Jeremiah 51:47

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

> 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.

Analysis

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. This verse reiterates God's judgment against Babylon's idolatry. Graven images (pesilim, פְּסִילִים) refers to carved idols, the physical representations of false gods that dominated Babylonian religion. The phrase **I will do judgment** uses paqad (פָּקַד), meaning to visit in judgment, attend to, or punish—the same verb used in verse 44 regarding Bel.

Her whole land shall be confounded employs bosh (בּוֹשׁ), meaning to be ashamed, disappointed, or put to shame—the humiliation that comes when one's trust proves worthless. Babylon trusted in Marduk, Ishtar, and other deities; their defeat would expose these gods' impotence. **All her slain shall fall in the midst of her** indicates Babylon's destruction would occur within the city itself, not primarily in battlefield campaigns. This was fulfilled when Cyrus's forces entered Babylon in 539 BC with minimal resistance, catching the city off-guard during a festival (Daniel 5). The judgment of idols demonstrates a consistent biblical principle: false gods cannot save their worshipers (Isaiah 44:9-20, 46:1-2). Only Yahweh is God; all other worship leads to shame and destruction.

Historical Context

Babylon's religion was polytheistic and complex, with thousands of deities organized in pantheons. Major gods included Marduk (chief deity), Ishtar (goddess of love and war), Nabu (wisdom), and Shamash (sun god). Massive temple complexes, ziggurats, and elaborate rituals characterized Babylonian worship. The famous ziggurat Etemenanki (possibly the Tower of Babel's location) reached about 300 feet high. When Babylon fell to Cyrus (539 BC), this entire religious system was exposed as powerless to prevent conquest. Cyrus's religious policy was syncretic—he honored various gods pragmatically rather than exclusively promoting any one deity. This effectively ended Marduk worship's supremacy. Archaeological discoveries show Babylonian religious sites fell into decline and eventual ruin, literally fulfilling the prophecy of judgment on graven images.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. What modern 'idols' (money, power, technology, nationalism) might similarly fail their worshipers when tested by crisis?
2. How does the shame of false religion contrast with the vindication believers experience when trusting the true God?
3. What does God's patience in eventually judging Babylon's idolatry teach about His timing and purposes?

Interlinear Text

לָכֵן הִנֵּ ה יָמ ים בָּ א ים וּפָקַדְתִּי עַל
H3651 H2009 **Therefore behold the days** **come** **that I will do judgment** H5921
H3117 H935 H6485

פְּסִילֶ י בָּבֶ ל וְכָל אַרְצָ ה תֵּב וֹש
upon the graven images **of Babylon** H3605 **and her whole land** **shall be confounded**
H6456 H894 H776 H954

וְכָל חֲלָלֶ יהָ יִפְּל וּ בְתוֹכָה:
H3605 **and all her slain** **shall fall** **in the midst**
H2491 H5307 H8432

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 50:2 (References Babylon): 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 51:52 (Judgment): 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.

Isaiah 21:9 (References Babylon): And, behold, here cometh a chariot of men, with a couple of horsemen. And he answered and said, Babylon is fallen, is fallen; and all the graven images of her gods he hath broken unto the ground.