

Jeremiah 51:55

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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:

Analysis

Because the LORD hath spoiled Babylon (כִּי־שָׁדַד יְהוָה אֶת־בָּבֶל, ki-shoded YHWH et-Bavel)—Active divine agency: God is the Spoiler. Babylon, archetypal plunderer of nations, is herself plundered by Yahweh personally. **And destroyed out of her the great voice** (וַיִּבֶד מִמֶּנָּה קוֹל גָּדוֹל, v'ibbed mimmenah qol gadol)—The 'great voice' of Babylon (imperial edicts, temple chants, marketplace bustle, military commands) falls silent. Abad (destroy/perish) is total cessation.

When her waves do roar like great waters, a noise of their voice is uttered (וְהָמוּ גַלְיֵהֶם כְּמַיִם רַבִּים נִתַּן שֹׁאֲוֹן קוֹלָם, v'hamu galeihem k'mayim rabbim nittan sh'on qolam)—The metaphor shifts: Babylon's 'waves' (armies? populace?) roar like floodwaters, but this roar is death-throe, not triumph. The cacophony of collapse replaces the hum of civilization. Just as God drowned Pharaoh's army in waters (Exodus 15), He drowns Babylon in chaos. The sea-imagery suggests primordial uncreation—Babylon returns to *tohu vavohu* (Genesis 1:2).

Historical Context

Babylon's 'voice'—Marduk's cult, royal decrees, commercial activity—did cease. The vibrant city became backwater, then ruins. The 'roaring waves' may reference panic during conquest, or metaphorically, the overwhelming chaos that consumed Babylon's order. Either way, the 'great voice' was indeed silenced.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. What does the silencing of Babylon's 'great voice' teach about the temporal nature of earthly power and culture?
2. How does the water/flood imagery connect Babylon's judgment to other biblical judgments (Flood, Red Sea)?
3. In what ways does civilization's collapse represent a kind of 'uncreation' under divine curse?

Interlinear Text

כִּי	שָׁדַד דָּ	יְהוָה	אֶת	בָּבֶל ל	וְאַבְדָּ ד	מִמֶּנָּה
H3588	hath spoiled	Because the LORD	H853	Babylon	and destroyed	H4480
	H7703	H3068		H894	H6	
קוֹלָם:	גָּד וּל	וְהִמָּו	גְּלִיָּהֶם	כֶּמַּיִם	רַב יִם	
of their voice	out of her the great	do roar	when her waves	waters	like great	
H6963	H1419	H1993	H1530	H4325	H7227	
נִתְּן	שָׁא וְ	קוֹלָם:				
is uttered	a noise	of their voice				
H5414	H7588	H6963				

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 25:10 (Parallel theme): Moreover I will take from them the voice of mirth, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride, the sound of the millstones, and the light of the candle.

