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## The “Fall of Babylon” Motif in the Books of Jeremiah and Revelation

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The New Testament use of and relation to the Old Testament is well documented, especially the Old Testament echoes in the Apocalypse.<sup>1</sup> While the book of Jeremiah has the least number of quotations and allusions in the book of Revelation,<sup>2</sup> it plays a key role in the motif of the Fall of Babylon, a theme which is shared between both writings. Indeed, no other Old Testament book has as sustained or as dramatic a picture as does Jeremiah on this issue (chaps 25; 50-51). For this reason, it is worth exploring the relationship between Jeremiah and Revelation, since the Apocalypse has also devoted much space to the same issue (chaps. 14:8; 16:17-19:16).

In an attempt to avoid subjective “parallelomania,”<sup>3</sup> we are not trying to prove that John borrowed from Jeremiah. Instead, we are establishing probable thematic links that bind both books, especially in light of the theme of the Fall of Babylon. This study, therefore, shows the connections between mystical Babylon in the Apocalypse (identified as “all apostate religious organizations and their leadership”)<sup>4</sup> and its historical counterpart in the OT book of Jeremiah.

### I. God’s Sovereignty

The fact that ultimate authority rests with God is demonstrated in that He is the real antagonist behind the punitive actions actuated against Babylon. Interestingly, He used Babylon as the agent of destruction for His own people, Judah. So even the judgment *by* Babylon shows that final power is in His command. We may observe this in Jer 25:8 where God calls Nebuchadnezzar “my servant.”<sup>5</sup> Further, the strength of the statements designate God as the real antagonist behind the judgment: “I will summon . . . ; I will completely

*JOURNAL OF THE ADVENTIST THEOLOGICAL SOCIETY*

destroy” (vs. 9). This is nothing less than the *ban*, that is, the irrevocable giving over of things or people to the Lord, often by totally destroying them.

In a similar vein, judgment *against* Babylon is also directed by the hand of God. Note the directness and strength of the language: “I will finish . . . Babylon” (vs 12); “I will bring upon that land all *my words* that I have pronounced against it . . .” (vs. 13).

It is also important to realize that God determines when the hour of Babylon’s judgment comes. Babylon will have its way for 70 years (25: 11-12). This is God’s determination and not that of humankind. It is not merely the political movements of the international scene that dictate Babylon’s judgment. *It is God’s determination.*<sup>6</sup>

In short, according to Jeremiah, God used Babylon to effect judgment against His people. However, even if Babylon was cognizant that this occurred because of Israel’s sin, her boastful disclaimer, “We are not guilty” (Jer 50:7), is illegitimate. Because God is supreme, He could use Babylon to effect His cause, and then in turn, adjudicate punitive measures against her.

In the book of Revelation, however, it does not appear that Babylon was an agent used by God to accomplish His divine will. But here too, even though Babylon is the “Mother of Prostitutes and the Abominations of the Earth” (Rev. 17:5), she too is subject to the authority of God. Even her boastful claim, “I sit as queen; I am not a widow” (Rev 19:7), will not suffice in the day of her visitation.

Indeed, Babylon’s allies are the ones who turn on her and render evil against her. Even though the horn and beast powers once supported Babylon, they will turn on her and render her desolate and naked, exposing her shame. Inebriated by hate, they will prey on her like a carnivorous beast which violently and completely devours its catch. Whatever is left will be consumed by fire (Rev 17:16).

When this ruination comes it is because God has effected it “to accomplish His purpose” (vs.17) and until His “words are fulfilled” (vs.17). The divine will is behind the devastation of Babylon, and it comes according to God’s timetable, not any human, political intrigue. The connotation is transparent: God is the One who effects judgment against Babylon. *It is God’s determination.*

In both Jeremiah and Revelation, the facts indicate that despite the agents used in the judgment, the real protagonist behind the fall of Babylon is God. He is supreme.

John Thompson’s comment concerning the prophet’s passion against the nations is also appropriate to the book of Revelation:

### MULZAC: THE “FALL OF BABYLON” MOTIF

Prophecies against the nations were one aspect of the prophetic ministry. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Amos, Nahum, and Obadiah all have considerable sections devoted to the theme, while other prophets generally mention the nations. Such prophecies indicate Israel’s view that Yahweh was not merely the God of Israel but was *Lord over all the nations of the world, whose destiny lay in God’s hands.*<sup>7</sup>

#### II. Certainty of Judgment.

Jeremiah 25:13 indicates the surety of judgment in light of “all that is written in this book (i.e. Jeremiah) and prophesied by the prophet Jeremiah against all nations.” Jeremiah’s prophecies against the nations are found in chaps 46-51,<sup>8</sup> with 50-51 dedicated to Babylon alone. From the outset, the proclamation of judgment rings with the tones of absolute certainty for Babylon’s gods will be annihilated, her religion damned, her land decimated, and her people wasted (50: 1-3). This theme is threaded throughout Jeremiah’s prophecy against Babylon: 50:9-13; 18, 24, 31, 40, 44; 51:12-14; 24-26; 41-44. In 50:35-38, the prophet graphically describes the judgment in a sustained manner by repeating five times that a “sword is against” (i.e. death) Babylon’s people, leaders, warriors, and treasures.

This same certainty is observed in Revelation 14:8 and 18:2, where a similar shout is heard: “Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great!” In fact, the Revelator speaks with such clarity and surety of imminent judgment, that although it has not yet come, it is described as though it has already occurred. The word *epesen* is in the aorist tense, indicating that this is a done deal.

In fact, the fall of Babylon has already been spied on by Jeremiah when he says, “Babylon will suddenly fall and be broken” (51:8; cf. Isa. 21:9). This may contribute to the repetitive lament of Rev 18: 10, 17, 19 that Babylon’s ruin is effected in one hour.

Kenneth Strand has well illustrated that the main part of Rev 18 denotes the “actual *execution* of judgment” after an investigation has taken place.<sup>9</sup>

Indeed, just as both prophets describe Babylon as one who lives by “many waters” (Jer 51:13; Rev 17: 1,15); and being rich (Jer 51: 13; Rev 18:11-17), so too they underline the certitude of judgment against her.

#### III. Reason For Judgment

This addresses the reasons *why* judgment befalls Babylon. Jer 25:14b plainly states, “I will repay them according to their deeds and the work of their hands.” The judgment is further described as a “time

*JOURNAL OF THE ADVENTIST THEOLOGICAL SOCIETY*

for the Lord's vengeance" to "pay her what she deserves" (Jer 51:6). Again, "Repay her for her deeds, do to her as she has done" (Jer 50:29b).

This sentiment is echoed in Rev 18:6, "Give back to her as she has given; pay her back double for what she has done. Mix her a double portion from her own cup." Judgment is depicted in terms of justice and retribution according to the actions of Babylon. This is consistent with scripture (Ps 137: 8-9). The basic factor is that Babylon is guilty (Jer 25: 12).

Both Jeremiah and John underscore Babylon's actions as deserving just retribution based on three factors:

(1) *She is the enemy of God.* Jeremiah's shout that "she has sinned against God" (50:14b) is echoed in John's record of her prostitution and the "golden cup in her hand filled with abominations and the filth of her adulteries" (Rev 17:2, 4). Little wonder the testimony of Rev 18:5 is that "her sins are piled up to heaven, and God has remembered her crimes" (cf. Jer 51: 9). Further, Babylon is seen as being blasphemous (Rev 17:3) and full of pride, boasting, "I sit as a queen; I am not a widow, and I will never mourn" (18:7b).

It is precisely such hubris that led to ancient Babylon's decimation by Yahweh. In her bid for world domination, Babylon "engaged in a contest" (Jer 50:24b)<sup>10</sup> with Yahweh and acted in proud defiance of His authority (vs. 25b).<sup>11</sup> In fact, the force of Babylon's absolutely reprehensible blasphemy of arrogantly disregarding God is captured in the noun *zadon* in vss. 31, 32. Here, "Babylon is apostrophized as "insolence personified."<sup>12</sup> "Insolence" is therefore to be cauterized without hope of renewal. Because of her overwhelming pride, Yahweh's judgment renders Babylon to be destroyed without leaving a trace. Perhaps this picture lies behind Rev 18:7-8, describing speedy judgment directed by the "mighty . . . Lord God who judges her."

(2) *She is the enemy of God's people.* Babylon opposes not only God, but by her tyrannical activity, she oppresses and opposes God's people. The truth of the historical record of Babylon's activities against Israel is clearly documented. The Babylonian captivity speaks of this. Babylon "pillaged my inheritance," says the Lord (Jer 50:11) and claimed that she was guiltless (vs.7). But her oppression is magnified in verse: "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 spewed us out. May the violence done to our flesh be upon Babylon,' say the inhabitants of Zion. 'May our blood be on those who live in Babylonia,'" says Jerusalem" (Jer 51:34-35 [NIV]).

In fact, Babylon's opposition to Israel is described as crushing his bones (Jer 50:17). This is why her judgment is based, in part, according

### MULZAC: THE “FALL OF BABYLON” MOTIF

“as she has done to others” (vs.15). Babylon’s actions as a tyrannical imperium are made the grounds for her own defeat: “Repay her according to her deeds; do to her according to all she has done” (50:29). The same mighty Babylon who in her zenith of power as “the hammer of the whole earth” (vs. 23) had smashed the nations into subjugation will suffer similar defeat. The completion of judgment is evident, in that those expected to be most resilient, young men and soldiers, will be destroyed (vss. 30-31). Indeed, the lack of survivors or escapees is highlighted in that the consuming fire of Yahweh’s wrath will destroy “all who are around her”(vs. 32; cf. Rev. 18:8).

This same retributive justice is noted in Rev 18:6, “Give her back as she has given.” John adds a significant detail, “Pay her back *double* for what she has done. Mix her a *double* portion from her own cup.” Such a condemnation is demanded because of Babylon’s murderous opposition to God’s people: John describes her as being “drunk with the blood of the saints, the blood of those who bore testimony to Jesus” (Rev 17:6). Again, “In her was found the blood of the prophets and of the saints, and of all who have been killed on the earth” (18:24; cf. 16:6).

Such repayment or retribution reflects a verdict handed down by a court of justice. It is based on the law of malicious witness (Deut 19:16-19). Strand comments:

In the case of the malicious false witness, “both parties to the dispute shall appear before the Lord, before the priests and judges who are in office in those days” and “the judges shall inquire diligently.” If the witness was found to be a false witness, “then you shall do to him as he had meant to do to his brother. In our setting in Rev 18, Babylon has this verdict rendered against her—in double measure. . . The verdict is to render against Babylon the judgment that she, the malicious false witness, had rendered against God’s people.<sup>13</sup>

It cannot be overemphasized that Babylon is the antagonist against God and His people.

(3) *Babylon is corrupt*. Jer 51:7 asserts that Babylon was a golden cup (a reference to her great wealth) in the hand of God. She functioned as an instrument of Yahweh’s wrath against the nations, making them drunk with her wine, the effect of which was madness.

John, however, depicts Babylon not as a cup in God’s hand, but having her own cup, and with the wine of her adulteries contained therein, she intoxicated the inhabitants of the earth. This golden cup is “filled with abominable things and the filth of her adulteries” (Rev 17:2, 4; cf. 14:8). This is a reference to her false teachings, which are

#### *JOURNAL OF THE ADVENTIST THEOLOGICAL SOCIETY*

equivalent to the idolatrous practices of ancient Babylon, detailed by Jeremiah.

She has divorced herself from God and is acting independently of Him. This is the height of rebellion (cf. Is. 14:12-14). But in the day of her visitation (Rev. 17:1), Babylon the Unclean (the Great, 16:19) is compelled to swallow the cup of God's wrath (16:19). Hence, God is still sovereign.

#### **IV. Symbols of Judgment**

1. *Cup of wrath.* Jer 25:15 states, "Take from my hand this cup filled with the wine of my wrath and make all nations to whom I send you, drink it."<sup>14</sup> The figure of the "cup of wrath"<sup>15</sup> indicates judgment in the form of a compelling drink which has a stupefying effect: those who drink will stagger<sup>16</sup> and go mad (vs.16). Jeremiah uses the same figure in 13: 12-14 to designate a ruthless destruction against *all* levels of society: royalty, religious leaders, and common people, even the family unit.

Commentators agree that the cup of raging wine<sup>17</sup> is a metaphor which "symbolizes Yahweh's resolve to consummate His judgment against them" (the nations).<sup>18</sup> The manner in which the prophet is to execute the divinely issued command is not known (vs. 15), but the effects of drinking are clear (vs. 16). The cup of judgment is the sword that Yahweh will employ to effect the fate of the victims.

The nature of the task is seen in the comprehensive list of nations to whom the prophet must fulfill this command (vss. 17-26). Probably, Jerusalem and Judah are mentioned first because of the unique covenant they had with God. The description as an object of curse reminds one of the covenant context, for "curse is part of broken covenant as surely as blessing is a part of obeyed covenant."<sup>19</sup>

The concern here is not to pinpoint the geographical location of each nation but to note two significant factors: (1) *the universality of the judgment* and (2) *the inevitability of the judgment*. None is exempt. Not even Jerusalem can claim "most favored nation" status. The striking issue in the listing of the nations is not the geographical movement, (i.e., starting with Egypt to the southwest of Judah and moving northward; or moving from neighboring to more distant nations), but that all are included. Further, it demonstrates that the mighty enemies of Judah will also perish: from Egypt, the first tyrant, to the present antagonist, Babylon. This is reinforced by the inevitability of the judgment, as emphasized in vss. 27-29. All must drink. If the work of evil begins with Jerusalem, the elect city of God, how could the foreign nations be exempt? All must suffer a similar fate, the mighty enemies

### MULZAC: THE “FALL OF BABYLON” MOTIF

of Judah as well as tribes with whom Judah had no contact. This universality and inevitability of judgment are subtly highlighted, in that even those already reduced to insignificance, “the remnant of Ashdod,” will suffer the divine wrath.

This passage indicates that there is no safety in the multitude of nations. All will fall, even those that seem impregnable, like Egypt and Babylon. Finally, only Yahweh will remain. His sovereignty is ultimate.

This is precisely the case with mystical Babylon as recorded in Rev 16:19 in a message concerning the consuming fury of “God’s wrath on the earth” (16:1). The entire chapter details God’s punitive actions on a *universal scale*. *Inevitability of judgment* is seen in the exclamation, “It is done!” (vs. 17). Then the cryptic statement is added, “God remembered Babylon the Great (Grk., Unclean) and gave her the cup filled with the wine of the fury of His wrath” (vs. 19). Even Babylon that boasts, “I will never mourn” (18:7), will fall. Only God will remain.

(2) *The mourning*. Jeremiah repeatedly symbolizes the judgment in terms of “mourning” (50:46; 51:8-9a; 52b;54). In each instance the wail is followed by an indicator signaling *imminent destruction*. The same holds true for Revelation. Describing chapter 18 as “a sort of funeral litany,”<sup>20</sup> Strand illustrates the chiasmic structure, demonstrating that the central factor (vss. 9-19) is a litany characterized by mourning at the judgment scene. Mourning is followed by an indicator signaling both *imminence* (“in one hour”) and *absolute destruction*.<sup>21</sup>

(3) *The stone*. The closing act of Jer was to write out all the disaster that would befall Babylon, rendering it a desolate, uninhabited wasteland as divined by the judgment of God. He instructed the courier, Seriah<sup>22</sup> to perform a symbolic act: tie the scroll to a stone and throw it into the Euphrates, and pronounce, “So will Babylon sink to rise no more . . .” (51:64). This signaled the violent end of Babylon.

The closing act of divine judgment against Babylon in Revelation is narrated in 18:21, “Then a mighty angel picked up a boulder the size of a millstone and threw it into the sea . . .” What follows is a series of pronouncements asserting, “With such violence the great city of Babylon will be thrown down, *never* to be found again” (vs 21b). The absolute nature of punitive action is verified in that six times the negation (“no;” “no more;” “never”) is repeated against her (vss. 21-23).

### V. Result of Judgment

Judgment has a two-fold result: annihilation of Babylon and salvation for God’s people.

(1) *Annihilation of Babylon*. This may be described in terms of:

*JOURNAL OF THE ADVENTIST THEOLOGICAL SOCIETY*

(a) *Great reversal*. In Jer 50:9-16a Yahweh directs an enemy (from the N) to destroy Babylon. The tumble of imperatives (“set yourselves” [*irku*]; “shoot” [*yedu*]; “raise a shout” [*hari u*]) expresses a sense of eager anticipation for this destruction. The vengeance of the Lord demands that Babylon’s punishment equals the evil she has done (vs. 15a). This is the principle of *lex talionis*. Therefore, she is to be “cut off” (*krt* vs.16a), i.e., rooted out, eliminated, or destroyed by a violent act.<sup>23</sup> This is a *great reversal*. Babylon had once destroyed cities and peoples; now she throws up her hands in surrender: *nat nah yadah*, “she has given her hand.”<sup>24</sup>

This section expresses the “great reversal”<sup>25</sup> of the fortunes of Babylon.

Yahweh’s judgment of and the fall of Babylon, are introduced by a summons to battle. Yahweh commands the invading forces to destroy Babylon. Yet it is clear that while these are agents of destruction, Yahweh Himself is behind this punitive action.<sup>26</sup>

The first intervention (vs. 21) is particularly caustic in its description of the unleashing of unrelenting judgment: “Attack the land of Merathaim and those who live in Pekod. Pursue, kill and utterly destroy,” declares the Lord “Do everything I have commanded you.” There is more than geographical location in the names Merathaim and Pekod.<sup>27</sup> This is a scorching wordplay. As Thompson shows, “The root *mrh* means ‘to rebel’, and the form of the word is a dual, meaning ‘(land of) double rebellion’ or ‘two-fold rebel’, that is, ‘rebel of rebels.’”<sup>28</sup> The root *pqd*, “to punish,” points to Pekod, that is, the “land of doom.”<sup>29</sup> Hence, the names correspond to what Babylon will experience when God’s wrath is vented on her as her enemies attack her. Further, the call for complete destruction is nothing less than the ban, the talionic principle.<sup>30</sup>

A similar situation may be observed in the Revelation. Babylon made the nations drink the portion of her adulteries (17:2; 18:3); she now drinks the wine of God’s wrath (16:19). The same principle of *lex talionis* (just or legal retribution) is meted out as 18:6 denotes: “Give back to her as she has given; pay her back double<sup>31</sup> for what she has done. Mix her a double portion from her own cup.”

While it seemed that Babylon had a free hand to do as she pleased, divorced from God and guilty of heinous crimes, the judgment against her reverses this, for “God has remembered her crimes”(18:5).

Further, reversal is noted, in that, while Babylon once enjoyed regal status (18:7) and ruled over the kings of the earth (17:18), these same ones will in turn devour her (vs. 16). Also, the wealth and luxury characteristic of Babylon (17:4; 18:9-19) are snatched away such that she is reduced to a despicable haunt (18:2; cf. Jer 50:39).



### MULZAC: THE “FALL OF BABYLON” MOTIF

(b) *No remnant*. Jer 50:26-27 continues the stinging threat of judgment. In brilliant images, the poet declares Yahweh’s open arsenal, the invading forces, tearing apart the enemy and laying waste the land. The metaphors are taken from the harvesting process, in that granaries bursting with produce are to be torn open and the precious grain spilled out in heaps. Her “bulls” (vs. 27), a metaphor for the Babylonian soldiers, the strong ones of the nation,<sup>32</sup> are to be slaughtered. The destruction is absolutely complete, such that there is no thread of anything left. No remnant will survive the disaster, so terrible it will be. Carroll comments correctly, “Such a reversal of the harvest is the *death* of a culture. . . . Yet how well the images of destroyed granaries convey the idea of a powerful and politically sated empire such as Babylon being overrun and devastated by invaders!”<sup>33</sup>

Babylon’s destruction is seen as complete decimation. Not even a tiny fraction of the former whole must be left. Babylon must be totally and comprehensively overthrown so that the possibility of rejuvenation and rebuilding is eradicated.

This absolute lack of a remnant is highlighted in that there is a “common emphasis on the totality of Babylon’s destruction: it must be utterly destroyed (vs.21); utterly destroyed without remainder (vs. 26); and with none escaping (vs. 29).”<sup>34</sup>

Indeed, the surety and absoluteness of Babylon’s judgment is portrayed in that it is likened to the destruction of Assyria (50:18), Sodom and Gomorrah (vs. 40).

While the technical term for “remnant” (*loipos*) is not present in the verses dealing with Babylon’s overthrow, the thought is certainly prevalent. No remnant will be left in Babylon. The following statements indicate this: “All your riches and splendor have vanished, *never* to be recovered” (18:14); “the great city of Babylon will be thrown down, *never* to be found again” (vs.21); *never again* will the sound of music be heard; the tradesmen fly their crafts; light shine; and marriage be consummated (vss. 22-23). Nothing short of absolute decimation is in view here.

2. *Salvation*. It is precisely God’s judgment against Babylon that effects the liberation of His people. At the very time the ban (the irrevocable giving over of things or persons to God, often by totally destroying them) is leveled against Babylon (Jer 51: 3-4), God proclaims, “Israel and Judah have not been forsaken by their God, the Lord Almighty. . .” (vs.5). God’s sovereignty again comes to the forefront: just as He inflicted punishment, He effects salvation. (And this according to His time schedule (cf. Jer 29:10 ff.).

Jer 50: 4-20 provides a summary statement of salvation in terms of restoration for the remnant. Four (4) factors are underscored:

### *JOURNAL OF THE ADVENTIST THEOLOGICAL SOCIETY*

unity of the people (vs. 4); repentance (vs. 4);<sup>35</sup> covenant renewal (vs. 5; cf. 31:31-34; 32:40); and forgiveness (vs. 20).<sup>36</sup> Again, this is all accomplished by God, within the very context of Babylon's defeat. At all points, "Israel's future will be a commensurate reversal of its past."<sup>37</sup>

In Jer 50:34 God is the Redeemer of Israel. His salvific power is attested to in His *name* and *activity*. He is Yahweh of Hosts, that is, the God mighty in battle. This is the Warrior God who fights for His people. He acts as their advocate in that He Himself will plead their cause.<sup>38</sup>

John's description of "the punishment of the great prostitute" (17:1) indicates that in the controversy with the Lamb, whose name is "Lord of lords and king of Kings," the combined forces of horns, kings, and beasts will be defeated. In rage, they will turn on the prostitute (Babylon) and devour her (17:14,16). This is accomplished according to God's purpose and time ("until God's words are fulfilled"- vs.18). But within this very context of judgment, the Lamb's victory effects salvation for those who are "with him . . . his called, chosen and faithful followers" (vs.14b). His *name* and *activity* clearly bespeak salvation. As the Supreme Commander He defeats the foe and saves His people.

In both prophets, judgment and salvation are juxtaposed. Nevertheless, a solemn responsibility devolves upon the people. In view of Babylon's despicable and deplorable situation, and the verdict pronounced against her, the divine warning and invitation is: "Flee from Babylon! Run for your lives! Do not be destroyed because of her sins. Come out of her, my people! Run for your lives! Run from the fierce anger of the Lord" (Jer 51:6,45).

The parallel in Revelation is certain: "Come out of her, my people, so that you will not share in her sins, so that you will not receive any of her plagues" (18:4).

God's salvific activity is not arbitrary. Yes, Babylon will be judged. But those who will escape it must make and act on a conscious decision to cooperate with God. Refusal to do so results in judgment. Acceptance results in salvation. Indeed, judgment and salvation are juxtaposed.

### **VI. Exultation of God**

With the defeat of Babylon and the salvation of God's people, the cry of victory resounds, "Then heaven and earth and all that is in them will shout for joy over Babylon . . . You who have escaped the sword, leave and do not linger! Remember the Lord in a distant land, and think on Jerusalem" (Jer 51: 48, 50). God is exalted because He is Creator, whose nature distances Him from fraudulent idols (Jer 51:15-

### MULZAC: THE “FALL OF BABYLON” MOTIF

19); and whose sovereignty allows Him to use Babylon for His purposes, yet punish her appropriately (vss. 20-24).

In similar fashion, Rev 18:20 celebrates the retributive justice of God: “Rejoice over her, O heaven! Rejoice, saints and apostles and prophets! God has judged her for the way she treated you.

In fact, Rev 19:1-16 erupts in praise for God’s vengeance on Babylon and the salvation of His people (described as a bride ready for her wedding and dressed in fine linen). But note vss.1-2: “Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God, true and just are His judgments. He has condemned the great prostitute who corrupted the earth by her adulteries. He has avenged on her the blood of His servants”.

Finally, the great prostitute with her title: MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF PROSTITUTES AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH (17:5) is defeated by the One who is LORD OF LORDS AND KING OF KINGS (19:16). This is the culmination of the fall of Babylon and the establishment of God’s kingdom.

### Conclusion

The judgment against Babylon is effected by God. As Sovereign Lord (Jer 50:25), the Lord Almighty (51:14,33; 58), He is “the Lord God, omnipotent,” whose judgments are “true and righteous” (Rev 16:7). His sovereignty as King (Jer 51:57) cannot be overlooked. In fact, in the grand finale celebrating His victory over Babylon, He is hailed as King of Kings and Lord of lords” (Rev 19:16).

Absolute judgment is leveled against Babylon in terms of the ban. Further, the principle of *lex talionis* is applicable. In fact, as a God of retribution (Jer 51:56), the Lord avenges Babylon both on His own and His people’s behalf (Jer 51:11, 24, 36; Rev 18:5-6; 20; 19:2). But it is this very act of judgment that effects the salvation of God’s people. In both prophets, judgment and salvation are juxtaposed. The Fall of Babylon indicates both the destruction of that people *and* the salvation of God’s people.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> R.V.G. Tasker, *The Old Testament in the New Testament* (London: SCM Press, 1946); F. F. Bruce, *The New Testament Development of Old Testament Themes* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1969); James M. Eifird, ed., *The Use of the Old Testament in the New and other Essays* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1972); M. Black, “The Theological Appropriation of the Old Testament by the New Testament,” *SJT* 39 (1986): 1-18; L. P. Trudinger, “The Text of the Old Testament in the Book of Revelation” (Th.D dissertation, Boston University, 1963); C. G. Ozanne, “The Influence of the Text and Language of the Old Testament on the Book of Revelation” (Ph.D Thesis, University of Manchester, 1964); Jon Paulien, “Elusive Allusions: The Problematic Use of the Old Testament in Revelation,” *BR*

## JOURNAL OF THE ADVENTIST THEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

33 (1988): 37-53; Steve Moyise, *The Old Testament in the Book of Revelation*, JSNTS 115 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995).

<sup>2</sup> Moyise, 16.

<sup>3</sup> S. Sandmel, "Parallelomania," *JBL* 81 (1962): 1-13.

<sup>4</sup> F.D. Nichol, ed., *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 5 (Washington D.C.: Review and Herald, 19), 830.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Isa 44:28, where Cyrus is called "my shepherd."

<sup>6</sup> Daniel recognized this very fact as reflected in Daniel 9, where, on the basis of his study of the book of Jeremiah, he prays, asking God to effect salvation (Dan. 9:2; cf. 2 Chron. 36:21-22; Zech. 7:5).

<sup>7</sup> John Thompson, *Jeremiah* NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 687 (Emphasis mine).

<sup>8</sup> In LXX these chapters are interspersed from 25:14b in the MT. It suggests that these may have been an independent unit, especially since they form a distinct block in the book. The arrangement between the MT and LXX is also different, with the first following a broadly geographical outline (west to east), and the second providing an order according to political importance. See further, Thompson, 27-50, for discussion on structure and composition.

<sup>9</sup> Kenneth Strand, "Two Aspects of Babylon's Judgment Portrayed in Revelation 18," *AUSS* 20 (1982): 55, 57.

<sup>10</sup> MT *hitgarit*, "engage in a contest," "oppose," "challenge." This is the only appearance of the root *grh* in the book of Jeremiah.

<sup>11</sup> This is the only occurrence in Jeremiah of the verb *zud*. It appears elsewhere only in Exodus 18: 11 in the qal stem. So its precise connotation here is difficult to ascertain. However, the noun derivative is found in Jer 41:16 and 50:31- 32. The verb carries the idea of "insolence," "arrogance," "presumption," "hubris."

<sup>12</sup> John Bright, *Jeremiah*, Anchor Bible, vol. 21 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1965), 355. He translates *zadon* as "Sir Pride." Josef Scharbert, "*zudh*," *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* (1980), 4:46- 51, indicates that the Lord points to a foreign power that arrogates to itself rights over Israel or Yahweh as Israel's protector to which it is not entitled.

<sup>13</sup> Strand, 56, 57.

<sup>14</sup> The phrase "nations to whom I send you" reflects the fulfillment of the call to prophetic office (cf. Jer 1:5,10).

<sup>15</sup> LXX reads *tou oi nou tou akratou*, "of unmixed wine," the equivalent of *yen hahamer*, according to *BHS*. Bright, 158, suggests reading the construct *yen* for *hayyayin* and thus translating, "this cup of the wine of wrath." It may be that "this cup of wine/ this cup of wrath" are variants.

<sup>16</sup> LXX says *kai pointai kai exemountai*, "and they shall drink and vomit." Cf. William McKane, "Poison, Trial by Ordeal and the Cup of Wrath," *VT* 30 (1980): 491.

<sup>17</sup> This "cup" may have had its origin in the ordeal procedure whereby a portion was imbibed to test the innocence of a person (cf. Num. 5:11-31). It may have been derived from a banquet setting in which poison substituted for wine. See Carroll, Jeremiah, 502. The cup is understood variously as a cup of poison that all the nations must drink because they are ineluctably destined to death [See H. A. Brongers, "Der Zornesbrecher," *OTS* 15 (1969): 177-192.] Hugo Gressmann, "*H koinonia ton daimonion*," *ZNW* 20 (1921): 224-230, posits an anti-banquet situation where the festivities associated with a cultic meal are reversed. H. Ringgren, "Vredens Kalk," *SEA* 17 (1952): 19-30, concentrates on intoxication as a "Chaos Motif" that is connected to the New Year Festival. The "cup" indicates a nexus between intoxication and the judgment of the enemies.

<sup>18</sup> McKane, "Poison, Trial by Ordeal and the Cup of Wrath," 490. Cf. Duhm, 91. The image of the drinking of a cup to indicate judgment is found elsewhere in the OT: Pss 11: 6; 75: 9; Isa. 51: 17, 22; Jer 49: 12; 51: 7; Lam 4:21; Ezek 23 :31- 33; Obad 16; Hab 2: 15, 16; Zech 12 :2.

<sup>19</sup> CKD, 371.

<sup>20</sup> Strand, 53-55. He offers a helpful excursus from Paul S. Minear, *I Saw a New Earth* (Wash. DC: 1968), 145, dealing with the funeral litany and structure of the chapter.

<sup>21</sup> The word "judgment" (*krisis*) in vs. 10 parallels the term "made desolate" or "laid waste" (*eremthe*) in vss. 17a and 19. See *ibid.*, 55.

<sup>22</sup> It appears that in 594/3 B.C.E., the fourth year of Zedekiah, a plot implicating the king in rebellion against Babylon (cf. Jer 27) was uncovered. Zedekiah wisely went to Babylon himself to refute the claims and pledge allegiance and/or to pay the annual tribute. However, LXX implies that he did not go, but that Seriah went "from Zedekiah," i.e., he was the envoy. Since both Seraiah and Baruch are described as "ben Neriah ben Mahseiah," it is believed that they were brothers.

<sup>23</sup> E. Kutsch, "krt, abschneiden," *THAT* (1984), 1: 857-860. LXX offers *exolethreusate*, "completely cut off."

<sup>24</sup> Cf. 1 Chr 29:24; 2 Chr 30:8. The same expression *natan yad*, "to give a hand," is used in Chronicles and here as a sign of surrender. Babylon, personified as mother, will be reduced to a minor status, the least of nations. This too is a great reversal. In former times Babylon had reduced cities to

## MULZAC: THE “FALL OF BABYLON” MOTIF

uninhabitable wasteland so that passersby would whistle in appallment as they went by. In this day of Yahweh’s wrath, the same expressions would be used of Babylon. Hence, Babylon stands indicted.

<sup>25</sup> Christensen, 260, n. 109. He borrowed this phrase from Martin Kessler in a paper (presented in November 1960 at the Society of Biblical Literature) entitled, “Oracles Against the Nations: Jeremiah 50, 51.”

<sup>26</sup> Note the following text: “I set a trap for you, O Babylon, and you were caught before you knew it” (vs. 24a). “The Lord has opened his arsenal and brought out the weapons of his wrath, for the Sovereign Lord Almighty has work to do in the land of the Chaldeans” (vs.25).

<sup>27</sup> Merathaim was likely the area/district of Mat Marratim at the head of the Persian Gulf at the confluence of the Euphrates and Tigris rivers. It was called nar marratu, “bitter river.” See W.S. LaSor, “Merathaim,” *ISBE* (1986), 3:321. Pekod refers to the Akkadian Puqudu in Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian texts. It refers to one of the larger Aramean tribes that led a nomadic life but settled in Southeastern Babylonia between the lower Tigris and Elam by the 8th century B.C. See M.J. Horsnell, “Pekod,” *ISBE* (1986), 3: 736. For both places consult further, J. Simons, *The Geographical and Topographical Texts of the Old Testament* (Leiden : E. J. Brill 1959), 451.

<sup>28</sup> Thompson, 741.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.; Bright, Jeremiah, 354.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. Deut. 2: 32; Josh 8:28; Judg 1:7. See also Christensen, 261, who describes it as devoting “Babylon to the sacred ban of Israel’s most ancient holy war traditions.” Cf. Patrick D. Miller, *Sin and Judgment in the Prophet: A Stylistic and Theological Analysis* (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1982), 94.

<sup>31</sup> Meredith Kline, “Double Trouble,” *JETS* 32(1989): 171-179, believes that the word translated as “double” in Rev 18:6 (cf. Isa 40:2; 61:7; Jer 16:18; Zech 9:12), really means “equivalent.”

<sup>32</sup> Thompson, 742. The LXX varies the image, *anaxerante pantas tous Karpous autes*, “dry up all her fruits.” This continues the harvesting metaphor of destroying the agricultural products of vs. 26.

<sup>33</sup> Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 830 (emphasis mine).

<sup>34</sup> Aitken, 38. See Kenneth Mulzac, “The Remnant Motif in the Conflict of Judgment and Salvation in the Book of Jeremiah.” (Ph.D. dissertation, Andrews University, 1995), 245-252; 280-282.

<sup>35</sup> The expression “seek the Lord” invokes the idea of repentance. While this occurs only here in Jer, it is found within the context of repentance or the lack thereof in Hos. 3:5; 5:6; Zeph. 1:6; 2:3. Cf. Thompson, 733; Holladay, Jeremiah 2, 415.

<sup>36</sup> For a complete discussion, see Mulzac, 321-330.

<sup>37</sup> Aitken, 34.

<sup>38</sup> The verb plus the infinitive absolute adds power, “He will surely plead their cause.” Note the assonance in Hebrew: *rib yarib 'et-ribam*.