

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-שִׁזֵּד יְהֹוָה 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** (וְאָבַד 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 (וְקָמָו גָּלִים כָּמִים כְּבָנִים נִתְנַשְּׁאָן כְּזָלָם, 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

מִתְּבַּשֵּׂלָה וְאֶתְּבַּשְׂרָה בָּבֶל אֲתָּה שְׁדֵךְ תְּהִלָּה
H3588 hath spoiled H7703 Because the LORD H853 Babylon H894 and destroyed H4480 H6

לְקֹלָם: וְלֹא יָמַר כַּאֲמִתּוֹן גָּלִים כַּמְּאַמְּתָן
of their voice out of her the great do roar when her waves waters like great
H6963 H1419 H1993 H1530 H4325 H7227

וְלֹא יָמַר כַּאֲמִתּוֹן שָׂא וְלֹא
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.

