

# **Dr. Gary Yates, Jeremiah, Lecture 30, Jeremiah 50-51, Oracles against the Nations, Babylon**

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This is Dr. Gary Yates in his teaching on the book of Jeremiah. This is the final session, session 30, on Jeremiah 50-51, The Oracles of the nation, particularly focused on Babylon.

This is our final lesson and session in the book of Jeremiah.

I want to thank those of you who may have watched or participated in part of this. My prayer, my desire is that God, maybe through this, has increased your love for the book of Jeremiah, but more importantly, has given you a deeper love and understanding of the God of the prophets. That's ultimately what this project and this goal are about.

Not just to fill people with biblical information, but to help them know God in a deeper and fuller way. And I believe that the prophets help us to do that in a way that's true of no other part of the canon. Every part of God's word has a unique contribution to make to us.

When we leave some part of God's word out, we're going to miss something about what God is revealing to us through that. And so many of us as Christians have missed, I think a great deal by not listening to the prophets. So, it's been an honor to be a part of this.

For those of you that have went through all of it, you deserve some type of medal. But for those of you, maybe that have just bits and pieces, I hope that it's been helpful. I want to follow up on our last lesson with a second lesson on the oracles against the nations and focus specifically on the judgment of Babylon in chapters 50 and 51.

Before we get into those specific chapters, let me remind you of something that we talked about last time. I think one of the problems with prophecy, and especially when we begin thinking about eschatology and prophecy about the end times, is that we often want to go to the prophets and find very detailed and specific information about end-time events or about things that are going on in our political situation today and find almost kind of coded information that's giving us insider truth on what's going on. Sometimes it's things simply to satisfy our curiosity or sometimes a concern for things that are going on in the world that's very general, but maybe a misunderstanding of what the Bible is designed to convey to us.

I do not believe that the prophets are designed to give us detailed and specific information about end-time events. More what the prophets do are reflect to us some general patterns and things that we can be certain of that God is doing in the future, that God has done in the past. Many times there are recurring patterns.

What God has done in the past, how God has dealt with peoples and nations, and these nations in Jeremiah 46 to 51, how they are being judged and why God judged them is paradigmatic for how God judges nations today and also representative of the type of judgment that God is going to bring in the future. Similarly, the experiences that Israel had as the people of God are very much related to our experiences as Christians and believers today, but prophecy is there more to give us general patterns than it is to always give us specific information. I remember back during the days of the Cold War, and even as a young person, hearing my first sermons and messages on biblical prophecy, it was often titles like, The Coming War with Russia, and how this war between Israel and Russia was prophesied in passages like the Gog and Magog passage in Ezekiel 38 and 39.

In 1999, as a pastor, I had the opportunity to teach the prophets in Moscow at a Bible Institute there. We got to the book of Ezekiel, and then we got to Ezekiel 38. Before we had even gotten into the passage, one of the students who used to be a news commentator during the Soviet era said, I've always wanted to ask an American pastor this question: why do you people always preach that we are Gog of Magog? Talking to them about that issue is an interesting reflection and an interesting perspective on the prophets.

They weren't all that happy about the association of Russia with Gog of Magog. Of course, the real issue is, what does the text really say? Not whether we like it or not, but as I've studied those kinds of passages, as I've studied the prophets, as I've studied these oracles about things even that are going to happen in the end times, they often are more there to give us general pictures of anchors that we can hold on to. So, I don't think Ezekiel 38 to 39 prophesies for us something as specific as a coming war with Russia.

But what the prophets do tell us is that there does appear to be in God's plans an eschatological battle. There is going to be an assault on the nations that resembles what happened with Babylon and Judah in the days of Jeremiah. The nations are going to come again, and God is going to use that eschatological battle to bring judgment both against the nations and against the people of God.

You can read about that battle in places like Ezekiel 38, Micah 5, Joel 3, Zephaniah 3, Zechariah 12, Zechariah 14, Revelation 16 and 19, as it talks about the battle of Armageddon. But it's more to give us a general picture that God is going to execute judgment on the nations and on Israel. What prophecy is not designed to do is to

give us a program with the numbers and the names of all of the players that are going to be there.

When I go to a baseball game, I always appreciate teams that have the names of their players on the backs of their uniforms. It's easier to recognize. But in prophecy, the players generally do not have their names on the uniform.

Even in a passage like the Gog of Magog passage in Ezekiel 38, there are specific nations that are mentioned as allies of this king, who is named Gog of Magog. But I believe the nations there are simply representatives of a worldwide coalition that is going to attack God's people in the last days, and God will bring judgment on them. There are seven nations mentioned in that passage.

They come from four directions on the compass. Instead of trying to specify for us, it's going to be these people and this group and the nations that live in this particular geographical area. If you don't live in those geographical areas, it doesn't have much to say to us.

But if the passage is picturing for us a worldwide rebellion against God, and where human pride and the counter kingdom that man has set up in opposition to God is ultimately leading us, then it ultimately has something to say to every one of us. The greatest thing that prophecy does in what it has to say about the judgment of nations and the salvation of God's people is that it gives us an assurance that ultimately, as God's people, God wins. We're on the winning team.

We are part of God's kingdom. Ultimately, these empires are going to come and go. These nations are going to come and go.

The counter kingdom that man has set up in opposition to God's true kingdom is going to defy God and oppose and persecute God's people until the very end. That battle is always there. The same thing that's going on in Jeremiah's day, God ultimately wins.

Again, I apologize for one more sports illustration, and this will be the last one since we're on the last video. I can make that promise. But when I watch a video or a recording of a game where my favorite team is playing, if I know the outcome of that game, I don't really get bothered if there's a fumble in the second quarter or if they're behind at halftime because I know the eventual outcome.

I believe that prophecy is designed to give us an assurance of the eventual outcome and to say that no matter what God's people face, God is ultimately going to deliver them, and God is ultimately going to judge and destroy the wicked. As we come to Jeremiah chapters 50 and 51, we are focusing on the judgment of Babylon as the final part of the book of Jeremiah. As we talked about in the judgment of these other

oracles against the nations, I believe that we are primarily talking about a judgment that occurred in history.

We are talking about the judgment of the Neo-Babylonian empire that was established by Nebuchadnezzar and that Nebuchadnezzar was king over and that had carried away the people of Judah into exile. It is the judgment of that specific group of people. This is not a coded eschatological message about something that is going to happen in the end times, but just like we talked about in the previous video, even though this is a judgment on a specific nation that lived a long time ago, there are applications and implications of this passage that I think has huge significance for us as Christians today.

They have applications and implications that help us to think about not just our relationship with God but the world that we live in where humanity is heading and finally and ultimately where history itself is heading. The judgment of Babylon in the book of Jeremiah is very important because this is going to be the thing that brings about the deliverance and the salvation of God's people. Jeremiah's message is that the Lord has had a plan.

He has elevated Babylon. He has given Nebuchadnezzar hegemony and control over the nations and over Judah itself for a specific reason: to execute judgment on the people of Judah for their covenant unfaithfulness toward the Lord. The Lord directs nations and circumstances and political events and armies and all those things.

The Lord is sovereignly in control of that, and the Lord used the Babylonians to judge the people of Judah. But the promise in 50 and 51, and this goes back to what Jeremiah preaches in chapter 50, is that God is also going to judge Babylon, and through that, he is going to bring about the salvation of his own people. Here's the promise that's given to Judah and to Israel at the beginning of this section on Babylon.

The Lord says in chapter 50 verses 4 and 5, in those days and at 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. So we're talking about here the spiritual restoration of Israel, the renewal of that relationship to God. It is finally going to be at the place where it needs to be because the people repent and come to God and acknowledge their sin.

This is the new covenant, this is the Shub Shabuot that we read about in Jeremiah 30 to 33. It says, they shall ask the way to Zion with faces turned toward it and saying, come let us join ourselves to the Lord in an everlasting covenant that will never be forgotten. So, in Jeremiah chapter 31, the Lord promises that he will make a new covenant with the people of Israel.

Here, it says that the people initiate, and they come to the Lord and make an everlasting covenant with him. That relationship is going to be restored. But what ultimately is going to have to happen for that relationship to be restored, what would have to happen in the days of Jeremiah for the people to come back to the land, is that God would have to deal with the Babylonians, and God would have to bring an end to this empire.

Chapter 51, verse 10 is going to say this, the Lord has brought about our vindication. Come, let us declare in Zion the work of the Lord our God. So, Babylon has been the enemy of Judah.

They have attacked the people of God. The Lord will ultimately vindicate his people. Whatever attacks, whatever oppression, whatever persecution the people of God will go through, God ultimately will vindicate them and deliver them.

These empires come and go, as Daniel portrays, but ultimately, a great stone is going to crush them, and that stone is God's kingdom. So, there's the promise in the judgment of Babylon of the ultimate deliverance of God's people. To bring about or to highlight this idea of reversal, how God is first going to use Babylon to judge Judah, and then the Lord is going to judge Babylon in order to save Israel.

This complete reversal we see in these judgment speeches against Babylon in chapters 50 and 51, direct reversals of things that we have read about Judah in the earlier parts of the book. The judgment that is described and portrayed as coming against Judah in the first part of the book is described using even some of the same passages and terminology to describe the judgment of Babylon. So, let's take a look at how this works.

In the earlier parts of the book of Jeremiah, as God is bringing judgment against the people of Judah, he warns them that a boiling pot is tilting out of the north and is about to scald them with this burning liquid. It's a powerful description of an enemy army. Well, in Jeremiah chapter 50, verses 3 and 9, now an enemy from the north is going to invade and destroy Babylon.

Babylon was the enemy from the north who attacked Judah. There is also going to be an enemy from the north that attacks Babylon. Jeremiah chapter 21, verses 1 to 5, pictures God as a warrior going out to fight a holy war against the people of Judah.

So, when the Babylonians came and laid siege against Jerusalem, Nebuchadnezzar was technically not the leader of the army; the Lord was. The Lord uses these series of I-will verses in 21 to 1 to 5 to say, it's not just the Babylonians; it's the Lord that's fighting against you. A number of times in the book of Jeremiah, the idea is the Lord has given Jerusalem into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar.

Well, in Jeremiah 50 and 51, what we have going on here is the Lord is leading a holy war against Babylon. The Lord says this in Jeremiah chapter 50, verses 25 and 27: the Lord has opened his armory and has brought out the weapons of his wrath for the Lord God of hosts, the Lord of armies, has a work to do in the land of the Chaldeans. 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. So, in the same way that God fought holy war against Judah, the Lord is about to fight holy war against Babylon. Chapter 50 verses 41 to 43, there is a message that is delivered there against the daughter of Babylon.

It is ironic that she's even described as a young woman in the same way as Judah and Jerusalem, the daughter of Zion. So, what's going to happen in the book of Jeremiah? In the early parts of the book, the daughter of Zion is going to be judged. In the second half of the book or in this last section here, it's the daughter of Babylon that's going to be destroyed.

In Jeremiah, chapter 50, verses 41 to 43, a passage that is a direct quotation of what we have in chapter 6, verses 22 to 24. Now, the message is no longer about Judah; the message is about Babylon. Let me read the passage there.

Behold, a people comes from the north, a mighty nation, and many kings are stirring from the farthest parts of the earth. They lay hold of the bow and the 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. Okay, now I've had sermons that I've tried to use before.

Apparently, Jeremiah does the same. And you know that message I preached against Jerusalem? That was a good one. I'm going to bring it out and preach it against Babylon.

But beyond a pastor simply recycling his sermon or a prophet recycling his sermon here, I think we have a theological message. The exact same kind of judgment that was brought against Judah at the beginning is going to be brought against Babylon at the end. There is absolute justice in what God does here.

Babylon was used by God to carry out his purposes, but that wasn't Babylon's intention. They weren't there to do the will of the Lord. They were there to carry out their own greedy plans to establish an empire.

Prophetic justice is going to demand that they receive the same thing back from God that they inflicted on Israel. In the earlier parts of the book, in chapters 4-6, there are

these pictures of an invading army that is coming into Judah, and sometimes not even identified exactly who this army is. And there are calls to the people in Jeremiah 4-6: sound the trumpet, note the alarms, go inside the fortified cities, and hide yourself.

There's an enemy army coming, and they're ferocious. You better watch out for them. Well, in chapter 51, verse 27, here's the message that's given to Babylon.

Set up a standard on the earth, blow the trumpet among the nations, and prepare the nations for war against her. Okay, now it's Babylon that has to sound the trumpet and get behind their fortified walls because now the invasion is against them. Earlier in the book, the warriors of Jerusalem are compared to women who are bending over in child labor because of the pain that they're going to experience.

The promise or the warning in 50-51 is that the warriors of Babylon are going to become like women in their fear. So, God is going to bring about the execution of absolute justice. Okay, now we hear that, we read this, we know that that has historically taken place, but I want you to imagine the impact that this message must have had on the people of Judah themselves or the exiles maybe who are living in Babylon and are living in the midst of this empire.

Babylon is the greatest city in the world at that time. Babylon is an empire and for Jeremiah to stand there and say, God is about to deliver this poor group of exiles and bring them back and reform them and reestablish them into a nation. On the other hand, God is about to destroy the most powerful city in the world.

I mean, there's an incredible surprise element. How in the world is the Lord ever going to bring this about? But the Lord is going to bring down a nation like Babylon, even at the height of its power, and we know that the Neo-Babylonian empire didn't last for very long. In several places in these oracles, Jeremiah is going to make mention of the walls and the fortification that surround the city of Babylon.

I wanted to note a couple of these. Chapter 51, verse 53 says this, "...though Babylon should mount up to heaven," and I can't help but think of the Tower of Babylon, the book of Genesis, "...and though she should fortify her strong height, yet destroyers would come from me against her," declares the Lord. Chapter 51, verse 58, also makes reference to the walls of Babylon, "...thus says the Lord of armies, the broad wall of Babylon shall be leveled to the ground, and her high gates shall be burned with fire, the people's labor for nothing, and the nations weary themselves only for fire." The fortifications and the defenses of Babylon are not going to protect them.

I was reading in preparation for this lesson, a description of the fortifications of the city of Babylon during the time of Nebuchadnezzar in the Zondervan illustrated Bible background commentary. They give this description. It says that at the time of

Nebuchadnezzar, the inner wall of the city of Babylon measured about twenty-one feet thick, and while the outer wall measured about twelve feet in thickness.

Along with that, Nebuchadnezzar, we read about him as a warrior and a conqueror in extra-biblical records, he's portrayed as a builder, an innovator, and a creator in that way. Nebuchadnezzar also had a protective moat dug around the wall and filled it with water. He enhanced the security of the walls with a system of artificial lakes and flooded areas that, again, would make it very difficult for an army to invade the city.

The walls were fortified with a number of gates. The Ishtar Gate you often see pictures of is the most famous example of that. You can see a model of that in the museum in Berlin, and there were two hundred and fifty towers around that wall.

We're talking about an impressive city. And as an exile, or maybe someone who would look from the outside at the city of Babylon, how is God ever going to bring this about? How is God ever going to carry this off? It was an impressive city. You had Nebuchadnezzar's hanging gardens inside the city, the temple of Entomenache that was built to the Babylonian gods, the representations of the dragons and the lions, and the bulls that represented the powerful gods of Babylon.

How's all this going to come down? God is going to make this happen, and God is going to bring this about. What's very interesting about all of this, and thinking about biblical prophecy, within a few hundred years of the time of Jeremiah, the city of Babylon for all practical purposes had essentially ceased to exist. In the second century AD, Lucian makes this comment.

He says Nineveh has vanished without a trace, and soon men will search in vain even for Babylon. So, here's the city. In that day and in that time, how's this ever going to happen? Within a few hundred years, Babylon was forgotten.

It's a great warning to us. We think our nation is strong because of our military or our economic status. Within a few hundred years, we may no longer be standing.

There's a description of the empires of the world, or the empires of the ancient Near East at least, in Ezekiel chapter 31. This is to me just one of the most chilling passages. It just makes you stop and think.

It's a passage that announces judgment on the Egyptians and judgment on the Pharaoh. Again, a powerful nation, an empire. It is not the nation that it once was, but it is still a significant player.

But at the end of this judgment against the Pharaoh in Egypt, the prophet says, on that day, the cedar went down to Sheol and caused mourning. There's this just



sadness over the fact that the king of Egypt is going down to Sheol. I'm sorry, it's in chapter 32, not chapter 31.

When the king of Egypt arrives in Sheol, it's interesting to see what he discovers there. Verse 22, Assyria is there and all of her company. Verse 24, Elam is there and all her multitude around her grave.

Verse 26, Meshach Tubal is there and all of her multitude—one of the people that's mentioned in the Gog and Magog passage in Ezekiel 38. Verse 29, Edom is there, her kings and all of her princes, who for all of their might are laid with those who were killed by the sword.

Verse 30, the princes of the north are there, all of them and the Sidonians. Verse 31, when Pharaoh sees them, he will at least be comforted that they are with him. Now, I heard last week about someone who's writing a Texas Bible to update the Bible for Texans and using their idioms.

If we were to write an updated version of the book of Ezekiel, we could write out all of the nations and all of the empires that have fallen in history and say they're there with the Egyptians. And someday, someone will write that the United States is there with all of its multitudes. And so, these passages, yeah, they may be historical judgments that God executed in the past, but they are a reminder of what is coming for the nations and what God is still doing in the present.

God still judges nations, sometimes within history and ultimately all of them at the end of history. In 1899, when the German archeologists who were doing the excavations on Babylon began their work, the whole city had become covered over and was practically undetectable. In fact, there were people even at that time who read about Nebuchadnezzar in the Bible and questioned whether or not he was a historical figure.

Well, the surprise element is that this powerful nation is going to fall, and its city seems immovable and inviolable, but when the judgment of God comes, their walls are not going to protect them. Okay. I think I've emphasized this point maybe enough, but I want to say it one more time.

This is a judgment in chapters 50 and 51 that describes something that has taken place in history. Again, I do not believe that this is a coded eschatological message. This is the fall of the Neo-Babylonian Empire and the fall of Babylon and that empire and what it represented to the Persians and to Cyrus in 538 BC.

Now, some people have questioned whether that's an accurate way to describe or to portray what's going on there, and there's a reason why that's an issue. As Jeremiah

is describing the fall of Babylon here, the fall of the city is described in terms of an absolute destruction. The city's going to fall.

No one's going to be left there. It's going to be turned into a heap of ruins, a haunt of jackals and all these kinds of things. Some people have argued that the judgment of Babylon in the past couldn't possibly be the complete fulfillment of what is described here.

When Cyrus and the Persians captured the city of Babylon, they took it without a shot. In fact, many of the people who were living in Babylon at that time viewed the Persians as deliverers. How can this passage that's talking about this catastrophic judgment where the city's going to be turned into a heap of ruins, and no one's going to be left there? How was that fulfilled by what happened in history? As a result of this and because of this destruction language that's used with reference to Babylon here, many people have argued that what this passage is talking about is a rebuilding of Babylon and a destruction of Babylon that takes place in the end times.

Revelation 17 and 18 also talk about the fall of Babylon the Great in connection with the Antichrist. Many have taken this not to be a historical passage but to be an eschatological passage. There were several popular treatments of Jeremiah 50 and 51 and other Old Testament prophecies back during the Gulf War and the conflict with Iraq.

The idea was that the conflict between the United States and Saddam Hussein and everything that was going on at that time was a fulfillment of these passages in Jeremiah and Isaiah that talk about the destruction of Babylon. And this is the prelude or this is the beginning of the end times in the last days. Something that added fuel to this is that Saddam Hussein, during his regime, also made a decision that he was going to attempt to rebuild the ancient ruins of Babylon.

And he put inscriptions there as he was doing this and rebuilding the cities. This was built by Saddam Hussein, the son of Nebuchadnezzar, to glorify Iraq. However, Saddam Hussein's plans have been interrupted.

And so, the idea that this was the beginning of the end times was very popular during the time when Saddam Hussein was in power and while the Iraq War was going on. But I think there's a better explanation of the destruction language that's here. The destruction language here is portraying the fall of Babylon to the Persians in a way that we see throughout prophetic literature.

And these things about the city being left without inhabitants, it turning into a haunt of jackals and all those kinds of things, its curse language that is recurring throughout the ancient Near East. And oftentimes when kings would make covenant treaties with each other, they would pronounce these types of curses on each other. If you

don't keep this covenant, may your city be turned into a haunt of ruins and may your body be consumed by the birds of the air.

When God had made his covenant with Israel during the time of Moses, he had implemented the covenant curses that sound in many ways like these ancient Near Eastern curses. So, we have statements in Jeremiah 50 and 51 about the destruction of Babylon that read like this, chapter 50, verses 39 and 40. Therefore, wild beasts shall dwell with hyenas in Babylon, and ostriches shall dwell in her.

She will never again have people nor be inhabited for all generations. Chapter 51, verse 37, listen to what it says there. Babylon shall become a heap of ruins, a haunt of jackals, a horror, and a hissing without inhabitants.

So how can these types of descriptions be used to talk about what happened when Cyrus, basically without a shot, took the city of Babylon? Well, the answer again is that the prophet is using the curse language of the ancient Near East that makes the fall of the Babylonian empire vivid. We do not necessarily expect to see ostriches flying out of the hanging gardens of Babylon. This is simply covenant curse language.

So, the fulfillment of this prophecy was carried out by Cyrus and the Persians. The prophecy was essentially fulfilled even if it was not fulfilled in an absolutely literal way by the demise of the Neo-Babylonian empire. That is what this passage is about.

It is important to remember that when you look elsewhere in the book of Jeremiah, this same type of curse language is used with reference to Jerusalem. We do not always interpret that in an absolutely literal manner, either. It says in Jeremiah chapter 9 verse 11 that no one will live in the city of Judah or in the city of Jerusalem or in the cities of Judah.

I think it is what it says there. 25.9, Jerusalem will become an everlasting ruin. That creates some problems in light of the book of consolation which says they are going to rebuild and return and restore their cities.

So, it is curse language to describe in a vivid way the destruction of Judah, and here in 50 and 51, this is curse language to describe in a vivid way the fall of ancient Babylon and the kingdom that was reigned over by Nebuchadnezzar. The book of Daniel tells us that there was one day when Nebuchadnezzar went out, and he looked at the city and said, isn't this Babylon the great city that I have built with my own strength and my own power? God ultimately humbles him about that. But God is also going to ultimately humble the Neo-Babylonian empire completely by giving it over into the hands of the Persians.

That is what Jeremiah 50 and 51 is about. We interpret scripture in light of its surrounding historical context and in light of the literary conventions and language of that day. I hope that helps us to understand that a little more effectively.

If that is our approach to the book, we might walk away from this saying, wow, we got another history lesson. It is interesting that all of this happened in Jeremiah's day. It's interesting what happened to Nebuchadnezzar and the Neo-Babylonian empire, but so what? What does that mean to us? Well, as I begin to look at the name and the title and the place of Babylon, I realize that as I'm studying this in scripture, Babylon in scripture represents something more than just the ancient city.

So, I think there's an application significance to this. Even though this does not describe specific eschatological events, there is eschatological significance to this because the geographical place of Babylon, in fact, represents something more than just a city. And I believe that if you go all the way back to Genesis, what Babylon represents in scripture is that Babylon is a paradigm nation that reflects humanity and kings and kingdoms and rulers that stand in opposition to God and to God's people.

The ultimate enemy of Israel in the Old Testament is Babylon, as they take the people into captivity and destroy the temple. Babylon in that sense represents human opposition to God's purposes. And that goes all the way back to Genesis chapter 11, where Babylon is the place that the people gather together in defiance of the Lord's command and they build a tower that reaches and stretches into the heavens.

And I think what they're doing there is they're setting up a counter kingdom. They're setting up an alternative form of religion where they can manipulate God in the way that they want, and they are living in defiance of God. God had made Adam his vice-regent, and Adam, as the image of God, would live under God's rule.

Adam rebelled against that and wanted to go outside of God's rule and God's dominion. The people in Babylon who built this tower in Genesis chapter 11 represent that same kind of defiance toward God's kingdom and God's authority. Babylon is the home base throughout the Old Testament for human opposition to God.

This idea about Babylon and the king of Babylon is also reflected in a taunt song about the king of Babylon that is found in Isaiah chapter 14. Here's the king of Babylon in his hubris, in his pride, and his defiance against God. Remember that in these oracles against the nations, that's the primary reason why God is going to bring judgment.

But listen to what the king of Babylon says. You get the idea. The king of Babylon is pretty impressed with himself.

Here's his statement as he finally falls. Here's how the people react to this. How you are fallen from heaven, O day-star, the sun of dawn.

Now, many people have seen the fall of Satan being described here in context. It's the death of the king of Babylon. He's the one who is like Venus, who is at the top of the sky as the morning star in the early morning.

But when the sun comes up after the dawn, he falls from the sky. That's the demise of the king of Babylon. But listen to his hubris.

You said in your heart, I will ascend into heaven above the stars of God. I will set my authority and my throne on high. I will sit on the mount of the assembly in the far reaches of the north.

And one of the reasons that people have seen Satan here is that, like, this seems like someone that's extra human. But that's what the king of Babylon thinks about himself. I am godlike in my power.

And I'll set my throne up in the heavens where I want. I'll defy God. I'll defy his kingdom.

I will ascend above the heights of the clouds. I will make myself like the most high. The same thing that Satan said to Adam.

Eat the fruit, and you will be like God. Well, here's what actually happened to the king of Babylon. But you are brought down to Sheol, to the far reaches of the pit.

Those who see you will stare at you, and they will ponder over you. So, here's this guy who thinks that he's godlike and he's going to sit on the divine assembly and make himself like the most high God. What's going to happen to him? Well, the problems with his pretensions to deity are that he's a man, and he's ultimately going to die and go down to Sheol.

And in an almost humorous way, we have the descent of the king of Babylon to Sheol here in Isaiah 14. And the other people and the rulers and the kings that are there that the king of Babylon has put there with his armies, they're like, have you seen who showed up today? And it's almost like the police officer that shows up at the prison block, he has become one of them. And it's like, come to your place of royal dignity.

We have a bed of maggots for you to lie down on for the rest of eternity. The passage starts out with him saying, I will set my throne on high. The passage ends with him going down to Sheol and laying down on his maggot bed.

That's the pretensions of Babylon. That's the hubris of humanity in rebellion against God. In Daniel chapter two, Daniel pictures history as the working out of the time of the Gentiles involving four great empires.

There are the Babylonians, the Medes, the Persians, the Greeks, and then a fourth empire that either represents Rome or some eschatological power or a connection of the two. At the end of these four empires, the kingdom of God comes down like a mountain and will be there forever. God's kingdom will be established permanently.

These nations are there, they're here, and they're gone. They may appear to have great power, but they will ultimately be destroyed. Babylon, in this passage, doesn't just represent one kingdom.

It's a reminder of what happens to all of humanity and every human empire, every human kingdom that stands in defiance of God. It's paradigmatic of what God is going to do to every kingdom, to every empire that stands in opposition to him. Jeremiah chapter 50, verses 34 and 35 again reflect what Babylon represents here.

Some very interesting imagery is used to describe Nebuchadnezzar and his kingdom. The Lord says, I'm sorry, this is chapter 51, verses 34 and 35, and Judah says, Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, has devoured me. He has crushed me.

He has made me like an empty vessel. He has swallowed me like a monster. He has filled his stomach with my delicacies.

He has rinsed me out. So, in this passage, Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonian empire are described as the chaos monsters of the Old Testament, and like these monsters like Leviathan and the sea monsters that God fights against and controls and subdues because they represent the forces of evil. And I think what this ancient Near Eastern imagery is ultimately pointing to is the fact that these nations are inspired by the great dragon, Satan, the dragon that is described for us in Revelation chapter 12.

Well, Babylon is a depiction of that chaos monster that hates God, that opposes God, God's people. The Lord is ultimately going to destroy all of these monsters. In Daniel, chapter 7, the final empire that rises out of the sea is not described as a man.

It's described as a beast, as a hideous monster. And that's really what human government becomes, and what this human counter-kingdom becomes as it defies

God and seeks to establish its own power. And the Lord will ultimately destroy that final power in the same way that he destroyed Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians.

I believe this representation of Babylon as the symbol and the paradigm of evil carries over into the New Testament as well. And as the early Christians and as the early church, as they're engaged in a conflict with Rome, and Rome is persecuting the church, the early church comes to look at Babylon or comes to look at Rome as another embodiment of Babylon. I mean, they're not in the same geographical place, but they represent the same spiritual reality.

Nations, kingdoms, and empires that defy God and persecute God's people. And so Babylon becomes paradigmatic of any nation that stands in opposition to God. And again, as we assess, where does America stand in all of this? There's not a specific reference to the United States anywhere in Scripture, but Peter Leithart again says we're somewhere between Babel and beast.

We're somewhere between those people that built that tower defying God in Genesis chapter 11 and that beast that builds an empire at the end of time in Revelation as he goes out to wage war on the saints and on God's people. We're somewhere there. Well, Rome in the first century was an embodiment of what Babylon was all about.

So, 1 Peter 5:13. Peter, as he's closing this book, sends greetings and he says, she who is at Babylon, who is likewise chosen, sends you greetings. And so does Mark, my son. There's no evidence that Peter ever went to Babylon.

And so the reference here to Babylon is Peter is in Rome, and he makes reference to Rome as the city of Babylon. Why? Because there's a typology that's going on throughout Scripture. The tower of Babel.

Babylon is the seat of opposition against God. Isaiah and Jeremiah, the Babylonians, are God's instruments. They hate God's people.

They oppose. They persecute them. Revelation and in the New Testament, Rome is simply another embodiment of what Babylon represented. And so, in Revelation 17-18, the final aspect of this is that Babylon the Great becomes the center of the kingdom of Antichrist.

And I'm thankful that I don't have to address all the interpretive issues that are in the book of Revelation and glad I can leave that for someone else. But I believe that there are actually both historical and eschatological references there. Rome is a representation of what John is speaking of there.

In 17-9, the city of Babylon is described there as being a city that is on seven hills. That seems to be a representation of Rome, not of Babylon. But again, what we have been portrayed there is not just Rome, but it is the opposition to God and God's people that will continue to the very end of time, and that will ultimately culminate in the rebellion of the man of sin who will lead the world astray again.

So, is there any relevance or significance to the historical lesson that we have about the judgment of Babylon in Jeremiah 50-51? Absolutely. It's representative of a conflict that wages itself out throughout the entirety of scripture, the counter kingdom of man versus the counter kingdom of God. Babylon represents that counter kingdom.

God ultimately wins. All of those empires that stand in rebellion against God, Ezekiel chapter 31, all of them will ultimately go down to Sheol. So, there's an incredible promise here given to God's people that we're on the winning side.

Okay, now I believe that the book of Revelation, the book of Jeremiah, as it speaks of these two counter kingdoms, again is not just giving us eschatological information, but it's asking us to think about our lives and where we align ourselves. In a symbolic way, let's not just think about Babylon and New Jerusalem in the book of Revelation as giving us eschatological information. Let's think about what those cities symbolically represent and where we align ourselves.

Desmond Alexander, in his book *From Eden to the New Jerusalem*, writes this. He says the Babylon of Revelation is often taken to be a cipher for Rome, the greatest city or the great city in the first century AD. There is no doubt that Rome is included within the image of Babylon.

However, Babylon as a symbol should not be restricted to the capital of the Roman Empire because it represents and embodies what human beings strive after when they are separated from God. Babylon is the antithesis of the city that God himself desires to construct upon the earth. He goes on to say later, on the next page, in Revelation, the city of Babylon symbolizes humanity's obsession with wealth and power, which becomes a substitute for knowing God.

History witnesses the ongoing existence of Babylon as one nation after another has used its power to grow rich at the expense of others. We live in a world where economic power dominates national and international politics. James Resigway, in his commentary on Revelation, a narrative commentary, says something very similar about Babylon and New Jerusalem in his commentary as well.

Let me read just a couple of quotes there, and we'll tie this all together. The two cities, Babylon and New Jerusalem, are symbolic. The New Jerusalem is the ideal city, the city of God, the new promised land.



The other symbolic Babylon is the satanic parody of Jerusalem. Babylon looks like Rome with its seven mountains, claims to divinity; blasphemous names plastered over its throne, and the scarlet beast. Yet Babylon is more than the imperial city.

It is Babylon, the ancient city of Israel's exile in alienation. It is Sodom and a symbol of wickedness. He goes on to say Babylon and Jerusalem represent the two choices of the apocalypse.

Babylon, the city of this world, the place of exile and alienation for Christians, is the spiritual capital for those who are earthbound, whose point of view is from below and from this world. The earthbound includes not only those outside the church but also those within it. Babylon is where the inhabitants of the world dwell, and the followers of the beast make their thrones and make their homes.

Yet Babylon is not only the home of the earth's inhabitants, it is also where, in this present evil age, Christians live, although it cannot be called their home. In John's world, Christians are exiled to Babylon. Thus, John calls Christians to come out of Babylon and not to take part in her sins.

So, I believe, yeah, there's an eschatological message in all of this. There's a warning to America. There's a warning to every nation in the world.

What happens to nations like Babylon will ultimately be destroyed. But there's a practical application for all of us, even as individuals now. Where do we align ourselves? Do we live in the sphere of this world and love this world and live with the values, thoughts, and world system that reflects Babylon? Or do we live with the values and the kingdom priorities that reflect the new Jerusalem? Just kind of a practical personal application of all this. But God's message in Jeremiah 46-51 is that God was to judge the nations of the earth.

God was going to judge the nations of Jeremiah's day. And it's a message for the nations that come after them as well. It may not be scripture directly to us, but it is scripture that ultimately is applicable to us.

Now, if that's all we had in Jeremiah 46-51, I think we'd hear an important message, but one that's pretty depressing. The nations are coming under God's judgment. But in the last couple of minutes that I have, this is my last shot to teach you anything out of the book of Jeremiah.

There's also incredibly, in the midst of these messages of judgment, there is also a promise that is given to certain of these nations. Now, there is no hope given to Babylon here, but Jeremiah 48-47 says this, and it is just interesting to note this

passage. After God judges the Moabites, who had been rivals of Israel for a long time, the Lord says, yet I will restore the fortunes of Moab.

And in the latter days, declares the Lord, thus far is the judgment on Moab. God says, after I've judged the Moabites, I'm going to restore their fortunes. I'm going to shub shabut.

I'm going to do the same thing for those pagan people that I did for my people. Chapter 49, verse six, the Ammonites, and remember they had encroached on Israel's territory, and that's why they were being judged. But at the end of this passage on the Ammonites in chapter 49, verse six, the Lord says, but afterward I will shub shabut.

I will restore the fortune of the Ammonites, declares the Lord. Chapter 49, verse 39, the Lord says this: but in the latter days, I will restore the fortunes of Elam, declares the Lord. Now we don't know the specific reasons.

Why does God say that he's going to restore the fortunes of some of these people and not of the others? Again, I'm not sure it's making a distinction between specific groups of people. I think it's simply reflecting that even when God carries out his judgment on the nations of the earth, his ultimate plan and his ultimate design is to bring people from those nations into the kingdom of God and they will have their fortunes restored as they come to know Israel's Messiah. As God does his great work for Israel in restoring their fortunes, the Lord is going to do absolutely the same for the nations that surround him.

They are going to be included in God's kingdom. There's one last passage that I want us to look at in Jeremiah that I think reflects exactly the same idea. God has plans of salvation for the nations that are just like the plans and the designs and the intentions that he has for the people of Israel.

Missions in the Bible does not begin with the Great Commission in Matthew 28. Missionary endeavor does not begin with Acts 1-8 and God sending his people out to be witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the ends of the earth. Missions begins with Genesis chapter 12.

Through you, I will bless all nations on earth. And so, the prophets, as they talk about the restoration of Israel, they are also going to talk about the restoration of the nations. One of the great missionary passages in all of the Old Testament that we will use to close our study of the book of Jeremiah is found for us in Jeremiah chapter 12, verses 14-17.

Listen to this passage. Thus says the Lord concerning all of my evil neighbors who touch the heritage that I have given my people Israel to inherit. Behold, I will pluck them up from their land, and I will pluck up the house of Judah from among them.

What's God going to do to the house of Judah? He's going to pluck them up, overturn, destroy. Those are the verbs that describe that work of judgment. God is going to do the same thing to the nations.

But here's the promise. After I have plucked them up, I will again have compassion on them. And that verse doesn't just talk about Judah.

It's talking about the nations. And I will bring them again each to his inheritance and each to his land. And it shall come to pass that if they diligently learn the ways of my people to swear by my name as the Lord lives, even as they taught my people to swear by Baal, then they shall be built up in the midst of my people.

Again, the same words that are used to describe the salvation of Israel, to plant and to build, describe the nations as well. An amazing thing is that God's salvation even extends to the Canaanites, who taught the Israelites to swear by Baal, the people who were supposed to have been destroyed when the Israelites came to the promised land. Even they get in on the blessings of salvation.

This is a reminder to us that God is ultimately going to build his kingdom from every tribe, every nation, and every people group. For the people of Israel, that kingdom was going to include people and nations that they would have never envisioned ever coming under God's blessing. Jeremiah, what a great and powerful book.

It's been an honor to be able to teach it and to be involved in this video series. But Jeremiah is a prophet of both judgment and salvation. And that judgment is for Israel and for the people of Judah.

And that salvation is for the people of Israel and Judah as well. But God's judgment and God's salvation are for the nations. And that's why the book of Jeremiah continues to speak to us and why it continues to have a powerful message that's relevant and applicable to us today, just as it was in the context in which it was first given.

Thank you again for being with us and being a part of this study.

This is Dr. Gary Yates in his teaching on the book of Jeremiah. This is the final session, session 30, on Jeremiah 50-51, The Oracles of the nation, particularly focused on Babylon.