



March 31, 2019
“Lessons from Babylon”
Jeremiah 50
Pastor Gary Hamrick

In the closing chapters of the book of Jeremiah, God rebuked the Babylonian Empire for four particular sins. Even though God had used the Babylonians as the instrument of his correction for the Jewish people, the Babylonians were guilty of going too far in their treatment of the Jews. Despite these events being about an ancient story, Pastor Gary takes a modern look at how the sins of Babylon can serve to admonish us and help us live godly lives.

Historical Background

1. In Jeremiah chapters 46 through 49, God rebuked a number peoples and nations who were neighbors of the Jewish people, including the Philistines, Egypt, Damascus, Ammon, Moab, Edom, Kedar, Elam, and Babylonia.
2. **Jeremiah 50:1-3** - *“This is the word the LORD spoke through Jeremiah the prophet concerning Babylon and the land of the Babylonians: ‘Announce and proclaim among the nations, lift up a banner and proclaim it; keep nothing back, but say, “Babylon will be captured; Bel will be put to shame, Marduk filled with terror. Her images will be put to shame and her idols filled with terror.” A nation from the north will attack her and lay waste her land. No one will live in it; both men and animals will flee away.”*
3. Babylon
 - a. Babylon was the capital city of Babylonia, and it was located about 75 miles south of what is modern-day Baghdad.
 - b. Babylon reached the pinnacle of its success in the mid-6th Century, during the reign of King Nebuchadnezzar
 - c. The population of Babylon at the time of King Nebuchadnezzar was about

500,000 people, which is about 100,000 more than the current population of Loudoun County, Virginia.

- d. Herodotus, a historian of the time, wrote about the walls of the city being 300 feet tall and 87 feet thick!
- e. Babylon was 15 miles square, and it was situated on the Euphrates River, in what is modern-day Iraq.
- f. The Euphrates River was diverted to flow under the walls into the city.
- g. Babylon was a significant city and it's mentioned 164 times in the book of Jeremiah, and a total of 260 times.
- h. Babylon is mentioned in the Bible more times than any other city, except Jerusalem.
- i. Babylon is often seen as the opposite of Jerusalem, because Jerusalem was known as the city of peace, while Babylon was a city of evil.
- j. Babylon is shown in the Bible to be a city that was opposed to God.
- k. Babylon was the location of the Tower of Babel. (See [Genesis 11:1-9](#))
- l. Babylon was the place where pagan worship began.
- m. Babylon will be rebuilt according to [Revelation 17-18](#), and it will be the center of one-world government, one-world economy, and one-world religion.
- n. The Medes and the Persians conquered the Babylonians in 539BC.
 - i. The Euphrates River was dammed up outside the city walls, and under the cover of darkness, soldiers entered the city and conquered it without resistance or incident!

The Sins Of Babylon

4. God judged the Babylonians because of their extreme cruelty toward the Jewish people.
5. Jubilance
 - a. They sinned because they were jubilant over the sins of the Jewish people.
 - b. [Jeremiah 50:11-13](#) - *"Because you rejoice and are glad, you who pillage my inheritance, because you frolic like a heifer threshing grain and neigh like stallions, your mother will be greatly ashamed; she who gave you birth will be disgraced. She will be the least of the nations - a wilderness, a dry land, a desert. Because of the LORD's anger she will not be inhabited but will be completely desolate. All who pass Babylon will be horrified and scoff because of all her wounds."*
 - c. Today, Babylon is nothing more than rubble, in accordance with God's judgment.
 - d. [Proverbs 17:5](#) - *"He who mocks the poor shows contempt for their Maker; whoever gloats over disaster will not go unpunished."*
 - e. [Proverbs 24:17-18](#) - *"Do not gloat when your enemy falls; when he stumbles,*

do not let your heart rejoice, or the LORD will see and disapprove and turn his wrath away from him.”

- f. **Obadiah v. 12** - *“You should not look down on your brother in the day of his misfortune, nor rejoice over the people of Judah in the day of their destruction, not boast so much in the day of their trouble.”*
- g. Pastor Gary said: “God does not like cheering from the sidelines when someone, even someone who has done [us] wrong, experiences misfortune of their own. We must never celebrate another’s misfortune or rejoice over their troubles. ... We need to be instruments of his grace, and we need to extend grace towards people. ... What Christ calls us to in our Christian lives will not come easily [or] conveniently, and it will be very counterintuitive to the way the world operates. The world operates with a system of get even; people deserve what’s coming to them; karma and all of this kind of stuff.
- h. **Luke 6:27-28** - *“... I tell you who hear me: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.”*

6. Defiance

- a. They sinned because they were defiant toward God.
- b. **Jeremiah 50:29** - *“Summon archers against Babylon, all those who draw the bow. Encamp all around her; let no one escape. Repay her for her deeds; do to her as she has done. For she has defied the LORD, the Holy One of Israel.”*
- c. There are excellent examples of people in the Bible who acted defiantly, including Daniels three friends, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who defied King Nebuchadnezzar. (See **Daniel 3:1-30**)
 - i. **Daniel 3:28** - *“Then Nebuchadnezzar said, ‘Praise be to the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who has sent his angel and rescued his servants! They trusted in him and defied the king’s command were willing to give up their lives rather than serve or worship any god except their own God.”*
- d. Pastor Gary said: “Defying an earthly king, which [Daniel’s friends] did, in deference to the heavenly King, became a testimony to [King Nebuchadnezzar]. ... Whenever you see the word defy in the same sentence with the Lord, it’s never a good thing. ... Babylon defied God and [were opposed to God], and the truth is that you can only defy the Lord for so long. ... When we defy him, we make things miserable for ourselves. This was Paul’s testimony. ... Paul was a zealous Jew, and he was zealous for God... [who] thought that [Christianity] was just a heretical sect, and so he [tried] to kill [Christians]. ... He thought that Christians... were in rebellion against God. ... Paul had an encounter with Jesus... and Jesus [confronted] him.
 - i. **Acts 26:14** - *“... I heard a voice saying to me in Aramaic, ‘Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? it is hard for you to kick against the goads.’ ”*

1. A goad was a tool in the form of a pole; on one end it had a blade that could remove clay off the plow and on the other end it had sharp, jagged edges, which were the goads.
 2. Farmers used the goads to motivate oxen, and because oxen aren't among the smartest of animals, they would kick against the goads, which caused self-inflicted injuries.
- e. Pastor Gary encouraged us to surrender to the Lord!
- f. **Proverbs 13:15** - *"... the way of the transgressors is hard."*(King James Version - KJV)

7. Arrogance (pride)

- a. **Jeremiah 50:31-32** - *" 'See, I am against you, O arrogant one,' declares the LORD, the LORD Almighty, 'for your day has come, the time for you to be punished. The arrogant one will stumble and fall and no one will help her up; I will kindle a fire in her towns that will consume all who are around her.' "*
- b. Pastor Gary said: "Arrogance and pride are an affront to God. ... Think about all of the different sin issues, [and how,] at the core of it is [some] sense of entitlement. Pride says: 'I'm entitled!' [or] 'I deserve this!' [or] 'Look at me, notice me, honor me, love me, serve me!' [These] become the issue for a lot of kinds of sins. ... **When pride is at the center of your life, God cannot be.**" (Emphasis added)
- c. **1 Samuel 15:23a** - *"For rebellion is like the sin of divination, and arrogance like the evil of idolatry."*
- d. **Proverbs 8:13** - *"To fear the LORD is to hate evil; I hate pride and arrogance..."*
- e. Pride was the root cause for the sin and rebellion of Satan.
 - i. **Ezekiel 28:17a** - *"Your heart became proud on account of your beauty, and you corrupted your wisdom because of your splendor."*
- f. **James 4:6b** - *"That is why Scripture says: 'God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.' "*
- g. We can choose to humble ourselves before the Lord or he will humble us!
 - i. **James 4:10** - *"Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up."*
 - ii. **Luke 18:14** - *"For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."*
- h. Pastor Gary said: "**Humility is not thinking less of yourself; it's thinking of yourself less.**" (Emphasis added)
 - i. **Matthew 18:1-4** - *"At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, 'Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?' He called a little child and had him stand among them. And he said: 'I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.' "*

8. Dominance (oppression of others)
- a. [Jeremiah 50:33](#) - *“This is what the LORD Almighty says: ‘The people of Israel are oppressed, and the people of Judah as well. All their captors hold them fast, refusing to let them go.’ ”*
 - b. Pastor Gary said: “[God] took note of how oppressed the Jewish people were, and he always takes note of those who are oppressed and those who are suffering in our world.”
 - c. [Psalm 146:7a](#) - *“He upholds the cause of the oppressed...”*
 - d. [Deuteronomy 10:18](#) - *“He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow...”*
 - e. [Psalm 9:9](#) - *“The LORD is a refuge for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble.”*
 - f. The Lord doesn’t want us to dominate or oppress others, and Jesus made that point very clear!
 - i. [Matthew 20:25-28](#) - *“Jesus called them together and said, ‘You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. No so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave - just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.’ ”*

The Signs Of A Godly Life

- 9. Compassion for one another vs. Jubilance
- 10. Surrender to God vs. Defiance
- 11. Humility vs. Arrogance
- 12. Servanthood vs. Dominance

Discussion Questions

- 1. Read [Jeremiah 50:1-3](#) to provide a foundation for your Bible study time.
- 2. Provide an overview of the history of Babylon. (See #3 above)
- 3. Read and discuss [Jeremiah 50:11-13](#), [Proverbs 17:5](#), [Proverbs 24:17-18](#), and [Obadiah 1:12](#). (See #5b, 5d, 5e, 5f above)
- 4. Spend time talking about Pastor Gary’s remarks concerning celebrating the misfortune or downfall of others. (See #5g above)

5. How has the Lord helped you to see different situations from his perspective?
6. Read and discuss [Luke 6:27-28](#).
7. Allow the people in your group to share examples of the ways the Lord is helping them love their enemies.
8. Read and discuss [Jeremiah 50:29](#). (See #6b above)
9. Spend time talking about Pastor Gary's comments concerning civil disobedience and defying the Lord. (See #6d above)
10. Read and discuss [Proverbs 13:15](#).
11. Allow the people in your group to share examples of their experiences about times when they "kicked against the Lord," so to speak.
12. Read and discuss [Jeremiah 50:31-32](#). (See #7a above)
13. Spend time talking about Pastor Gary's remarks concerning how much the Lord hates pride and arrogance. (See #7b above)
14. Read and discuss this quote: "When pride is at the center of your life, God cannot be."
15. Read and discuss [1 Samuel 15:23a](#), [Proverbs 8:14](#), [James 4:6b](#), [James 4:10](#), and [Luke 18:14](#). (See #7c, #7D, #7F, #7G above)
16. How is the Lord changing and shaping you become humble like a little child? (See #7h above)
17. Read and discuss this quote: "Humility is not thinking less of yourself; it's thinking of yourself less."
18. Read and discuss [Jeremiah 50:33](#). (See #8a above)
19. Read and discuss [Psalm 146:7a](#), [Deuteronomy 10:18](#), and [Psalm 9:9](#). (See #8c, #8D, and #8e above)
20. Close your time in prayer and allow the Holy Spirit to lead your time of prayer.

* Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New International Version (NIV 1984)