

# Jeremiah 51:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Babylon is suddenly fallen and destroyed: howl for her; take balm for her pain, if so be she may be healed.

## Analysis

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**Babylon is suddenly fallen and destroyed** (פִּתְּוֹם נָפַלָה בָּבֶל, pit'om naflah Bavel)—the adverb "suddenly" emphasizes the unexpected swiftness of Babylon's collapse. Despite appearing invincible, the empire fell to Cyrus in a single night (539 BC). The perfect tense "is fallen" prophetically declares accomplished fact, demonstrating prophetic certainty.

**Howl for her; take balm for her pain**—the tsori (צֹרִי, balm, balsam) from Gilead was famous medicinal resin. The ironic call to apply balm suggests attempting to heal what God has wounded. Yet the final clause—**if so be she may be healed**—indicates hope's futility. Babylon's wound is mortal because divinely inflicted. This anticipates Revelation 18:2: "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen." When God judges, no human remedy suffices. This echoes 8:22: "Is there no balm in Gilead?"—spiritual wounds require divine healing, which Babylon refused.

## Historical Context

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Babylon fell October 12, 539 BC when Cyrus's forces entered through the riverbed of the diverted Euphrates. According to Herodotus and the Nabonidus Chronicle, the city was celebrating a feast when conquered—fulfilling Daniel 5's account of Belshazzar's feast. The sudden collapse shocked the ancient world; seemingly impregnable Babylon fell without prolonged siege. Archaeological evidence confirms Babylon continued as a city but never regained imperial status, eventually becoming uninhabited ruins—fulfilling multiple prophetic declarations.



**Revelation 14:8** (References Babylon): And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.

**Revelation 18:2** (References Babylon): And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.

**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 48:20** (Parallel theme): Moab is confounded; for it is broken down: howl and cry; tell ye it in Arnon, that Moab is spoiled,