

## ***Session 14 The Forerunner Message in Jeremiah 50-51 (Pt. 1)***

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

A. The theme of Jeremiah 50-51 is the Lord's promise to release His justice in the final destruction of Babylon and the deliverance and salvation of Israel.

B. Outline for Jeremiah 50-51

#### **Jeremiah 50**

- 50:1-3 The prophetic announcement of Babylon's destruction
- 50:4-7 The salvation and unity of Israel
- 50:8-10 Flee from Babylon before the army from north attacks
- 50:11-16 Babylon shall be desolate
- 50:17-20 Israel shall be forgiven and restored to her land
- 50:21-32 God's vengeance on Babylon
- 50:33-34 Israel's future deliverance
- 50:35-40 Judgment of Babylon
- 50:41-46 A great nation from the north shall destroy Babylon

#### **Jeremiah 51**

- 51:1-14 The Lord's vengeance on Babylon
- 51:15-19 The Lord's sovereignty over Babylon
- 51:20-26 The Lord's battle-ax and weapons of war
- 51:27-32 The nations summoned to attack Babylon
- 51:33-40 Israel's prayer and the Lord's response
- 51:41-44 A taunt against Babylon
- 51:45-50 God's people are to flee from Babylon
- 51:51-58 God's just judgment on Babylon
- 51:59-64 Seraiah's symbolic act depicting Babylon's judgment

C. Ten chapters in the Bible highlight the fall of Babylon with end-time implications (Isa. 13-14; 46-48; Jer. 50-51; Zech. 5; Rev. 17-18; cf. Isa. 21:1-10; 43:14-17; Jer. 25:12-14; Zech. 2:7). There are no contradictions in the prophetic Scriptures so the challenge is to understand how the details and events in these ten chapters relate to one another in the Lord's end-time storyline.

D. There is so much information on end-time Babylon because God wants us to understand its significance and danger. Jeremiah 50-51 is the longest prophecy in the OT (110 verses), and Revelation 17:1-19:10 is the longest prophecy in the NT (42 verses). These, plus the long prophecy about Babylon in Isaiah 13-14 (54 verses), reveal the importance of the prophecies about Babylon.

E. There are significant parallels in the language and events described in these three passages (Isa. 13-14; Jer. 50-51; Rev. 17-18).

F. When believers get the basic concepts, events, and transitions clear in their mind, then they are in position to gain greater understanding of the details and nuances set forth in prophetic Scriptures.

## II. OVERVIEW OF THE CHAPTERS ON THE JUDGMENT OF END-TIME BABYLON

- A. **Isaiah 13-14:** Isaiah 13 speaks of a powerful coalition of nations that will destroy the whole land of Babylon. They come from a far country to punish Babylon with flames (13:6-8) to “lay the land desolate” (13:9). At this time, the Lord is “punishing the world for its evil” (13:11).  
*<sup>4</sup>The noise of a multitude in the mountains...noise of the kingdoms of nations gathered together ...<sup>5</sup>They come from a far country, from the end of heaven...to destroy the whole land... <sup>9</sup>The day of the LORD comes...to lay the land desolate...<sup>10</sup>For the stars of heaven...will not give their light; the sun will be darkened...<sup>11</sup>“I will punish the world for its evil... (Isa. 13:4-11)*
- B. **Isaiah 46-48:** Much of this prophecy against Babylon was fulfilled in 539 BC, it is a prophetic picture of the end-time destruction of Babylon seen in Isaiah 13, Jeremiah 50-51; Revelation 17-18. Isaiah 47 ties into the Revelation 18 description of Babylon’s delusional sense of invincibility, feeling very secure and being given to much pleasure (47:8), yet her desolation shall come upon her suddenly (47:11) through fire (47:14) that will fill her merchants with grief (47:15).  
*<sup>5</sup>“... O daughter of the Chaldeans; for you shall no longer be called The Lady of Kingdoms...<sup>8</sup>You who are given to pleasures, who dwell securely, Who say in your heart, ‘...I shall not sit as a widow...’<sup>9</sup>But these...shall come to you in a moment, in one day: the loss of children, and widowhood. They shall come upon you...because of the multitude of your sorceries...” (Isa. 47:5-9)*
- C. **Jeremiah 50-51:** The fall of Babylon will have its ultimate fulfillment during the time of Jesus’ second coming. The fall of Babylon in 539 BC at the hands of the Persian army was a partial fulfillment of Jeremiah 50. Many of the specific details of this prophecy were not fulfilled at that time. John quoted Jeremiah 51 three times in Revelation 18 in reference to the future judgment of Babylon. In both passages, there are many elements of the prophetic proclamation that point to a future scenario in which Babylon is violently opposed and harshly judged by the Lord.
- D. **Zechariah 5:** This is one of primary insights into the prophetic events of Revelation 18 and is one of main proofs of Babylon being restored as a city. Jewish people will be living in Babylon (area of Assyria) in the end time (Isa. 11:11, 16; 27:13; Hos. 11:11; Mic. 4:10; 7:12; Zech. 10:10-11). This vision deals with the “system of sin” moving to Babylon (5:5-11). This vision pictures the national cleansing of wickedness from Israel (2:12; 3:9; 13:1). Zechariah saw a wicked woman trapped inside a basket (5:6-8) and two other women with wings like a stork. They picked up the basket and took it to Babylon (5:11). The vision has four parts: the symbolism of a wicked woman (5:5-7), the interpretation of the symbolism of the woman (5:8), the symbolism of the two women with wings of a stork (5:9), and the interpretation of the symbolism of the two women (5:10-11).
- E. **Revelation 17-18:** John received the most prophetic insight into the end-time judgment on Babylon. He describes an evil global economic and religious system—the harlot Babylon (Rev. 17-18). Satan will use economics as a primary means of controlling people and nations. The harlot includes an alliance of apostate Judaism and corrupt Christianity pursuing a false peace amid much luxury.
- F. The interpretative grid needed to understand the judgment of Babylon in the Old Testament is in Revelation 17-18. We interpret Revelation 17-18 through the details in the Old Testament.

### III. LAYING THE GROUND WORK TO UNDERSTAND BABYLON IN JEREMIAH 50-51

- A. I seek to understand the precise relationship between three distinct entities—the *land of Babylon*, the *physical city* of Babylon, and the “*global city*” of Babylon that will include religious and financial networks. Is the harlot Babylon of Revelation 17 expressed equally in all three entities?
1. ***Land of Babylon***: Jeremiah highlighted judgment coming on “the land of Chaldeans” and its cities (50:32; 51:43), thus on the nation, not just the city of Babylon (50:8, 18, 21, 25, 32, 45). The Chaldeans were the same people as the Babylonians. They were an ancient nomadic tribe who settled in Babylonia (800 BC) and later ruled Babylonia (625-539 BC).
  2. ***Physical city of Babylon***: I believe that the ancient city of Babylon (about 50 miles south of Baghdad) on the Euphrates River in Iraq will be rebuilt and connected to the harlot Babylon.
  3. ***Global city of Babylon***: The harlot reigns over the kings of the earth (Rev. 17:18). I believe the city of Babylon in Iraq will function as or connect with a “global city” that will influence the nations with religious and financial networks. Isaiah described God’s judgment on a global city (24:10-12; 25:2-3; 26:5; 27:10); he called Babylon the “lady of kingdoms” (47:5).  
***<sup>18</sup>The woman [harlot Babylon]...is that great city which reigns over the kings of the earth.***  
***(Rev. 17:18)***  
***<sup>2</sup>For You have made a city a ruin, a fortified city a ruin, a palace of foreigners to be a city no more...<sup>3</sup>The city of the terrible nations will fear You.*** (Isa. 25:2-3)
- B. Revelation 17 is the most detailed passage with the most symbolism in Revelation. An angel gave John the meaning of the symbols, so we have a foundation for understanding them. *Why is this most important prophecy veiled in such cryptic language?* Perhaps to motivate God’s people to pour over every line and discuss it often in seeking to understand it.
- C. Revelation 17 is one of the most significant end-time prophecies because it gives us insight into Satan’s end-time strategy to deceive the Church that many might fall away from the faith.
- D. A significant part of Satan’s end-time plan is that he be worshiped by all nations. Therefore, he will cause the nations to worship the Antichrist knowing that it is, in essence, “Satan worship.”  
***<sup>4</sup>They worshiped the dragon [Satan]...and the beast [Antichrist], saying, “Who is like the beast?”...<sup>8</sup>All who dwell on the earth will worship him [Antichrist]...*** (Rev. 13:4, 8)
- E. There are two stages in Satan’s plan to be worshiped by all nations. He knows it is too big a step for those with a religious heritage (Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Jewish, etc.) to suddenly become Satan worshipers. He will first deceive them into joining a ***worldwide harlot religion of moral “tolerance,”*** without absolutes, that teaches that all religions lead to God and salvation.
1. First, people will *voluntarily* join *harlot Babylon’s* one-world religion of tolerance (Rev. 17). By embracing the harlot religion, their conscience will be defiled, opening the way for them to make a complete break from their religious heritage (Christianity, Islam, Judaism, etc.).
  2. Second, all will be *forced* to worship Satan in the *Antichrist religion* (Rev. 13:4, 8, 15). That is, the voluntary harlot religion will be replaced by a mandatory Antichrist religion.

- F. John gives us details about the emergence and destruction of the harlot religion. He describes her evil seductions and cruel persecutions (Rev. 17:2-6). She will seduce and fully deceive the most powerful leaders on earth, including the kings and great merchants of the earth (Rev. 17:2; 18:23).  
*<sup>1</sup>“Come, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot...<sup>2</sup>with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication”... <sup>5</sup>On her forehead a name was written: MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, the mother of harlots... <sup>6</sup>I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints...” (Rev. 17:1-6)*
- G. **Mother of harlots:** She is the mother of harlots, or the source of false religion. Her offspring are the false religions throughout history, as well as the primary source of false religion in the end times. The original mother, or false religion, occurred at the tower of Babel (Gen. 11), where man’s first organized religion, or rebellion, against God began. This is where the city of Babylon was built.
- H. Israel’s spiritual harlotry consisted of worshiping idols.  
*<sup>1</sup>This people will...play the harlot with the gods of the foreigners of the land... (Deut. 31:16)*
1. When Israel turned to idols, God called it “playing the harlot with other gods” (1 Chr. 5:25; Ezek. 23:37; Hos. 4:12-13).
  2. To be guilty of harlotry requires that the harlot’s followers claim to once have had a relationship with the true God (this applies to both the Church and Israel).
  3. There are 90 passages in the OT that refer to Israel’s national harlotry. In each passage, harlotry is a religion based on idolatry.
- I. The primary enemy of the harlot will be the saints, who will expose her for who she really is and proclaim her judgment. The saints will be hated by all nations for this (Mt. 24:9-11).  
*<sup>6</sup>I saw the woman [harlot Babylon], drunk with the blood of the saints... (Rev. 17:6)*
- J. The harlot will *depend* on the Antichrist, who will *carry her* (provide resources and protection).  
*<sup>3</sup>I saw a woman [harlot] sitting on a Beast [Antichrist] which was full of names of blasphemy...  
<sup>7</sup>I will tell you the mystery of the woman and of the beast that carries her... (Rev. 17:3, 7)*
- K. The harlot will be the combination of two vast global institutions, possibly based in different cities, working together closely to deceive the earth. Revelation 17 highlights spiritual harlotry which has religious and financial implications. Revelation 18 focuses on the economic aspects of Babylon.
- L. A harlot will be raised up across the earth as a “global city” that has two expressions which overlap and operate simultaneous religious and economic networks. They will have a complicated inter-connection with each other and with the physical city of Babylon and the land of Babylon.
- M. Thus, the precise identification of harlot Babylon and how she operates and how and when God judges her presents challenges to the student of Bible prophecy.

#### IV. GOD'S JUDGMENT ON BABYLON

- A. Isaiah and Jeremiah's prophecies about Babylon's *sudden*, *total*, and *final* destruction will have ultimate fulfillment at the end of the Great Tribulation. The fall of Babylon in 539 BC, at the hands of the Persian army under Cyrus, was only a partial fulfillment of the judgments prophesied in Jeremiah 50-51. Many of the details of this prophecy were not fulfilled at that time. For example, Cyrus entered the city of Babylon without a fight and did not destroy the city or bring desolation and death to its citizens in the city and throughout the land as Jeremiah prophesied.
1. After it was conquered by Persia, its prominence waned steadily, but there was not a point in time when it was destroyed. Babylon simply grew weaker through the centuries. About 500 years after Christ, the Babylonian Talmud was established by orthodox Jews living in Babylon. History gives clear evidence of people living there 1,000 years after Christ.
  2. It can be easily proven historically that it was not desolate and without inhabitant; rather, for hundreds of years it prospered. For example, 200 years after Darius, Alexander the Great selected Babylon to be his capital city, though he died there before accomplishing his plan.
- B. Babylon will be destroyed by a coalition of nations from the north (50:3, 9, 41, 46; 51:25, 49).  
***<sup>9</sup>...I will raise and cause to come up against Babylon an assembly of great nations from the north country...from there she [Babylon] shall be captured. (Jer. 50:9)***
- C. The Antichrist's armies (Gog) will attack Israel from the far north (Ezek. 38:15; 39:2).  
***<sup>3</sup>"I am against you, O Gog...<sup>4</sup>I will...lead you out, with all your army...a great company... [from] <sup>5</sup>Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya...<sup>6</sup>Gomer and all its troops; the house of Togarmah from the far north and all its troops—many people...<sup>9</sup>You will ascend, coming like a storm...all your troops and many peoples with you."...<sup>15</sup>Then you will come from your place out of the far north, you and many peoples with you... a great company and a mighty army. (Ezek. 38:3-15)***
- D. The traditional premillennial view sees God's judgment on Babylon in two stages (Rev. 17-18).
1. **Revelation 17:** The first phase of the fall of Babylon as a worldwide religious system of toleration occurs in the beginning of the Great Tribulation by the ten kings (Rev. 17:16). They destroy the tolerant harlot religion to replace it with the Antichrist's intolerant religion.  
***<sup>12</sup>The ten horns which you saw are ten kings...<sup>16</sup>The ten horns...on the beast will hate the harlot, make her desolate and naked, eat her flesh and burn her with fire. (Rev. 17:12, 16)***
  2. **Revelation 18:** The second phase of the fall of Babylon as a worldwide economic system occurs at the end of the Great Tribulation directly by the hand of God (Rev. 18:8).
- E. The ten kings under the Antichrist will be divinely inspired to conquer the city or land of Babylon, capture her wealth and political might, and destroy her religious power. Once she is conquered, the way is clear for the demonic worship movement of Revelation 13 to be imposed upon many, there no longer being any viable rivals for the Antichrist, apart from Christ. With the economic power of Babylon now in his control, his worship movement can be tied into the commerce and goods of his people and beyond. The political power of Babylon and her armies are now his to command.

## V. PROPHETIC DESCRIPTION OF BABYLON'S JUDGMENT IN JEREMIAH 50-51

The conquering of ancient Babylon by Persia in 539 BC did not result in most of the following:

- A. **From the north:** Babylon is to be destroyed by a mighty nation from the north, even a strong coalition of nations (50:3, 9, 41, 46; 51:25, 49).  
<sup>9</sup>“...I will raise and cause to come up against Babylon an assembly of great nations from the north country...from there she [Babylon] shall be captured.” (Jer. 50:9)  
<sup>41</sup>Behold, a people shall come from the north, and a great nation and many kings shall be raised up from the ends of the earth. (Jer. 50:41)
- B. **Desolate:** Babylon will be destroyed or desolate (50:3, 13, 21-23, 26, 45; 51:2-3, 26, 29, 41, 62).  
<sup>3</sup>For out of the north a nation comes up against her, which shall make her land desolate, and no one shall dwell therein. (Jer. 50:3)
- C. **No inhabitants:** No one would be left in Babylon (50:3, 13, 29, 30, 39-40; 51:29, 43).  
<sup>29</sup>...to make the land of Babylon a desolation without inhabitant. (Jer. 51:29)
- D. **Land of the Chaldeans:** Judgment will come on “the land of Chaldeans” or on the whole nation, not just the city of Babylon (50:8, 18, 21, 25, 32, 45; on its cities 50:4, 32; 51:4).  
<sup>32</sup>“I will kindle a fire in his cities, and it will devour all around him.” (Jer. 50:32)
- E. **Fire:** The city of Babylon and land of Babylon will be destroyed by fire (50:32, 51:58; Isa. 47:14).
- F. **Forever:** Babylon’s desolation is forever rather than being a temporary judgment (50:39; 51:62).
- G. **Global:** Babylon’s judgment will make a global impact (50:46; 51:7, 25).  
<sup>46</sup>At the...taking of Babylon the earth trembles, and the cry is heard among the nations. (Jer. 50:46)
- H. **Suddenly:** Babylon’s judgment comes suddenly (51:8; cf. Isa. 47:8, 11).
- I. **Flee Babylon:** The Lord called His people to flee Babylon (50:4-5, 8, 16, 20, 28; 51:5-6, 9, 10, 45, 50; cf. Isa. 48:20; 52:11; Zech. 2:6-7, Rev. 18:4).  
<sup>6</sup>Flee from the midst of Babylon, and every one save his life...for this is the time of the Lord’s vengeance; He shall recompense her. (Jer. 51:6)
- J. **Salvation:** Israel’s national salvation is a timing indicator of Babylon final judgments (50:4, 20).  
<sup>4</sup>In those days and in that time...the children of Israel...and the children of Judah together; with continual weeping they shall come, and seek the Lord their God. (Jer. 50:4)  
<sup>20</sup>In those days and in that time...the iniquity of Israel shall be sought, but there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, but they shall not be found... (Jer. 50:20)