

9/14/25

Sermon Title: God's declaration of judgment against Babylon and His promise of Restoration for Israel

Preacher: Pastor Kim Soonbae

Scripture Passage: Jeremiah 51:1-64

(Jeremiah 51:1) This is what the LORD says: "See, I will stir up the spirit of a destroyer against Babylon and the people of Leb Kamai.

(Jeremiah 51:2) I will send foreigners to Babylon to winnow her and to devastate her land; they will oppose her on every side in the day of her disaster.

(Jeremiah 51:3) Let not the archer string his bow, nor let him put on his armor. Do not spare her young men; completely destroy her army.

(Jeremiah 51:4) They will fall down slain in Babylon, fatally wounded in her streets.

(Jeremiah 51:5) For Israel and Judah have not been forsaken by their God, the LORD Almighty, though their land is full of guilt before the Holy One of Israel.

(Jeremiah 51:6) "Flee from Babylon! Run for your lives! Do not be destroyed because of her sins. It is time for the LORD's vengeance; he will repay her what she deserves.

(Jeremiah 51:7) Babylon was a gold cup in the LORD's hand; she made the whole earth drunk. The nations drank her wine; therefore they have now gone mad.

(Jeremiah 51:8) Babylon will suddenly fall and be broken. Wail over her! Get balm for her pain; perhaps she can be healed.

(Jeremiah 51:9) "'We would have healed Babylon, but she cannot be healed; let us leave her and each go to our own land, for her judgment reaches to the skies, it rises as high as the heavens.'

(Jeremiah 51:10) "'The LORD has vindicated us; come, let us tell in Zion what the LORD our God has done.'

(Jeremiah 51:11) "Sharpen the arrows, take up the shields! The LORD has stirred up the kings of the Medes, because his purpose is to destroy Babylon. The LORD will take vengeance, vengeance for his temple.

(Jeremiah 51:12) Lift up a banner against the walls of Babylon! Reinforce the guard, station the watchmen, prepare an ambush! The LORD will carry out his purpose, his decree against the people of Babylon.

(Jeremiah 51:13) You who live by many waters and are rich in treasures, your end has come, the time for you to be destroyed.

(Jeremiah 51:14) The LORD Almighty has sworn by himself: I will surely fill you with troops, as with a swarm of locusts, and they will shout in triumph over you.

(Jeremiah 51:15) “He made the earth by his power he founded the world by his wisdom and stretched out the heavens by his understanding.

(Jeremiah 51:16) When he thunders, the waters in the heavens roar; he makes clouds rise from the ends of the earth. He sends lightning with the rain and brings out the wind from his storehouses.

(Jeremiah 51:17) “Everyone is senseless and without knowledge; every goldsmith is shamed by his idols. The images he makes are a fraud; they have no breath in them.

(Jeremiah 51:18) They are worthless, the objects of mockery; when their judgment comes, they will perish.

(Jeremiah 51:19) He who is the Portion of Jacob is not like these, for he is the Maker of all things, including the people of his inheritance—the LORD Almighty is his name.

(Jeremiah 51:20) “You are my war club, my weapon for battle with you I shatter nations, with you I destroy kingdoms,

(Jeremiah 51:21) with you I shatter horse and rider, with you I shatter chariot and driver,

(Jeremiah 51:22) with you I shatter man and woman, with you I shatter old man and youth with you I shatter young man and young woman,

(Jeremiah 51:23) with you I shatter shepherd and flock, with you I shatter farmer and oxen, with you I shatter governors and officials.

(Jeremiah 51:24) “Before your eyes I will repay Babylon and all who live in Babylonia for all the wrong they have done in Zion,” declares the LORD.

(Jeremiah 51:25) “I am against you, you destroying mountain, you who destroy the whole earth,” declares the LORD. “I will stretch out my hand against you, roll you off the cliffs, and make you a burned-out mountain.

(Jeremiah 51:26) No rock will be taken from you for a cornerstone, nor any stone for a foundation, for you will be desolate forever,” declares the LORD.

(Jeremiah 51:27) “Lift up a banner in the land Blow the trumpet among the nations! Prepare the nations for battle against her; summon against her these kingdoms: Ararat, Minni and Ashkenaz. Appoint a commander against her; send up horses like a swarm of locusts.

(Jeremiah 51:28) Prepare the nations for battle against her—the kings of the Medes, their governors and all their officials, and all the countries they rule.

(Jeremiah 51:29) The land trembles and writhes, for the LORD’s purposes against Babylon stand—to lay waste the land of Babylon so that no one will live there.

(Jeremiah 51:30) Babylon’s warriors have stopped fighting; they remain in their strongholds. Their strength is exhausted; they have become weaklings. Her dwellings are set on fire; the bars of her gates are broken.

(Jeremiah 51:31) One courier follows another and messenger follows messenger to announce to the king of Babylon that his entire city is captured,

(Jeremiah 51:32) the river crossings seized, the marshes set on fire, and the soldiers terrified.”

(Jeremiah 51:33) This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: Daughter Babylon is like a threshing floor at the time it is trampled; the time to harvest her will soon come.”

(Jeremiah 51:34) “Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon has devoured us, he has thrown us into confusion, he has made us an empty jar. Like a serpent he has swallowed us and filled his stomach with our delicacies, and then has spewed us out.

(Jeremiah 51:35) May the violence done to our flesh¹⁰ be on Babylon,” say the inhabitants of Zion. May our blood be on those who live in Babylonia,” says Jerusalem.

(Jeremiah 51:36) Therefore this is what the LORD says: “See, I will defend your cause and avenge you; I will dry up her sea and make her springs dry.

(Jeremiah 51:37) Babylon will be a heap of ruins, a haunt of jackals, an object of horror and scorn, a place where no one lives.

(Jeremiah 51:38) Her people all roar like young lions, they growl like lion cubs.

(Jeremiah 51:39) But while they are aroused, I will set out a feast for them and make them drunk, so that they shout with laughter— then sleep forever and not awake,” declares the LORD.

(Jeremiah 51:40) “I will bring them down like lambs to the slaughter, like rams and goats.

(Jeremiah 51:41) “How Sheshak will be captured, the boast of the whole earth seized! How desolate Babylon will be among the nations!

(Jeremiah 51:42) The sea will rise over Babylon; its roaring waves will cover her.

(Jeremiah 51:43) Her towns will be desolate, a dry and desert land a land where no one lives through which no one travels.

(Jeremiah 51:44) I will punish Bel in Babylon and make him spew out what he has swallowed. The nations will no longer stream to him. And the wall of Babylon will fall.

(Jeremiah 51:45) “Come out of her, my people! Run for your lives! Run from the fierce anger of the LORD.

(Jeremiah 51:46) Do not lose heart or be afraid when rumors are heard in the land; one rumor comes this year, another the next, rumors of violence in the land and of ruler against ruler.

(Jeremiah 51:47) For the time will surely come when I will punish the idols of Babylon; her whole land will be disgraced and her slain will all lie fallen within her.

(Jeremiah 51:48) Then heaven and earth and all that is in them will shout for joy over Babylon, for out of the north destroyers will attack her,” declares the LORD.

(Jeremiah 51:49) “Babylon must fall because of Israel’s slain just as the slain in all the earth have fallen because of Babylon.

(Jeremiah 51:50) You who have escaped the sword, leave and do not linger! Remember the LORD in a distant land, and call to mind Jerusalem.”

(Jeremiah 51:51) “We are disgraced, for we have been insulted and shame covers our faces, because foreigners have entered the holy places of the LORD’s house.”

(Jeremiah 51:52) “But days are coming,” declares the LORD, “when I will punish her idols, and throughout her land the wounded will groan.

(Jeremiah 51:53) Even if Babylon ascends to the heavens and fortifies her lofty stronghold, I will send destroyers against her,” declares the LORD.

(Jeremiah 51:54) “The sound of a cry comes from Babylon, the sound of great destruction from the land of the Babylonians.

(Jeremiah 51:55) The LORD will destroy Babylon; he will silence her noisy din. Waves of enemies will rage like great waters; the roar of their voices will resound.

(Jeremiah 51:56) A destroyer will come against Babylon; her warriors will be captured, and their bows will be broken. For the LORD is a God of retribution; he will repay in full.

(Jeremiah 51:57) I will make her officials and wise men drunk, her governors, officers and warriors as well; they will sleep forever and not awake,” declares the King, whose name is the LORD Almighty.

(Jeremiah 51:58) This is what the LORD Almighty says: “Babylon’s thick wall will be leveled and her high gates set on fire; the peoples exhaust themselves for nothing, the nations’ labor is only fuel for the flames.”

(Jeremiah 51:59) This is the message Jeremiah the prophet gave to the staff officer Seraiah son of Neriah, the son of Mahseiah, when he went to Babylon with Zedekiah king of Judah in the fourth year of his reign.

(Jeremiah 51:60) Jeremiah had written on a scroll about all the disasters that would come upon Babylon—all that had been recorded concerning Babylon.

(Jeremiah 51:61) He said to Seraiah, “When you get to Babylon, see that you read all these words aloud.

(Jeremiah 51:62) Then say, ‘LORD, you have said you will destroy this place, so that neither people nor animals will live in it; it will be desolate forever.’

(Jeremiah 51:63) When you finish reading this scroll, tie a stone to it and throw it into the Euphrates.

(Jeremiah 51:64) Then say, ‘So will Babylon sink to rise no more because of the disaster I will bring on her. And her people will fall.’”

The words of Jeremiah end here.

Following the previous chapter, here is God’s declaration of judgment against Babylon and His promise of Israel’s restoration.

God used Babylon as an instrument to destroy Judah when they sinned against Him.

Yet in the end, He will destroy the very Babylon He once employed as His tool, and He will restore His people, Israel and Judah.

The Lord declares that He will use Cyrus, king of Persia, to utterly overthrow Babylon.

(Jeremiah 51:1) This is what the LORD says: “See, I will stir up the spirit of a destroyer against Babylon and the people of Leb Kamai.

(Jeremiah 51:2) I will send foreigners to Babylon to winnow her and to devastate her land; they will oppose her on every side in the day of her disaster.

(Jeremiah 51:3) Let not the archer string his bow, nor let him put on his armor. Do not spare her young men; completely destroy her army.

(Jeremiah 51:4) They will fall down slain in Babylon, fatally wounded in her streets.

God judged Israel for their sins using Babylon, but He did not utterly abandon them.

The Lord declares that He will judge Babylon in order to save His people Israel.

He commands the people of Judah, who were taken captive into Babylon, to flee from it so that they may preserve their lives.

(Jeremiah 51:5) For Israel and Judah have not been forsaken by their God, the LORD Almighty, though their land is full of guilt before the Holy One of Israel.

(Jeremiah 51:6) “Flee from Babylon! Run for your lives! Do not be destroyed because of her sins. It is time for the LORD’s vengeance; he will repay her what she deserves.

The covenant-keeping God declares that He will not utterly cast off Israel, the unfaithful wife, but will once again receive her as His pure bride.

Though Babylon had been used as God’s instrument, against whom no one could stand, it will nevertheless collapse helplessly before God’s judgment.

(Jeremiah 51:7) Babylon was a gold cup in the LORD’s hand; she made the whole earth drunk. The nations drank her wine; therefore they have now gone mad.

(Jeremiah 51:8) Babylon will suddenly fall and be broken. Wail over her! Get balm for her pain; perhaps she can be healed.

(Jeremiah 51:9) “‘We would have healed Babylon, but she cannot be healed; let us leave her and each go to our own land, for her judgment reaches to the skies, it rises as high as the heavens.’

The golden cup, Babylon, which had made many nations drunk, will be destroyed with no way of healing.

God declares that He will annihilate Babylon and bring Israel back to their own land.

At that time, the remnant of Israel returning to Zion will rejoice with gratitude, praising and proclaiming the God of salvation.

(Jeremiah 51:10) “‘The LORD has vindicated us; come, let us tell in Zion what the LORD our God has done.’

Here, “our righteousness” refers to the righteousness that is acknowledged through God’s grace.

God declares that He will bring retribution upon Babylon, which destroyed His temple, by using the Medes.

(Jeremiah 51:11) “Sharpen the arrows, take up the shields! The LORD has stirred up the kings of the Medes, because his purpose is to destroy Babylon. The LORD will take vengeance, vengeance for his temple.

(Jeremiah 51:12) Lift up a banner against the walls of Babylon! Reinforce the guard, station the watchmen, prepare an ambush! The LORD will carry out his purpose, his decree against the people of Babylon.

(Jeremiah 51:13) You who live by many waters and are rich in treasures, your end has come, the time for you to be destroyed.

(Jeremiah 51:14) The LORD Almighty has sworn by himself: I will surely fill you with troops, as with a swarm of locusts, and they will shout in triumph over you. Babylon, with the Euphrates River and its many canals, possessed fertile farmland that allowed it to accumulate great wealth.

Even so, such things were useless before God’s judgment.

Just as God had spoken, Babylon was utterly destroyed around 550 BC by the combined forces of the Medes and Persians.

The royal houses of Media and Persia were related by marriage, as the mother of Cyrus, king of Persia, was a Mede.

However, later (in 539 BC), Media was conquered by King Cyrus of Persia.

Although the people of Israel disobeyed God and lost the promised land He had given them, becoming captives in Babylon, they remember the praises once lifted up in the temple. They confess that the Lord their God, whom they alone worship, is the One who created all things and is Israel’s inheritance.

And they awaited the day of restoration that God had promised.

(Jeremiah 51:15) “He made the earth by his power he founded the world by his wisdom and stretched out the heavens by his understanding.

(Jeremiah 51:16) When he thunders, the waters in the heavens roar; he makes clouds rise from the ends of the earth. He sends lightning with the rain and brings out the wind from his storehouses.

(Jeremiah 51:17) “Everyone is senseless and without knowledge; every goldsmith is shamed by his idols. The images he makes are a fraud; they have no breath in them.

(Jeremiah 51:18) They are worthless, the objects of mockery; when their judgment comes, they will perish.

(Jeremiah 51:19) He who is the Portion of Jacob is not like these, for he is the Maker of all things, including the people of his inheritance—the LORD Almighty is his name.

They confess that the idols cast and shaped by human hands cannot save them, and that only the living Lord God is able to deliver them.

“Jacob’s portion” refers to the God of Jacob, highlighting the extraordinary privilege that belongs to Israel.

Though Babylon had once been God’s instrument of judgment, given authority to strike down the nations, it too will now face destruction because of its own wickedness.

After the Lord has completed His judgment upon Mount Zion and Jerusalem, He will also bring judgment upon proud Babylon.

(Jeremiah 51:24) “Before your eyes I will repay Babylon and all who live in Babylonia for all the wrong they have done in Zion,” declares the LORD.

(Jeremiah 51:25) “I am against you, you destroying mountain, you who destroy the whole earth,” declares the LORD. “I will stretch out my hand against you, roll you off the cliffs, and make you a burned-out mountain.

(Jeremiah 51:26) No rock will be taken from you for a cornerstone, nor any stone for a foundation, for you will be desolate forever,” declares the LORD.

Babylon will suffer in the same way they acted against God's land, Zion, at the hands of the Medo-Persian alliance, and they will be left in an irrecoverable state. The inhabitants of Zion and the people of Israel will lament the dreadful suffering they have endured at the hands of Babylon, and the Lord God will hear their cry and avenge them by bringing Babylon to destruction.

(Jeremiah 51:34) "Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon has devoured us, he has thrown us into confusion, he has made us an empty jar. Like a serpent he has swallowed us and filled his stomach with our delicacies, and then has spewed us out.

(Jeremiah 51:35) May the violence done to our flesh¹⁹ be on Babylon," say the inhabitants of Zion. May our blood be on those who live in Babylonia," says Jerusalem.

(Jeremiah 51:36) Therefore this is what the LORD says: "See, I will defend your cause and avenge you; I will dry up her sea and make her springs dry.

(Jeremiah 51:37) Babylon will be a heap of ruins, a haunt of jackals, an object of horror and scorn, a place where no one lives.

God commands the people of Israel, who are captives in the land of Babylon, to leave, for Babylon's destruction is imminent.

(Jeremiah 51:45) "Come out of her, my people! Run for your lives! Run from the fierce anger of the LORD.

(Jeremiah 51:46) Do not lose heart or be afraid when rumors are heard in the land; one rumor comes this year, another the next, rumors of violence in the land and of ruler against ruler.

(Jeremiah 51:47) For the time will surely come when I will punish the idols of Babylon; her whole land will be disgraced and her slain will all lie fallen within her.

He says not to be afraid of the rumors of war and turmoil.

Because through war and turmoil Babylon will be destroyed, but the people of Judah will receive salvation.

With the fall of Babylon, shouts of victory will erupt.

(Jeremiah 51:48) Then heaven and earth and all that is in them will shout for joy over Babylon, for out of the north destroyers will attack her,” declares the LORD.

(Jeremiah 51:49) “Babylon must fall because of Israel’s slain just as the slain in all the earth have fallen because of Babylon.

Now the people of Israel only need to trust in God’s covenant and use their time in Babylonian captivity as an opportunity for repentance.

In the fourth year of King Zedekiah (593 B.C.), he went to Babylon with Seraiah, the quartermaster.

King Zedekiah had gathered the kings of Edom, Moab, Tyre, and Sidon in Jerusalem to conspire against Babylon, but when King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon found out, Zedekiah likely went to smooth things over.

(Jeremiah 51:59) This is the message Jeremiah the prophet gave to the staff officer Seraiah son of Neriah, the son of Mahseiah, when he went to Babylon with Zedekiah king of Judah in the fourth year of his reign.

This took place in the fourth year after Babylon plundered part of the temple in Jerusalem and carried the people into captivity for the second time (597 B.C.).

It was nine years before the third invasion (586 B.C.), when Judah was completely destroyed.

Seraiah was the brother of Baruch, Jeremiah’s scribe and secretary.

The prophet Jeremiah gave Seraiah a scroll containing the prophecy against Babylon and instructed him to read all the words in Babylon, then tie the scroll to a stone and throw it into the Euphrates River.

(Jeremiah 51:60) Jeremiah had written on a scroll about all the disasters that would come upon Babylon—all that had been recorded concerning Babylon.

(Jeremiah 51:61) He said to Seraiah, “When you get to Babylon, see that you read all these words aloud.

(Jeremiah 51:62) Then say, ‘LORD, you have said you will destroy this place, so that neither people nor animals will live in it; it will be desolate forever.’

It is not explicitly stated before whom the scroll was to be read, but the intended audience was most likely the Jews who had been taken captive to Babylon.

Previously, the prophet Jeremiah had urged the Jews to surrender to Babylon and settle there.

But now, declaring that God’s appointed time had come, he commands them to prepare to leave that land.

Thus, the prophet Jeremiah concludes his ministry by delivering God’s words of judgment against the nations—beginning with Egypt and ending with Babylon.

(Jeremiah 51:63) When you finish reading this scroll, tie a stone to it and throw it into the Euphrates.

(Jeremiah 51:64) Then say, ‘So will Babylon sink to rise no more because of the disaster I will bring on her. And her people will fall.’”

The words of Jeremiah end here.

Beloved members of Church of God’s Dream,

God has declared judgment on Babylon, which He once used as an instrument of His discipline, and now commands His people—those taken into exile there—to leave it.

He tells them not to fear war or unrest.

For while these will bring terror to Babylon, they will bring joy of liberation to God’s people.

On that day, the whole world will see many fall slain in Babylon.

This word does not merely mean to escape from the physical place called Babylon.

Spiritually, it signifies leaving behind idolatry and human pride, which Babylon represents.

The world today is unsettled with rumors of wars and unrest, much like what came upon ancient Babylon.

On September 10, in Nepal, Generation Z led riots.

They set fire to the presidential residence, government buildings, and the homes of politicians, and incidents occurred such as the assault of the Speaker of Parliament and the Foreign Minister. These were outbreaks of public anger toward the ruling class that had amassed wealth unjustly.

On the same day in the United States, right-wing young leader Charlie Kirk was shot dead while giving a lecture at Utah Valley University.

As a result, the atmosphere across the U.S. has become tense.

Politicians, fearing to appear before the crowds, have canceled all gatherings.

Yet even so, we as God's people need not be afraid.

For God's judgment on ungodly humanity opens the way to a new heaven and a new earth, where the glory of the Lord will fill the skies.

In the fall of Babylon, we see God judging all human toil done without Him, all efforts that refused to worship Him.

Let us quickly leave Babylon.

To leave Babylon means that, through the redeeming blood of Jesus Christ, forgiven and justified saints separate themselves from the world and keep themselves holy.

On the day when God judges Babylon, we, the believers who have departed from Babylon, will joyfully praise God in the new heaven and the new earth.