for every unclean spirit, a haunt for every unclean bird, a haunt for every unclean and detestable beast.

Wow! So the prophesied fall of Babylon. Chapter 51, which is again, the last of the prophetic chapters of this book picks up really where the prophecies of the previous chapter end off. And we're going to basically read through this chapter and I'll only pause where explanation is kind of needed because you're going to hear a lot of the same thing in it's a typical poetic, prophetic way. Poetic prophetic, I meant to say those together actually because it is a form of poetry but prophetic poetry. So here we go.

Thus says the LORD: “Behold, I will stir up the spirit of a destroyer against Babylon, against the inhabitants of Leb-kamai, ² and I will send to Babylon winnowers, and they shall winnow her, and they shall empty her land, when they come against her from every side on the day of trouble. ³ Let not the archer bend his bow, and let him not stand up in his armor. Spare not her young men; devote to destruction all her army. ⁴ They shall fall down slain in the land of the Chaldeans, and wounded in her streets.”

And then a contrasting statement again about Israel. ⁵ *For Israel and Judah have not been forsaken by their God, the LORD of hosts, but the land of the Chaldeans is full of guilt against the Holy One of Israel. ⁶ “Flee from the midst of Babylon; let every one save his life! Be not cut off in her punishment, for this is the time of the LORD's vengeance, the repayment he is rendering her.”* And

as we go on here, I have to believe that this next comment is futuristic and referring to the final fall of spiritual Babylon as told about in the Book of Revelation.

Here we go, verse 7, *“Babylon was a golden cup in the LORD's hand, making all the earth drunken; the nations drank of her wine; therefore the nations went mad. ⁸ Suddenly Babylon has fallen and been broken; wail for her! Take balm for her pain; perhaps she may be healed. ⁹ We would have healed Babylon, but she was not healed. Forsake her, and let us go each to his own country, for her judgment has reached up to heaven and has been lifted up even to the skies.*

¹⁰ The LORD has brought about our vindication; come, let us declare in Zion the work of the LORD our God. ¹¹ “Sharpen the arrows! Take up the shields! The LORD has stirred up the spirit of the kings of the Medes, (okay, now here’s a reference to the Medo-Persian Empire so this is the more current prophecy of the fall of Babylon. He says, He has stirred up the spirit of the kings of the Medes) because his purpose concerning Babylon is to destroy it, for that is the vengeance of the LORD, the vengeance for his temple.”

Verse 12, *“Set up a standard against the walls of Babylon; make the watch strong; set up watchmen; prepare the ambushes; for the LORD has both planned and done what he spoke concerning the inhabitants of Babylon. ¹³ O you who dwell by many waters, rich in treasures, your end has come; the thread of your life is cut. ¹⁴ The LORD of hosts has sworn by himself: Surely I will fill you with men, as many as locusts, and they shall raise the shout of victory over you. ¹⁵ “It is he who made the earth by his power, who established the world by his wisdom, and by his understanding stretched out the heavens.*

¹⁶ When he utters his voice there is a tumult of waters in the heavens, and he makes the mist rise from the ends of the earth. He makes lightning for the rain, and he brings forth the wind from his storehouses. ¹⁷ Every man is stupid and without knowledge; every goldsmith is put to shame by his idols, for his images are false, and there is no breath in them. ¹⁸ They are worthless, a work of delusion; at the time of their punishment they shall perish.

¹⁹ Not like these is he who is the portion of Jacob, for he is the one who formed all things, and Israel is the tribe of his inheritance; the LORD of hosts is his name. ²⁰ “You are my hammer and weapon of war: with you I break nations in pieces; with you I destroy kingdoms; ²¹ with you I break in pieces the horse and his rider; with you I break in pieces the chariot and the charioteer; ²² with you I break in pieces man and woman; with you I break in pieces the old man and the youth; with you I break in pieces the young man and the young woman;

²³ with you I break in pieces the shepherd and his flock; with you I break in pieces the farmer and his team; with you I break in pieces governors and commanders. ²⁴ “I will repay Babylon and all the inhabitants of Chaldea before your very eyes (and look at this) for all the evil that they have done in Zion, declares the LORD.” So once again, God makes it clear, that He’s paying them back for the evil they did while there were in the land of Israel.

²⁵ “Behold, I am against you, O destroying mountain, declares the LORD, which destroys the whole earth; I will stretch out my hand against you, and roll you down from the crags, and make you a burnt mountain. ²⁶ No stone shall be taken from you for a corner and no stone for a foundation, but you shall be a perpetual waste, declares the LORD. ²⁷ “Set up a standard on the earth; blow the trumpet among the nations; prepare the nations for war against her; summon against her the kingdoms, Ararat, Minni, and Ashkenaz; appoint a marshal against her; bring up horses like bristling locusts.

²⁸ Prepare the nations for war against her, (and again we talk about the more current Medo-Persian invasion) the kings of the Medes, with their governors and deputies, and every land under their dominion. ²⁹ The land trembles and writhes in pain, for the LORD's purposes against Babylon stand, to make the land of Babylon a desolation, without inhabitant. ³⁰ The warriors of Babylon have ceased fighting; they remain in their strongholds; their strength has failed; they have become women; her dwellings are on fire; her bars are broken. ³¹ One runner runs to meet another, and one messenger to meet another, to tell the king of Babylon that his city is taken on every side;”

³² the fords have been seized, the marshes are burned with fire, and the soldiers are in panic. ³³ For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: The daughter of Babylon is like a threshing floor at the time when it is trodden; yet a little while and the time of her harvest will come.” ³⁴ “Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon has devoured me; he has crushed me; he has made me an empty vessel; he has swallowed me like a monster; he has filled his stomach with my delicacies; he has rinsed me out.

³⁵ The violence done to me and to my kinsmen be upon Babylon,” let the inhabitant of Zion say. (so verses 34 and essentially verses 35 are what the Lord would have the Jews say) “My blood be upon the inhabitants of Chaldea,” let Jerusalem say. ³⁶ Therefore thus says the LORD: “Behold, I will plead your cause and take vengeance for you. I will dry up her sea and make her fountain dry, ³⁷ and Babylon shall become a heap of ruins, the haunt of jackals, a horror and a hissing, without inhabitant. ³⁸ “They shall roar together like lions; they shall growl like lions' cubs. ³⁹ While they are inflamed I will prepare

them a feast and make them drunk, that they may become merry, then sleep a perpetual sleep and not wake, declares the LORD.

⁴⁰ *I will bring them down like lambs to the slaughter, like rams and male goats.*

⁴¹ *“How Babylon is taken, the praise of the whole earth seized! How Babylon has become a horror among the nations! ⁴² The sea has come up on Babylon; she is covered with its tumultuous waves. ⁴³ Her cities have become a horror, a land of drought and a desert, a land in which no one dwells, and through which no son of man passes. ⁴⁴ And I will punish Bel in Babylon, (again, Babylon’s pagan god) and take out of his mouth what he has swallowed. The nations shall no longer flow to him; the wall of Babylon has fallen.*

⁴⁵ *“Go out of the midst of her, my people! Let every one save his life from the fierce anger of the LORD! ⁴⁶ Let not your heart faint, and be not fearful at the report heard in the land, when a report comes in one year and afterward a report in another year, and violence is in the land, and ruler is against ruler.*

⁴⁷ *“Therefore, behold, the days are coming when I will punish the images of Babylon; her whole land shall be put to shame, and all her slain shall fall in the midst of her. ⁴⁸ Then the heavens and the earth, and all that is in them, shall sing for joy over Babylon, for the destroyers shall come against them out of the north, declares the LORD.*

⁴⁹ *Babylon must fall for the slain of Israel, just as for Babylon have fallen the slain of all the earth. ⁵⁰ “You who have escaped from the sword, go, do not stand still! Remember the LORD from far away, and let Jerusalem come into your mind: ⁵¹ ‘We are put to shame, for we have heard reproach; dishonor has covered our face, for foreigners have come into the holy places of the LORD’s house.’ ⁵² “Therefore, behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will execute judgment upon her images, and through all her land the wounded shall groan. ⁵³ Though Babylon should mount up to heaven, and though she should fortify her strong height, yet destroyers would come from me against her, declares the LORD.”* So you can see that the Lord is saying that, it doesn't matter what Babylon does against her enemies, how strong she may fortify herself, the Lord is against her, and it will not work.

Verse 54, *“A voice! A cry from Babylon! The noise of great destruction from the land of the Chaldeans! ⁵⁵ For the LORD is laying Babylon waste and stilling her mighty voice. Their waves roar like many waters; the noise of their voice is raised, ⁵⁶ for a destroyer has come upon her, upon Babylon; her warriors are taken; their bows are broken in pieces, for the LORD is a God of recompense; he will surely repay. ⁵⁷ I will make drunk her officials and her wise men, her governors, her commanders, and her warriors; they shall sleep a perpetual sleep and not wake, declares the King, whose name is the LORD of hosts.*

⁵⁸ *“Thus says the LORD of hosts: The broad wall of Babylon shall be leveled to the ground, and her high gates shall be burned with fire. The peoples labor for nothing, and the nations weary themselves only for fire.”* ⁵⁹ *The word that Jeremiah the prophet commanded Seraiah the son of Neriah, son of Mahseiah, when he went with Zedekiah king of Judah to Babylon, in the fourth year of his reign. Seraiah was the quartermaster.*

⁶⁰ *Jeremiah wrote in a book all the disaster that should come upon Babylon, all these words that are written concerning Babylon.* ⁶¹ *And Jeremiah said to Seraiah: “When you come to Babylon, see that you read all these words, ⁶² and say, ‘O LORD, you have said concerning this place that you will cut it off, so that nothing shall dwell in it, neither man nor beast, and it shall be desolate forever.’ ⁶³ When you finish reading this book, tie a stone to it and cast it into the midst of the Euphrates, ⁶⁴ and say, ‘Thus shall Babylon sink, to rise no more, because of the disaster that I am bringing upon her, and they shall become exhausted.’” Thus far are the words of Jeremiah.”* And with that, we actually, as we've said, end the prophecies of Jeremiah.

And the final chapter of this book is a recounting of the fall of Jerusalem when the Babylonians captured it. Before I read it, I'm going to get a little quick drink of water, if that's all right, it's a lot of reading. By the way, I should probably also tell you that there are many, I would say a good healthy number of Bible students who believe that Jeremiah is not the author of this final chapter and they believe that his scribe Baruch is the one who actually wrote this final chapter. And the reason is that the language seems to differ greatly from the rest of the Book of Jeremiah as far as some of the names that are given and so forth.

But anyway, be that as it may, we considered it inspired scripture, so here we go. Chapter 52, *“Zedekiah (and you'll remember Zedekiah was the very last king of Judah) was twenty-one years old when he became king, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Hamutal the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah. ² And he did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that Jehoiakim had done. ³ For because of the anger of the LORD it came to the point in Jerusalem and Judah that he cast them out from his presence. And Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon.*

⁴ *And in the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, on the tenth day of the month, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came with all his army against Jerusalem, and laid siege to it. And they built siegeworks all around it. ⁵ So the city was besieged till the eleventh year of King Zedekiah. ⁶ On the ninth day of the fourth month the famine was so severe in the city that there was no food for the people of the land. ⁷ Then a breach was made in the city, and all the men of*

war fled and went out from the city by night by the way of a gate between the two walls, by the king's garden, and the Chaldeans were around the city. And they went in the direction of the Arabah.

⁸ But the army of the Chaldeans pursued the king and overtook Zedekiah in the plains of Jericho, and all his army was scattered from him. ⁹ Then they captured the king and brought him up to the king of Babylon at Riblah in the land of Hamath, and he passed sentence on him. ¹⁰ The king of Babylon slaughtered the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes, and also slaughtered all the officials of Judah at Riblah. ¹¹ He put out the eyes of Zedekiah, and bound him in chains, and the king of Babylon took him to Babylon, and put him in prison till the day of his death.

¹² In the fifth month, on the tenth day of the month—that was the nineteenth year of King Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon—Nebuzaradan the captain of the bodyguard, who served the king of Babylon, entered Jerusalem. ¹³ And he burned the house of the LORD, and the king's house and all the houses of Jerusalem; every great house he burned down. ¹⁴ And all the army of the Chaldeans, who were with the captain of the guard, broke down all the walls around Jerusalem. ¹⁵ And Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard carried away captive some of the poorest of the people and the rest of the people who were left in the city and the deserters who had deserted to the king of Babylon, together with the rest of the artisans.

¹⁶ But Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard left some of the poorest of the land to be vinedressers and plowmen. ¹⁷ And the pillars of bronze that were in the house of the LORD, and the stands and the bronze sea that were in the house of the LORD, the Chaldeans broke in pieces, and carried all the bronze to Babylon. ¹⁸ And they took away the pots and the shovels and the snuffers and the basins and the dishes for incense and all the vessels of bronze used in the temple service; ¹⁹ also the small bowls and the fire pans and the basins and the pots and the lampstands and the dishes for incense and the bowls for drink offerings. What was of gold the captain of the guard took away as gold, and what was of silver, as silver.

²⁰ As for the two pillars, the one sea, the twelve bronze bulls that were under the sea, and the stands, which Solomon the king had made for the house of the LORD, the bronze of all these things was beyond weight. ²¹ As for the pillars, the height of the one pillar was eighteen cubits, its circumference was twelve cubits, and its thickness was four fingers, and it was hollow. ²² On it was a capital of bronze. The height of the one capital was five cubits. A network and pomegranates, all of bronze, were around the capital. And the second pillar had the same, with pomegranates.

²³ There were ninety-six pomegranates on the sides; all the pomegranates were a hundred upon the network all around. ²⁴ And the captain of the guard took Seraiah the chief priest, and Zephaniah the second priest and the three keepers of the threshold; ²⁵ and from the city he took an officer who had been in command of the men of war, and seven men of the king's council, who were found in the city; and the secretary of the commander of the army, who mustered the people of the land; and sixty men of the people of the land, who were found in the midst of the city.

²⁶ And Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard took them and brought them to the king of Babylon at Riblah. ²⁷ And the king of Babylon struck them down and put them to death at Riblah in the land of Hamath. So Judah was taken into exile out of its land. ²⁸ This is the number of the people whom Nebuchadnezzar carried away captive: in the seventh year, 3,023 Judeans; ²⁹ in the eighteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar he carried away captive from Jerusalem 832 persons; ³⁰ in the twenty-third year of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard carried away captive of the Judeans 745 persons; all the persons were 4,600.

³¹ And in the thirty-seventh year of the exile of Jehoiachin king of Judah, in the twelfth month, on the twenty-fifth day of the month, Evil-merodach king of Babylon, in the year that he began to reign, graciously freed Jehoiachin king of Judah and brought him out of prison. ³² And he spoke kindly to him and gave him a seat above the seats of the kings who were with him in Babylon. ³³ So Jehoiachin put off his prison garments. And every day of his life he dined regularly at the king's table, ³⁴ and for his allowance, a regular allowance was given him by the king, according to his daily needs, until the day of his death, as long as he lived." We're actually told about the capture of king Jehoiachin in 2 Kings. We'll finish by putting this up on the screen so you can read it with me here from 2 Kings chapter 24. It says,

2 Kings 24:10-12 (ESV)

At that time the servants of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up to Jerusalem, and the city was besieged. And Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to the city while his servants were besieging it, and Jehoiachin the king of Judah gave himself up to the king of Babylon, himself and his mother and his servants and his officials and his palace officials. The king of Babylon took him prisoner in the eighth year of his reign

So it wasn't until the next king came on the throne in Babylon that Jehoiachin was actually released from prison and shown some mercy. Probably because he

gave himself up and didn't try to flee, you know. So anyway, with that, we complete our study of the Book of Jeremiah, all 52 chapters.

Let's pray. Father, we thank you so much for giving us time to study the Word and to open our hearts to all that it says. We thank you Lord for the goodness that you show us by nourishing us through your Word. Help us learn to learn from it, to grow in understanding. Lord, we ask you to fill us with peace and grace and life.

Thank you, Father, for this study. We commit our hearts to you, in Jesus precious name we pray, amen.