

# Jeremiah 50:38

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

## Analysis

**A drought is upon her waters** (חֲרֵב אֶל-מֵימֶיהָ, chorev el-meimeha)—The chorev can mean drought or sword; both readings are apt. Babylon's strength was the Euphrates River and irrigation canal system supporting agriculture and defense. God will 'dry up' (yavashu) these waters—literally fulfilled when Cyrus diverted the Euphrates to enter Babylon (Herodotus 1.191), and prophetically symbolizing the drying up of Babylon's vitality and power.

**For it is the land of graven images, and they are mad upon their idols** (כִּי אֶרֶץ פְּסִלִים הִיא וְבָאִימִים יִתְהַלְּלוּ, ki erets p'silim hi uva'eimim yithollalu)—This explains the judgment: Babylon was a 'land of carved images,' and they 'boasted' or 'acted like madmen' over their eimim (terrors/idols). Idolatry is insanity—worshipping creatures/creations instead of Creator (Romans 1:22-23). Babylon's elaborate pantheon (Marduk, Ishtar, Nabu) and New Year's festival (Akitu) testify to this theological madness. Just verdict: the idol-mad nation loses its water source and sanity.

## Historical Context

Babylon's Processional Way featured images of gods in glazed brick. The Esagila (Marduk's temple) and ziggurats dominated the cityscape. Yet these gods could not prevent Cyrus's conquest. Isaiah 46:1-2 mocks these gods needing to be carried into exile, unable to save themselves or Babylon.

## Related Passages

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**Romans 10:9** — Confession and belief for salvation

**Ephesians 2:8** — Salvation by grace through faith

## Study Questions

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1. How does the 'drying of waters' metaphor apply to the collapse of human systems and securities apart from God?
2. What does it mean to be 'mad' over idols, and how do modern idolatries produce similar insanity?
3. Why is idolatry consistently portrayed as the root cause of national judgment throughout Scripture?

## Interlinear Text

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חֶרֶב	אֶל	מִיַּם יָהּ	וַיֵּבֶשׁוּ	כִּי
A drought	H413	is upon her waters	and they shall be dried up	H3588
H2721		H4325	H3001	
אֶרֶץ	פְּסָלִים	הָיָא	וּבְאִימָם	יִתְהַלְלוּ:
for it is the land	of graven images	H1931	upon their idols	and they are mad
H776	H6456		H367	H1984

## Additional Cross-References

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**Revelation 16:12** (Parallel theme): And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared.

**Isaiah 44:27** (Parallel theme): That saith to the deep, Be dry, and I will dry up thy rivers:

**Jeremiah 50:2** (Parallel theme): 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.

**Jeremiah 51:47** (Parallel theme): 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.

**Jeremiah 51:52** (Parallel theme): 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.

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