

Jeremiah 51:13

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

O thou that dwellest upon many waters, abundant in treasures, thine end is come, and the measure of thy covetousness.

Analysis

O thou that dwellest upon many waters—Babylon's location on the Euphrates River and extensive canal system provided agricultural prosperity, transportation, and defensive moats. The "many waters" (מַיִם רַבִּים, mayim rabbim) represent both literal geography and symbolic prosperity. Revelation 17:1, 15 uses this imagery: "the great whore that sitteth upon many waters... The waters... are peoples, and multitudes."

Abundant in treasures—Babylon's wealth from tribute, plunder, and trade made her the ancient world's richest city. Archaeological evidence confirms vast treasuries. **Thine end is come, and the measure of thy covetousness**—the "end" (קֵץ, qets, termination, limit) arrives when the "measure" (אֲמָת, ammat, cubit, measure, standard) of greed is filled. God tolerates sin to a point, then judgment falls. The word "covetousness" (בִּצְעַ', betsa', unjust gain, greed) indicts Babylon's rapacious accumulation through conquest and exploitation. Wealth gained through injustice brings judgment.

Historical Context

Babylon's location where the Tigris and Euphrates rivers converge made it exceptionally prosperous. The city's canal system irrigated vast agricultural lands, generating wealth. Nebuchadnezzar's building projects consumed tribute from conquered nations. The 'treasures' included gold vessels from Jerusalem's temple

(Daniel 5:2-4). When Cyrus conquered Babylon, he seized its vast treasury. Archaeological excavations reveal immense wealth—gold, silver, precious stones—confirming biblical descriptions. Yet all this wealth could not prevent divine judgment.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How does the image of dwelling 'upon many waters' warn against false security based on natural resources or geographic advantages?
2. What does the 'measure of covetousness' teach about God's patience having limits when societies embrace systematic injustice?
3. In what ways does contemporary society 'dwell upon many waters' and abound in treasures while filling the measure of greed?

Interlinear Text

שְׁכֻנָּתְךָ י	עַל	מַיִם	רַבִּי	רַבִּי	אֲצֻרֵי	בָּא
O thou that dwellest	H5921	waters	abundant	abundant	in treasures	is come
H7931		H4325	H7227	H7227	H214	H935
קֵץ	וּמִדָּה	בְּצִעְרוֹ:				
thine end	and the measure	of thy covetousness				
H7093	H520	H1215				

Additional Cross-References

Revelation 17:1 (Parallel theme): And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters:

Revelation 17:15 (Parallel theme): And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.

Isaiah 45:3 (Parallel theme): And I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the LORD, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel.

Jeremiah 51:36 (Parallel theme): 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.

Genesis 6:13 (Parallel theme): And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth.