

## Babylonian Captivity – Supplement to Outline Section VIII

The captivity of the Jews in Babylon carried wide spread theological significance across the Bible. John borrows (or is inspired to use) the Babylonian captivity as a framework for Revelation.

### Historical Background

God promised punishment on Israel for disobedience to his commands in Deut 29:15-68

Deut 29 describes the siege of Jerusalem that is also described in Isaiah and Jeremiah. 2 Kings 25 gives the historical context for the siege and when it happened.

Deut 29: 49 The Lord will bring a nation against you from far away, from the end of the earth, swooping down like the eagle, a nation whose language you do not understand, 50 a hard-faced nation who shall not respect the old or show mercy to the young. 51 It shall eat the offspring of your cattle and the fruit of your ground, until you are destroyed; it also shall not leave you grain, wine, or oil, the increase of your herds or the young of your flock, until they have caused you to perish. 52 “They shall besiege you in all your towns, until your high and fortified walls, in which you trusted, come down throughout all your land. And they shall besiege you in all your towns throughout all your land, which the Lord your God has given you.

Isaiah, Micah, Hosea and Amos warned the Jews of an impending judgment because of their unfaithfulness. The theme is typically judgment, mercy, restoration for all of the prophets.

Isaiah prophesies about the destruction of Babylon by the hands of the Medes as punishment for their wickedness, even though God used them to punish Israel. Isaiah’s imagery shows up in Revelation.

Judgment comes after king Hezekiah’s reign. He made the foolish decision to show off all he had to the Babylonians when they visited Jerusalem.

2 Kings 20:12 At that time Merodach-baladan the son of Baladan, king of Babylon, sent envoys with letters and a present to Hezekiah, for he heard that Hezekiah had been sick. 13 And Hezekiah welcomed them, and he showed them all his treasure house, the silver, the gold, the spices, the precious oil, his armory, all that was found in his storehouses. There was nothing in his house or in all his realm that Hezekiah did not show them.

16 Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, “Hear the word of the Lord: 17 Behold, the days are coming, when all that is in your house, and that which your fathers have stored up till this day, shall be carried to Babylon. Nothing shall be left, says the Lord.

### Babylon deported the Israelites in 3 waves:

605 BC – Daniel and his friends were taken on more friendly terms to try to impose Babylonian culture on the Jews. Daniel prophesies about the eventual return to Israel by God’s mighty hand.

597 BC – Ezekiel was deported. His prophesies were warnings against the coming captivity, But his message changed to hope for restoration after the captivity was over.

586 BC – Jeremiah was the prophet before and during the final destruction of Jerusalem. 2 Kings 25:1-21

Isaiah also prophesied that God would rescue the people with his Messiah and restore his kingdom.

Properly understood, Daniel and Ezekiel were telling Israel that God had not forsaken them. John duplicates the same message in Revelation for the church. Instead of looking forward to the appearance of the king, John looks forward to the return of the king.

In our “exile and captivity” to the world, Jesus is still the king and we will eventually see him triumph over the evil around us.