

BABYLON-THE-GREAT IN JEREMIAH

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Preamble

Jeremiah has been called “the prophet to the nations.” In the Book of Jeremiah, he devotes the first forty-five chapters to Israel (Judah & Jerusalem). In chapters forty-six through fifty-one, however, he focuses on Israel’s neighbors - Egypt, Gaza (Phillistia), Jordan (Moab, Ammon, & Edom), Syria (Damascus), Saudi Arabia (Arabia), Iran, (Elam), and Iraq (Babylon) – and prophesies concerning what will befall them in the future. The United States of America does not seem to be among them – or is it? (In trying to answer this question, I owe much to S. Franklin Logsdon’s Is the U.S.A. in Prophecy?, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI, 1968.)

Section 1 - The United States of America (USA)

The original explorers and settlers of America were European Christians. Christopher Columbus, whose name means “Christ bearer,” sailed westward with the belief that he had been given a divine mission to extend Christendom to a new world. Spanish Franciscan and Dominican friars moved into the southwest and French Jesuits moved into the northeast with the common mission of bringing the gospel of Christ to the natives, often suffering gruesome deaths at the hands of demon possessed savages.¹ Their sacrificial lives and martyr deaths planted the seeds for the spiritual phenomenon to come. A lust for gold motivated the first settlers of Virginia, but the mission to build a New Jerusalem impelled the Pilgrim Separatists who left Holland aboard the Mayflower – the latter entered into a covenant with God and one another to establish a new society that would honor the biblical God and live according to biblical principles. They were followed by the Puritan Separatists led by John Winthrop, whose vision of this society as “a city on a hill” captured the imagination of countless of his followers in the next four centuries.

The founders of the new nation, most of whom were Christians, but all of whom were serious students of the Bible, took care to craft the foundational documents of the new nation according to biblical principles. The powers of the federal government would be limited to protecting society from outside invasion (using a citizens’ militia) and inside criminality (using an appeals court judicial system), punishing evil-doers, maintaining just

¹ The myth of the noble savage is just that – a myth.

commercial standards (particularly money, weights, and measures), regulating interstate commerce, and exercising stewardship over the public infrastructure. Whatever was not addressed in the founding documents was left to the individual states, one of the advantages of which turns out to be that the manner of dealing with a particular issue can be compared and used as a guide for arriving at the best way to do it.

In the 19th Century, America's citizens set about building local communities from the Atlantic to the Pacific that were most notable for the number of their churches, which were filled with God-fearing and Bible-believing worshippers each Sunday. As a result, God blessed and protected the nation as he promises to do for a nation that honors him and his commandments in Deuteronomy 28:1-14, and it became that "city on a hill" of which John Winthrop spoke: the freest, richest, most powerful nation ever to exist - and the envy of the world.

In the last 100 years, the nation has undergone such a startling transformation that it would be unrecognizable to its pioneers, founders, and early citizens. The federal government has become a leviathan. Both its bureaucracy² and its budget³ have become bloated beyond belief. Its currency has been debauched.⁴ It has inexorably extended its control over the lives of its citizens. Its professional military forces consume more money than the military forces of all other nations combined, maintain posts in 146 other countries, and engage in aggressive violent actions that extend its hegemony over peoples who do not welcome the presence of either its soldiers and its merchants on their soil or the cultural pollution that inexorably follows from that presence. Worst of all, it has purged the honoring of the biblical God from its public spaces and institutions and extended legal protection to behavior that is abhorrent to God: the worship of false gods and idols; blasphemy; the neglect of parents; abortion and euthanasia; fornication, adultery, and homosexuality and the destruction of the family that follows there from; gambling and theft; and covetousness. State and municipal governments are no better, having merely followed in the federal government's wake and emulated all its sins.

Not surprisingly, God has begun withdrawing his blessings and protection from the country,⁵ For example, on January 28, 1986, hundreds of millions of people watched America's space shuttle Challenger blow up with seven persons aboard, including a teacher. Yet few understood the lesson. At the time, the space shuttle was the pinnacle of American managerial, industrial, and technological achievement and represented America's attempt, in President Reagan's words, "to reach for the stars." A similar attempt was made over four thousand years ago in Babylon when they said, "Let us build us a city and a tower whose top may reach unto heaven" (Genesis 11:4). But "...the heaven, even the heavens, are the Lord's: but the earth hath he given to the children of men" (Psalm 115:16). He "...hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on

² By 2006, national, state, and municipal governments employed over 40% of workers in the country, most of whom earned more and possessed better pensions than their counterparts in the private sector.

³ Over \$2.5 trillion a year and growing.

⁴ The dollar is worth 1% of what it was worth in 1913 when congress delivered it into the hands of the Federal Reserve, a private corporation owned and operated for the benefit of the country's largest banks.

⁵ Compare the curses in Deuteronomy 28:15-68 with what is happening in the U.S. today.

all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and hath determined the bounds of their habitation” (Acts 17:26). And “...though they climb up to heaven, thence will I bring them down” (Amos 9:2).

Section 2 - Babylon-the-Great

In Jeremiah 50-51, “the prophet to the nations” wrote about the fate that awaits Babylon. I have often wondered about the identity of the nation which Jeremiah is describing. There may be two lands involved. While many of the references to Babylon obviously refer to the Ancient Babylon of the 1st millennium BC, a significant number do not, but they do fit the United States of America of the 21st century AD.

- Ancient Babylon did not have a mother that was “sore confounded” (Jeremiah 50:12), whereas the USA’s mother, England, has been “sore confounded” ever since the end of World War II.
- Ancient Babylon was not “the hindermost of the nations” (Jeremiah 50:12) – it was the first – whereas the USA is the hindermost (last or most recent) of the great nations.
- Ancient Babylon was not “the hammer of the whole earth” (Jeremiah 50:23), whereas at the start of the 21st century the USA is – to quote Madeleine Albright and many others after her, including President Obama - “the indispensable nation.”
- Ancient Babylon was not inhabited by “mingled peoples” (Jeremiah 50:37), whereas the US is a mixture of immigrants from every other nation in the world.
- Although Ancient Babylon enjoyed a measure of wealth and power, she was not “a golden cup in the Lord’s hand” (Jeremiah 51:7), whereas the USA is far and away the richest and most powerful nation the world has ever seen.
- Ancient Babylon did not make “all the earth drunken...[and]...mad” (Jeremiah 51:7), whereas the USA has exported its commercialism and debased culture to every nation on the globe.
- Ancient Babylon did not ‘dwell on many waters’ (Jeremiah 51:13) – only a small portion of it touched the Persian Gulf – whereas the USA sits amidst the Great Lakes to the north, the Atlantic Ocean to the east, the Gulf of Mexico to the south, and the Pacific Ocean to the west.

In my opinion, Jeremiah may have been addressing the USA of the 21st Century. If he was, the USA will be destroyed suddenly and utterly in an hour.⁶

Section 3 - Important Caveat

In conclusion, I should add that there are some problems involved in identifying the nation of Babylon in the Book of Jeremiah with modern America (the USA).

⁶ Jeremiah 51:8.

First, if Babylon-the-Great refers to the USA, then ancient Babylon is missing from Jeremiah's list of nations, which would be strange because it was the first nation and dominated the ancient world for about 339 years (2297-1958 BC).

Second, Babylon-the-Great is mentioned in both (1) the Book of Jeremiah, where it clearly symbolizes a nation, and (2) the Book of Revelation, where it clearly symbolizes a horse and its rider. It seems strange to me that the same name would refer to two such different entities.

Third, if the horse and its rider refer to Romanism and the *antichrist* (the papacy), which is maintained by the Historicist School and by me, it might refer to Vatican City, which is regarded by many as a separate nation within Italy. If so, it could not be the nation to which Babylon-the-Great in Jeremiah refers, because, like Ancient Babylon, it does not fit what Jeremiah says about Babylon-the-Great.

Nonetheless, even if Babylon-the-Great in the Book of Jeremiah is not a reference to the USA today, it still serves as a warning: the USA is following in the footsteps of ancient Babylon and will probably suffer the same fate as Babylon-the-Great.

Appendix

KJV Jeremiah 50

1 The word that the LORD spake against Babylon and against the land of the Chaldeans by Jeremiah the prophet. 2 Declare ye among the nations, and publish, and set up a standard; publish, and conceal not: say, Babylon is taken, Bel is confounded, Merodach is broken in pieces; her idols are confounded, her images are broken in pieces. 3 For out of the north there cometh up a nation against her, which shall make her land desolate, and none shall dwell therein: they shall remove, they shall depart, both man and beast. 4 In those days, and in that time, saith the LORD, the children of Israel shall come, they and the children of Judah together, going and weeping: they shall go, and seek the LORD their God. 5 They shall ask the way to Zion with their faces thitherward, saying, Come, and let us join ourselves to the LORD in a perpetual covenant that shall not be forgotten. 6 My people hath been lost sheep: their shepherds have caused them to go astray, they have turned them away on the mountains: they have gone from mountain to hill, they have forgotten their resting place. 7 All that found them have devoured them: and their adversaries said, We offend not, because they have sinned against the LORD, the habitation of justice, even the LORD, the hope of their fathers. 8 Remove out of the midst of Babylon, and go forth out of the land of the Chaldeans, and be as the he goats before the flocks. 9 For, lo, I will raise and cause to come up against Babylon an assembly of great nations from the north country: and they shall set themselves in array against her; from thence she shall be taken: their arrows shall be as of a mighty expert man; none shall return in vain. 10 And Chaldea shall be a spoil: all that spoil her shall be satisfied, saith the LORD. 11 Because ye were glad, because ye rejoiced, O ye destroyers of mine heritage, because ye are grown fat as the heifer at grass, and bellow as bulls; 12 Your mother shall be sore confounded; she that bare you shall be ashamed: behold, the hindermost of the nations shall be a wilderness, a dry land, and a desert. 13 Because of the wrath of the LORD it shall not be inhabited, but it shall be wholly desolate: every one that goeth by Babylon shall be astonished, and hiss at all her plagues. 14 Put yourselves in array against Babylon round about: all ye that bend the bow, shoot at her, spare no arrows: for she hath sinned against the LORD. 15 Shout against her round about: she hath given her hand: her foundations are fallen, her walls are thrown down: for it is the vengeance of the LORD: take vengeance upon her; as she hath done, do unto her. 16 Cut off the sower from Babylon, and him that handleth the sickle in the time of harvest: for fear of the oppressing sword they shall turn every one to his people, and they shall flee everyone to his own land. 17 Israel is a scattered sheep; the lions have driven him away: first the king of Assyria hath devoured him; and last this Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon hath broken his bones. 18 Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will punish the king of Babylon and his land, as I have punished the king of Assyria. 19 And I will bring Israel again to his habitation, and he shall feed on Carmel and Bashan, and his soul shall be satisfied upon mount Ephraim and Gilead. 20 In those days, and in that time, saith the LORD, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found: for I will pardon them whom I reserve. 21 Go up against the land of Merathaim, even against it, and against the inhabitants of Pekod: waste and utterly destroy after them, saith the LORD, and do according to all that I have

commanded thee. 22 A sound of battle is in the land, and of great destruction. 23 How is the hammer of the whole earth cut asunder and broken! how is Babylon become a desolation among the nations! 24 I have laid a snare for thee, and thou art also taken, O Babylon, and thou wast not aware: thou art found, and also caught, because thou hast striven against the LORD. 25 The LORD hath opened his armoury, and hath brought forth the weapons of his indignation: for this is the work of the Lord GOD of hosts in the land of the Chaldeans. 26 Come against her from the utmost border, open her storehouses: cast her up as heaps, and destroy her utterly: let nothing of her be left. 27 Slay all her bullocks; let them go down to the slaughter: woe unto them! for their day is come, the time of their visitation. 28 The voice of them that flee and escape out of the land of Babylon, to declare in Zion the vengeance of the LORD our God, the vengeance of his temple. 29 Call together the archers against Babylon: all ye that bend the bow, camp against it round about; let none thereof escape: recompense her according to her work; according to all that she hath done, do unto her: for she hath been proud against the LORD, against the Holy One of Israel. 30 Therefore shall her young men fall in the streets, and all her men of war shall be cut off in that day, saith the LORD. 31 Behold, I am against thee, O thou most proud, saith the Lord GOD of hosts: for thy day is come, the time that I will visit thee. 32 And the most proud shall stumble and fall, and none shall raise him up: and I will kindle a fire in his cities, and it shall devour all round about him. 33 Thus saith the LORD of hosts; The children of Israel and the children of Judah were oppressed together: and all that took them captives held them fast; they refused to let them go. 34 Their Redeemer is strong; the LORD of hosts is his name: he shall throughly plead their cause, that he may give rest to the land, and disquiet the inhabitants of Babylon. 35 A sword is upon the Chaldeans, saith the LORD, and upon the inhabitants of Babylon, and upon her princes, and upon her wise men. 36 A sword is upon the liars; and they shall dote: a sword is upon her mighty men; and they shall be dismayed. 37 A sword is upon their horses, and upon their chariots, and upon all the mingled people that are in the midst of her; and they shall become as women: a sword is upon her treasures; and they shall be robbed. 38 A drought is upon her waters; and they shall be dried up: for it is the land of graven images, and they are mad upon their idols. 39 Therefore the wild beasts of the desert with the wild beasts of the islands shall dwell there, and the owls shall dwell therein: and it shall be no more inhabited forever; neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation. 40 As God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah and the neighbour cities thereof, saith the LORD; so shall no man abide there, neither shall any son of man dwell therein. 41 Behold, a people shall come from the north, and a great nation, and many kings shall be raised up from the coasts of the earth. 42 They shall hold the bow and the lance: they are cruel, and will not shew mercy: their voice shall roar like the sea, and they shall ride upon horses, every one put in array, like a man to the battle, against thee, O daughter of Babylon. 43 The king of Babylon hath heard the report of them, and his hands waxed feeble: anguish took hold of him, and pangs as of a woman in travail. 44 Behold, he shall come up like a lion from the swelling of Jordan unto the habitation of the strong: but I will make them suddenly run away from her: and who is a chosen man, that I may appoint over her? for who is like me? and who will appoint me the time? and who is that shepherd that will stand before me? 45 Therefore hear ye the counsel of the LORD, that he hath taken against Babylon; and his purposes, that he hath purposed against the land of the Chaldeans: Surely the least of the flock shall draw them out: surely he shall make their habitation desolate with them. 46 At the noise of

the taking of Babylon the earth is moved, and the cry is heard among the nations.

KJV Jeremiah 51

1 Thus saith the LORD; Behold, I will raise up against Babylon, and against them that dwell in the midst of them that rise up against me, a destroying wind; 2 And will send unto Babylon fanners, that shall fan her, and shall empty her land: for in the day of trouble they shall be against her round about. 3 Against him that bendeth let the archer bend his bow, and against him that lifteth himself up in his brigandine: and spare ye not her young men; destroy ye utterly all her host. 4 Thus the slain shall fall in the land of the Chaldeans, and they that are thrust through in her streets. 5 For Israel hath not been forsaken, nor Judah of his God, of the LORD of hosts; though their land was filled with sin against the Holy One of Israel. 6 Flee out of the midst of Babylon, and deliver every man his soul: be not cut off in her iniquity; for this is the time of the LORD's vengeance; he will render unto her a recompence. 7 Babylon hath been a golden cup in the LORD's hand, that made all the earth drunken: the nations have drunken of her wine; therefore the nations are mad. 8 Babylon is suddenly fallen and destroyed: howl for her; take balm for her pain, if so she may be healed. 9 We would have healed Babylon, but she is not healed: forsake her, and let us go every one into his own country: for her judgment reacheth unto heaven, and is lifted up even to the skies. 10 The LORD hath brought forth our righteousness: come, and let us declare in Zion the work of the LORD our God. 11 Make bright the arrows; gather the shields: the LORD hath raised up the spirit of the kings of the Medes: for his device is against Babylon, to destroy it; because it is the vengeance of the LORD, the vengeance of his temple. 12 Set up the standard upon the walls of Babylon, make the watch strong, set up the watchmen, prepare the ambushes: for the LORD hath both devised and done that which he spake against the inhabitants of Babylon. 13 O thou that dwellest upon many waters, abundant in treasures, thine end is come, and the measure of thy covetousness. 14 The LORD of hosts hath sworn by himself, saying, Surely I will fill thee with men, as with caterpillers; and they shall lift up a shout against thee. 15 He hath made the earth by his power, he hath established the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched out the heaven by his understanding. 16 When he uttereth his voice, there is a multitude of waters in the heavens; and he causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth: he maketh lightnings with rain, and bringeth forth the wind out of his treasures. 17 Every man is brutish by his knowledge; every founder is confounded by the graven image: for his molten image is falsehood, and there is no breath in them. 18 They are vanity, the work of errors: in the time of their visitation they shall perish. 19 The portion of Jacob is not like them; for he is the former of all things: and Israel is the rod of his inheritance: the LORD of hosts is his name. 20 Thou art my battle axe and weapons of war: for with thee will I break in pieces the nations, and with thee will I destroy kingdoms; 21 And with thee will I break in pieces the horse and his rider; and with thee will I break in pieces the chariot and his rider; 22 With thee also will I break in pieces man and woman; and with thee will I break in pieces old and young; and with thee will I break in pieces the young man and the maid; 23 I will also break in pieces with thee the shepherd and his flock; and with thee will I break in pieces the husbandman and his yoke of oxen; and with thee will I break in pieces captains and rulers. 24 And I will render unto Babylon and to all the inhabitants of Chaldea all their evil that they have done in Zion in your sight, saith the LORD. 25

Behold, I am against thee, O destroying mountain, saith the LORD, which destroyest all the earth: and I will stretch out mine hand upon thee, and roll thee down from the rocks, and will make thee a burnt mountain. 26 And they shall not take of thee a stone for a corner, nor a stone for foundations; but thou shalt be desolate for ever, saith the LORD. 27 Set ye up a standard in the land, blow the trumpet among the nations, prepare the nations against her, call together against her the kingdoms of Ararat, Minni, and Ashchenaz; appoint a captain against her; cause the horses to come up as the rough caterpillers. 28 Prepare against her the nations with the kings of the Medes, the captains thereof, and all the rulers thereof, and all the land of his dominion. 29 And the land shall tremble and sorrow: for every purpose of the LORD shall be performed against Babylon, to make the land of Babylon a desolation without an inhabitant. 30 The mighty men of Babylon have forbore to fight, they have remained in their holds: their might hath failed; they became as women: they have burned her dwelling places; her bars are broken. 31 One post shall run to meet another, and one messenger to meet another, to shew the king of Babylon that his city is taken at one end, 32 And that the passages are stopped, and the reeds they have burned with fire, and the men of war are affrighted. 33 For thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; The daughter of Babylon is like a threshing floor, it is time to thresh her: yet a little while, and the time of her harvest shall come. 34 Nebuchadrezzar the king of Babylon hath devoured me, he hath crushed me, he hath made me an empty vessel, he hath swallowed me up like a dragon, he hath filled his belly with my delicates, he hath cast me out. 35 The violence done to me and to my flesh be upon Babylon, shall the inhabitant of Zion say; and my blood upon the inhabitants of Chaldea, shall Jerusalem say. 36 Therefore thus saith the LORD; Behold, I will plead thy cause, and take vengeance for thee; and I will dry up her sea, and make her springs dry. 37 And Babylon shall become heaps, a dwelling place for dragons, an astonishment, and an hissing, without an inhabitant. 38 They shall roar together like lions: they shall yell as lion's whelps. 39 In their heat I will make their feasts, and I will make them drunken, that they may rejoice, and sleep a perpetual sleep, and not wake, saith the LORD. 40 I will bring them down like lambs to the slaughter, like rams with he goats. 41 How is Sheshach taken! and how is the praise of the whole earth surprised! how is Babylon become an astonishment among the nations! 42 The sea is come up upon Babylon: she is covered with the multitude of the waves thereof. 43 Her cities are a desolation, a dry land, and a wilderness, a land wherein no man dwelleth, neither doth any son of man pass thereby. 44 And I will punish Bel in Babylon, and I will bring forth out of his mouth that which he hath swallowed up: and the nations shall not flow together any more unto him: yea, the wall of Babylon shall fall. 45 My people, go ye out of the midst of her, and deliver ye every man his soul from the fierce anger of the LORD. 46 And lest your heart faint, and ye fear for the rumour that shall be heard in the land; a rumour shall both come one year, and after that in another year shall come a rumour, and violence in the land, ruler against ruler. 47 Therefore, behold, the days come, that I will do judgment upon the graven images of Babylon: and her whole land shall be confounded, and all her slain shall fall in the midst of her. 48 Then the heaven and the earth, and all that is therein, shall sing for Babylon: for the spoilers shall come unto her from the north, saith the LORD. 49 As Babylon hath caused the slain of Israel to fall, so at Babylon shall fall the slain of all the earth. 50 Ye that have escaped the sword, go away, stand not still: remember the LORD afar off, and let Jerusalem come into your mind. 51 We are confounded, because we have heard reproach: shame hath covered

our faces: for strangers are come into the sanctuaries of the LORD's house. 52 Wherefore, behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will do judgment upon her graven images: and through all her land the wounded shall groan. 53 Though Babylon should mount up to heaven, and though she should fortify the height of her strength, yet from me shall spoilers come unto her, saith the LORD. 54 A sound of a cry cometh from Babylon, and great destruction from the land of the Chaldeans: 55 Because the LORD hath spoiled Babylon, and destroyed out of her the great voice; when her waves do roar like great waters, a noise of their voice is uttered: 56 Because the spoiler is come upon her, even upon Babylon, and her mighty men are taken, every one of their bows is broken: for the LORD God of recompences shall surely requite. 57 And I will make drunk her princes, and her wise men, her captains, and her rulers, and her mighty men: and they shall sleep a perpetual sleep, and not wake, saith the King, whose name is the LORD of hosts. 58 Thus saith the LORD of hosts; The broad walls of Babylon shall be utterly broken, and her high gates shall be burned with fire; and the people shall labour in vain, and the folk in the fire, and they shall be weary. 59 The word which Jeremiah the prophet commanded Seraiah the son of Neriah, the son of Maaseiah, when he went with Zedekiah the king of Judah into Babylon in the fourth year of his reign. And this Seraiah was a quiet prince. 60 So Jeremiah wrote in a book all the evil that should come upon Babylon, even all these words that are written against Babylon. 61 And Jeremiah said to Seraiah, When thou comest to Babylon, and shalt see, and shalt read all these words; 62 Then shalt thou say, O LORD, thou hast spoken against this place, to cut it off, that none shall remain in it, neither man nor beast, but that it shall be desolate for ever. 63 And it shall be, when thou hast made an end of reading this book, that thou shalt bind a stone to it, and cast it into the midst of Euphrates: 64 And thou shalt say, Thus shall Babylon sink, and shall not rise from the evil that I will bring upon her: and they shall be weary. Thus far are the words of Jeremiah.