

# THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET JEREMIAH

**1**<sup>1</sup>THE WORDS OF JEREMIAH son of Hilkiyah, one of the priests at Anathoth in Benjamin.  
<sup>2</sup>The word of the LORD came to him in the thirteenth year of the reign of Josiah son of Amon, king of Judah; <sup>3</sup>also during the reign of Jehoiakim son of Josiah, king of Judah, until the eleventh year of Zedekiah son of Josiah, king of Judah, was completed. In the fifth month the people of Jerusalem were carried away into exile.

## Jeremiah's call and two visions

<sup>4</sup>THE WORD OF THE LORD CAME TO ME: <sup>5</sup>Before I formed you in the womb I knew you for my own; before you were born I consecrated you, I appointed you a prophet to the nations.' <sup>6</sup>'Ah! Lord GOD,' I answered, 'I do not know how to speak; I am only a child.'  
<sup>7</sup>But the LORD said, 'Do not call yourself a child; for you shall go to whatever people I send you and say whatever I tell you to say. <sup>8</sup>Fear none of them, for I am with you and will keep you safe.' This was the very word of the LORD. <sup>9</sup>Then the LORD stretched out his hand and touched my mouth, and said to me, 'I put my words into your mouth.  
<sup>10</sup>This day I give you authority over nations and over kingdoms, to pull down and to uproot, to destroy and to demolish, to build and to plant.'

<sup>11</sup>The word of the LORD came to me: 'What is it that you see, Jeremiah?' 'An almond in early bloom [*Heb* *shaked*]', I answered. <sup>12</sup>'You are right,' said the LORD to me, 'for I am early on the watch [*Heb* *shoked*] to carry out my purpose.'  
<sup>13</sup>The word of the LORD came to me a second time: 'What is it that you see?' 'A cauldron', I said, 'on a fire, fanned by the wind; it is tilted away from the north.'  
<sup>14</sup>The LORD said:

From the north disaster shall flare up  
against all who live in this land;

<sup>15</sup>for now I summon all peoples and kingdoms of the north,  
says the LORD.

Their kings shall come and each shall set up his throne  
before the gates of Jerusalem,  
against her walls on every side,  
and against all the cities of Judah.

<sup>16</sup>I will state my case against my people  
for all the wrong they have done in forsaking me,  
in burning sacrifices to other gods,  
worshipping the work of their own hands.

<sup>17</sup>Brace yourself, Jeremiah;  
stand up and speak to them.  
Tell them everything I bid you,  
do not let your spirit break at sight of them,  
or I will break you before their eyes.

<sup>18</sup>This day I make you a fortified city,  
a pillar of iron, a wall of bronze,  
to stand fast against the whole land,  
against the kings and princes of Judah,

its priests and its people.

<sup>19</sup>They will make war on you but shall not overcome you,  
for I am with you and will keep you safe.

This is the very word of the LORD.

## **Exhortations to Israel and Judah**

**2**<sup>1</sup>THE WORD OF THE LORD CAME TO ME: <sup>2</sup>Go, make a proclamation that all Jerusalem shall hear: These are the words of the LORD:

I remember the unfailing devotion of your youth,  
the love of your bridal days,  
when you followed me in the wilderness,  
through a land unsown.

<sup>3</sup>Israel then was holy to the LORD,  
the firstfruits of his harvest;  
no one who devoured her went unpunished,  
evil always overtook them.

This is the very word of the LORD.

<sup>4</sup>Listen to the word of the LORD, people of Jacob, families of Israel, one and all. <sup>5</sup>These are the words of the LORD:

What fault did your forefathers find in me,  
that they wandered far from me,  
pursuing empty phantoms and themselves becoming empty;

<sup>6</sup>that they did not ask, 'Where is the LORD,  
who brought us up from Egypt,  
and led us through the wilderness,  
through a country of deserts and shifting sands,  
a country barren and ill-omened, where no man ever trod,  
no man made his home?'

<sup>7</sup>I brought you into a fruitful land  
to enjoy its fruit and the goodness of it;  
but when you entered upon it you defiled it  
and made the home I gave you loathsome.

<sup>8</sup>The priests no longer asked, 'Where is the LORD?'  
Those who handled the law had no thought of me,  
the shepherds of the people rebelled against me;  
the prophets prophesied in the name of Baal  
and followed gods powerless to help.

<sup>9</sup>Therefore I will bring a charge against you once more,  
says the LORD,  
against you and against your descendants.

<sup>10</sup>Cross to the coasts and islands of Kittim and see,  
send to Kedar and consider well,  
see whether there has been anything like this:

<sup>11</sup>has a nation ever changed its gods,  
although they were no gods?

But my people have exchanged their Glory

for a god altogether powerless.

<sup>12</sup>Stand aghast at this, you heavens,  
tremble in utter despair,  
says the LORD.

<sup>13</sup>Two sins have my people committed:  
they have forsaken me,  
a spring of living water,  
and they have hewn out for themselves cisterns,  
cracked cisterns that can hold no water.

<sup>14</sup>Is Israel a slave? Was he born in slavery?  
If not, why has he been despoiled?

<sup>15</sup>Why do lions roar and growl at him?  
Why has his land been laid waste,  
why are his cities razed to the ground and abandoned?

<sup>16</sup>Men of Noph and Tahpanhes  
will break your heads.

<sup>17</sup>Is it not your desertion of the LORD your God  
that brings all this upon you?

<sup>18</sup>And now, why should you make off to Egypt  
to drink the waters of the Shihor?  
Or why make off to Assyria  
to drink the waters of the River?

<sup>19</sup>It is your own wickedness that will punish you,  
your own apostasy that will condemn you.  
See for yourselves how bitter a thing it is and how evil,  
to forsake the LORD your God and revere me no longer.  
This is the very word of the Lord GOD of Hosts.

<sup>20</sup>Ages ago you broke your yoke and snapped your traces,  
crying, 'I will not be your slave';  
and you sprawled in promiscuous vice  
on all the hill-tops, under every spreading tree.

<sup>21</sup>I planted you as a choice red vine,  
true stock all of you,  
yet now you are turned into a vine  
debased and worthless!

<sup>22</sup>The stain of your sin is still there and I see it,  
though you wash with soda and do not stint the soap.  
This is the very word of the Lord GOD.

<sup>23</sup>How can you say, 'I am not polluted, not I!  
I have not followed the Baalim'?  
Look how you conducted yourself in the valley;  
remember what you have done.

You have been like a she-camel,  
twisting and turning as she runs,

<sup>24</sup>rushing alone into [rushing alone into: *prob. rdg, Heb a wild-ass taught in*]  
the wilderness,  
snuffing the wind in her lust;  
who can restrain her in her heat?

No one need tire himself out in pursuit of her;  
she is easily found at mating time.

<sup>25</sup>Why not save your feet from stony ground  
and your throats from thirst?  
But you said, 'No; I am desperate.  
I love foreign gods and I must go after them.'

<sup>26</sup>As a thief is ashamed when he is found out,  
so the people of Israel feel ashamed,  
they, their kings, their princes,  
their priests and their prophets;

<sup>27</sup>they say 'You are our father' to a block of wood  
and cry 'Mother' to a stone.

But on me they have turned their backs  
and averted their faces from me.

And now on the day of disaster they say,  
'Rise up and save us.'

<sup>28</sup>Where are they, those gods you made for yourselves?  
Let them come and save you in the day of disaster.

For you, Judah, have as many gods as you have towns [towns: *or* blood-spattered altars].

<sup>29</sup>The LORD answers,  
Why argue your case with me?

You are rebels, every one of you.

<sup>30</sup>In vain I struck down your sons,  
the lesson was not learnt;  
still your own sword devoured your prophets  
like a ravening lion.

<sup>31</sup>[*prob. rdg, Heb prefixes You, O generation, see the word of the LORD*]

Have I shown myself inhospitable to Israel  
like some wilderness or waterless land?

Why do my people say, 'We have broken away;  
we will never come back to thee'?

<sup>32</sup>Will a girl forget her finery  
or a bride her ribbons?  
Yet my people have forgotten me  
over and over again.

<sup>33</sup>How well you pick your way in search of lovers!  
Why! even the worst of women can learn from you.

<sup>34</sup>Yes, and there is blood on the corners of your robe –  
the life-blood of the innocent poor.

You did not get it by housebreaking  
but by your sacrifices under every oak.

<sup>35</sup>You say, 'I am innocent;  
surely his anger has passed away.'

But I will challenge your claim  
to have done no sin.

<sup>36</sup>Why do you so lightly change your course?  
Egypt will fail you as Assyria did;

<sup>37</sup>you shall go out from here,  
each of you with his hands above his head,  
for the LORD repudiates those in whom you trusted,  
and from them you shall gain nothing.

**3**<sup>1</sup>If a man puts away his wife  
and she leaves him,  
and if she then becomes another's,  
may he go back to her again?  
Is not that woman defiled,  
a forbidden thing?  
You have played the harlot with many lovers;  
can you come back to me?  
says the LORD.

<sup>2</sup>Look up to the high bare places and see:  
where have you not been ravished?  
You sat by the wayside to catch lovers,  
like an Arab lurking in the desert,  
and defiled the land  
with your fornication and your wickedness.

<sup>3</sup>Therefore the showers were withheld  
and the spring rain failed.  
But yours was a harlot's brow,  
and you were resolved to show no shame.

<sup>4</sup>Not so long since, you called me 'Father,  
dear friend of my youth',  
thinking, <sup>5</sup>'Will he be angry for ever?  
Will he rage eternally?'  
This is how you spoke; you have done evil  
and gone unchallenged.

<sup>6</sup>In the reign of King Josiah, the LORD said to me, Do you see what apostate Israel did? She went up to every hill-top and under every spreading tree, and there she played the whore. <sup>7</sup>Even after she had done all this, I said to her, Come back to me, but she would not. That faithless woman, her sister Judah, saw it all; <sup>8</sup>she saw too that I had put apostate Israel away and given her a note of divorce because she had committed adultery. Yet that faithless woman, her sister Judah, was not afraid; she too has gone and played the whore. <sup>9</sup>She defiled the land with her thoughtless harlotry and her adulterous worship of stone and wood. <sup>10</sup>In spite of all this that faithless woman, her sister Judah, has not come back to me in good faith: but only in pretence. This is the very word of the LORD.

<sup>11</sup>The LORD said to me, Apostate Israel is less to blame than that faithless woman Judah. <sup>12</sup>Go and proclaim this message to the north:  
Come back to me, apostate Israel,  
says the LORD,  
I will no longer frown on you.  
For my love is unfailing, says the LORD,  
I will not be angry for ever.

<sup>13</sup>Only you must acknowledge your wrongdoing,  
confess your rebellion against the LORD your God.  
Confess your promiscuous traffic with foreign gods  
under every spreading tree,  
confess that you have not obeyed me.  
This is the very word of the LORD.

<sup>14</sup>Come back to me, apostate children, says the LORD, for I am patient with you, and I will take you, one from a city and two from a clan, and bring you to Zion. <sup>15</sup>There will I give you shepherds after my own heart, and they shall lead you with knowledge and understanding. <sup>16</sup>In those days, when you have increased and become fruitful in the land, says the LORD, men shall speak no more of the Ark of the Covenant of the LORD; they shall not think of it nor remember it nor resort to it; it will be needed no more. <sup>17</sup>At that time Jerusalem shall be called the Throne of the LORD. All nations shall gather in Jerusalem to honour the LORD's name; never again shall they follow the promptings of their evil and stubborn hearts. <sup>18</sup>In those days Judah shall join Israel, and together they shall come from a northern land into the land I gave their fathers as their patrimony.

<sup>19</sup>I said, How gladly would I treat you as a son,  
giving you a pleasant land,  
a patrimony fairer than that of any nation!  
I said, You shall call me Father  
and never cease to follow me.

<sup>20</sup>But like a woman who is unfaithful to her lover,  
so you, Israel, were unfaithful to me.  
This is the very word of the LORD.

<sup>21</sup>Hark, a sound of weeping on the bare places,  
Israel's people pleading for mercy!  
For they have taken to crooked ways  
and ignored the LORD their God.

<sup>22</sup>Come back to me, wayward [*Or* apostate] sons;  
I will heal your apostasy.  
O LORD, we come! We come to thee;  
for thou art our God.

<sup>23</sup>There is no help in worship on the hill-tops,  
no help from clamour on the heights;  
truly in the LORD our God  
is Israel's only salvation.

<sup>24</sup>From our early days  
Baal, god of shame, has devoured  
the fruits of our fathers' labours,  
their flocks and herds, their sons and daughters.

<sup>25</sup>Let us lie down in shame, wrapped round by our dishonour,  
for we have sinned against the LORD our God,  
both we and our fathers,  
from our early days till now,  
and we have not obeyed the LORD our God.

**4**<sup>1</sup>If you will but come back, O Israel,  
if you will but come back to me, says the LORD,

if you will banish your loathsome idols from my sight,  
and stray no more,  
<sup>2</sup>if you swear by the life of the LORD,  
in truth, in justice and uprightness,  
then shall the nations pray to be blessed like you [*prob. rdg, Heb him*]  
and in you [*prob. rdg, Heb him*] shall they boast.

<sup>3</sup>These are the words of the LORD to the men of Judah and Jerusalem:  
Break up your fallow ground,  
do not sow among thorns,  
<sup>4</sup>circumcise yourselves to the service of the LORD,  
circumcise your hearts,  
men of Judah and dwellers in Jerusalem,  
lest the fire of my fury blaze up and burn unquenched,  
because of your evil doings.

<sup>5</sup>Tell this in Judah,  
proclaim it in Jerusalem,  
blow the trumpet throughout the land,  
sound the muster,  
give the command, Stand to! – and let us fall back  
on the fortified cities.

<sup>6</sup>Raise the signal – To Zion!  
make for safety, lose no time,  
for I bring disaster out of the north,  
and dire destruction.

<sup>7</sup>A lion has come out from his lair,  
the destroyer of nations;  
he has struck his tents, he has broken camp,  
to harry your land  
and lay your cities waste and unpeopled.

<sup>8</sup>Well may you put on sackcloth,  
beat the breast and wail,  
for the anger of the LORD  
is not averted from us.

<sup>9</sup>On that day, says the LORD,  
the hearts of the king and his officers shall fail them,  
priests shall be struck with horror and prophets dumbfounded.

<sup>10</sup>And I said, O Lord GOD, thou surely didst deceive this people and Jerusalem in saying,  
'You shall have peace', while the sword is at our throats.

<sup>11</sup>At that time this people and Jerusalem shall be told:  
A scorching wind from the high bare places in the wilderness  
sweeps down upon my people,  
no breeze for winnowing or for cleansing;  
<sup>12</sup>a wind too strong for these  
will come at my bidding,  
and now I will state my case against them.

<sup>13</sup>Like clouds the enemy advances  
with a whirlwind of chariots;  
his horses are swifter than eagles –  
alas, we are overwhelmed!

<sup>14</sup>O Jerusalem, wash the wrongdoing from your heart  
and you may yet be saved;  
how long will you cherish  
your evil schemes?

<sup>15</sup>Hark, a runner from Dan,  
tidings of evil from Mount Ephraim!

<sup>16</sup>Tell all this to the nations,  
proclaim the doom of Jerusalem:  
hordes of invaders come from a distant land,  
howling against the cities of Judah.

<sup>17</sup>Their pickets are closing in all round her,  
because she has rebelled against me.  
This is the very word of the LORD.

<sup>18</sup>Your own ways, your own deeds  
have brought all this upon you;  
this is your punishment,  
and all this comes of your rebellion [*your rebellion: prob. rdg, Heb obscure*].

<sup>19</sup>Oh, the writhing of my bowels  
and the throbbing of my heart!  
I cannot keep silence.  
I hear the sound of the trumpet,  
the sound of the battle-cry.

<sup>20</sup>Crash upon crash,  
the land goes down in ruin,  
my tents are thrown down,  
their coverings torn to shreds.

<sup>21</sup>How long must I see the standard raised  
and hear the trumpet call?

<sup>22</sup>My people are fools, they know nothing of me;  
silly children, with no understanding,  
they are clever only in wrongdoing,  
and of doing right they know nothing.

<sup>23</sup>I saw the earth, and it was without form and void;  
the heavens, and their light was gone.

<sup>24</sup>I saw the mountains, and they reeled;  
all the hills rocked to and fro.

<sup>25</sup>I saw, and there was no man,  
and the very birds had taken flight.

<sup>26</sup>I saw, and the farm-land was wilderness,  
and the towns all razed to the ground,  
before the LORD in his anger.

<sup>27</sup>These are the words of the LORD:  
The whole land shall be desolate,

though I will not make an end of it.

<sup>28</sup>Therefore the earth will mourn  
and the heavens above turn black.  
For I have made known my purpose;  
I will not relent or change my mind.

<sup>29</sup>At the sound of the horsemen and archers  
the whole country is in flight;  
they creep into caves, they hide in thickets,  
they scramble up the crags.  
Every town is forsaken,  
no one dwells there.

<sup>30</sup>And you, what are you doing?  
When you dress yourself in scarlet,  
deck yourself out with golden ornaments,  
and make your eyes big with antimony,  
you are beautifying yourself to no purpose.  
Your lovers spurn you  
and are out for your life.

<sup>31</sup>I hear a sound as of a woman in labour,  
the sharp cry of one bearing her first child.  
It is Zion, gasping for breath,  
clenching her fists.  
Ah me! I am weary,  
weary of slaughter.

**5**<sup>1</sup>Go up and down the streets of Jerusalem  
and see for yourselves;  
search her wide squares:  
can you find any man who acts justly,  
who seeks the truth,  
that I may forgive that city?

<sup>2</sup>Men may swear by the life of the LORD  
but they only perjure themselves.

<sup>3</sup>O LORD, are thine eyes not set upon the truth?  
Thou didst strike them down,  
but they took no heed;  
didst pierce them to the heart,  
but they refused to learn.  
They set their faces harder than flint  
and refused to come back.

<sup>4</sup>I said, 'After all, these are the poor,  
these are stupid folk,  
who do not know the way of the LORD,  
the ordinances of their God.

<sup>5</sup>I will go to the great  
and speak with them;  
for they will know the way of the LORD,

the ordinances of their God.'

But they too have broken the yoke  
and snapped their traces.

<sup>6</sup>Therefore a lion out of the scrub shall strike them down,  
a wolf from the plains shall ravage them;  
a leopard shall prowl about their cities  
and maul any who venture out.  
For their rebellious deeds are many,  
their apostasies past counting.

<sup>7</sup>How can I forgive you for all this?  
Your sons have forsaken me and sworn by gods  
that are no gods.

I gave them all they needed, yet they preferred adultery,  
and haunted the brothels;

<sup>8</sup>each neighs after another man's wife,  
like a well-fed and lusty stallion.

<sup>9</sup>Shall I not punish them for this?  
the LORD asks.

Shall I not take vengeance  
on such a people?

<sup>10</sup>Go along her rows of vines and slash them,  
yet do not make an end of them.  
Hack away her green branches,  
for they are not the LORD's.

<sup>11</sup>Faithless are Israel and Judah,  
both faithless to me.  
This is the very word of the LORD.

<sup>12</sup>They have denied the LORD,  
saying, 'He does not exist.  
No evil shall come upon us;  
we shall never see sword or famine.

<sup>13</sup>The prophets will prove mere wind,  
the word not in them.'

<sup>14</sup>And so, because you talk in this way, these are the words of the LORD the God of Hosts to me:

I will make my words a fire in your mouth;  
and it shall burn up this people like brushwood.

<sup>15</sup>I bring against you, Israel, a nation from afar,  
an ancient people established long ago,  
says the LORD.

A people whose language you do not know,  
whose speech you will not understand;

<sup>16</sup>they are all mighty warriors,  
their jaws are a grave, wide open,

<sup>17</sup>to devour your harvest and your bread,  
to devour your sons and your daughters,  
to devour your flocks and your herds,

to devour your vines and your fig-trees.  
They shall batter down the cities in which you trust [*prob. rdg, Heb adds with the sword*],  
walled though they are.

<sup>18</sup>But in those days, the LORD declares, I will still not make an end of you. <sup>19</sup>When you ask, 'Why has the LORD our God done all this to us?' I shall answer, 'As you have forsaken me and served alien gods in your own land, so shall you serve foreigners [*Or foreign gods*] in a land that is not yours.'

<sup>20</sup>Tell this to the people of Jacob,  
proclaim it in Judah:

<sup>21</sup>Listen, you foolish and senseless people,  
who have eyes and see nothing,  
ears and hear nothing.

<sup>22</sup>Have you no fear of me? says the LORD;  
will you not shiver before me,  
before me, who made the shivering sand to bound the sea,  
a barrier it never can pass?  
Its waves heave and toss but they are powerless;  
roar as they may, they cannot pass.

<sup>23</sup>But this people has a rebellious and defiant heart,  
rebels they have been and now they are clean gone.

<sup>24</sup>They did not say to themselves,  
'Let us fear the LORD our God,  
who gives us the rains of autumn  
and spring showers in their turn,  
who brings us unfailingly  
fixed seasons of harvest.'

<sup>25</sup>But your wrongdoing has upset nature's order,  
and your sins have kept from you her kindly gifts.

<sup>26</sup>For among my people there are wicked men,  
who lay snares like a fowler's net [*who ... net: prob. rdg, Heb unintelligible*]  
and set deadly traps to catch men.

<sup>27</sup>Their houses are full of fraud,  
as a cage is full of birds.

They grow rich and grand,

<sup>28</sup>bloated and rancorous;  
their thoughts are all of evil,  
and they refuse to do justice,  
the claims of the orphan they do not put right  
nor do they grant justice to the poor.

<sup>29</sup>Shall I not punish them for this?  
says the LORD;  
shall I not take vengeance  
on such a people?

<sup>30</sup>An appalling thing, an outrage,  
has appeared in this land:

<sup>31</sup>prophets prophesy lies and priests go hand in hand with them,

and my people love to have it so.  
How will you fare at the end of it all?

**6**<sup>1</sup>Save yourselves, men of Benjamin,  
come out of Jerusalem,  
blow the trumpet in Tekoa,  
fire the beacon on Beth-hakkerem,  
for calamity looms from the north  
and great disaster.

<sup>2</sup>Zion, delightful and lovely:  
her end is near –

<sup>3</sup>she to whom the shepherds come  
and bring their flocks with them.  
There they pitch their tents all round her,  
each grazing his own strip of pasture.

<sup>4</sup>Declare war solemnly against her;  
come, let us attack her at noon.  
Too late! the day declines  
and the shadows lengthen.

<sup>5</sup>Come then, let us attack her by night  
and destroy her palaces.

<sup>6</sup>These are the words of the LORD of Hosts:  
Cut down the trees of Jerusalem  
and raise siege-ramps against her,  
the city whose name is Licence,  
oppression is rampant in her.

<sup>7</sup>As a well keeps its water fresh,  
so she keeps her evil fresh.  
Violence and outrage echo in her streets;  
sickness and wounds stare me in the face.

<sup>8</sup>Learn your lesson, Jerusalem,  
lest my love for you be torn from my heart,  
and I leave you desolate,  
a land where no one can live.

<sup>9</sup>These are the words of the LORD of Hosts:  
Glean the remnant of Israel  
like a vine,  
pass your hand like a vintager one last time  
over the branches.

<sup>10</sup>To whom can I address myself,  
to whom give solemn warning? Who will hear me?  
Their ears are uncircumcised;  
they cannot listen;  
they treat the LORD's word as a reproach;  
they show no concern with it.

<sup>11</sup>But I am full of the anger of the LORD,  
I cannot hold it in.  
I must pour it out on the children in the street  
and on the young men in their gangs.

Man and wife alike shall be caught in it,  
the greybeard and the very old.

<sup>12</sup>Their houses shall be turned over to others,  
their fields and their women alike.

For I will raise my hand, says the LORD,  
against the people of the country.

<sup>13</sup>For all, high and low,  
are out for ill-gotten gain;  
prophets and priests are frauds,  
every one of them;

<sup>14</sup>they dress my people's wound, but skin-deep only,  
with their saying, 'All is well.'

All well? Nothing is well!

<sup>15</sup>Are they ashamed when they practise their abominations?

Ashamed? Not they!

They can never be put out of countenance.

Therefore they shall fall with a great crash [with a great crash: *or where they fall or among the fallen*],

and be brought to the ground on the day of my reckoning.

The LORD has said it.

<sup>16</sup>These are the words of the LORD: Stop at the cross-roads; look for the ancient paths; ask, 'Where is the way that leads to what is good?' Then take that way, and you will find rest for yourselves. But they said, 'We will not.' <sup>17</sup>Then I will appoint watchmen to direct you; listen for their trumpet-call. But they said, 'We will not.' <sup>18</sup>Therefore hear, you nations, and take note, all you who witness it, of the plight of this people. <sup>19</sup>Listen, O earth, I bring ruin on them, the harvest of all their scheming; for they have given no thought to my words and have spurned my instruction. <sup>20</sup>What good is it to me if frankincense is brought from Sheba and fragrant spices from distant lands? I will not accept your whole-offerings, your sacrifices do not please me. <sup>21</sup>Therefore these are the words of the LORD:

I will set obstacles before this people  
which shall bring them to the ground;  
fathers and sons, friends and neighbours  
shall all perish together.

<sup>22</sup>These are the words of the LORD:

See, a people is coming from a northern land,  
a great nation rouses itself from earth's farthest corners.

<sup>23</sup>They come with bow and sabre, cruel men and pitiless,  
bestriding their horses, they sound like the thunder of the sea,  
they are like men arrayed for battle against you, Zion.

<sup>24</sup>We have heard tell of them  
and our hands hang limp,  
agony grips us, the anguish of a woman in labour.

<sup>25</sup>Do not go out into the country,  
do not walk by the high road;  
for the foe, sword in hand,  
is a terror let loose.

<sup>26</sup>Daughter of my people, wrap yourself in sackcloth,  
sprinkle ashes over yourself, wail bitterly,  
as one who mourns an only son;  
in an instant shall the marauder be upon us.

<sup>27</sup>I have appointed you an assayer of my people;  
you will know how to test them and will assay their conduct;

<sup>28</sup>arch-rebels all of them,  
mischief-makers, corrupt to a man.

<sup>29</sup>The bellows puff and blow, the furnace glows;  
in vain does the refiner smelt the ore,  
lead, copper and iron [*copper and iron: transposed from after mischief-*  
*makers in v28*] are not separated out.

<sup>30</sup>Call them spurious silver;  
for the LORD has spurned them.

## **False religion and its punishment**

**7**<sup>1</sup>THIS WORD CAME FROM THE LORD to Jeremiah. <sup>2</sup>Stand at the gate of the LORD's house and there make your proclamation: Listen to the words of the LORD, all you men of Judah who come in through these gates to worship him. <sup>3</sup>These are the words of the LORD of Hosts the God of Israel: Mend your ways and your doings, that I may let you live in this place. <sup>4</sup>You keep saying, 'This place [*This place: prob. rdg, Heb Those*] is the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD!' This catchword of yours is a lie; put no trust in it. <sup>5</sup>Mend your ways and your doings, deal fairly with one another, <sup>6</sup>do not oppress the alien, the orphan, and the widow, shed no innocent blood in this place, do not run after other gods to your own ruin. <sup>7</sup>Then will I let you live in this place, in the land which I gave long ago to your forefathers for all time. <sup>8</sup>You gain nothing by putting your trust in this lie. <sup>9</sup>You steal, you murder, you commit adultery and perjury, you burn sacrifices to Baal, you run after other gods whom you have not known; <sup>10</sup>then you come and stand before me in this house, which bears my name, and say, 'We are safe'; safe, you think, to indulge in all these abominations. <sup>11</sup>Do you think that this house, this house which bears my name, is a robbers' cave? I myself have seen all this, says the LORD. <sup>12</sup>Go to my shrine at Shiloh, which once I made a dwelling for my Name, and see what I did to it because of the wickedness of my people Israel. <sup>13</sup>And now you have done all these things, says the LORD; though I took pains to speak to you, you did not listen, and though I called, you gave no answer. <sup>14</sup>Therefore what I did to Shiloh I will do to this house which bears my name, the house in which you put your trust, the place I gave to you and your forefathers; <sup>15</sup>I will fling you away out of my sight, as I flung away all your kinsfolk, the whole brood of Ephraim.

<sup>16</sup>Offer up no prayer, Jeremiah, for this people, raise no plea or prayer on their behalf, and do not intercede with me; for I will not listen to you. <sup>17</sup>Do you not see what is going on in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem? <sup>18</sup>Children are gathering wood, fathers lighting fires, women kneading dough to make crescent-cakes in honour of the queen of heaven; and drink-offerings are poured out to other gods than me – all to

provoke and hurt me. <sup>19</sup>But is it I, says the LORD, whom they hurt? No; it is themselves, covering their own selves with shame. <sup>20</sup>Therefore, says the Lord GOD, my anger and my fury shall fall on this place, on man and beast, on trees and crops, and it shall burn unquenched.

<sup>21</sup>These are the words of the LORD of Hosts the God of Israel: Add whole-offerings to sacrifices and eat the flesh if you will. <sup>22</sup>But when I brought your forefathers out of Egypt, I gave them no commands about whole-offering and sacrifice; I said not a word about them. <sup>23</sup>What I did command them was this: If you obey me, I will be your God and you shall be my people. You must conform to all my commands, if you would prosper. <sup>24</sup>But they did not listen; they paid no heed, and persisted in disobedience with evil and stubborn hearts; they looked backwards and not forwards, <sup>25</sup>from the day when your forefathers left Egypt until now. I took pains to send to them all my servants the prophets; <sup>26</sup>they did not listen to me, they paid no heed, but were obstinate and proved even more wicked than their forefathers. <sup>27</sup>When you tell them this, they will not listen to you; if you call them, they will not answer. <sup>28</sup>Then you shall say to them, This is the nation that did not obey the LORD its God nor accept correction; truth has perished, it is heard no more on their lips.

<sup>29</sup>O Jerusalem, cut off your hair,  
the symbol of your dedication, and throw it away;  
raise up a lament on the high bare places.

For the LORD has spurned the generation which has roused his wrath, and has abandoned them. <sup>30</sup>For the men of Judah have done what is wrong in my eyes, says the LORD. They have defiled with their loathsome idols the house that bears my name, <sup>31</sup>they have built a shrine of Topheth in the Valley of Ben-hinnom, at which to burn their sons and daughters; that was no command of mine, nor did it ever enter my thought. <sup>32</sup>Therefore a time is coming, says the LORD, when it shall no longer be called Topheth or the Valley of Ben-hinnom, but the Valley of Slaughter; for the dead shall be buried in Topheth because there is no room elsewhere. <sup>33</sup>So the bodies of this people shall become food for the birds of the air and the wild beasts, and there will be no one to scare them away. <sup>34</sup>From the cities of Judah and the streets of Jerusalem I will banish all sounds of joy and gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the bride; for the land shall become desert.

**8**<sup>1</sup>At that time, says the LORD, men shall bring out from their graves the bones of the kings of Judah, of the officers, priests, and prophets, and of all who lived in Jerusalem. <sup>2</sup>They shall expose them to the sun, the moon, and all the host of heaven, whom they loved and served and adored, to whom they resorted and bowed in worship. Those bones shall not be gathered up nor buried but shall become dung on the ground. <sup>3</sup>All the survivors of this wicked race, wherever I have banished them, would rather die than live. This is the very word of the LORD of Hosts.

<sup>4</sup>You shall say to them, These are the words of the LORD:

If men fall, can they not also rise?  
If a man breaks away, can he not return?

<sup>5</sup>Then why are this people so wayward,

incurable in their waywardness?  
Why have they clung to their treachery  
and refused to return to their obedience?

<sup>6</sup>I have listened to them  
and heard not one word of truth,  
not one sinner crying remorsefully,  
'Oh, what have I done?'

Each one breaks away [*breaks away: or is wayward*] in headlong career  
as a war-horse plunges in battle.

<sup>7</sup>The stork in the sky  
knows the time to migrate,  
the dove and the swift and the wryneck  
know the season of return;  
but my people do not know the ordinances of the LORD.

<sup>8</sup>How can you say, 'We are wise,  
we have the law of the LORD',  
when scribes with their lying pens  
have falsified it?

<sup>9</sup>The wise are put to shame, they are dismayed and have lost their wits.  
They have spurned the word of the LORD,  
and what sort of wisdom is theirs?

<sup>10</sup>Therefore will I give their wives to other men  
and their lands to new owners.  
For all, high and low,  
are out for ill-gotten gain;  
prophets and priests are frauds,  
every one of them;

<sup>11</sup>they dress my people's wound, but skin-deep only,  
with their saying, 'All is well.'  
All well? Nothing is well!

<sup>12</sup>Are they ashamed when they practise their abominations?  
Ashamed? Not they!  
They can never be put out of countenance.  
Therefore they shall fall with a great crash [*with a great crash: or where  
they fall or among the fallen*],  
and be brought to the ground on the day of my reckoning.  
The LORD has said it.

<sup>13</sup>I would gather their harvest, says the LORD,  
but there are no grapes on the vine,  
no figs on the fig-tree;  
even their leaves are withered.,

<sup>14</sup>Why do we sit idle? Up, all of you together,  
let us go into our walled cities and there meet our doom.  
For the LORD our God has struck us down,  
he has given us a draught of bitter poison;  
for we have sinned against the LORD.

<sup>15</sup>Can we hope to prosper when nothing goes well?  
Can we hope for respite when the terror falls suddenly?

<sup>16</sup>The snorting of his horses is heard from Dan;  
at the neighing of his stallions the whole land trembles.  
The enemy come; they devour the land and all its store,  
city and citizens alike.

<sup>17</sup>Beware, I am sending snakes against you,  
vipers, such as no man can charm,  
and they shall bite you.  
This is the very word of the LORD.

<sup>18</sup>How can I bear my sorrow [How ... sorrow: *prob. rdg, Heb unintelligible*?]  
I am sick at heart.

<sup>19</sup>Hark, the cry of my people  
from a distant land:  
'Is the LORD not in Zion?  
Is her King no longer there?'  
Why do they provoke me with their images  
and foreign gods?

<sup>20</sup>Harvest is past, summer is over,  
and we are not saved.

<sup>21</sup>I am wounded at the sight of my people's wound;  
I go like a mourner, overcome with horror.

<sup>22</sup>Is there no balm in Gilead,  
no physician there?  
Why has no new skin grown over their wound?

**9**<sup>1</sup>Would that my head were all water,  
my eyes a fountain of tears,  
that I might weep day and night  
for my people's dead!

<sup>2</sup>Oh that I could find in the wilderness a shelter by the wayside.  
that I might leave my people and depart!  
Adulterers are they all, a mob of traitors.

<sup>3</sup>The tongue is their weapon, a bow ready bent.  
Lying, not truth, is master in the land.  
They run from one sin to another,  
and for me they care nothing.  
This is the very word of the LORD.

<sup>4</sup>Be on your guard, each man against his friend;  
put no trust even in a brother.  
Brother supplants brother [Brother supplants brother: *or Every brother is a  
supplanter like Jacob (cp Gen. 27.35 and note)*],  
and friend slanders friend.

<sup>5</sup>They make game of their friends  
but never speak the truth;  
they have trained their tongues to lies;  
deep in their sin, they cannot retrace their steps.

<sup>6</sup>Wrong follows wrong, deceit follows deceit;  
they refuse to acknowledge me.  
This is the very word of the LORD.

<sup>7</sup>Therefore these are the words of the LORD of Hosts:  
I am their refiner and will assay them.  
How can I disregard my people?

<sup>8</sup>Their tongue is a cruel arrow,  
their mouths speak lies.  
One speaks amicably to another,  
while inwardly he plans a trap for him.

<sup>9</sup>Shall I not punish them for this?  
says the LORD;  
shall I not take vengeance  
on such a people?

<sup>10</sup>Over the mountains will I raise weeping and wailing,  
and over the desert pastures will I chant a dirge.  
They are scorched and untrodden,  
they hear no lowing of cattle;  
birds of the air and beasts have fled and are gone.

<sup>11</sup>I will make Jerusalem a heap of ruins, a haunt of wolves,  
and the cities of Judah an unpeopled waste.

<sup>12</sup>What man is wise enough to understand this, to understand what the LORD has said  
and to proclaim it? Why has the land become a dead land, scorched like the desert and  
untrodden? <sup>13</sup>The LORD said, It is because they forsook my law which I set before  
them; they neither obeyed me nor conformed to it. <sup>14</sup>They followed the promptings of  
their own stubborn hearts, they followed the Baalim as their forefathers had taught  
them. <sup>15</sup>Therefore these are the words of the LORD of Hosts the God of Israel: I will  
feed this people with wormwood and give them bitter poison to drink. <sup>16</sup>I will scatter  
them among nations whom neither they nor their forefathers have known; I will harry  
them with the sword until I have made an end of them.

<sup>17</sup>These are the words of the LORD of Hosts:

Summon the wailing women to come,  
send for the women skilled in keening

<sup>18</sup>to come quickly and raise a lament for us,  
that our eyes may run with tears  
and our eyelids be wet with weeping.

<sup>19</sup>Hark, hark, lamentation is heard in Zion:  
How fearful is our ruin! How great our shame!  
We have left our lands, our houses have been pulled down.

<sup>20</sup>Listen, you women, to the words of the LORD,  
that your ears may catch what he says.

Teach your daughters the lament,  
let them teach one another this dirge:

<sup>21</sup>Death has climbed in through our windows,

it has entered our palaces,  
it sweeps off the children in the open air  
and drives young men from the streets.

<sup>22</sup>This is the word of the LORD:

The corpses of men shall fall and lie like dung in the fields,  
like swathes behind the reaper, but no one shall gather them.

<sup>23</sup>These are the words of the LORD:

Let not the wise man boast of his wisdom  
nor the valiant of his valour;  
let not the rich man boast of his riches;  
<sup>24</sup>but if any man would boast, let him boast of this,  
that he understands and knows me.  
For I am the LORD, I show unfailing love,  
I do justice and right upon the earth;  
for on these I have set my heart.  
This is the very word of the LORD.

<sup>25</sup>The time is coming, says the LORD, when I will punish all the circumcised, <sup>26</sup>Egypt  
and Judah, Edom and Ammon, Moab, and all who haunt the fringes of the desert  
[who ... desert: *or* the dwellers in the desert who clip the hair on their temples]; for all  
alike, the nations and Israel, are uncircumcised in heart.

**10**<sup>1</sup>O Listen, Israel, to this word that the LORD has spoken against you:

<sup>2</sup>Do not fall into the ways of the nations,  
do not be awed by signs in the heavens;  
it is the nations who go in awe of these.

<sup>3</sup>For the carved images of the nations are a sham,  
they are nothing but timber cut from the forest,  
worked with his chisel by a craftsman;

<sup>4</sup>he adorns it with silver and gold,  
fastening them on with hammer and nails  
so that they do not fall apart.

<sup>5</sup>They can no more speak than a scarecrow in a plot of cucumbers;  
they must be carried, for they cannot walk.  
Do not be afraid of them: they can do no harm,  
and they have no power to do good.

<sup>6</sup>Where can one be found like thee, O LORD?  
Great thou art and great the might of thy name.

<sup>7</sup>Who shall not fear thee, king of the nations?  
for fear is thy fitting tribute.

Where among the wisest of the nations and all their royalty  
can one be found like thee?

<sup>8</sup>They are fools and blockheads one and all,  
learning their nonsense from a log of wood.

<sup>9</sup>The beaten silver is brought from Tarshish  
and the gold from Ophir;  
all are the work of craftsmen and goldsmiths.

They are draped in violet and purple,  
all the work of skilled men.

<sup>10</sup>But the LORD is God in truth,  
a living god, an eternal king.  
The earth quakes under his wrath,  
nations cannot endure his fury.

<sup>11</sup>{You shall say this to them: The gods who did not make heaven and earth shall perish  
from the earth and from under these heavens.}

<sup>12</sup>[*vv12-16: cp 51.15-19*] God made the earth by his power,  
fixed the world in place by his wisdom,  
unfurled the skies by his understanding.

<sup>13</sup>At the thunder of his voice the waters in heaven are amazed [At the  
thunder ... amazed: *prob. rdg, Heb* At the sound of his giving tumult of  
waters in heaven];

he brings up the mist from the ends of the earth,  
he opens rifts [*riffts: prob. rdg, Heb* lightnings] for the rain  
and brings the wind out of his storehouses.

<sup>14</sup>All men are brutish and ignorant;  
every goldsmith is discredited by his idol;  
for the figures he casts are a sham,  
there is no breath in them.

<sup>15</sup>They are worth nothing, mere mockeries,  
which perish when their day of reckoning comes.

<sup>16</sup>God, Jacob's creator, is not like these;  
for he is the maker of all.  
Israel is the people he claims as his own;  
the LORD of Hosts is his name.

<sup>17</sup>Put your goods together and carry them out of the country,  
living as you are under siege.

<sup>18</sup>For these are the words of the LORD:  
This time I will uproot  
the whole population of the land,  
and I will press them hard and squeeze them dry.

<sup>19</sup>O the pain of my wounds!  
Cruel are the blows I suffer.  
But this is my plight, I said, and I must endure it.

<sup>20</sup>My home is ruined, my tent-ropes all severed,  
my sons have left me and are gone,  
there is no one to pitch my tent again,  
no one to put up its curtains.

<sup>21</sup>The shepherds of the people are mere brutes;  
they never consult the LORD,  
and so they do not prosper,  
and all their flocks at pasture are scattered.

<sup>22</sup>Hark, a rumour comes flying,

then a mounting uproar from the land of the north,  
an army to make Judah's cities desolate, a haunt of wolves.

<sup>23</sup>I know, O LORD,  
that man's ways are not of his own choosing;  
nor is it for a man to determine his course in life.

<sup>24</sup>Correct us, O LORD, but with justice, not in anger,  
lest thou bring us almost to nothing.

<sup>25</sup>Pour out thy fury on nations  
that have not acknowledged thee,  
on tribes that have not invoked thee by name;  
for they have devoured Jacob and made an end of him  
and have left his home a waste.

## Warnings and punishment

**11**<sup>1</sup>THE WORD WHICH CAME TO JEREMIAH from the LORD: <sup>2</sup>Listen to the terms of this covenant and repeat them to the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. <sup>3</sup>Tell them, These are the words of the LORD the God of Israel: A curse on the man who does not observe the terms of this covenant <sup>4</sup>by which I bound your forefathers when I brought them out of Egypt, from the smelting-furnace. I said, If you obey me and do all that I tell you, you shall become my people and I will become your God. <sup>5</sup>And I will thus make good the oath I swore to your forefathers, that I would give them a land flowing with milk and honey, the land you now possess. I answered, 'Amen, LORD.' <sup>6</sup>Then the LORD said: Proclaim all these terms in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem. Say, Listen to the terms of this covenant and carry them out. <sup>7</sup>I have protested to your forefathers since I brought them out of Egypt, till this day; I took pains to warn them: Obey me, I said. <sup>8</sup>But they did not obey; they paid no attention to me, but each followed the promptings of his own stubborn and wicked heart. So I brought on them all the penalties laid down in this covenant by which I had bound them, whose terms they did not observe.

<sup>9</sup>The LORD said to me, The men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem have entered into a conspiracy: <sup>10</sup>they have gone back to the sins of their earliest forefathers and refused to listen to me: They have followed other gods and worshipped them; Israel and Judah have broken the covenant which I made with their fathers. <sup>11</sup>Therefore these are the words of the LORD: I now bring on them disaster from which they cannot escape; though they cry to me for help I will not listen. <sup>12</sup>The inhabitants of the cities of Judah and of Jerusalem may go and cry for help to the gods to whom they have burnt sacrifices; they will not save them in the hour of disaster. <sup>13</sup>For you, Judah, have as many gods as you have towns; you have set up as many altars to burn sacrifices to Baal as there are streets in Jerusalem. <sup>14</sup>So offer up no prayer for this people; raise no cry or prayer on their behalf, for I will not listen when they call to me in the hour of disaster.

<sup>15</sup>What right has my beloved in my house  
with her shameless ways?

Can the flesh of fat offerings on the altar  
ward off the disaster that threatens you?

<sup>16</sup>Once the LORD called you an olive-tree,

leafy and fair;  
but now with a great roaring noise  
you will feel sharp anguish [you will feel sharp anguish: *transposed from end of v15*];  
fire sets its leaves alight  
and consumes [*consumes: prob. rdg, Heb they consume*] its branches.

<sup>17</sup>The LORD of Hosts who planted you has threatened you with disaster, because of the harm Israel and Judah brought on themselves when they provoked me to anger by burning sacrifices to Baal.

<sup>18</sup>It was the LORD who showed me, and so I knew; he opened my eyes to what they were doing. <sup>19</sup>I had been like a sheep led obedient to the slaughter; I did not know that they were hatching plots against me and saying, 'Let us cut down the tree while the sap is in it; let us destroy him out of the living, so that his very name shall be forgotten.'

<sup>20</sup>O LORD of Hosts who art a righteous judge,  
testing the heart and mind,  
I have committed my cause to thee;  
let me see thy vengeance upon them.

<sup>21</sup>Therefore these are the words of the LORD about the men of Anathoth who seek to take my life, and say, 'Prophecy no more in the name of the LORD or we will kill you' –  
<sup>22</sup>these are his words: I will punish them: their young men shall die by the sword, their sons and daughters shall die by famine. <sup>23</sup>Not one of them shall survive; for in the year of their reckoning I will bring ruin on the men of Anathoth.

**12**<sup>1</sup>O LORD, I will dispute with thee, for thou art just;  
yes, I will plead my case before thee.

Why do the wicked prosper  
and traitors live at ease?

<sup>2</sup>Thou hast planted them and their roots strike deep,  
they grow up and bear fruit.  
Thou art ever on their lips,  
yet far from their hearts.

<sup>3</sup>But thou knowest me, O LORD, thou seest me;  
thou dost test my devotion to thyself.  
Drag them away like sheep to the shambles;  
set them apart for the day of slaughter.

<sup>4</sup>How long must the country lie parched  
and its green grass wither?  
No birds and beasts are left, because its people are so wicked,  
because they say, 'God will not see what we are doing.'

<sup>5</sup>If you have raced with men and the runners have worn you down,  
how then can you hope to vie with horses?  
If you fall headlong in easy country,  
how will you fare in Jordan's dense thickets?

<sup>6</sup>All men, your brothers and kinsmen, are traitors to you,  
they are in full cry after you;

trust them not, for all the fine words they give you.

<sup>7</sup>I have forsaken the house of Israel,  
I have cast off my own people.  
I have given my beloved into the power of her foes.

<sup>8</sup>My own people have turned on me like a lion from the scrub,  
roaring against me; therefore I hate them.

<sup>9</sup>Is this land of mine a hyena's lair,  
with birds of prey hovering all around it?  
Come, you wild beasts; come, all of you, flock to the feast.

<sup>10</sup>Many shepherds have ravaged my vineyard  
and trampled down my field,  
they have made my pleasant field a desolate wilderness,

<sup>11</sup>made it a waste land, waste and waterless, to my sorrow.  
The whole land is waste, and no one cares.

<sup>12</sup>Plunderers have swarmed across the high bare places in the wilderness, a sword of the LORD devouring the land from end to end; no creature can find peace.

<sup>13</sup>Men sow wheat and reap thistles;  
they sift but get no grain.

They are disappointed of their [*prob. rdg, Heb your*] harvest  
because of the anger of the LORD.

<sup>14</sup>These are the words of the LORD about all those evil neighbours who are laying hands on the land which I gave to my people Israel as their patrimony: I will uproot them from that [*prob. rdg, Heb their*] soil. <sup>16</sup>[*The rest of v14 and v15 transposed to follow destroy them in*

<sup>v17</sup>]Yet, if they will learn the ways of my people, swearing by my name, 'By the life of the LORD', as they taught my people to swear by the Baal, they shall form families among my people. <sup>17</sup>But if they will not listen, I will uproot that people, uproot and destroy them. <sup>15</sup>Also I will uproot Judah from among them; but after I have uprooted them, I will have pity on them again and will bring each man back to his patrimony and his land. This is the very word of the LORD.

**13**<sup>1</sup>These were the words of the LORD to me: Go and buy yourself a linen girdle and put it round your waist, but do not let it come near water. <sup>2</sup>So I bought it as the LORD had told me and put it round my waist. <sup>3</sup>The LORD spoke to me a second time: <sup>4</sup>Take the girdle which you bought and put round your waist; go at once to Perath and hide it in a crevice among the rocks. <sup>5</sup>So I went and hid the girdle at [*Or by*] Perath, as the LORD had told me. <sup>6</sup>After a long time the LORD said to me: Go at once to Perath and fetch back the girdle which I told you to hide there. <sup>7</sup>So I went to Perath and looked for the place where I had hidden it, but when I picked it up, I saw that it was spoilt, and no good for anything. <sup>8</sup>Again the LORD spoke to me <sup>9</sup>and these were his words: Thus will I spoil the gross pride of Judah, the gross pride of Jerusalem. <sup>10</sup>This wicked nation has refused to listen to my words; they have followed other gods, serving them and bowing down to them. So it shall be [*Prob.rdg, Heb And let it be*] like this girdle, no good for anything. <sup>11</sup>For, just as a girdle is bound close to a man's waist, so I bound all Israel and all Judah to myself, says the LORD, so that they should become my people to win a

name for me, and praise and glory; but they did not listen.

<sup>12</sup>You shall say this to them: These are the words of the LORD the God of Israel: Wine-jars should be filled with wine. They will answer, 'We know quite well that wine-jars should be filled with wine.' <sup>13</sup>Then you shall say to them, These are the words of the LORD: I will fill all the inhabitants of this land with wine until they are drunk – kings of David's line who sit on his throne, priests, prophets, and all who live in Jerusalem. <sup>14</sup>I will dash them to pieces one against another, fathers and sons alike, says the LORD, I will show them no compassion or pity or tenderness; nor refrain from destroying them [nor refrain ... them: *or so corrupt are they*].

<sup>15</sup>Hear and attend. Be not too proud to listen,  
for it is the LORD who speaks.

<sup>16</sup>Ascribe glory to the LORD your God  
before the darkness falls,  
before your feet stumble  
on the twilight hill-sides,  
before he turns the light you look for  
to deep gloom and thick darkness.

<sup>17</sup>If in those depths of gloom you will not listen,  
then for very anguish I can only weep and shed tears [If ... shed tears: *or If*  
you will not listen to this, for very anguish I must weep in secret],  
my eyes must stream with tears;  
for the LORD's flock is carried away into captivity.

<sup>18</sup>Say to the king and the queen mother [*Or queen*]:  
Down, take a humble seat,  
for your proud crowns are fallen from your heads.

<sup>19</sup>Your cities in the Negeb are besieged,  
and no one can relieve them;  
all Judah has been swept into exile,  
swept clean away.

<sup>20</sup>Lift up your eyes and see  
those who are coming from the north.  
Where is the flock that was entrusted to you,  
the flock you were so proud of?

<sup>21</sup>What will you say when you suffer  
because your leaders [*leaders: transposed from next line*] cannot be found,  
though it was you who trained them  
to be your head?

Will not pangs seize you,  
like the pangs of a woman in labour,

<sup>22</sup>when you wonder,  
'Why has this come upon me?'  
For your many sins your skirts are torn off you,  
your limbs uncovered.

<sup>23</sup>Can the Nubian change his skin,  
or the leopard its spots?  
And you? Can you do good,

you who are schooled in evil?

<sup>24</sup>Therefore I will scatter you [*prob. rdg, Heb them*] like chaff driven by the desert wind.

<sup>25</sup>This is your lot, the portion of the rebel, measured out by me, says the LORD, because you have forsaken me and trusted in false gods.

<sup>26</sup>So I myself have stripped off your skirts and laid bare your shame.

<sup>27</sup>Your adulteries, your lustful neighing, your wanton lewdness, are an offence to me [*an offence to me (Heb you): transposed from v26*].

On the hills and in the open country I have seen your foul deeds.

Alas, Jerusalem, unclean that you are!

How long, how long will you delay [*How ... delay?: prob. rdg, Heb unintelligible*]?

**14**<sup>1</sup>This came to Jeremiah as the word of the LORD concerning the drought:

<sup>2</sup>Judah droops, her cities languish, her men sink to the ground; Jerusalem's cry goes up.

<sup>3</sup>Their flock-masters send their boys for water; they come to the pools but find no water there. Back they go, with empty vessels;

<sup>4</sup>the produce [*the produce: prob. rdg, Heb obscure*] of the land has failed, because there is no rain.

The farmers' hopes are wrecked, they uncover their heads for grief.

<sup>5</sup>The hind calves in the open country and forsakes her young because there is no grass;

<sup>6</sup>for lack of herbage, wild asses stand on the high bare places and snuff the wind for moisture, as wolves do, and their eyes begin to fail.

<sup>7</sup>Though our sins testify against us, yet act [*Or turn away*], O LORD, for thy own name's sake. Our disloyalties indeed are many; we have sinned against thee.

<sup>8</sup>O hope of Israel, their saviour in time of trouble, must thou be a stranger in the land, a traveller pitching his tent for a night?

<sup>9</sup>Must thou be like a man suddenly overcome, like a man powerless to save himself?

Thou art in our midst, O LORD, and thou hast named us thine; do not forsake us.

<sup>10</sup>The LORD speaks thus of this people: They love to stray from my ways, they wander where they will. Therefore he has no more pleasure in them; he remembers their guilt

now, and punishes their sins. <sup>11</sup>Then the LORD said to me, Do not pray for the well-being of this people. <sup>12</sup>When they fast, I will not listen to their cry; when they sacrifice whole-offering and grain-offering, I will not accept them. I will make an end of them with sword, with famine and pestilence. <sup>13</sup>But I said, O Lord GOD, the prophets tell them that they shall see no sword and suffer no famine; for thou wilt give them lasting prosperity in this place. <sup>14</sup>The LORD answered me, The prophets are prophesying lies in my name. I have not sent them; I have given them no charge; I have not spoken to them. The prophets offer them false visions, worthless augury, and their own deluding fancies. <sup>15</sup>Therefore these are the words of the LORD about the prophets who, though not sent by me, prophesy in my name and say that neither sword nor famine shall touch this land: By sword and by famine shall those prophets meet their end. <sup>16</sup>The people to whom they prophesy shall be flung out into the streets of Jerusalem, victims of famine and sword; they, their wives, their sons, and their daughters, with no one to bury them: I will pour down upon them the evil they deserve.

<sup>17</sup>So this is what you shall say to them:

Let my eyes stream with tears,  
ceaselessly, day and night.  
For the virgin daughter of my people  
has been broken in pieces,  
struck by a cruel blow.

<sup>18</sup>If I go out into the country,  
I see men slain by the sword;  
if I enter the city, I see the ravages of famine;  
prophet and priest alike  
go begging round the land and are never at rest.

<sup>19</sup>Hast thou spurned Judah utterly?  
Dost thou loathe Zion?  
Why hast thou wounded us, and there is no remedy;  
why let us hope for better days, and we find nothing good,  
for a time of healing, and all is disaster?

<sup>20</sup>We acknowledge our wickedness,  
the guilt of our forefathers;  
O LORD, we have sinned against thee.

<sup>21</sup>Do not despise the place where thy name dwells  
nor bring contempt on the throne of thy glory.  
Remember thy covenant with us and do not make it void.

<sup>22</sup>Can any of the false gods of the nations give rain?  
Or do the heavens send showers of themselves?  
Art thou not God, O LORD,  
that we may hope in thee?

It is thou only who doest [*Or madest*] all these things.

**15**<sup>1</sup>The LORD said to me, Even if Moses and Samuel stood before me, I would not be moved to pity this people. Banish them from my presence; let them be gone. <sup>2</sup>When they ask where they are to go, you shall say to them, These are the words of the LORD:

Those who are for death shall go to their death,  
and those for the sword to the sword;  
those who are for famine to famine,  
and those for captivity to captivity.

<sup>3</sup>Four kinds of doom do I ordain for them, says the LORD: the sword to kill, dogs to tear, birds of prey from the skies and beasts from their lairs to devour and destroy. <sup>4</sup>I will make them repugnant to all the kingdoms of the earth, because of the crimes of Manasseh son of Hezekiah, king of Judah, in Jerusalem.

<sup>5</sup>Who will take pity on you, Jerusalem,  
who will offer you consolation?  
Who will turn aside to wish you well?

<sup>6</sup>You cast me off, says the LORD,  
you turned your backs on me.  
So I stretched out my hand and ruined you;  
I was weary of relenting.

<sup>7</sup>I winnowed them and scattered them  
through the cities of the land;  
I brought bereavement on them, I destroyed my people,  
for they would not abandon their ways.

<sup>8</sup>I made widows among them more in number  
than the sands of the sea;  
I brought upon them a horde of raiders [I brought ... raiders: *prob. rdg, Heb obscure*]  
to plunder at high noon.  
I made the terror of invasion fall upon them  
all in a moment.

<sup>9</sup>The mother of seven sons grew faint,  
she sank into a swoon;  
her light was quenched while it was yet day,  
she was left humbled and shamed.  
All the remnant I gave to perish by the sword  
at the hand of their enemies.  
This is the very word of the LORD.

## Confessions and addresses

<sup>10</sup>Alas, alas, my mother, that you ever gave me birth!  
a man doomed to strife, with the whole world against me.  
I have borrowed from no one, I have lent to no one,  
yet all men abuse me.

<sup>11</sup>The LORD answered,  
But I will greatly strengthen you;  
in time of distress and in time of disaster  
I will bring the enemy to your feet.

<sup>12</sup>Can iron break steel from the north? [*prob. rdg, Heb adds and bronze. Heb also adds* <sup>13</sup>I will give away your wealth as spoil, and your treasure for no payment, because of your sin throughout your country. <sup>14</sup>I will make your enemies pass through a land you do not know; for my anger is a blazing fire and it shall burn for ever (*cp 17.3-4*)]

<sup>15</sup>LORD, thou knowest;  
remember me, LORD, and come to visit me,

take vengeance for me on my persecutors..

Be patient with me and take me not away,  
see what reproaches I endure for thy sake.

<sup>16</sup>I have to suffer those who despise thy words,  
but thy word is joy and happiness to me,  
for thou hast named me thine,  
O LORD, God of Hosts.

<sup>17</sup>I have never kept company with any gang of roisterers,  
or made merry with them,  
because I felt thy hand upon me I have sat alone;  
for thou hast filled me with indignation.

<sup>18</sup>Why then is my pain unending,  
my wound desperate and incurable?  
Thou art to me like a brook that is not to be trusted,  
whose waters fail.

<sup>19</sup>This was the LORD's answer:

If you will turn back to me, I will take you back  
and you shall stand before me.

If you choose noble utterance and reject the base,  
you shall be my spokesman.

This people will turn again to you,  
but you will not turn to them.

<sup>20</sup>To withstand them I will make you impregnable,  
a wall of bronze.

They will attack you but they will not prevail,  
for I am with you to deliver you  
and save you, says the LORD;

<sup>21</sup>I will deliver you from the wicked,  
I will rescue you from the ruthless.

**16**<sup>1</sup>The word of the LORD came to me: <sup>2</sup>You shall not marry a wife; you shall have neither son nor daughter in this place. <sup>3</sup>For these are the words of the LORD concerning sons and daughters born in this place, the mothers who bear them and the fathers who beget them in this land: <sup>4</sup>When men die, struck down by deadly ulcers, there shall be no wailing for them and no burial; they shall be like dung lying upon the ground. When men perish by sword or famine, their corpses shall become food for birds and for beasts.

<sup>5</sup>For these are the words of the LORD: Enter no house where there is a mourning-feast; do not go in to wail or to bring comfort, for I have withdrawn my peace from this people, says the LORD, my love and affection. <sup>6</sup>High and low shall die in this land, but there shall be no burial, no wailing for them; no one shall gash himself, or shave his head. <sup>7</sup>No one shall give the mourner a portion of bread to console him for the dead, nor give him the cup of consolation, even for his father or mother. <sup>8</sup>Nor shall you enter a house where there is feasting, to sit eating and drinking there. <sup>9</sup>For these are the words of the LORD of Hosts, the God of Israel: In your own days, in the sight of you all, and in this very place, I will silence all sounds of joy and gladness, and the voice of bridegroom and bride.

<sup>10</sup>When you tell this people all these things they will ask you, 'Why has the LORD decreed that this great disaster is to come upon us? What wrong have we done? What sin have we committed against the LORD our God?' <sup>11</sup>You shall answer, 'Because your forefathers forsook me, says the LORD, and followed other gods, serving them and bowing down to them. They forsook me and did not keep my law. <sup>12</sup>And you yourselves have done worse than your forefathers; for each of you follows the promptings of his wicked and stubborn heart instead of obeying me. <sup>13</sup>So I will fling you headlong out of this land into a country unknown to you and to your forefathers; there you can serve other gods day and night, for I will show you no favour. <sup>14</sup>Therefore, says the LORD, the time is coming when men shall no longer swear, 'By the life of the LORD who brought the Israelites up from Egypt', <sup>15</sup>but, 'By the life of the LORD who brought the Israelites back from a northern land and from all the lands to which he had dispersed them'; and I will bring them back to the soil which I gave to their forefathers.

<sup>16</sup>I will send for many fishermen, says the LORD, and they shall fish for them. After that I will send for many hunters, and they shall hunt them out from every mountain and hill and from the crevices in the rocks. <sup>17</sup>For my eyes are on all their ways; they are not hidden from my sight, nor is their wrongdoing concealed from me. <sup>18</sup>I will first make them pay in full [in full: *or double*] for the wrong they have done and the sin they have committed by defiling with the dead lumber of their idols the land which belongs to me, and by filling it with their abominations.

<sup>19</sup>O LORD, my strength and my stronghold,  
my refuge in time of trouble,  
to thee shall the nations come  
from the ends of the earth and say,  
Our forefathers inherited only a sham,  
an idol vain and useless.

<sup>20</sup>Can man make gods for himself?  
They would be no gods.

<sup>21</sup>Therefore I am teaching them,  
once for all will I teach them  
my power and my might,  
and they shall learn that my name is the LORD.

**17**<sup>1</sup>The sin of Judah is recorded with an iron tool, engraved on the tablet of their heart with a point of adamant and carved on the horns of their altars <sup>2</sup>to bear witness against them [to bear ... them: *prob. rdg, Heb as their sons remember*]. Their altars and their sacred poles stand by every spreading tree, on the heights <sup>3</sup>and the hills in the mountain country. I will give away your wealth as spoil, and all your treasure for no payment [for no payment: *prob. rdg, cp 15.13; Heb your hill-shrines*], because of your [your: *prob. rdg, cp 15.13; Heb omitted*] sin throughout your country. <sup>4</sup>You will lose possession [You ... possession: *prob. rdg, Heb obscure*] of the patrimony which I gave you. I will make you serve your enemies as slaves in a land you do not know; for my anger is a blazing fire [for ... fire: *prob. rdg, cp 15.14; Heb for you have kindled a fire in my anger*] and it shall burn for ever.

<sup>5</sup>These are the words of the LORD:

A curse on the man who trusts in man

and leans for support on human kind,  
while his heart is far from the LORD!

<sup>6</sup>He shall be like a juniper in the desert;  
when good comes he shall not see it.  
He shall dwell among the rocks in the wilderness,  
in a salt land where no man can live.

<sup>7</sup>Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD,  
and rests his confidence upon him.

<sup>8</sup>He shall be like a tree planted by the waterside,  
that stretches its roots along the stream.  
When the heat comes it has nothing to fear;  
its spreading foliage stays green.  
In a year of drought it feels no care,  
and does not cease to bear fruit.

<sup>9</sup>The heart is the most deceitful of all things,  
desperately sick [the most ... sick: *or too deceitful for any man*], who can  
fathom it?

<sup>10</sup>I, the LORD, search the mind  
and test the heart,  
requiting man for his conduct,  
and as his deeds deserve.

<sup>11</sup>Like a partridge which gathers into its nest  
eggs which it has not laid,  
so is the man who amasses wealth unjustly.  
Before his days are half done he must leave it,  
and prove but a fool at the last.

<sup>12</sup>O throne of glory, exalted from the beginning,  
the place of our sanctuary,

<sup>13</sup>O LORD on whom Israel's hope is fixed,  
all who reject thee shall be put to shame;  
all in this land who forsake thee shall be humbled [*humbled: prob. rdg, Heb  
written*],

for they have rejected the fountain of living water [*prob. rdg, Heb adds the  
LORD*].

<sup>14</sup>Heal me, O LORD, and I shall be healed,  
save me and I shall be saved;  
for thou art my praise.

<sup>15</sup>They say to me, 'Where is the word of the LORD?  
Let it come if it can!'

<sup>16</sup>It is not the thought of disaster that makes me press after thee;  
never did I desire this day of despair.  
Thou knowest all that has passed my lips;  
it was approved by thee.

<sup>17</sup>Do not become a terror to me;  
thou art my only refuge on the day of disaster.

<sup>18</sup>May my persecutors be foiled, not I;  
may they be terrified, not I.

Bring on them the day of disaster;  
destroy them, destroy them utterly.

<sup>19</sup>These were the words of the LORD to me: Go and stand in the Benjamin [*Benjamin: prob. rdg, Heb sons of the people*] Gate, through which the kings of Judah go in and out, and in all the gates of Jerusalem. <sup>20</sup>Say, Hear the words of the LORD, you princes of Judah, all you men of Judah, and all you inhabitants of Jerusalem who come in through these gates. <sup>21</sup>These are the words of the LORD: Observe this with care, that you do not carry any load on the sabbath or bring it through the gates of Jerusalem. <sup>22</sup>You shall not bring any load out of your houses or do any work on the sabbath, but you shall keep the sabbath day holy as I commanded your forefathers. <sup>23</sup>Yet they did not obey or pay attention, but obstinately refused to hear or learn their lesson. <sup>24</sup>Now if you will obey me, says the LORD, and refrain from bringing any load through the gates of this city on the sabbath, and keep that day holy by doing no work on it, <sup>25</sup>then kings shall come through the gates of this city, kings [*prob. rdg, Heb adds and officers*] who shall sit on David's throne. They shall come riding in chariots or on horseback, escorted by their captains, by the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and this city shall be inhabited for ever. <sup>26</sup>People shall come from the cities of Judah, the country round Jerusalem, the land of Benjamin, the Shephelah, the hill-country and the Negeb, bringing whole-offerings, sacrifices, grain-offerings, and frankincense, bringing also thank-offerings to the house of the LORD. <sup>27</sup>But if you do not obey me by keeping the sabbath day holy and by not carrying any load as you come through the gates of Jerusalem on the sabbath, then I will set fire to those gates; it shall consume the palaces of Jerusalem and shall not be put out.

**18**<sup>1</sup>These are the words which came to Jeremiah from the LORD: <sup>2</sup>Go down at once to the potter's house, and there I will tell you what I have to say. <sup>3</sup>So I went down to the potter's house and found him working at the wheel. <sup>4</sup>Now and then a vessel he was making out of the clay would be spoilt in his hands, and then he would start again and mould it into another vessel to his liking. <sup>5</sup>Then the word of the LORD came to me: <sup>6</sup>Can I not deal with you, Israel, says the LORD, as the potter deals with his clay? You are clay in my hands like the clay in his, O house of Israel. <sup>7</sup>At any moment I may threaten to uproot a nation or a kingdom, to pull it down and destroy it. <sup>8</sup>But if the nation which I have threatened turns back from its wicked ways, then I shall think better of the evil I had in mind to bring on it. <sup>9</sup>Or at any moment I may decide to build or to plant a nation or a kingdom. <sup>10</sup>But if it does evil in my sight and does not obey me, I shall think better of the good I had in mind for it. <sup>11</sup>Go now and tell the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem that these are the words of the LORD: I am the potter; I am preparing evil for you and perfecting my designs against you. Turn back, every one of you, from his evil course; mend your ways and your doings. <sup>12</sup>But they answer, 'Things are past hope. We will do as we like, and each of us will follow the promptings of his own wicked and stubborn heart.' <sup>13</sup>Therefore these are the words of the LORD:

Inquire among the nations: who ever heard the like of this?  
The virgin Israel has done a thing most horrible.

<sup>14</sup>Will the snow cease to fall on the rocky slopes of Lebanon?  
Will the cool rain streaming in torrents ever fail?

<sup>15</sup>No, but my people have forgotten me;

they burn sacrifices to a mere idol,  
so they stumble in their paths, the ancient ways,  
and they take to byways and unmade roads;  
<sup>16</sup>their own land they lay waste,  
and men will jeer at it for ever in contempt.  
All who go by will be horror-struck and shake their heads.  
<sup>17</sup>Like a wind from the east  
I will scatter them before their enemies.  
In the hour of their downfall  
I will turn my back towards them and not my face.

<sup>18</sup>Come, let us decide what to do with Jeremiah', men say. 'There will still be priests to guide us, still wise men to advise, still prophets to proclaim the word. Come, let us invent some charges against him; let us pay no attention to his message.'

<sup>19</sup>But do thou, O LORD, pay attention,  
and hear what my opponents are saying against me.

<sup>20</sup>Is good to be repaid with evil [*prob. rdg, Heb adds they have dug a pit for me (cp v22)*]?  
Remember how I stood before thee,  
pleading on their behalf  
to avert thy wrath from them.

<sup>21</sup>Therefore give their sons over to famine,  
leave them at the mercy of the sword.  
Let their women be childless and widowed,  
let death carry off their men,  
let their young men be cut down in battle.

<sup>22</sup>Bring raiders upon them without warning,  
and let screams of terror ring out from their houses.  
For they have dug a pit to catch me  
and have hidden snares for my feet.

<sup>23</sup>Well thou knowest, O LORD,  
all their murderous plots against me.  
Do not blot out their wrongdoing  
or annul their sin;  
when they are brought stumbling into thy presence,  
deal with them on the day of thy anger.

**19**<sup>1</sup>These are the words of the LORD: Go and buy an earthenware jar. Then take with you some of the elders of the people and of the priests, <sup>2</sup>and go out to the Valley of Ben-hinnom, on which the Gate of the Potsherd opens, and there proclaim what I tell you. <sup>3</sup>Say, Hear the word of the LORD, you princes of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem. These are the words of the LORD of Hosts the God of Israel: I will bring on this place a disaster which shall ring in the ears of all who hear of it. <sup>4</sup>For they have forsaken me, and treated this place as if it were not mine, burning sacrifice to other gods whom neither they nor their fathers nor the kings of Judah have known, and filling this place with the blood of the innocent. <sup>5</sup>They have built shrines to Baal, where they burn their sons as whole-offerings to Baal. It was no command of mine; I never spoke of it; it never entered my thought. <sup>6</sup>Therefore, says the LORD, the time is coming when this place shall no longer be called Topheth or the Valley of Ben-hinnom, but the Valley

of Slaughter. <sup>7</sup>In this place I will shatter the plans of Judah and Jerusalem as a jar is shattered; I will make the people fall by the sword before their enemies, at the hands of those who would kill them, and I will give their corpses to the birds and beasts to devour. <sup>8</sup>I will make this city a scene of horror and contempt, so that every passer-by will be horror-struck and jeer in contempt at the sight of its wounds. <sup>9</sup>I will compel men to eat the flesh of their sons and their daughters; they shall devour one another's flesh in the dire straits to which their enemies and those who would kill them will reduce them in the siege. <sup>10</sup>Then you must shatter the jar before the eyes of the men who have come with you <sup>11</sup>and say to them, These are the words of the LORD of Hosts: Thus will I shatter this people and this city as one shatters an earthen vessel so that it cannot be mended, and the dead shall be buried in Topheth because there is no room elsewhere to bury them. <sup>12</sup>This is what I will do to this place, says the LORD, and to those who live there: I will make this city like Topheth. <sup>13</sup>Because of their defilement, the houses of Jerusalem and those of the kings of Judah shall be like Topheth, every one of the houses on whose roofs men have burnt sacrifices to the host of heaven and poured drink-offerings to other gods.

<sup>14</sup>Jeremiah came in from Topheth, where the LORD had sent him to prophesy, and stood in the court of the LORD's house. He said to all the people, <sup>15</sup>These are the words of the LORD of Hosts the God of Israel: I am bringing on this city and on all its blood-spattered altars every disaster with which I have threatened it, for its people have remained obstinate and refused to listen to me.

**20**<sup>1</sup>When Pashhur son of Immer the priest, the chief officer in the house of the LORD, heard Jeremiah prophesying these things, <sup>2</sup>he had him flogged [had him flogged: *or* struck him] and put him into the stocks at the Upper Gate of Benjamin, in the house of the LORD. <sup>3</sup>The next morning he released him, and Jeremiah said to him, The LORD has called you not Pashhur but Magor-missabib [*That is Terror let loose*]. <sup>4</sup>For these are the words of the LORD: I will make you a terror to yourself and to all your friends; they shall fall by the sword of the enemy before your very eyes. I will hand over all Judah to the king of Babylon, and he will deport them to Babylon and put them to the sword. <sup>5</sup>I will give all this city's store of wealth and riches and all the treasures of the kings of Judah to their enemies; they shall seize them as spoil and carry them off to Babylon. <sup>6</sup>You, Pashhur, and all your household shall go into captivity and come to Babylon. There shall you die and there shall you be buried, you and all your friends to whom you have been a false prophet.

<sup>7</sup>O LORD, thou hast duped me, and I have been thy dupe;  
thou hast outwitted me and hast prevailed.  
I have been made a laughing-stock all the day long,  
everyone mocks me.

<sup>8</sup>Whenever I speak I must needs cry out  
and proclaim violence and destruction.  
I am reproached and mocked all the time  
for uttering the word of the LORD.

<sup>9</sup>Whenever I said, 'I will call him to mind no more,  
nor speak in his name again',  
then his word was imprisoned in my body,  
like a fire blazing in my heart,

and I was weary with holding it under,  
and could endure no more.

<sup>10</sup>For I heard many whispering [*prob. rdg, Heb adds* Terror let loose],  
'Denounce him! we will denounce him.'

All my friends were on the watch for a false step,  
saying, 'Perhaps he may be tricked, then we can catch him and take our  
revenge.'

<sup>11</sup>But the LORD is on my side, strong and ruthless,  
therefore my persecutors shall stumble and fall powerless.  
Bitter shall be their abasement when they fail,  
and their shame shall long be remembered.

<sup>12</sup>O LORD of Hosts, thou dost test the righteous  
and search the depths of the heart;  
to thee have I committed my cause,  
let me see thee take vengeance on them.

<sup>13</sup>Sing to the LORD, praise the LORD;  
for he rescues the poor from those who would do them wrong.

<sup>14</sup>A curse on the day when I was born!  
Be it for ever unblessed,  
the day when my mother bore me!

<sup>15</sup>A curse on the man who brought word to my father,  
'A child is born to you, a son',  
and gladdened his heart!

<sup>16</sup>That man shall fare like the cities  
which the LORD overthrew without mercy.  
He shall hear cries of alarm in the morning  
and uproar at noon,

<sup>17</sup>because death did not claim me before birth,  
and my mother did not become my grave,  
her womb great with me for ever.

<sup>18</sup>Why did I come forth from the womb  
to know only sorrow and toil,  
to end my days in shame?

## **Kings and prophets denounced**

**21**<sup>1</sup>THE WORD WHICH CAME FROM THE LORD to Jeremiah when King Zedekiah sent to him Pashhur son of Malchiah and Zephaniah the priest, son of Maaseiah, with this request: <sup>2</sup>'Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon is making war on us; inquire of the LORD on our behalf. Perhaps the LORD will perform a miracle as he has done in past times, so that Nebuchadrezzar may raise the siege.'<sup>3</sup>But Jeremiah answered them, <sup>4</sup>Tell Zedekiah, these are the words of the LORD the God of Israel: I will turn back upon you your own weapons with which you are fighting the king of Babylon and the Chaldaeans besieging you outside the wall; and I will bring them into the heart of this city. <sup>5</sup>I myself will fight against you in burning rage and great fury, with an outstretched hand and a strong arm. <sup>6</sup>I will strike down those who live in this city, men and cattle alike; they

shall die of a great pestilence. <sup>7</sup>After that, says the LORD, I will take Zedekiah king of Judah, his courtiers and the people, all in this city who survive pestilence, sword, and famine, and hand them over to Nebuchadrezzar the king of Babylon, to their enemies and those who would kill them. He shall put them to the sword and shall show no pity, no mercy or compassion.

<sup>8</sup>You shall say further to this people, These are the words of the LORD: I offer you now a choice between the way of life and the way of death. <sup>9</sup>Whoever remains in this city shall die by sword, by famine, or by pestilence, but whoever goes out to surrender to the Chaldeans, who are now besieging you, shall survive; he shall take home his life, and nothing more. <sup>10</sup>I have set my face against this city, meaning to do them harm, not good, says the LORD. It shall be handed over to the king of Babylon, and he shall burn it to the ground.

<sup>11</sup>To the royal house of Judah.

Listen to the word of the LORD:

<sup>12</sup>O house of David, these are the words of the LORD:

Administer justice betimes,  
rescue the victim from his oppressor,  
lest the fire of my fury blaze up and burn unquenched  
because of your evil doings.

<sup>13</sup>The LORD says,

I am against you who lie in the valley,  
you, the rock in the plain,  
you who say, 'Who can come down upon us?  
Who can penetrate our lairs?'

<sup>14</sup>I will punish you as you deserve,  
says the LORD,

I will kindle fire on the heathland around you,  
and it shall consume everything round about.

**22**<sup>1</sup>These were the words of the LORD: Go down to the house of the king of Judah <sup>2</sup>and say this: Listen to the words of the LORD, O king of Judah, you who sit on David's throne, you and your courtiers and your people who come in at these gates. <sup>3</sup>These are the words of the LORD: Deal justly and fairly, rescue the victim from his oppressor, do not ill-treat or do violence to the alien, the orphan or the widow, do not shed innocent blood in this place. <sup>4</sup>If you obey, and only if you obey, kings who sit on David's throne shall yet come riding through these gates in chariots and on horses, with their retinue of courtiers and people. <sup>5</sup>But if you do not listen to my words, then by myself I swear, says the LORD, this house shall become a desolate ruin. <sup>6</sup>For these are the words of the LORD about the royal house of Judah:

Though you are dear to me as Gilead  
or as the heights of Lebanon,  
I swear that I will make you a wilderness,  
a land of unpeopled cities.

<sup>7</sup>I will dedicate an armed host to fight against you,  
a ravaging horde;  
they shall cut your choicest cedars down  
and fling them on the fire.

<sup>8</sup>Men of many nations shall pass by this city and say to one another, 'Why has the LORD done this to such a great city?' <sup>9</sup>The answer will be, 'Because they forsook their covenant with the LORD their God; they worshipped other gods and served them.'

<sup>10</sup>Weep not for the dead nor brood over his loss.  
Weep rather for him who has gone away,  
for he shall never return,  
never again see the land of his birth.

<sup>11</sup>For these are the words of the LORD concerning Shallum son of Josiah, king of Judah, who succeeded his father on the throne and has gone away: He shall never return; <sup>12</sup>he shall die in the place of his exile and never see this land again.

<sup>13</sup>Shame on the man who builds his house by unjust means  
and completes its roof-chambers by fraud,  
making his countrymen work without payment,  
giving them no wage for their labour!

<sup>14</sup>Shame on the man who says, 'I will build a spacious house  
with airy roof-chambers,  
set windows in it, panel it with cedar  
and paint it with vermilion'!

<sup>15</sup>If your cedar is more splendid,  
does that prove you a king?  
Think of your father: he ate and drank,  
dealt justly and fairly; all went well with him.

<sup>16</sup>He dispensed justice to the lowly and poor [*prob. rdg, Heb adds all went well (repeated from v15)*];  
did not this show he knew me? says the LORD.

<sup>17</sup>But you have no eyes, no thought for anything but gain,  
set only on the innocent blood you can shed,  
on cruel acts of tyranny.

<sup>18</sup>Therefore these are the words of the LORD concerning Jehoiakim son of Josiah, king of Judah:

For him no mourner shall say, 'Alas, brother, dear brother!'  
no one say, 'Alas, lord and master!'

<sup>19</sup>He shall be buried like a dead ass,  
dragged along and flung out  
beyond the gates of Jerusalem.

<sup>20</sup>Get up into Lebanon and cry aloud,  
make your voice heard in Bashan,  
cry aloud from Abarim, for all who befriend you are broken.

<sup>21</sup>I spoke to you in your days of prosperous ease,  
but you said, 'I will not listen.'

This is how you behaved since your youth;  
never have you obeyed me.

<sup>22</sup>The wind shall carry away all your friends [*Or shepherds*],

your lovers shall depart into exile.  
Then you will be put to shame and abashed  
for all your evil deeds [*Or calamities*].

<sup>23</sup>You dwellers in Lebanon, who make your nests among the cedars,  
how you will groan when the pains come upon you,  
like the pangs of a woman in labour!

<sup>24</sup>By my life, says the LORD, Coniah son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, shall be the signet-ring on my right hand no longer. Yes, Coniah, I will pull you off. <sup>25</sup>I will hand you over to those who seek your life, to those you fear, to Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon and to the Chaldeans. <sup>26</sup>I will fling you headlong, you and the mother who gave you birth, into another land, a land where you were not born; and there shall you both die. <sup>27</sup>They shall never come back to their own land, the land for which they long.

<sup>28</sup>This man, Coniah, then, is he a mere puppet, contemptible and broken, only a thing unwanted? Why else are he and his children flung out headlong and hurled into a country they do not know?

<sup>29</sup>O land, land, land, hear the words of the LORD: <sup>30</sup>These are the words of the LORD: Write this man down as stripped of all honour, one who in his own life shall not prosper, nor shall he leave descendants to sit in prosperity on David's throne or rule again in Judah.

**23**<sup>1</sup>Shame on the shepherds who let the sheep of my flock scatter and be lost! says the LORD. <sup>2</sup>Therefore these are the words of the LORD the God of Israel about the shepherds who tend my people: You have scattered and dispersed my flock. You have not watched over them; but I am watching you to punish you for your evil doings, says the LORD. <sup>3</sup>I will myself gather the remnant of my sheep from all the lands to which I have dispersed them. I will bring them back to their homes, and they shall be fruitful and increase. <sup>4</sup>I will appoint shepherds to tend them; they shall never again know fear or dismay or punishment. This is the very word of the LORD.

<sup>5</sup>The days are now coming, says the LORD,  
when I will make a righteous Branch spring from David's line,  
a king who shall rule wisely,  
maintaining law and justice in the land.

<sup>6</sup>In his days Judah shall be kept safe,  
and Israel shall live undisturbed.  
This is the name to be given to him:  
The LORD is our Righteousness.

<sup>7</sup>Therefore the days are coming, says the LORD, when men shall no longer swear, 'By the life of the LORD who brought Israel up from Egypt', <sup>8</sup>but, 'By the life of the LORD who brought the descendants of the Israelites back from a northern land and from all the lands to which he had dispersed them, to live again on their own soil.'

<sup>9</sup>On the prophets.  
Deep within me my heart is broken,  
there is no strength in my bones;

because of the LORD, because of his dread words  
I have become like a drunken man,  
like a man overcome with wine.

<sup>10</sup>For the land is full of adulterers,  
and because of them the earth lies parched,  
the wild pastures have dried up.  
The course that they run is evil,  
and their powers are misused.

<sup>11</sup>For prophet and priest alike are godless;  
I have come upon the evil they are doing even in my own house.  
This is the very word of the LORD.

<sup>12</sup>Therefore the path shall turn slippery beneath their feet;  
they shall be dispersed in the dark and shall fall there.  
For I will bring disaster on them when their day of reckoning comes.  
This is the very word of the LORD.

<sup>13</sup>I found the prophets of Samaria men of no sense:  
they prophesied in Baal's name and led my people Israel astray.

<sup>14</sup>In the prophets of Jerusalem I see a thing most horrible:  
adulterers and hypocrites that they are,  
they encourage evildoers,  
so that no man turns back from his sin;  
to me all her inhabitants are like Sodom and Gomorrah.

<sup>15</sup>These then are the words of the LORD of Hosts concerning the prophets:  
I will give them wormwood to eat  
and a bitter poison to drink;  
for a godless spirit has spread over all the land  
from the prophets of Jerusalem.

<sup>16</sup>These are the words of the LORD of Hosts:  
Do not listen to what the prophets say,  
who buoy you up with false hopes;  
the vision they report springs from their own imagination,  
it is not from the mouth of the LORD.

<sup>17</sup>They say to those who spurn the word of the LORD,  
'Prosperity shall be yours';  
and to all who follow the promptings of their own stubborn heart they say.  
'No disaster shall befall you.'

<sup>18</sup>But which of them has stood in the council of the LORD,  
seen him and heard his word?  
Which of them has listened to his word and obeyed?

<sup>19</sup>See what a scorching wind has gone out from the LORD,  
a furious whirlwind;  
it whirls round the heads of the wicked.

<sup>20</sup>The LORD's anger is not to be turned aside,  
until he has accomplished and fulfilled his deep designs.  
In days to come you will fully understand.

<sup>21</sup>I did not send these prophets, yet they went in haste;  
I did not speak to them, yet they prophesied.

<sup>22</sup>If they have stood in my council,  
let them proclaim my words to my people  
and turn them from their evil course and their evil doings.  
<sup>23</sup>Am I a god only near at hand, not far away?  
<sup>24</sup>Can a man hide in any secret place and I not see him?  
Do I not fill heaven and earth?  
This is the very word of the LORD.

<sup>25</sup>I have heard what the prophets say, the prophets who speak lies in my name and cry,  
'I have had a dream, a dream!' <sup>26</sup>How long will it be till they change their tune, these  
prophets who prophesy lies and give voice to their own inventions? <sup>27</sup>By these dreams  
which they tell one another these men think they will make my people forget my name,  
as their fathers forgot my name for the name of [for the name of: *or* by their worship  
of] Baal. <sup>28</sup>If a prophet has a dream, let him tell his dream; if he has my word, let him  
speak my word in truth. What has chaff to do with grain? says the LORD. <sup>29</sup>Do not my  
words scorch [*scorch: prob. rdg, Heb thus*] like fire? says the LORD. Are they not like a  
hammer that splinters rock? <sup>30</sup>I am against the prophets, says the LORD, who steal my  
words from one another for their own use. <sup>31</sup>I am against the prophets, says the LORD,  
who concoct words of their own and then say, 'This is his very word.' <sup>32</sup>I am against the  
prophets, says the LORD, who dream lies and retail them, misleading my people with  
wild and reckless falsehoods. It was not I who sent them or commissioned them, and  
they will do this people no good. This is the very word of the LORD.

<sup>33</sup>When you are asked by this people or by a prophet or priest what the burden of the  
LORD's message is, you shall answer, You are his burden, and I shall throw you down,  
says the LORD. <sup>34</sup>If prophet or priest or layman uses the term 'the LORD's burden', I  
will punish that man and his family. <sup>35</sup>The form of words you shall use in speaking  
amongst yourselves is: 'What answer has the LORD given?' or, 'What has the LORD  
said?' <sup>36</sup>You shall never again mention 'the burden of the LORD'; that is reserved for the  
man to whom he entrusts his message. If you do, you will make nonsense of the words  
of the living God, the LORD of Hosts our God. <sup>37</sup>This is the form you shall use in  
speaking to a prophet: 'What answer has the LORD given?' or, 'What has the LORD  
said?' <sup>38</sup>But to any of you who do say, 'the burden of the LORD', the LORD speaks thus:  
<sup>39</sup>Because you say, 'the burden of the LORD', though I sent to tell you not to say it,  
<sup>39</sup>therefore I myself will carry you like a burden and throw you down, casting out of my  
sight both you and the city which I gave to you and to your forefathers. <sup>40</sup>I will inflict on  
you endless reproach, endless shame which shall never be forgotten.

## Two visions

**24**<sup>1</sup>THIS IS WHAT THE LORD SHOWED ME: I saw two baskets of figs set out in front of  
the sanctuary of the LORD. This was after Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon had deported  
from Jerusalem Jeconiah son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, with the officers of Judah, the  
craftsmen and the smiths [*the smiths: or the harem*], and taken them to Babylon. <sup>2</sup>In  
one basket the figs were very good, like the figs that are first ripe; in the other the figs  
were very bad, so bad that they were not fit to eat. <sup>3</sup>The LORD said to me, 'What are

you looking at, Jeremiah?' 'Figs,' I answered, 'the good very good, and the bad so bad that they are not fit to eat.' <sup>4</sup>Then this word came to me from the LORD: <sup>5</sup>These are the words of the LORD the God of Israel: I count the exiles of Judah whom I sent away from this place to the land of the Chaldeans as good as these good figs. <sup>6</sup>I will look upon them meaning to do them good, and I will restore them to their land; I will build them up and not pull them down, plant them and not uproot them. <sup>7</sup>I will give them the wit to know me, for I am the LORD; they shall become my people and I will become their God, for they will come back to me with all their heart. <sup>8</sup>But Zedekiah king of Judah, his officers and the survivors of Jerusalem, whether they remain in this land or live in Egypt – all these I will treat as bad figs, says the LORD, so bad that they are not fit to eat. <sup>9</sup>I will make them repugnant to all the kingdoms of the earth, a reproach, a by-word, an object-lesson and a thing of ridicule wherever I drive them. <sup>10</sup>I will send against them sword, famine, and pestilence until they have vanished from the land which I gave to them and to their forefathers.

**25**<sup>1</sup>This came to Jeremiah as the word concerning all the people of Judah in the fourth year of Jehoiakim son of Josiah, king of Judah (that is the first year of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon). <sup>2</sup>This is what the prophet Jeremiah said to all Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem: <sup>3</sup>For twenty-three years, from the thirteenth year of Josiah son of Amon, king of Judah, to the present day, I have been receiving the words of the LORD and taking pains to speak to you, but you have not listened. <sup>4</sup>The LORD has taken pains to send you his servants the prophets, but you have not listened or shown any inclination to listen. <sup>5</sup>If each of you will turn from his wicked ways and evil courses, he has said, then you shall for ever live on the soil which the LORD gave to you and to your forefathers. <sup>6</sup>You must not follow other gods, serving and worshipping them, nor must you provoke me to anger with the idols your hands have made; then I will not do you harm. <sup>7</sup>But you did not listen to me, says the LORD; you provoked me to anger with the idols your hands had made and so brought harm upon yourselves.

<sup>8</sup>Therefore these are the words of the LORD of Hosts: Because you have not listened to my words, <sup>9</sup>I will summon all the tribes of the north, says the LORD: I will send for my servant Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon. I will bring them against this land and all its inhabitants and all these nations round it; I will exterminate them and make them a thing of horror and derision, a scandal for ever. <sup>10</sup>I will silence all sounds of joy and gladness among them, the voices of bridegroom and bride, and the sound of the handmill; I will quench the light of every lamp. <sup>11</sup>For seventy years this whole country shall be a scandal and a horror; these nations shall be in subjection to the king of Babylon. <sup>12</sup>When those seventy years are completed, I will punish the king of Babylon and his people, says the LORD, for all their misdeeds and make the land of the Chaldeans a waste for ever. <sup>13</sup>I will bring upon that country all I have said, all that is written in this book, all that Jeremiah has prophesied against these peoples. <sup>14</sup>They will be the victims [They ... victims: *prob. rdg, Heb* They were the victims] of mighty nations and great kings, and thus I will repay them for their actions and their deeds.

<sup>15</sup>These were the words of the LORD the God of Israel to me: Take from my hand this cup of fiery wine and make all the nations to whom I send you drink it. <sup>16</sup>When they have drunk it they will vomit and go mad; such is the sword which I am sending among

them. <sup>17</sup>Then I took the cup from the LORD's hand, gave it to all the nations to whom he sent me and made them drink it: <sup>18</sup>to Jerusalem, the cities of Judah, its kings and officers, making them a scandal, a thing of horror and derision and an object of ridicule, as they still are: <sup>19</sup>to Pharaoh king of Egypt, his courtiers, his officers, all his people, <sup>20</sup>and all his rabble of followers, all the kings of the land of Uz, all the kings of the Philistines: to Ashkelon, Gaza, Ekroh, and the remnant of Ashdod: <sup>21</sup>also to Edom, Moab, and the Ammonites, <sup>22</sup>all the kings of Tyre, all the kings of Sidon, and the kings of the coasts and islands: <sup>23</sup>to Dedan, Tema, Buz, and all who roam the fringes of the desert [who roam ... desert: *or who clip the hair on their temples*], <sup>24</sup>all the kings of Arabia living in the wilderness, <sup>25</sup>all the kings of Zamri, all the kings of Elam, and all the kings of the Medes, <sup>26</sup>all the kings of the north, neighbours or far apart, and all the kingdoms on the face of the earth. Last of all the king of Sheshak [*A name for Babylon*] shall drink. <sup>27</sup>You shall say to them, These are the words of the LORD of Hosts the God of Israel: Drink this, get drunk and be sick; fall, to rise no more, before the sword which I am sending among you. <sup>28</sup>If they refuse to take the cup from you and to drink, say to them, These are the words of the LORD of Hosts: You must and shall drink. <sup>29</sup>I will first punish the city which bears my name; do you think that you can be exempt? No, you cannot be exempt, for I am invoking the sword against all that inhabit the earth. This is the very word of the LORD of Hosts.

<sup>30</sup>Prophecy to them and tell them all I have said:

The LORD roars from Zion on high  
and thunders from his holy dwelling-place.  
Yes, he roars across the heavens, his home;  
an echo comes back like the shout of men treading grapes.

<sup>31</sup>The great noise reaches to the ends of the earth  
and all its inhabitants.  
For the LORD brings a charge against the nations,  
he goes to law with all mankind  
and has handed the wicked over to the sword.  
This is the very word of the LORD.

<sup>32</sup>These are the words of the LORD of Hosts:  
Ruin spreads from nation to nation,  
a mighty tempest is blowing up from the ends of the earth.

<sup>33</sup>In that day those whom the LORD has slain shall lie like dung on the ground from one end of the earth to the other; no one shall wail for them, they shall not be taken up and buried.

<sup>34</sup>Howl, shepherds, cry aloud,  
sprinkle yourselves with ashes, you masters of the flock.  
It is your turn to go to the slaughter,  
and you shall fall like fine rams.

<sup>35</sup>The shepherds shall have nowhere to flee,  
the flockmasters no way of escape.

<sup>36</sup>Hark, the shepherds cry out, the flockmasters howl,  
for the LORD is ravaging their pasture,

<sup>37</sup>and their peaceful homesteads lie in ruins beneath his anger.

<sup>38</sup>They flee like a young lion abandoning his lair,  
for their land has become a waste,  
Wasted by the cruel sword and by his anger.

## **Jerusalem laid under a curse**

**26**<sup>1</sup>AT THE BEGINNING OF THE REIGN of Jehoiakim son of Josiah, king of Judah, this word came to Jeremiah from the LORD: <sup>2</sup>These are the words of the LORD: Stand in the court of the LORD's house and speak to the inhabitants of all the cities of Judah who come to worship there. You shall tell them everything that I command you to say to them, keeping nothing back. <sup>3</sup>Perhaps they may listen, and every man may turn back from his evil courses. Then I will relent, and give up my purpose to bring disaster on them for their evil deeds. <sup>4</sup>You shall say to them, These are the words of the LORD: If you do not obey me, if you do not follow the law I have set before you, <sup>5</sup>and listen to the words of my servants the prophets, the prophets whom I have taken pains to send to you, but you have never listened to them, <sup>6</sup>then I will make this house like Shiloh and this city an object of ridicule to all nations on earth.

<sup>7</sup>The priests, the prophets, and all the people heard Jeremiah say this in the LORD's house <sup>8</sup>and, when he came to the end of what the LORD had commanded him to say to them, priests, prophets, and people seized him and threatened him with death. <sup>9</sup>'Why', they demanded, 'have you prophesied in the LORD's name that this house shall become like Shiloh and this city waste and uninhabited?' The people all gathered against Jeremiah in the LORD's house. <sup>10</sup>The officers of Judah heard what was happening, and they went up from the royal palace to the LORD's house and took their places there at the entrance of the new gate. <sup>11</sup>Then the priests and the prophets said to the officers and all the people, 'Condemn this fellow to death. He has prophesied against this city: you have heard it with your own ears.' <sup>12</sup>Then Jeremiah said to the officers and the people, 'The LORD sent me to prophesy against this house and this city all that you have heard. <sup>13</sup>If you now mend your ways and your doings and obey the LORD your God, then he may relent and revoke the disaster with which he has threatened you. <sup>14</sup>But I am in your hands; do with me whatever you think right and proper. <sup>15</sup>Only you may be certain that, if you put me to death, you and this city and all who live in it will be guilty of murdering an innocent man; for in very truth the LORD has sent me to you to say all this in your hearing.'

<sup>16</sup>Then the officers and all the people said to the priests and the prophets, 'This man ought not to be condemned to death, for he has spoken to us in the name of the LORD our God.' <sup>17</sup>Some of the elders of the land also stood up and said to the assembled people, <sup>18</sup>'In the time of Hezekiah king of Judah, Micah of Moresheth was prophesying and said to all the people of Judah: "These are the words of the LORD of Hosts: Zion shall become a ploughed field, Jerusalem a heap of ruins, and the temple-hill rough heath."

<sup>19</sup>Did King Hezekiah and all Judah put him to death? Did not the king show reverence for the LORD and seek to placate him? Then the LORD relented and revoked the disaster

with which he had threatened them. Are we to bring great disaster on ourselves?’

<sup>20</sup>There was another man who prophesied in the name of the LORD, Uriah son of Shemaiah, from Kiriath-jearim. He also prophesied against this city and this land, just as Jeremiah had done. <sup>21</sup>King Jehoiakim with all his officers and his bodyguard heard what he said and sought to put him to death. When Uriah heard of it, he was afraid and fled to Egypt. <sup>22</sup>King Jehoiakim sent Elnathan son of Akbor with others <sup>23</sup>to fetch Uriah from Egypt, and they brought him to the king. He had him put to death by the sword, and his body flung into the burial-place of the common people. <sup>24</sup>But Ahikam son of Shaphan used his influence on Jeremiah’s behalf to save him from death at the hands of the people.

## **A rising against Nebuchadrezzar checked**

**27**<sup>1</sup>AT THE BEGINNING OF THE REIGN of Zedekiah son of Josiah, king of Judah, this word came from the LORD to Jeremiah: <sup>2</sup>These are the words of the LORD to me: Take the cords and bars of a yoke and put them on your neck. <sup>3</sup>Then send to the kings of Edom, Moab, Ammon, Tyre, and Sidon by the envoys who have come from them to Zedekiah king of Judah in Jerusalem, <sup>4</sup>and give them the following message for their masters: These are the words of the LORD of Hosts the God of Israel: Say to your masters: <sup>5</sup>I made the earth with my great strength and with outstretched arm, I made man and beast on the face of the earth, and I give it to whom I see fit. <sup>6</sup>I now give all these lands to my servant Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, and I give him also all the beasts of the field to serve him. <sup>7</sup>All nations shall serve him, and his son and his grandson, until the destined hour of his own land comes, and then mighty nations and great kings shall use him as they please. <sup>8</sup>If any nation or kingdom will not serve Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon or submit to his yoke, I will punish them with sword, famine, and pestilence, says the LORD, until I leave them entirely in his power. <sup>9</sup>Therefore do not listen to your prophets, your diviners, your wise women, your soothsayers, and your sorcerers when they tell you not to serve the king of Babylon. <sup>10</sup>They are prophesying falsely to you; and so you will be carried far from your own land, and I shall banish you and you will perish. <sup>11</sup>But if any nation submits to the yoke of the king of Babylon and serves him, I will leave them on their own soil, says the LORD; they shall cultivate it and live there.

<sup>12</sup>I have said all this to Zedekiah king of Judah: If you will submit to the yoke of the king of Babylon and serve him and his people, then you shall save your lives. <sup>13</sup>Why should you and your people die by sword, famine, and pestilence, the fate with which the LORD has threatened any nation which does not serve the king of Babylon? <sup>14</sup>Do not listen to the prophets who tell you not to become subject to the king of Babylon; they are prophesying falsely to you. <sup>15</sup>I have not sent them, says the LORD; they are prophesying falsely in my name, and so I shall banish you and you will perish, you and these prophets who prophesy to you.

<sup>16</sup>I said to the priests and all the people, These are the words of the LORD: Do not listen to your prophets who tell you that the vessels of the LORD’s house will very soon be

brought back from Babylon; they are only prophesying falsely to you. <sup>17</sup>Do not listen to them; serve the king of Babylon, and save your lives. Why should this city become a ruin? <sup>18</sup>If they are prophets, and if they have the word of the LORD, let them intercede with the LORD of Hosts to grant that the vessels still left in the LORD's house, in the royal palace, and in Jerusalem, may not be carried off to Babylon. <sup>19</sup>For these are the words of the LORD of Hosts concerning the pillars, the sea, the trolleys, and all the other vessels still left in this city, <sup>20</sup>which Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon did not take when he deported Jeconiah son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, from Jerusalem to Babylon, together with all the nobles of Judah and Jerusalem. <sup>21</sup>These indeed are the words of the LORD of Hosts the God of Israel concerning the vessels still left in the LORD's house, in the royal palace, and in Jerusalem: <sup>22</sup>They shall be taken to Babylon and stay there until I recall them, says the LORD; then I will bring them back and restore them to this place.

**28**<sup>1</sup>That same year [*prob. rdg, Heb adds at the beginning of the reign*], in the fifth month of the first [*prob. rdg, Heb fourth*] year of the reign of Zedekiah king of Judah, Hananiah son of Azzur, the prophet from Gibeon, said to me in the house of the LORD, in the presence of the priests and all the people, <sup>2</sup>These are the words of the LORD of Hosts the God of Israel: I have broken the yoke of the king of Babylon. <sup>3</sup>Within two years I will bring back to this place all the vessels of the LORD's house which Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon took from here and carried off to Babylon. <sup>4</sup>I will also bring back to this place, says the LORD, Jeconiah son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, and all the exiles of Judah who went to Babylon; for I will break the yoke of the king of Babylon.' <sup>5</sup>The prophet Jeremiah said to Hananiah the prophet in the presence of the priests and all the people standing in the LORD's house: <sup>6</sup>May it be so ! May the LORD indeed do this: may he fulfil all that you have prophesied, by bringing back the vessels of the LORD's house and all the exiles from Babylon to this place! <sup>7</sup>Only hear what I have to say to you and to all the people: <sup>8</sup>the prophets who preceded you and me from earliest times have foretold war, famine, and pestilence for many lands and for great kingdoms. <sup>9</sup>If a prophet foretells prosperity, when his words come true it will be known that the LORD has sent him.'

<sup>10</sup>Then the prophet Hananiah took the yoke from the neck of the prophet Jeremiah and broke it, <sup>11</sup>saying before all the people, 'These are the words of the LORD: Thus will I break the yoke of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon; I will break it off the necks of all nations within two years [*within two years: or while there are still two full years to run*]'; and the prophet Jeremiah went his way. <sup>12</sup>After Hananiah had broken the yoke which had been on Jeremiah's neck, the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah: <sup>13</sup>Go and say to Hananiah, These are the words of the LORD: You have broken bars of wood; in their place you shall get bars of iron. <sup>14</sup>For these are the words of the LORD of Hosts the God of Israel: I have put a yoke of iron on the necks of all these nations, making them serve Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon. They shall serve him, and I have given him even the beasts of the field. <sup>15</sup>Then Jeremiah said to Hananiah, 'Listen, Hananiah. The LORD has not sent you, and you have led this nation to trust in false prophecies. <sup>16</sup>Therefore these are the words of the LORD: Beware, I will remove you from the face of the earth; you shall die within the year, because you have preached rebellion against the LORD.'  
<sup>17</sup>The prophet Hananiah died that same year, in the seventh month.

**29**<sup>1</sup>Jeremiah sent a letter from Jerusalem to the remaining elders among the exiles, to the priests and prophets, and to all the people whom Nebuchadnezzar had deported from Jerusalem to Babylon, <sup>2</sup>after King Jeconiah had left Jerusalem with the queen mother and the eunuchs, the officers of Judah and Jerusalem, the craftsmen and the smiths [the smiths: *or* the harem]. <sup>3</sup>The prophet entrusted the letter to Elasah son of Shaphan and Gemariah son of Hilkiah, whom Zedekiah king of Judah had sent to Babylon to King Nebuchadnezzar. <sup>4</sup>This is what he wrote: These are the words of the LORD of Hosts the God of Israel: To all the exiles whom I have carried off from Jerusalem to Babylon: <sup>5</sup>Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat their produce. <sup>6</sup>Marry wives and beget sons and daughters; take wives for your sons and give your daughters to husbands, so that they may bear sons and daughters and you may increase there and not dwindle away. <sup>7</sup>Seek the welfare of any city to which I have carried you off, and pray to the LORD for it, on its welfare your welfare will depend. <sup>8</sup>For these are the words of the LORD of Hosts the God of Israel: Do not be deceived by the prophets or the diviners among you, and do not listen to the wise women whom you set to dream dreams. <sup>9</sup>They prophesy falsely to you in my name; I did not send them. This is the very word of the LORD.

<sup>10</sup>These are the words of the LORD: When a full seventy years has passed over Babylon, I will take up your cause and fulfil the promise of good things I made you, by bringing you back to this place. <sup>11</sup>I alone know my purpose for you, says the LORD: prosperity and not misfortune, and a long line of children after you. <sup>12</sup>If you invoke me and pray to me, I will listen to you: <sup>13</sup>when you seek me, you shall find me; if you search with all your heart, <sup>14</sup>I will let you find me, says the LORD. I will restore your fortunes and gather you again from all the nations and all the places to which I have banished you, says the LORD, and bring you back to the place from which I have carried you into exile.

<sup>15</sup>You say that the LORD has raised up prophets for you in Babylon. <sup>16</sup>These are the words of the LORD concerning the king who sits on the throne of David and all the people who live in this city, your fellow-countrymen who have not gone into exile with you. <sup>17</sup>These are the words of the LORD of Hosts: I bring upon them sword, famine, and pestilence, and make them like rotten figs, too bad to be eaten. <sup>18</sup>I pursue them with sword, famine, and pestilence, and make them repugnant to all the kingdoms of the earth, an object of execration and horror, of derision and reproach, among all the nations to which I have banished them. <sup>19</sup>Just as they did not listen to my words, says the LORD, when I took pains to send them my servants the prophets, so you did not listen, says the LORD. <sup>20</sup>But now, you exiles whom I have sent from Jerusalem to Babylon, listen to the words of the LORD. <sup>21</sup>These are the words of the LORD of Hosts the God of Israel concerning Ahab son of Kolaiah and Zedekiah son of Maaseiah, who prophesy falsely to you in my name. I will hand them over to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and he will put them to death before your eyes. <sup>22</sup>Their names shall be used by all the exiles of Judah in Babylon when they curse a man; they shall say, May the LORD treat you like Zedekiah and Ahab, whom the king of Babylon roasted in the fire! <sup>23</sup>For their conduct in Israel was an outrage: they committed adultery with other men's wives, and without my authority prophesied in my name, and what they prophesied was false. I know; I can testify. This is the very word of the LORD.

<sup>24</sup>To Shemaiah the Nehelamite [*prob. rdg, Heb adds you shall say, saying*]. <sup>25</sup>These are the words of the LORD of Hosts the God of Israel: You have sent a letter in your own name to Zephaniah son of Maaseiah the priest, in which you say: <sup>26</sup>The LORD has appointed you to be priest in place of Jehoiada the priest, and it is your duty, as officer in charge of the LORD's house, to put every madman who sets up as a prophet into the stocks and the pillory. <sup>27</sup>Why, then, have you not reprimanded Jeremiah of Anathoth, who poses as a prophet before you? <sup>28</sup>On the strength of this he has sent to us in Babylon and said, "Your exile will be long; build houses and live in them, plant gardens and eat their produce." ' <sup>29</sup>Zephaniah the priest read this letter to Jeremiah the prophet, <sup>30</sup>and the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah: <sup>31</sup>Send and tell all the exiles that these are the words of the LORD concerning Shemaiah the Nehelamite: Because Shemaiah has prophesied to you, though I did not send him, and has led you to trust in false prophecies, <sup>32</sup>these are now the words of the LORD: I will punish Shemaiah and his children. He shall have no one to take his place in this nation and enjoy the prosperity which I will bestow on my people, says the LORD, because he has preached rebellion against me.

## Hopes for the restoration of Jerusalem

**30**<sup>1</sup>THE WORD WHICH CAME TO JEREMIAH from the LORD. <sup>2</sup>These are the words of the LORD the God of Israel: Write in a book all that I have said to you, for this is the very word of the LORD: <sup>3</sup>The time is coming when I will restore the fortunes of my people Israel and Judah, says the LORD, and bring them back to the land which I gave to their forefathers; and it shall be their possession.

<sup>4</sup>This is what the LORD has said to Israel and Judah. <sup>5</sup>These are the words of the LORD:  
You shall hear a cry of terror, of fear without relief.  
<sup>6</sup>Ask and see: can a man bear a child?  
Why then do I see every man  
gripping his sides like a woman in labour,  
every face changed, all turned pale?  
<sup>7</sup>Awful is that day:  
when has there been its like?  
A time of anguish for Jacob,  
yet he shall come through it safely.

<sup>8</sup>In that day, says the LORD of Hosts, I will break their yoke off their necks and snap their cords; foreigners shall no longer use them as they please; <sup>9</sup>they shall serve the LORD their God and David their king, whom I will raise up for them.

<sup>10</sup>And you, Jacob my servant, have no fear;  
despair not, O Israel, says the LORD.  
For I will bring you back safe from afar  
and your offspring from the land where they are captives;  
and Jacob shall be at rest once more,  
prosperous and unafraid.

<sup>11</sup>For I am with you and will save you, says the LORD.

I will make an end of all the nations  
amongst whom I have scattered you,  
but I will not make an end of you;  
though I punish you as you deserve,  
I will not sweep you clean away.

<sup>12</sup>For these are the words of the LORD to Zion:

Your injury is past healing,  
cruel was the blow you suffered.

<sup>13</sup>There can be no [*prob. rdg, Heb adds one judging your case*] remedy for  
your sore,  
the new skin cannot grow.

<sup>14</sup>All your lovers have forgotten you;  
they look for you no longer.  
I have struck you down  
as an enemy strikes, and punished you cruelly;  
for your wickedness is great and your sins are many.

<sup>15</sup>Why complain of your injury,  
that your sore cannot be healed? [*Why ... healed?: or Cry not for help in  
your injury. Your sore cannot be healed.*]  
I have done this to you,  
because your wickedness is great and your sins are many.

<sup>16</sup>Yet all who devoured you shall themselves be devoured,  
all your oppressors shall go into captivity.  
Those who plunder you shall be plundered,  
and those who despoil you I will give up to be spoiled.

<sup>17</sup>I will cause the new skin to grow  
and heal your wounds, says the LORD,  
although men call you the Outcast,  
Zion, nobody's friend.

<sup>18</sup>These are the words of the LORD:

Watch; I will restore the fortunes of Jacob's clans  
and show my love for all his dwellings.  
Every city shall be rebuilt on its mound of ruins,  
every mansion shall have its familiar household.

<sup>19</sup>From them praise shall be heard  
and sounds of merrymaking.  
I will increase them, they shall not diminish,  
I will raise them to honour, they shall no longer be despised.

<sup>20</sup>Their sons shall be what they once were,  
and their community shall be established in my sight.  
I will punish all their oppressors;

<sup>21</sup>a ruler shall appear, one of themselves,  
a governor shall arise from their own number.  
I will myself bring him [*Or them*] near and so he [*Or they*] shall approach  
me;  
for no one ventures of himself to approach me,

says the LORD.

<sup>22</sup>So you shall be my people,  
and I will be your God.

<sup>23</sup>See what a scorching wind has gone out from the LORD,  
a sweeping whirlwind.

It whirls round the heads of the wicked;

<sup>24</sup>the LORD's anger is not to be turned aside,  
till he has finished and achieved his heart's desire.

In days to come you will understand.

**31**<sup>1</sup>At that time, says the LORD, I will become God of all the families of Israel, and they shall become my people. <sup>2</sup>These are the words of the LORD:

A people that survived the sword

found favour in the wilderness;

Israel journeyed to find rest;

<sup>3</sup>long ago [long ago: *or* from afar] the LORD appeared to them:

I have dearly loved you from of old,  
and still I maintain my unfailing care for you.

<sup>4</sup>I will build you up again, O virgin Israel,  
and you shall be rebuilt.

Again you shall adorn yourself with jingles,  
and go forth with the merry throng of dancers.

<sup>5</sup>Again you shall plant vineyards on the hills of Samaria,  
vineyards which those who planted them defiled;

<sup>6</sup>for a day will come when the watchmen on Ephraim's hills cry out,  
Come, let us go up to Zion, to the LORD our God.

<sup>7</sup>For these are the words of the LORD:

Break into shouts of joy for Jacob's sake,

lead the nations, crying loud and clear,

sing out your praises and say,

The LORD has saved his people,

and preserved a remnant of Israel.

<sup>8</sup>See how I bring them from the land of the north;

I will gather them from the ends of the earth,

their blind and lame among them,

women with child and women in labour,

a great company.

<sup>9</sup>They come home, weeping as they come,

but I will comfort them and be their escort.

I will lead them to flowing streams;

they shall not stumble, their path will be so smooth.

For I have become a father to Israel,

and Ephraim is my eldest son.

<sup>10</sup>Listen to the word of the LORD, you nations,  
announce it, make it known to coasts and islands far away:

He who scattered Israel shall gather them again

and watch over them as a shepherd watches his flock.

<sup>11</sup>For the LORD has ransomed Jacob  
and redeemed him from a foe too strong for him.

<sup>12</sup>They shall come with shouts of joy to Zion's height,  
shining with happiness at the bounty of the LORD,  
the corn, the new wine, and the oil,  
the young of flock and herd.

They shall become like a watered garden  
and they shall never want again.

<sup>13</sup>Then shall the girl show her joy in the dance,  
young men and old shall rejoice;  
I will turn their mourning into gladness,  
I will relent and give them joy to outdo their sorrow.

<sup>14</sup>I will satisfy the priests with the fat of the land  
and fill my people with my bounty.  
This is the very word of the LORD.

<sup>15</sup>These are the words of the LORD:

Hark, lamentation is heard in Ramah, and bitter weeping,  
Rachel weeping for her sons.  
She refuses to be comforted: they are no more.

<sup>16</sup>These are the words of the LORD:

Cease your loud weeping,  
shed no more tears;  
for there shall be a reward for your toil,  
they shall return from the land of the enemy.

<sup>17</sup>You shall leave descendants after you [You shall ... you: *or* There shall be  
hope for your posterity];  
your sons shall return to their own land.

<sup>18</sup>I listened; Ephraim was rocking in his grief:  
'Thou hast trained me to the yoke like an unbroken calf,  
and now I am trained;  
restore me, let me return,  
for thou, LORD, art my God.

<sup>19</sup>Though I broke loose I have repented:  
now that I am tamed I beat my breast;  
in shame and remorse  
I reproach myself for the sins of my youth.'

<sup>20</sup>Is Ephraim still my dear son,  
a child in whom I delight?  
As often as I turn my back on him  
I still remember him;  
and so my heart yearns for him,  
I am filled with tenderness towards him.  
This is the very word of the LORD.

<sup>21</sup>Build cairns to mark your way,  
set up sign-posts;  
make sure of the road,  
the path which you will tread.

Come back, virgin Israel,  
come back to your cities.

<sup>22</sup>How long will you twist and turn, my wayward child?  
For the LORD has created a new thing in the earth:  
a woman turned into a man.

<sup>23</sup>These are the words of the LORD of Hosts the God of Israel: Once more shall these words be heard in the land of Judah and in her cities, when I restore their fortunes:

The LORD bless you,  
the LORD, your true goal [the LORD ... goal: *or* O home of righteousness],  
your holy mountain.

<sup>24</sup>Ploughmen and shepherds who wander with their flocks  
shall live together there [*prob. rdg, Heb adds* Judah and all his cities].

<sup>25</sup>For I have given deep draughts to the thirsty,  
and satisfied those who were faint with hunger.

<sup>26</sup>Thereupon I woke and looked about me, and my dream [*Or sleep*] had been pleasant.

<sup>27</sup>The time is coming, says the LORD, when I will sow Israel and Judah with the seed of man and the seed of cattle. <sup>28</sup>As I watched over them with intent to pull down and to uproot, to demolish and destroy and harm, so now will I watch over them to build and to plant. This is the very word of the LORD.

<sup>29</sup>In those days it shall no longer be said,  
'The fathers have eaten sour grapes  
and the children's teeth are set on edge';

<sup>30</sup>for a man shall die for his own wrongdoing; the man who eats sour grapes shall have his own teeth set on edge.

<sup>31</sup>The time is coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with Israel and Judah. <sup>32</sup>It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand and led them out of Egypt. Although they broke my covenant, I was patient with them, says the LORD. <sup>33</sup>But this is the covenant which I will make with Israel after those days, says the LORD; I will set my law within them and write it on their hearts; I will become their God and they shall become my people. <sup>34</sup>No longer need they teach one another to know the LORD; all of them, high and low alike, shall know me, says the LORD, for I will forgive their wrongdoing and remember their sin no more.

<sup>35</sup>These are the words of the LORD, who gave the sun for a light by day and the moon and stars for a light by night, who cleft the sea and its waves roared; the LORD of Hosts is his name:

<sup>36</sup>If this fixed order could vanish out of my sight,  
says the LORD,  
then the race of Israel too could cease for evermore  
to be a nation in my sight.

<sup>37</sup>These are the words of the LORD: If any man could measure the heaven above or fathom the depths of the earth beneath, then I could spurn the whole race of Israel

because of all they have done. This is the very word of the LORD.

<sup>38</sup>The time is coming, says the LORD, when the city shall be rebuilt in the LORD's honour from the Tower of Hananel to the Corner Gate. <sup>39</sup>The measuring line shall then be laid straight out over the hill of Gareb and round Goath [*Or Goah*]. <sup>40</sup>All the valley and every field as far as the gorge of the Kidron to the corner by the Horse Gate eastwards shall be holy to the LORD. It shall never again be pulled down or demolished.

**32**<sup>1</sup>The word which came to Jeremiah from the LORD in the tenth year of Zedekiah king of Judah (the eighteenth year of Nebuchadrezzar). <sup>2</sup>At that time the forces of the Babylonian king were besieging Jerusalem, and the prophet Jeremiah was imprisoned in the court of the guard-house attached to the royal palace. <sup>3</sup>Zedekiah king of Judah had imprisoned him after demanding what he meant by this prophecy: 'These are the words of the LORD: I will deliver this city into the hands of the king of Babylon, and he shall take it. <sup>4</sup>Zedekiah king of Judah will not escape from the Chaldeans but will be surrendered to the king of Babylon; he will speak with him face to face and see him with his own eyes. <sup>5</sup>Zedekiah will be taken to Babylon and will remain there until I turn my thoughts to him, says the LORD. However much you fight against the Chaldeans you will have no success.'

<sup>6</sup>Jeremiah said, The word of the LORD came to me: <sup>7</sup>Hanamel son of your uncle Shallum is coming to see you and will say, 'Buy my field at Anathoth; you have the right of redemption, as next of kin, to buy it.' <sup>8</sup>As the LORD had foretold, my cousin Hanamel came to the court of the guard-house and said, 'Buy my field at Anathoth in Benjamin. You have the right of redemption and possession as next of kin; buy it.' I knew that this was the LORD's message; <sup>9</sup>so I bought the field at Anathoth from my cousin Hanamel and weighed out the price, seventeen shekels of silver. <sup>10</sup>I signed and sealed the deed and had it witnessed; then I weighed out the money on the scales. <sup>11</sup>I took my copies of the deed of purchase, both the sealed and the unsealed, <sup>12</sup>and gave them to Baruch son of Neriah, son of Mahseiah, in the presence of Hanamel my cousin, of the witnesses whose names were on the deed of purchase, and of the Judaeans sitting in the court of the guard-house. <sup>13</sup>In the presence of them all I gave my instructions to Baruch: <sup>14</sup>These are the words of the LORD of Hosts the God of Israel: Take these copies of the deed of purchase, the sealed and the unsealed, and deposit them in an earthenware jar so that they may be preserved for a long time. <sup>15</sup>For these are the words of the LORD of Hosts the God of Israel: The time will come when houses, fields, and vineyards will again be bought and sold in this land. <sup>16</sup>After I had given the deed of purchase to Baruch son of Neriah, I prayed to the LORD: <sup>17</sup>O Lord GOD, thou hast made the heavens and the earth by thy great strength and with thy outstretched arm; nothing is impossible for thee. <sup>18</sup>Thou keepest faith with thousands and thou dost requite the sins of fathers on to the heads of their sons. O great and mighty God whose name is the LORD of Hosts, <sup>19</sup>great are thy purposes and mighty thy actions. Thine eyes watch all the ways of men, and thou rewardest each according to his ways and as his deeds deserve. <sup>20</sup>Thou didst work signs and portents in Egypt and hast continued them to this day, both in Israel and amongst all men, and hast won for thyself a name that lives on to this day. <sup>21</sup>Thou didst bring thy people Israel out of Egypt with signs and portents, with a strong hand and an outstretched arm, and with terrible power. <sup>22</sup>Thou didst give

them this land which thou didst promise with an oath to their forefathers, a land flowing with milk and honey. <sup>23</sup>They came and took possession of it, but they did not obey thee or follow thy law, they disobeyed all thy commands; and so thou hast brought this disaster upon them. <sup>24</sup>Look at the siege-ramps, the men who are advancing to take the city, and the city given over to its assailants from Chaldea, the victim of sword, famine, and pestilence. The word thou hast spoken is fulfilled and thou dost see it. <sup>25</sup>And yet thou hast bidden me buy the field, O Lord GOD, and have the deed witnessed, even though the city is given to the Chaldeans.

<sup>26</sup>These are the words of the LORD to Jeremiah: <sup>27</sup>I am the LORD, the God of all flesh; is anything impossible for me? <sup>28</sup>Therefore these are the words of the LORD: I will deliver this city into the hands of the Chaldeans and of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, and he shall take it. <sup>29</sup>The Chaldeans who are fighting against this city will enter it, set it on fire and burn it down, with the houses on whose roofs sacrifices have been burnt to Baal and drink-offerings poured out to other gods, by which I was provoked to anger.

<sup>30</sup>From their earliest days Israel and Judah have been doing what is wrong in my eyes, provoking me to anger by their actions, says the LORD. <sup>31</sup>For this city has so roused my anger and my fury, from the time it was built down to this day, <sup>32</sup>that I would rid myself of it. Israel and Judah, their kings, officers, priests, prophets, and everyone living in Jerusalem and Judah have provoked me to anger by their wrongdoing. <sup>33</sup>They have turned their backs on me and averted their faces; though I took pains to teach them, they would not hear or learn their lesson. <sup>34</sup>They set up their loathsome idols in the house which bears my name and so defiled it. <sup>35</sup>They built shrines to Baal in the Valley of Ben-hinnom, to surrender their sons and daughters to Molech. It was no command of mine, nor did it ever enter my thought to do this abominable thing and lead Judah into sin.

<sup>36</sup>Now, therefore, these are the words of the LORD the God of Israel to this city of which you say, 'It is being given over to the king of Babylon, with sword, famine, and pestilence': <sup>37</sup>I will gather them from all the lands to which I banished them in my anger, rage, and fury, and I will bring them back to this place and let them dwell there undisturbed. <sup>38</sup>They shall become my people and I will become their God. <sup>39</sup>I will give them one heart and one way of life so that they shall fear me at all times, for their own good and the good of their children after them. <sup>40</sup>I will enter into an eternal covenant with them, to follow them unfailingly with my bounty; I will fill their hearts with fear of me, and so they will not turn away from me. <sup>41</sup>I will rejoice over them, rejoice to do them good, and faithfully with all my heart and soul I will plant them in this land. <sup>42</sup>For these are the words of the LORD: As I brought on this people such great disaster, so will I bring them all the prosperity which I now promise them. <sup>43</sup>Fields shall again be bought and sold in this land of which you now say, 'It is desolate, without man or beast; it is given over to the Chaldeans.' <sup>44</sup>Fields shall be bought and sold, deeds signed, sealed, and witnessed, in Benjamin, in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, in the cities of Judah, of the hill-country, of the Shephelah, and of the Negeb, for I will restore their fortunes. This is the very word of the LORD.

**33**<sup>1</sup>The word of the LORD came to Jeremiah a second time while he was still imprisoned in the court of the guard-house: <sup>2</sup>These are the words of the LORD who made the earth, who formed it and established it; the LORD is his name: <sup>3</sup>If you call to me I will answer you, and tell you great and mysterious things which you do not understand. <sup>4</sup>These are the words of the LORD the God of Israel concerning the houses in this city and the royal palace, which are to be razed to the ground, concerning siege-ramp and sword, <sup>5</sup>and attackers [*prob. rdg, Heb adds the Chaldaeans*] who fill the houses with the corpses of those whom he struck down in his furious rage: I hid my face from this city because of their wicked ways, <sup>6</sup>but now I will bring her healing; I will heal and cure Judah and Israel, and will let my people see an age of peace and security. <sup>7</sup>I will restore their fortunes and build them again as once they were. <sup>8</sup>I will cleanse them of all the wickedness and sin that they have committed; I will forgive all the evil deeds they have done in rebellion against me. <sup>9</sup>This city will win me a name [*prob. rdg, Heb adds of joy*] and praise and glory before all the nations on earth, when they hear of all the blessings I bestow on her; and they shall be moved and filled with awe because of the blessings and the peace which I have brought upon her.

<sup>10</sup>These are the words of the LORD: You say of this place, 'It is in ruins, and neither man nor beast lives in the cities of Judah or in the streets of Jerusalem. It is all a waste, inhabited by neither man nor beast.' Yet in this place shall be heard once again <sup>11</sup>the sounds of joy and gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the bride; here too shall be heard voices shouting, 'Praise the LORD of Hosts, for he is good, for his love endures for ever', as they offer praise and thanksgiving in the house of the LORD. For I will restore the fortunes of the land as once they were. This is the word of the LORD.

<sup>12</sup>These are the words of the LORD of Hosts: In this place and in all its cities, now ruined and inhabited by neither man nor beast, there shall once more be a refuge where shepherds may fold their flocks. <sup>13</sup>In the cities of the hill-country, of the Shephelah, of the Negeb, in Benjamin, in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem and the cities of Judah, flocks will once more pass under the shepherd's hand as he counts them. This is the word of the LORD.

<sup>14</sup>Wait, says the LORD, the days are coming when I will bestow on Israel and Judah all the blessings I have promised them. <sup>15</sup>In those days, at that time, I will make a righteous Branch of David spring up; he shall maintain law and justice in the land. <sup>16</sup>In those days Judah shall be kept safe and Jerusalem shall live undisturbed; and this shall be her name: The LORD is our Righteousness.

<sup>17</sup>For these are the words of the LORD: David will never lack a successor on the throne of Israel, <sup>18</sup>nor will the levitical priests lack a man who shall come before me continually to present whole-offerings, to burn grain-offerings and to make other offerings.

<sup>19</sup>This word came from the LORD to Jeremiah: <sup>20</sup>These are the words of the LORD: If the law that I made for the day and the night could be annulled so that they fell out of their proper order, <sup>21</sup>then my covenant with my servant David could be annulled so that none of his line should sit upon his throne; so also could my covenant with the levitical priests who minister to me. <sup>22</sup>Like the innumerable host of heaven or the countless

sands of the sea, I will increase the descendants of my servant David and the Levites who minister to me.

<sup>23</sup>The word of the LORD came to Jeremiah: <sup>24</sup>Have you not observed how this people have said, 'It is the two families whom he chose that the LORD has spurned'? So others will despise my people and no longer regard them as a nation. <sup>25</sup>These are the words of the LORD: If I had not made my law for day and night nor established a fixed order in heaven and earth, <sup>26</sup>then I would spurn the descendants of Jacob and of my servant David, and would not take any of David's line to be rulers over the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. But now I will restore their fortunes and have compassion upon them.

## **Events under Jehoiakim and Zedekiah**

**34**<sup>1</sup>THE WORD WHICH CAME TO JEREMIAH from the LORD when Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon and his army, with all his vassal kingdoms and nations, were fighting against Jerusalem and all her towns: <sup>2</sup>These are the words of the LORD the God of Israel: Go and say to Zedekiah king of Judah, These are the words of the LORD: I will give this city into the hands of the king of Babylon and he will burn it down. <sup>3</sup>You shall not escape, you will be captured and handed over to him. You will see him face to face, and he will speak to you in person; and you shall go to Babylon. <sup>4</sup>But listen to the LORD's word to you, Zedekiah king of Judah. This is his word: You shall not die by the sword; <sup>5</sup>you will die a peaceful death, and they will kindle fires in your honour like the fires kindled in former times for the kings your ancestors who preceded you. 'Alas, my lord!' they will say as they beat their breasts in mourning for you. This I have spoken. This is the very word of the LORD. <sup>6</sup>The prophet Jeremiah repeated all this to Zedekiah king of Judah in Jerusalem <sup>7</sup>when the army of the king of Babylon was attacking Jerusalem and the remaining cities of Judah, namely Lachish and Azekah. These were the only fortified cities left in Judah.

<sup>8</sup>The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD after Zedekiah had made a covenant with all the people in Jerusalem to proclaim an act of freedom for the slaves. <sup>9</sup>All who had Hebrew slaves, male or female, were to set them free; they were not to keep their fellow Judaeans in servitude. <sup>10</sup>All the officers and people, having made this covenant to set free their slaves, both male and female, and not to keep them in servitude any longer, fulfilled its terms and let them go. <sup>11</sup>Afterwards, however, they changed their minds and forced back again into slavery the men and women whom they had freed. <sup>12</sup>Then this word came from the LORD to Jeremiah: <sup>13</sup>These are the words of the LORD the God of Israel: I made a covenant with your forefathers on the day that I brought them out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. These were its terms: <sup>14</sup>'Within seven years each of you shall set free any Hebrew who has sold himself to you as a slave and has served you for six years; you shall set him free.' Your forefathers did not listen to me or obey me. <sup>15</sup>You, on the contrary, recently proclaimed an act of freedom for the slaves and made a covenant in my presence, in the house that bears my name, and so have done what is right in my eyes. <sup>16</sup>But you too have profaned my name. You have all taken back the slaves you had set free and you have forced them, both male and female, to be your slaves again. <sup>17</sup>Therefore these are the words of the LORD: After you

had proclaimed an act of freedom, a deliverance for your kinsmen and your neighbours, you did not obey me; so I will proclaim a deliverance for you, says the LORD, a deliverance over to sword, to pestilence, and to famine, and I will make you repugnant to all the kingdoms of the earth. <sup>18</sup>You have disregarded my covenant and have not fulfilled the terms to which you yourselves had agreed; so I will make you like the calf of the covenant when they cut it into two and passed between the pieces. <sup>19</sup>Those who passed between the pieces of the calf were the officers of Judah and Jerusalem, the eunuchs and priests and all the people of the land. <sup>20</sup>I will give them up to their enemies who seek their lives, and their bodies shall be food for birds of prey and wild beasts. <sup>21</sup>I will deliver Zedekiah king of Judah and his officers to their enemies who seek their lives and to the army of the king of Babylon, which is now raising the siege. <sup>22</sup>I will give the command, says the LORD, and will bring them back to this city. They shall attack it and take it and burn it down, and I will make the cities of Judah desolate and unpeopled.

**35**<sup>1</sup>The word which came to Jeremiah from the LORD in the days of Jehoiakim son of Josiah, king of Judah: <sup>2</sup>Go and speak to the Rechabites, bring them to one of the rooms in the house of the LORD and offer them wine to drink. <sup>3</sup>So I fetched Jaazaniah son of Jeremiah, son of Habaziah, with his brothers and all his sons and all the family of the Rechabites. <sup>4</sup>I brought them into the house of the LORD to the room of the sons of Hanan son of Igdaliah, the man of God; this adjoins the officers' room above that of Maaseiah son of Shallum, the keeper of the threshold. <sup>5</sup>I set bowls full of wine and drinking-cups before the Rechabites and invited them to drink wine; <sup>6</sup>but they said, 'We will not drink wine, for our forefather Jonadab son of Rechab laid this command on us: "You shall never drink wine, neither you nor your children. <sup>7</sup>You shall not build houses or sow seed or plant vineyards; you shall have none of these things. Instead, you shall remain tent-dwellers all your lives, so that you may live long in the land where you are sojourners." <sup>8</sup>We have honoured all the commands of our forefather Jonadab son of Rechab and have drunk no wine all our lives, neither we nor our wives, not our sons, not our daughters. <sup>9</sup>We have not built houses to live in, nor have we possessed vineyards or sown fields. <sup>10</sup>We have lived in tents, obeying and observing all the commands of our forefather Jonadab. <sup>11</sup>But when Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon invaded the land we said, "Come, let us go to Jerusalem before the advancing Chaldaean and Aramaean armies." And we have stayed in Jerusalem.'

<sup>12</sup>Then the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah: <sup>13</sup>These are the words of the LORD of Hosts the God of Israel: Go and say to the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, You must accept correction and obey my words, says the LORD. <sup>14</sup>The command of Jonadab son of Rechab to his descendants not to drink wine has been honoured; they have not drunk wine to this day, for they have obeyed their ancestor's command. But I have taken especial pains to warn you and yet you have not obeyed me. <sup>15</sup>I sent my servants the prophets especially to say to you, 'Turn back every one of you from his evil course, mend your ways and cease to follow other gods and worship them; then you shall remain on the land that I have given to you and to your forefathers.' Yet you did not obey or listen to me. <sup>16</sup>The sons of Jonadab son of Rechab have honoured their ancestor's command laid on them, but this people have not listened to me. <sup>17</sup>Therefore, these are the words of the LORD the God of Hosts, the God of

Israel: Because they did not listen when I spoke to them, nor answer when I called them, I will bring upon Judah and upon all the inhabitants of Jerusalem the disaster with which I threatened them. <sup>18</sup>To the Rechabites Jeremiah said, These are the words of the LORD of Hosts the God of Israel: Because you have kept the command of Jonadab your ancestor and obeyed all his instructions and carried out all that he told you to do, <sup>19</sup>therefore these are the words of the LORD of Hosts the God of Israel: Jonadab son of Rechab shall not want a descendant to stand before me for all time.

**36**<sup>1</sup>IN THE FOURTH YEAR OF JEHOIAKIM son of Josiah, king of Judah, this word came to Jeremiah from the LORD: <sup>2</sup>Take a scroll and write on it every word that I have spoken to you about Jerusalem and Judah and all the nations, from the day that I first spoke to you in the reign of Josiah down to the present day. <sup>3</sup>Perhaps the house of Judah will be warned of the calamity that I am planning to bring on them, and every man will abandon his evil course; then I will forgive their wrongdoing and their sin. <sup>4</sup>So Jeremiah called Baruch son of Neriah, and he wrote on the scroll at Jeremiah's dictation all the words which the LORD had spoken to him. <sup>5</sup>He gave Baruch this instruction: 'I am prevented from going to the LORD's house. <sup>6</sup>You must go there in my place on a fast-day and read the words of the LORD in the hearing of the people from the scroll you have written at my dictation. You shall read them in the hearing of all the men of Judah who come in from their cities. <sup>7</sup>Then perhaps they will present a petition to the LORD and every man will abandon his evil course; for the LORD has spoken against this people in great anger and wrath.' <sup>8</sup>Baruch son of Neriah did all that the prophet Jeremiah had told him to do, and read the words of the LORD in the LORD's house out of the book.

<sup>9</sup>In the ninth month of the fifth year of the reign of Jehoiakim son of Josiah, king of Judah, all the people in Jerusalem and all who came there from the cities of Judah proclaimed a fast before the LORD. <sup>10</sup>Then Baruch read Jeremiah's words in the house of the LORD out of the book in the hearing of all the people; he read them from the room of Gemariah son of the adjutant-general Shaphan in the upper court at the entrance to the new gate of the LORD's house. <sup>11</sup>Micaiah son of Gemariah, son of Shaphan, heard all the words of the LORD out of the book <sup>12</sup>and went down to the palace, to the adjutant-general's room where all the officers were gathered – Elishama the adjutant-general, Delaiah son of Shemaiah, Elnathan son of Akbor, Gemariah son of Shaphan, Zedekiah son of Hananiah and all the other officers. <sup>13</sup>There Micaiah repeated all the words he had heard when Baruch read out of the book in the people's hearing. <sup>14</sup>Then the officers sent Jehudi son of Nethaniah, son of Shelemiah, son of Cushi, to Baruch with this message: 'Come here and bring the scroll from which you read in the people's hearing.' So Baruch son of Neriah brought the scroll to them, <sup>15</sup>and they said, 'Sit down and [Sit down and: *or This time*] read it to us.' <sup>16</sup>When they heard what he read, they turned to each other trembling and said, 'We must report this to the king.' <sup>17</sup>They asked Baruch to tell them how he had come to write all this. <sup>18</sup>He said to them, 'Jeremiah dictated every word of it to me, and I wrote it down in ink in the book.' <sup>19</sup>The officers said to Baruch, 'You and Jeremiah must go into hiding so that no one may know where you are.' <sup>20</sup>When they had deposited the scroll in the room of Elishama the adjutant-general, they went to the court and reported everything to the king.

<sup>21</sup>The king sent Jehudi to fetch the scroll. When he had fetched it from the room of Elishama the adjutant-general, he read it to the king and to all the officers in attendance. <sup>22</sup>It was the ninth month of the year, and the king was sitting in his winter apartments with a fire burning in a brazier in front of him. <sup>23</sup>When Jehudi had read three or four columns of the scroll, the king cut them off with a penknife and threw them into the fire in the brazier. He went on doing so until the whole scroll had been thrown on the fire. <sup>24</sup>Neither the king nor any of his courtiers who heard these words showed any fear or rent their clothes; <sup>25</sup>and though Elnathan, Delaiah, and Gemariah begged the king not to burn the scroll, he would not listen to them. <sup>26</sup>The king then ordered Jerahmeel, a royal prince [a royal prince: *or* the king's deputy], Seraiah son of Azriel, and Shelemiah son of Abdeel to fetch the scribe Baruch and the prophet Jeremiah; but the LORD had hidden them.

<sup>27</sup>After the king had burnt the scroll with all that Baruch had written on it at Jeremiah's dictation, the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah: <sup>28</sup>Now take another scroll and write on it all the words that were on the first scroll which Jehoiakim king of Judah burnt. <sup>29</sup>You shall say to Jehoiakim king of Judah, These are the words of the LORD: You burnt this scroll and said, Why have you written here that the king of Babylon shall come and destroy this land and exterminate both men and beasts? <sup>30</sup>Therefore these are the words of the LORD about Jehoiakim king of Judah: He shall have no one to succeed him on the throne of David, and his dead body shall be exposed to scorching heat by day and frost by night. <sup>31</sup>I will punish him and also his offspring and his courtiers for their wickedness, and I will bring down on them and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem and on the men of Judah all the calamities with which I threatened them, and to which they turned a deaf ear. <sup>32</sup>Then Jeremiah took another scroll and gave it to the scribe Baruch son of Neriah, who wrote on it at Jeremiah's dictation all the words of the book which Jehoiakim king of Judah had burnt; and much else was added to the same effect.

**37**<sup>1</sup>King Zedekiah son of Josiah was set on the throne of Judah by Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, in succession to Coniah son of Jehoiakim. <sup>2</sup>Neither he nor his courtiers nor the people of the land listened to the words which the LORD spoke through the prophet Jeremiah.

<sup>3</sup>King Zedekiah sent Jehucal son of Shelemiah and the priest Zephaniah son of Maaseiah to the prophet Jeremiah to say to him, 'Pray for us to the LORD our God.' <sup>4</sup>At the time Jeremiah was free to come and go among the people; he had not yet been thrown into prison. <sup>5</sup>Meanwhile, Pharaoh's army had marched out of Egypt, and when the Chaldaeans who were besieging Jerusalem heard of it they raised the siege. <sup>6</sup>Then this word came from the LORD to the prophet Jeremiah: <sup>7</sup>These are the words of the LORD the God of Israel: Say to the king of Judah who sent you to consult me, Pharaoh's army which marched out to help you is on its way back to Egypt, its own land, <sup>8</sup>and the Chaldaeans will return to the attack. They will capture this city and burn it to the ground. <sup>9</sup>These are the words of the LORD: Do not deceive yourselves, do not imagine that the Chaldaeans will go away and leave you alone. They will not go; <sup>10</sup>for even if you defeated the whole Chaldaean force with which you are now fighting, and only the wounded were left lying in their tents, they would rise and burn down the city.

<sup>11</sup>When the Chaldaean army had raised the siege of Jerusalem because of the advance of Pharaoh's army, <sup>12</sup>Jeremiah was on the point of leaving Jerusalem to go into Benjaminite territory and take possession of his patrimony in the presence of the people there. <sup>13</sup>Irijah son of Shelemiah, son of Hananiah, the officer of the guard, was in the Benjamin Gate when Jeremiah reached it, and he arrested the prophet, accusing him of going over to the Chaldaeans. <sup>14</sup>'It is a lie,' said Jeremiah; 'I am not going over to the Chaldaeans.' Irijah would not listen to him but arrested him and brought him before the officers. <sup>15</sup>The officers were indignant with Jeremiah; they flogged him and imprisoned him in the house of Jonathan the scribe, which they had converted into a prison; <sup>16</sup>for Jeremiah had been put into a vaulted pit beneath the house, and here he remained for a long time.

<sup>17</sup>King Zedekiah had Jeremiah brought to him and consulted him privately in the palace, asking him if there was a word from the LORD. 'Indeed there is,' said Jeremiah; 'you shall fall into the hands of the king of Babylon.' <sup>18</sup>Then Jeremiah said to King Zedekiah, 'What wrong have I done to you or your courtiers or this people? Why have you thrown me into prison? <sup>19</sup>Where are your prophets who prophesied that the king of Babylon would not attack you or your country? <sup>20</sup>I pray you now, my lord king, give me a hearing and let my petition be presented: do not send me back to the house of Jonathan the scribe, or I shall die there.' <sup>21</sup>Then King Zedekiah gave the order and Jeremiah was committed to the court of the guard-house and was granted a daily ration of one loaf from the Street of the Bakers, until the bread in the city was all gone. So Jeremiah remained in the court of the guard-house.

**38**<sup>1</sup>Shephatiah son of Mattan, Gedaliah son of Pashhur, Jucal son of Shelemiah, and Pashhur son of Malchiah heard what Jeremiah was saying to all the people: <sup>2</sup>These are the words of the LORD: Whoever remains in this city shall die by sword, by famine, or by pestilence, but whoever goes out to surrender to the Chaldaeans shall survive; he shall survive, he shall take home his life and nothing more. <sup>3</sup>These are the words of the LORD: This city will fall into the hands of the king of Babylon's army, and they will capture it. <sup>4</sup>Then the officers said to the king, 'The man must be put to death. By talking in this way he is discouraging the soldiers and the rest of the people left in the city. He is pursuing not the people's welfare but their ruin.' <sup>5</sup>King Zedekiah said, 'He is in your hands; the king is powerless against you.' <sup>6</sup>So they took Jeremiah and threw him into the pit [*prob. rdg, Heb adds Malchiah son (or deputy) of the king*], in the court of the guard-house, letting him down with ropes. There was no water in the pit, only mud, and Jeremiah sank in the mud. <sup>7-8</sup>Now Ebed-melech the Cushite, a eunuch, who was in the palace, heard that they had thrown Jeremiah into the pit and went to tell the king, who was seated in the Benjamin Gate. <sup>9</sup>'Your majesty,' he said, 'these men have shown great wickedness in their treatment of the prophet Jeremiah. They have thrown him into the pit, and when there is no more bread in the city he will die of hunger where he lies.' <sup>10</sup>Thereupon the king told Ebed-melech the Cushite to take three men with him and hoist Jeremiah out of the pit before he died. <sup>11</sup>So Ebed-melech went to the palace with the men and took some tattered, cast-off clothes from the wardrobe [*the wardrobe: prob. rdg, Heb underneath the treasury*] and let them down with ropes to Jeremiah in the pit. <sup>12</sup>Ebed-melech the Cushite said to Jeremiah, 'Put these old clothes under your armpits to ease the ropes.' Jeremiah did this, <sup>13</sup>and they pulled him up out of the pit

with the ropes; and he remained in the court of the guard-house.

<sup>14</sup>King Zedekiah had the prophet Jeremiah brought to him by the third entrance to the LORD's house and said to him, 'I want to ask you something; hide nothing from me.'

<sup>15</sup>Jeremiah answered, 'If I speak out, you will certainly put me to death; if I offer you any advice, you will not take it.' <sup>16</sup>But King Zedekiah swore to Jeremiah privately, 'By the life of the LORD who gave us our lives, I will not put you to death, nor will I hand you over to these men who are seeking to take your life.' <sup>17</sup>Jeremiah said to Zedekiah, 'These are the words of the LORD the God of Hosts, the God of Israel: If you go out and surrender to the officers of the king of Babylon, you shall live and this city shall not be burnt down; you and your family shall live. <sup>18</sup>But if you do not surrender to the officers of the king of Babylon, the city shall fall into the hands of the Chaldeans, and they shall burn it down, and you will not escape them.' <sup>19</sup>King Zedekiah said to Jeremiah, 'I am afraid of the Judaeans who have gone over to the enemy. I fear the Chaldeans will give me up to them and I shall be roughly handled.' <sup>20</sup>Jeremiah answered, 'They will not give you up. If you obey the LORD in everything I tell you, all will be well with you and you shall live. <sup>21</sup>But if you refuse to go out and surrender, this is what the LORD has shown me: <sup>22</sup>all the women left in the king of Judah's palace will be led out to the officers of the king of Babylon and they will say:

Your own friends have misled you  
and have been too strong for you;  
they have let your feet sink in the mud  
and have turned away and left you.

<sup>23</sup>All your women and children will be led out to the Chaldeans, and you will not escape; you will be seized by the king of Babylon and this city will be burnt down.'

<sup>24</sup>Zedekiah said to Jeremiah, 'Let no one know about this. and you shall not be put to death. <sup>25</sup>If the officers hear that I have been speaking with you and they come to you and say, "Tell us what you said to the king and what he said to you; hide nothing from us, and we will not put you to death", <sup>26</sup>then answer, "I was presenting a petition to the king not to send me back to the house of Jonathan to die there."' <sup>27</sup>The officers all came to Jeremiah and questioned him, and he said to them just what the king had told him to say; so their talk came to an end and they were none the wiser. <sup>28</sup>Jeremiah remained in the court of the guard-house till the day Jerusalem fell.

**39**<sup>1</sup>*[vv1-10: cp 52.4-16 and 2Kgs. 25.1-12]* IN THE TENTH MONTH OF THE NINTH YEAR of the reign of Zedekiah king of Judah, Nebuchadrezzar advanced with all his army against Jerusalem, and they laid siege to it. <sup>2</sup>In the fourth month of the eleventh year of Zedekiah, on the ninth day of the month, the city was thrown open. <sup>3</sup>All the officers of the king of Babylon came in and took their seats in the middle gate: Nergalsarezer of Simmagir, Nebusarsekim [*Probably a different form of Nebushazban (v13)*] the chief eunuch [the chief eunuch: *or Rab-saris*], Nergalsarezer the commander of the frontier troops [the commander ... troops: *or Rab-mag*], and all the other officers of the king of Babylon. <sup>4</sup>When Zedekiah king of Judah saw them, he and all his armed escort left the city and fled by night by way of the king's garden through the gate called Between the Two Walls. They escaped towards the Arabah, <sup>5</sup>but the Chaldaean army pursued them and overtook Zedekiah in the lowlands of Jericho. The king was seized and brought before Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon at Riblah in the land of Hamath, and he pleaded

his case before him. <sup>6</sup>The king of Babylon slew Zedekiah's sons before his eyes at Riblah; he also put to death the nobles of Judah. <sup>7</sup>Then Zedekiah's eyes were put out, and he was bound in fetters of bronze to be brought to Babylon. <sup>8</sup>The Chaldaeans burnt the royal palace and the house of the LORD and the houses [of the LORD and the houses: *prob. rdg, Heb omitted*] of the people, and pulled down the walls of Jerusalem. <sup>9</sup>Nebuzaradan captain of the bodyguard deported to Babylon the rest of the people left in the city, those who had deserted to him and any remaining artisans [*artisans: prob. rdg, cp 52.15; Heb people who were left*]. <sup>10</sup>At the same time the captain of the guard left behind the weakest class of the people, those who owned nothing at all, and made them vine-dressers and labourers.

<sup>11</sup>Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon sent orders about Jeremiah to Nebuzaradan captain of the guard. <sup>12</sup>'Take him,' he said; 'take special care of him, and do him no harm of any kind, but do for him whatever he says.' <sup>13</sup>So Nebuzaradan captain of the guard sent Nebushazban the chief eunuch, Nergalsarezer the commander of the frontier troops, and all the chief officers of the king of Babylon, <sup>14</sup>and they fetched Jeremiah from the court of the guard-house and handed him over to Gedaliah son of Ahikam, son of Shaphan, to take him out to the Residence. So he stayed with his own people.

<sup>15</sup>The word of the LORD had come to Jeremiah while he was under arrest in the court of the guard-house: <sup>16</sup>Go and say to Ebed-melech the Cushite, These are the words of the LORD of Hosts the God of Israel: I will make good the words I have spoken against this city, foretelling ruin and not prosperity, and when that day comes you will be there to see it. <sup>17</sup>But I will preserve you on that day, says the LORD, and you shall not be handed over to the men you fear. <sup>18</sup>I will keep you safe and you shall not fall a victim to the sword; because you trusted in me you shall escape, you shall take home your life and nothing more. This is the very word of the LORD.

## **Jeremiah after the capture of Jerusalem**

**40**<sup>1</sup>THE WORD WHICH CAME FROM THE LORD concerning Jeremiah: Nebuzaradan captain of the guard had taken him in chains to Ramah along with the other exiles from Jerusalem and Judah who were being deported to Babylon; <sup>2</sup>and there he set him free, and took it upon himself to say to Jeremiah, 'The LORD your God threatened this place with disaster, <sup>3</sup>and has duly carried out his threat that this should happen to all of you because you have sinned against the LORD and not obeyed him. <sup>4</sup>But as for you, Jeremiah, today I remove the fetters from your wrists. Come with me to Babylon if you wish, and I will take special care of you; but if you prefer not to come, well and good. The whole country lies before you; go wherever you think. best.' Jeremiah had not yet answered <sup>5</sup>when Nebuzaradan went on [*Jeremiah ... went on: prob. rdg, Heb unintelligible in context*], 'Go back to Gedaliah son of Ahikam, son of Shaphan, whom the king of Babylon has appointed governor of the cities of Judah, and stay with him openly; or else go wherever you choose.' Then the captain of the guard granted him an allowance of food, and gave him a present, and so took leave of him. <sup>6</sup>Jeremiah then came to Gedaliah son of Ahikam at Mizpah and stayed with him among the people left in the land. <sup>7</sup>When all the captains of the armed bands in the country-side and their men heard that the king of Babylon had appointed Gedaliah son of Ahikam governor of the

land, and had put him in charge of the weakest class of the population, men, women, and children, who had not been deported to Babylon, <sup>8</sup>they came to him at Mizpah; Ishmael son of Nethaniah came, and Johanan and Jonathan sons of Kareah, Seraiah son of Tanhumeth, the sons of Ephai[Or Ophai] from Netophah, and Jezaniah of Bethmaacah, with their men. <sup>9</sup>Gedaliah son of Ahikam, son of Shaphan, gave them all this assurance: 'Have no fear of the Chaldaean officers. Settle down in the land and serve the king of Babylon; and then all will be well with you. <sup>10</sup>I am to stay in Mizpah and attend upon the Chaldaeans whenever they come, and you are to gather in the summer-fruits, wine, and oil, store them in jars, and settle in the towns you have taken over.' <sup>11</sup>The Judaeans also, in Moab, Ammon, Edom and other countries, heard that the king of Babylon had left a remnant in Judah and that he had set over them Gedaliah son of Ahikam, son of Shaphan. <sup>12</sup>The Judaeans, therefore, from all the places where they were scattered, came back to Judah and presented themselves before Gedaliah at Mizpah; and they gathered in a considerable store of fruit and wine.

<sup>13</sup>Johanan son of Kareah and all the captains of the armed bands from the country-side came to Gedaliah at Mizpah <sup>14</sup>and said to him, 'Do you know that Baalis king of the Ammonites has sent Ishmael son of Nethaniah to assassinate you?' But Gedaliah son of Ahikam did not believe them. <sup>15</sup>Then Johanan son of Kareah said in private to Gedaliah, 'Let me go, unknown to anyone else, and kill Ishmael son of Nethaniah. Why allow him to assassinate you, and so let all the Judaeans who have rallied round you be scattered and the remnant of Judah lost?' <sup>16</sup>Gedaliah son of Ahikam answered him, 'Do no such thing. Your story about Ishmael is a lie.'

**41**<sup>1</sup>In the seventh month Ishmael son of Nethaniah, son of Elishama, who was a member of the royal house, came with ten men to Gedaliah son of Ahikam at Mizpah. <sup>2</sup>While they were at table with him there, Ishmael son of Nethaniah and the ten men with him rose to their feet and assassinated Gedaliah son of Ahikam, son of Shaphan, whom the king of Babylon had appointed governor of the land. <sup>3</sup>They also murdered the Judaeans with him in Mizpah and the Chaldaeans who happened to be there. <sup>4</sup>The second day after the murder of Gedaliah, while it was not yet common knowledge, <sup>5</sup>there came eighty men from Shechem, Shiloh, and Samaria. They had shaved off their beards, their clothes were rent and their bodies gashed, and they were carrying grain-offerings and frankincense to take to the house of the LORD. <sup>6</sup>Ishmael son of Nethaniah came out weeping from Mizpah to meet them and, when he met them, he said, 'Come to Gedaliah son of Ahikam.' <sup>7</sup>But as soon as they reached the centre of the town, Ishmael son of Nethaniah and his men murdered them and threw their bodies into a pit, <sup>8</sup>all except ten of them who said to Ishmael, 'Do not kill us, for we have a secret hoard in the country, wheat and barley, oil and honey.' So he held his hand and did not kill them with the others. <sup>9</sup>The pit into which he threw the bodies of those whose death he had caused by using Gedaliah's name was the pit which King Asa had made when threatened by Baasha king of Israel; and the dead bodies filled it. <sup>10</sup>He rounded up the rest of the people in Mizpah, that is the king's daughters and all who remained in Mizpah when Nebuzaradan captain of the guard appointed Gedaliah son of Ahikam governor; and with these he set out to cross over into Ammon. <sup>11</sup>When Johanan son of Kareah and all the captains of the armed bands heard of the crimes committed by Ishmael son of Nethaniah, <sup>12</sup>they took all the men they had and went to attack him. They found him by

the great pool in Gibeon. <sup>13</sup>The people with Ishmael were glad when they saw Johanan son of Kareah and the captains of the armed bands with him; <sup>14</sup>and all whom Ishmael had taken prisoner at Mizpah turned and joined Johanan son of Kareah. <sup>15</sup>But Ishmael son of Nethaniah escaped from Johanan with eight men, and they made their way to the Ammonites.

<sup>16</sup>Johanan son of Kareah and all the captains of the armed bands took from Mizpah the survivors whom he had rescued from Ishmael son of Nethaniah after the murder of Gedaliah son of Ahikam – men, armed and unarmed, women, children, and eunuchs, whom he had brought back from Gibeon. <sup>17</sup>They started out and broke their journey at Kimham's holding near Bethlehem, on their way into Egypt <sup>18</sup>to escape the Chaldeans. They were afraid because Ishmael son of Nethaniah had assassinated Gedaliah son of Ahikam, whom the king of Babylon had appointed governor of the country.

**42**<sup>1</sup>All the captains of the armed bands, including Johanan son of Kareah and Azariah son of Hoshai, together with the people, high and low, <sup>2</sup>came to the prophet Jeremiah and said to him, 'May our petition be acceptable to you: Pray to the LORD your God on our behalf and on behalf of this remnant; for, as you see for yourself, only a few of us remain out of many. <sup>3</sup>Pray that the LORD your God may tell us which way we ought to go and what we ought to do.' <sup>4</sup>Then the prophet Jeremiah said to them, 'I have heard your request and will pray to the LORD your God as you desire, and whatever answer the LORD gives I will tell you; I will keep nothing back.' <sup>5</sup>They said to Jeremiah, 'May the LORD be a true and faithful witness against us if we do not keep our oath! We swear that we will do whatever the LORD your God sends you to tell us. <sup>6</sup>Whether we like it or not, we will obey the LORD our God to whom we send you, in order that it may be well with us; we will obey the LORD our God.'

<sup>7</sup>Within ten days the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah; <sup>8</sup>so he summoned Johanan son of Kareah, all the captains of the armed bands with him, and all the people, both high and low. <sup>9</sup>He said to them, These are the words of the LORD the God of Israel, to whom you sent me to present your petition: <sup>10</sup>If you will stay in this land, then I will build you up and not pull you down, I will plant you and not uproot you; I grieve for the disaster which I have brought upon you. <sup>11</sup>Do not be afraid of the king of Babylon whom you now fear. Do not be afraid of him, says the LORD; for I am with you, to save you and deliver you from his power. <sup>12</sup>I will show you compassion, and he too will have compassion on you; he will let you stay on your own soil. <sup>13</sup>But it may be that you will disobey the LORD your God and say, 'We will not stay in this land. <sup>14</sup>No, we will go to Egypt, where we shall see no sign of war, never hear the sound of the trumpet, and not starve for want of bread; and there we will live.' <sup>15</sup>Then hear the word of the LORD, you remnant of Judah. These are the words of the LORD of Hosts the God of Israel: If you are bent on going to Egypt, if you do settle there, <sup>16</sup>then the sword you fear will overtake you in Egypt, and the famine you dread will still be with you, even in Egypt, and there you will die. <sup>17</sup>All the men who are bent on going to Egypt and settling there will die by sword, by famine, or by pestilence; not one shall escape or survive the calamity which I will bring upon them. <sup>18</sup>These are the words of the LORD of Hosts the God of Israel: As my anger and my wrath were poured out upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so will my wrath be poured out upon you when you go to Egypt; you will

become an object of execration and horror, of ridicule and reproach; you will never see this place again. <sup>19</sup>To you, then, remnant of Judah, the LORD says. Do not go to Egypt. Make no mistake, I can bear witness against you this day. <sup>20</sup>You deceived yourselves when you sent me to the LORD your God and said, 'Pray for us to the LORD our God; tell us all that the LORD our God says and we will do it.' <sup>21</sup>I have told you everything today; but you have not obeyed the LORD your God in what he sent me to tell you. <sup>22</sup>So now be sure of this: you will die by sword, by famine, and by pestilence in the place where you desire to go and make your home.

**43**<sup>1</sup>When Jeremiah had finished reciting to the people all that the LORD their God had sent him to say, <sup>2</sup>Azariah son of Hoshaiah and Johanan son of Kareah and their party had the effrontery to say to [to say to: *or* to say: It is being said to] Jeremiah, 'You are lying; the LORD our God has not sent you to forbid us to go and make our home in Egypt. <sup>3</sup>Baruch son of Neriah has incited you against us in order to put us in the power of the Chaldeans, so that they may kill us or deport us to Babylon.' <sup>4</sup>Johanan son of Kareah and the captains of the armed bands and all the people refused to obey the LORD and stay in Judah. <sup>5</sup>So Johanan son of Kareah and the captains collected the remnant of Judah, all who had returned from the countries among which they had been scattered to make their home in Judah – <sup>6</sup>men, women and children, including the king's daughters, all the people whom Nebuzaradan captain of the guard had left with Gedaliah son of Ahikam, son of Shaphan, as well as the prophet Jeremiah and Baruch son of Neriah; <sup>7</sup>these all went to Egypt and came to Tahpanhes, disobeying the LORD.

<sup>8</sup>The word of the LORD came to Jeremiah at Tahpanhes: <sup>9</sup>Take some large stones and set them in cement in the pavement at the entrance to Pharaoh's palace in Tahpanhes. Let the Judaeans see you do it <sup>10</sup>and say to them, These are the words of the LORD of Hosts the God of Israel: I will send for my servant Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, and he will place his throne on these stones that I have set there, and spread his canopy over them. <sup>11</sup>He will then proceed to strike Egypt down, killing those doomed to death, taking captive those who are for captivity, and putting to the sword those who are for the sword. <sup>12</sup>He will set fire to the temples of the Egyptian gods, burning the buildings and carrying the gods into captivity. He will scour the land of Egypt as a shepherd scours his clothes to rid them of lice. He will leave Egypt with his purpose achieved. <sup>13</sup>He will smash the sacred pillars of Beth-shemesh in Egypt and burn down the temples of the Egyptian gods.

**44**<sup>1</sup>The word that came to Jeremiah for all the Judaeans who were living in Egypt, in Migdol, Tahpanhes, Noph, and the district of Pathros: <sup>2</sup>These are the words of the LORD of Hosts the God of Israel: You have seen the calamity that I brought upon Jerusalem and all the cities of Judah: today they are laid waste and left uninhabited, <sup>3</sup>all because of the wickedness of those who provoked me to anger by going after other gods, gods unknown to them, by burning sacrifices to them. It was you and your fathers who did this. <sup>4</sup>I took pains to send all my servants the prophets to you with this warning: 'Do not do this abominable thing which I hate.' <sup>5</sup>But your fathers would not listen; they paid no heed. They did not give up their wickedness or cease to burn sacrifices to other gods; <sup>6</sup>so my anger and wrath raged like a fire through the cities of Judah and the streets of Jerusalem, and they became the desolate ruin that they are today.

<sup>7</sup>Now these are the words of the LORD the God of Hosts, the God of Israel: Why bring so great a disaster upon yourselves? Why bring destruction upon Judaeans, men and women, children and babes, and leave yourselves without a survivor? <sup>8</sup>This is what comes of your provoking me by all your idolatry in burning sacrifices to other gods in Egypt where you have made your home. You will destroy yourselves and become an object of ridicule and reproach to all the nations of the earth. <sup>9</sup>Have you forgotten all the wickedness committed by your forefathers, by the kings of Judah and their wives, by yourselves and your wives in the land of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem? <sup>10</sup>To this day you have shown no remorse, no reverence; you have not conformed to the law and the statutes which I set before you and your forefathers. <sup>11</sup>These, therefore, are the words of the LORD of Hosts the God of Israel: I have made up my mind to bring calamity upon you and exterminate the people of Judah. <sup>12</sup>I will deal with the remnant of Judah who were bent on going to make their home in Egypt; in Egypt they shall all meet their end. Some shall fall by the sword, others will meet their end by famine. High and low alike will die by sword or by famine and will be an object of execration and horror, of ridicule and reproach. <sup>13</sup>I will punish those who live in Egypt as I punished those in Jerusalem, by sword, famine, and pestilence. <sup>14</sup>Those who had remained in Judah came to make their home in Egypt, confident that they would return and live once more in Judah. But they shall not return [*prob. rdg, Heb adds except fugitives*]; not one of them shall survive, not one escape.

<sup>15</sup>Then all the men who knew that their wives were burning sacrifices to other gods and the crowds of women standing by [*prob. rdg, Heb adds and all the people who lived in Egypt, in Pathros*] answered Jeremiah, <sup>16</sup>'We will not listen to what you tell us in the name of the LORD. <sup>17</sup>We intend to fulfil all the promises by which we have bound ourselves: we will burn sacrifices to the queen of heaven and pour drink-offerings to her as we used to do, we and our fathers, our kings and our princes, in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem. We then had food in plenty and were content; no calamity touched us. <sup>18</sup>But from the time we left off burning sacrifices to the queen of heaven and pouring drink-offerings to her, we have been in great want, and in the end we have fallen victims to sword and famine.' <sup>19</sup>And the women said, 'When we burnt sacrifices to the queen of heaven and poured drink-offerings to her, our husbands knew full well that we were making crescent-cakes marked with her image and pouring drink-offerings to her.' <sup>20</sup>When Jeremiah received this answer from these men and women and all the people, he said, <sup>21</sup>'The LORD did not forget those sacrifices which you and your fathers, your kings and princes and the people of the land burnt in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem, and they mounted up in his mind <sup>22</sup>until he could no longer tolerate them, so wicked were your deeds and so abominable the things you did. Your land became a desolate waste, an object of horror and ridicule, with no inhabitants, as it still is. <sup>23</sup>This calamity has come upon you because you burnt these sacrifices and sinned against the LORD and did not obey the LORD or conform to his laws, statutes, and teachings.'

<sup>24</sup>Jeremiah further said to all the people and to the women, Listen to the word of the LORD, all you from Judah who live in Egypt. <sup>25</sup>These are the words of the LORD of Hosts the God of Israel: You women have made your actions match your words. 'We will carry out our vows', you said, 'to burn sacrifices to the queen of heaven and to pour drink-

offerings to her.' Well then, fulfil your vows by all means, and make your words good.  
<sup>26</sup>But listen to the word of the LORD, all you from Judah who live in Egypt. I have sworn by my great name, says the LORD, that my name shall never again be on the lips of the men of Judah; they shall no longer swear in Egypt, 'By the life of the Lord GOD.'  
<sup>27</sup>I am on the watch to bring you evil and not good, and all the men of Judah who are in Egypt shall meet their end by sword and by famine until not one is left [*prob. rdg, Heb adds*  
<sup>28</sup>Few will escape the sword in Egypt to return to Judah]. It is then that all the survivors of Judah who have made their home in Egypt shall know whose word prevails, theirs or mine.

<sup>29</sup>This is the sign I give you, says the LORD, that I intend to punish you in this place, so that you may learn that my words against you will prevail to bring evil upon you:  
<sup>30</sup>These are the words of the LORD: I will hand over Pharaoh Hophra king of Egypt to his enemies and to those who seek his life, just as I handed over Zedekiah king of Judah to his enemy Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon who was seeking to take his life.

**45**<sup>1</sup>THE WORD WHICH THE PROPHET JEREMIAH SPOKE to Baruch son of Neriah when he wrote these words in a book at Jeremiah's dictation in the fourth year of Jehoiakim son of Josiah, king of Judah: <sup>2</sup>These are the words of the LORD the God of Israel concerning you, Baruch: <sup>3</sup>You said, 'Woe is me, for the LORD has added grief to all my trials. I have worn myself out with my labours and have had no respite.'  
<sup>4</sup>This is what you shall say to Baruch, These are the words of the LORD: What I have built, I, demolish; what I have planted, I uproot. So it will be with the whole earth. <sup>5</sup>You seek great things for yourself. Leave off seeking them; for I will bring disaster upon all mankind, says the LORD, and I will let you live wherever you go, but you shall save your life and nothing more.

## Prophecies against the nations

**46**<sup>1</sup>THIS CAME TO THE PROPHET JEREMIAH as the word of the LORD concerning the nations.

<sup>2</sup>Of Egypt: concerning the army of Pharaoh Necho king of Egypt at Carchemish on the river Euphrates, which Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon defeated in the fourth year of Jehoiakim son of Josiah, king of Judah.

<sup>3</sup>Hold shield and buckler ready  
and advance to battle;

<sup>4</sup>harness the horses, let the riders mount;  
form up, your helmets on, your lances burnished;  
on with your coats of mail!

<sup>5</sup>But now, what sight is this?  
They are broken and routed,  
their warriors beaten down;  
they have turned to flight and do not look behind them.  
Terror let loose!

This is the very word of the LORD.

<sup>6</sup>Can the swift escape, can the warrior save himself?  
In the north, by the river Euphrates,  
they stumble and fall.

<sup>7</sup>Who is this rising like the Nile,  
like its streams turbulent in flood?

<sup>8</sup>Egypt is rising like the Nile,  
like its streams turbulent in flood.

He [*Or It*] says:

I will rise and cover the earth,  
I will destroy both city and people.

<sup>9</sup>Charge, horsemen! On, you flashing chariots, on!  
Forward, the warriors,  
Cushites and men of Put carrying shields,  
Lydians grasping their bent bows!

<sup>10</sup>This is the day of the Lord, the GOD of Hosts,  
a day of vengeance, vengeance on his enemies;  
the sword shall devour and be sated,  
drunk with their blood.

For the GOD of Hosts, the Lord, holds sacrifice  
in a northern land, by the river Euphrates.

<sup>11</sup>Go up into Gilead and fetch balm,  
O virgin people of Egypt.

You have tried many remedies, all in vain;  
no skin shall grow over your wounds.

<sup>12</sup>The nations have heard your cry,  
and the earth echoes with your screams;  
warrior stumbles against warrior  
and both fall together.

<sup>13</sup>The word which the LORD spoke to the prophet Jeremiah when Nebuchadrezzar king  
of Babylon was coming to harry the land of Egypt:

<sup>14</sup>Announce it in Egypt, proclaim it in Migdol,  
proclaim it in Noph and Tahpanhes.

Say, Stand to! Be ready!  
for a sword devours all around you.

<sup>15</sup>Why does Apis flee, why does your bull-god not [*Why does Apis ... not: or  
Why is your bull-god routed, why does he not*] stand fast?  
The LORD has thrust him out.

<sup>16</sup>The rabble of Egypt stumbles and falls,  
man against man;  
each says, 'Quick, back to our people,  
to the land of our birth, far from the cruel sword!'

<sup>17</sup>Give Pharaoh of Egypt the title King Bombast,  
the man who missed his moment.

<sup>18</sup>By my life, says the King  
whose name is the LORD of Hosts,  
one shall come mighty as Tabor among the hills,

as Carmel by the sea.

<sup>19</sup>Make ready your baggage for exile,  
you native people of Egypt;  
for Noph shall become a waste,  
ruined and unpeopled.

<sup>20</sup>Egypt was a lovely heifer,  
but a gadfly from the north descended on her.

<sup>21</sup>The mercenaries in her land were like stall-fed calves;  
but they too turned and fled,  
not one of them stood his ground.  
The hour of their downfall has come upon them,  
their day of reckoning.

<sup>22</sup>Hark, she is hissing like a snake,  
for the enemy has come in all his force.  
They fall upon her with axes  
like woodcutters at their work.

<sup>23</sup>They cut down her forest, says the LORD,  
and it flaunts itself no more;  
for they are many as locusts and past counting.

<sup>24</sup>The Egyptians are put to shame, enslaved to a northern race.

<sup>25</sup>The LORD of Hosts the God of Israel has spoken:  
I will punish Amon god of No [*prob. rdg, Heb adds and Pharaoh*],  
Egypt with her gods and her princes,  
Pharaoh and all who trust in him.

<sup>26</sup>I will deliver them to those bent on their destruction,  
to Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon and his troops;  
yet in after time the land shall be peopled as of old.  
This is the very word of the LORD.

<sup>27</sup>But you, Jacob my servant, have no fear,  
despair not, O Israel;  
for I will bring you back safe from afar  
and your offspring from the land where they are captives;  
and Jacob shall be at rest once more,  
prosperous and unafraid.

<sup>28</sup>O Jacob my servant, have no fear,  
says the LORD; for I am with you.  
I will make an end of all the nations  
amongst whom I have banished you;  
but I will not make an end of you;  
though I punish you as you deserve,  
I will not sweep you clean away.

**47**<sup>1</sup>This came to the prophet Jeremiah as the word of the LORD concerning the Philistines before Pharaoh's harrying of Gaza: <sup>2</sup>The LORD has spoken:  
See how waters are rising from the north  
and swelling to a torrent in spate,  
flooding the land and all that is in it,

cities and all who live in them.

Men shall shriek in alarm

and all who live in the land shall howl.

<sup>3</sup>Hark, the pounding of his chargers' hooves,  
the rattle of his chariots and their rumbling wheels!

Fathers spare no thought for their children;  
their hands hang powerless,

<sup>4</sup>because the day is upon them when Philistia will be despoiled,  
and Tyre and Sidon destroyed to the last defender;

for the LORD will despoil the Philistines,  
that remnant of the isle of Caphtor.

<sup>5</sup>Gaza is shorn bare, Ashkelon ruined.

Poor remnant of their strength,

how long will you gash yourselves and cry:

<sup>6</sup>Ah, sword in the hand of the LORD,

how long will it be before you rest?

Sheathe yourself, rest and be quiet.

<sup>7</sup>How can it rest? for the LORD has given it work to do  
against Ashkelon and the plain by the sea;  
there he has assigned the sword its task.

**48**<sup>1</sup>Of Moab. The LORD of Hosts the God of Israel has spoken:

Alas for Nebo! it is laid waste;

Kiriathaim is put to shame and captured,

Misgab reduced to shame and dismay;

<sup>2</sup>Moab is renowned no longer.

In Heshbon they plot evil against her:

Come, destroy her, and leave her no longer a nation.

And you who live in Madmen shall be struck down,  
your people pursued by the sword.

<sup>3</sup>Hark to the cries of anguish from Horonaim:  
great havoc and disaster!

<sup>4</sup>Moab is broken.

Their cries are heard as far as Zoar.

<sup>5</sup>On the ascent of Luhith

men go up weeping bitterly;

on the descent of Horonaim

cries of 'Disaster!' are heard.

<sup>6</sup>Flee, flee for your lives

like a sand-grouse in the wilderness.

<sup>7</sup>Because you have trusted in your defences and your arsenals,  
you too will be captured,

and Kemosh will go into exile,

his priests and his captains with him;

<sup>8</sup>and a spoiler shall descend on every city.

No city shall escape,

valley and tableland will be laid waste and plundered;

the LORD has spoken.

<sup>9</sup>Let a warning flash to Moab [Let ... Moab: *or* Doom Moab to become saltings],  
for she shall be laid in ruins [laid in ruins: *prob. rdg, Heb obscure*]  
and her cities shall become waste places  
with no inhabitant.

<sup>10</sup>A curse on him who is slack in doing the LORD's work!  
A curse on him who withholds his sword from bloodshed!

<sup>11</sup>All his life long, Moab has lain undisturbed  
like wine settled on its lees,  
not emptied from vessel to vessel;  
he has not gone into exile.  
Therefore the taste of him is unaltered,  
and the flavour stays unchanged.

<sup>12</sup>Therefore the days are coming, says the LORD,  
when I will send men to tilt the jars; they shall tilt them  
and empty his vessels and smash his jars;

<sup>13</sup>and Moab shall be betrayed by Kemosh,  
as Israel was betrayed by Bethel,  
a god in whom he trusted.

<sup>14</sup>How can you say, 'We are warriors  
and men valiant in battle'?

<sup>15</sup>The spoiler of Moab and her cities has come up,  
and the flower of her army goes down to the slaughter.

This is the very word of the King whose name is the LORD of Hosts.

<sup>16</sup>The downfall of Moab is near at hand,  
disaster rushes swiftly upon him.

<sup>17</sup>Grieve for him, all you his neighbours  
and all you who acknowledge him,  
and say, 'Alas! The commander's staff is broken,  
broken is the baton of honour.'

<sup>18</sup>Come down from your place of honour,  
sit on the thirsty ground, you natives of Dibon;  
for the spoiler of Moab has come upon you  
and destroyed your citadels.

<sup>19</sup>You that live in Aroer, stand on the roadside and watch,  
ask the fugitives, the man running, the woman escaping,  
ask them, 'What has happened?'

<sup>20</sup>Moab is reduced to shame and dismay:  
howl and shriek,  
proclaim by the Arnon that Moab is despoiled,

<sup>21</sup>and that judgement has come to the tableland, to Holon and Jahazah, Mephaath <sup>22</sup>and  
Dibon, Nebo and Beth-diblathaim <sup>23</sup>and Kiriathaim, Beth-gamul, Beth-meon, <sup>24</sup>Kiriath  
and Bozrah, and to all the cities of Moab far and near.

<sup>25</sup>Moab's horn is hacked off

and his strong arm is broken,  
says the LORD.

<sup>26</sup>Make Moab drunk – he has defied the LORD –  
until he overflows with his vomit  
and even he becomes a butt for derision.

<sup>27</sup>But was Israel ever your butt?  
Was he ever in company with thieves,  
that whenever you spoke of him you should shake your head?

<sup>28</sup>Leave your cities, you inhabitants of Moab,  
and find a home among the crags;  
become like a dove which nests  
in the rock-face at the mouth of a cavern.

<sup>29</sup>We have heard of Moab's pride, and proud indeed he is,  
proud, presumptuous, overbearing, insolent.

<sup>30</sup>I know his arrogance, says the LORD;  
his boasting is false, false are his deeds.

<sup>31</sup>Therefore I will howl over Moab  
and cry in anguish at the fate of every soul in Moab;  
I will moan over the men of Kir-heres.

<sup>32</sup>I will weep for you more than I wept for Jazer,  
O vine of Sibmah

whose branches spread out to the sea  
and stretch as far as Jazer.

The despoiler has fallen on your fruit and on your vintage,

<sup>33</sup>gladness and joy are taken away  
from the meadows of Moab,

and I have stopped the flow of wine from the vats;

nor shall shout follow shout from the harvesters – not one shout.

<sup>34</sup>Heshbon and [and: *prob. rdg, cp Isa. 15.4; Heb as far as*] Elealeh utter cries of  
anguish which are heard in Jahaz; the sound carries from Zoar to Horonaim and Eglath-  
shelishiyah; for the waters of Nimrim have become a desolate waste. <sup>35</sup>In Moab I will

stop their sacrificing at hill-shrines and burning of offerings to their gods, says the  
LORD. <sup>36</sup>Therefore my heart wails for Moab like a reed-pipe, wails like a pipe for the

men of Kir-heres. Their hard-earned wealth has vanished. <sup>37</sup>Every man's head is shorn  
in mourning, every beard shaved, every hand gashed, and every waist girded with

sackcloth. <sup>38</sup>On Moab's roofs and in her broad streets nothing is heard but lamentation;  
for I have broken Moab like a useless thing [*prob. rdg, Heb adds says the LORD*].

<sup>39</sup>Moab in her dismay has shamefully turned to flight. Moab has become a butt of  
derision and a cause of dismay to all her neighbours.

<sup>40</sup>For the LORD has spoken:

A vulture shall swoop down  
and spread out his wings over Moab.

<sup>41</sup>The towns are captured, the strongholds taken;  
on that day the spirit of Moab's warriors shall fail  
like the spirit of a woman in childbirth.

<sup>42</sup>Then Moab shall be destroyed, no more to be a nation;  
for he defied the LORD.

<sup>43</sup>The hunter's scare, the pit, and the trap  
threaten all who dwell in Moab,  
says the LORD.

<sup>44</sup>If a man runs from the scare  
he will fall into the pit;  
if he climbs out of the pit  
he will be caught in the trap.  
All this will I bring on Moab in the year of their reckoning.  
This is the very word of the LORD.

<sup>45</sup>In the shadow of Heshbon the fugitives stand helpless;  
for fire has blazed out from Heshbon,  
flames have shot out from the palace of Sihon;  
they devour the homeland of Moab  
and the country of the sons of tumult.

<sup>46</sup>Alas for you, Moab! the people of Kemosh have vanished,  
for your sons are taken into captivity  
and your daughters led away captive.

<sup>47</sup>Yet in days to come I will restore Moab's fortunes.  
This is the very word of the LORD.

Here ends the sentence on Moab.

**49**<sup>1</sup>Of the people of Ammon. Thus says the LORD:  
Has Israel no sons? Has he no heir?  
Why has Milcom inherited the land of Gad,  
and why do his people live in the cities of Gad?

<sup>2</sup>Look, therefore, a time is coming,  
says the LORD,  
when I will make Rabbath Ammon hear the battle-cry,  
when it will become a desolate mound of ruins  
and its villages will be burnt to ashes,  
and Israel shall disinherit those who disinherited him,  
says the LORD.

<sup>3</sup>Howl, Heshbon, for Ai is despoiled.  
Cry aloud, you villages round Rabbath Ammon,  
put on sackcloth and beat your breast,  
and score your bodies with gashes.  
For Milcom will go into exile,  
and with him his priests and officers.

<sup>4</sup>Why do you boast of your resources,  
you whose resources are melting away,  
you wayward people who trust in your arsenals,  
and say, 'Who will dare attack me?'

<sup>5</sup>Beware, I am bringing fear upon you from every side [*prob. rdg, Heb adds*  
says the Lord GOD of Hosts],  
and every one of you shall be driven headlong

with no man to round up the stragglers.

<sup>6</sup>Yet after this I will restore the fortunes of Ammon.  
This is the very word of the LORD.

<sup>7</sup>Of Edom. The LORD of Hosts has said:

Is wisdom no longer to be found in Teman?  
Have her sages no skill in counsel?  
Has their wisdom decayed?

<sup>8</sup>The people of Dedan have turned and fled  
and taken refuge in remote places;  
for I will bring Esau's calamity upon him  
when his day of reckoning comes.

<sup>9</sup>[vv9-10: cp Obad. 5-6] When the vintagers come to you  
they will surely leave gleanings;  
and if thieves raid your early crop in the night,  
they will take only as much as they want.

<sup>10</sup>But I have ransacked Esau's treasure,  
I have uncovered his hiding-places,  
and he has nowhere to conceal himself;  
his children, his kinsfolk and his neighbours are despoiled;  
there is no one to help him.

<sup>11</sup>What! am I to save alive your fatherless children?  
Are your widows to trust in me?

<sup>12</sup>For the LORD has spoken: Those who were not doomed to drink the cup shall drink it none the less. Are you alone to go unpunished? You shall not go unpunished; you shall drink it. <sup>13</sup>For by my life, says the LORD, Bozrah shall become a horror and reproach, a byword and a thing of ridicule; and all her towns shall be a byword for ever.

<sup>14</sup>[vv14-16: cp Obad. 1-4] When a herald was sent among the nations, crying,  
'Gather together and march against her,  
rouse yourselves for battle',  
I heard this message from the LORD:

<sup>15</sup>Look, I make you the least of all nations,  
an object of all men's contempt.

<sup>16</sup>Your overbearing arrogance and your insolent heart  
have led you astray,  
you who haunt the crannies among the rocks  
and keep your hold on the heights of the hills.  
Though you build your nest high as a vulture,  
thence I will bring you down.

This is the very word of the LORD.

<sup>17</sup>Edom shall become a scene of horror,  
all who pass that way shall be horror-struck  
and shall jeer in derision at the blows she has borne,

<sup>18</sup>overthrown like Sodom and Gomorrah and their neighbours [*Or*  
*inhabitants*],  
says the LORD.  
No man shall live there,

no mortal make a home in her.

<sup>19</sup>Look, like a lion coming up  
from Jordan's dense thickets to the perennial pastures,  
in a moment I will chase every one away  
and round up the choicest of [the choicest of: *prob. rdg, Heb* who is  
chosen?] her rams.  
For who is like me? Who is my equal?  
What shepherd can stand his ground before me?

<sup>20</sup>Therefore listen to the LORD's whole purpose against Edom and all his plans against  
the people of Teman:

The young ones of the flock shall be carried off,  
and their pasture shall be horrified at their fate.

<sup>21</sup>At the sound of their fall the land quakes;  
it cries out, and the cry is heard at the Red Sea [*Or* the Sea of Reeds].

<sup>22</sup>A vulture shall soar and swoop down  
and spread out his wings over Bozrah,  
and on that day the spirit of Edom's warriors shall fail  
like the spirit of a woman in labour.

<sup>23</sup>Of Damascus.

Hamath and Arpad are in confusion,  
for they have heard news of disaster;  
they are tossed up and down in anxiety  
like the unresting sea.

<sup>24</sup>Damascus has lost heart and turns to flight;  
trembling has seized her,  
the pangs of childbirth have gripped her.

<sup>25</sup>How forlorn is the town of joyful song,  
the city of gladness!

<sup>26</sup>Therefore her young men shall fall in her streets  
and all her warriors lie still in death that day.  
This is the very word of the LORD of Hosts.

<sup>27</sup>Then will I kindle a fire against the wall of Damascus  
and it shall consume the palaces of Ben-hadad.

<sup>28</sup>Of Kedar and the royal princes [*royal princes: or* kingdom] of Hazer which  
Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon subdued. The LORD has said:

Come, attack Kedar,  
despoil the Arabs of the east.

<sup>29</sup>Carry off their tents and their flocks,  
their tent-hangings and all their vessels,  
drive off their camels too,  
and a cry shall go up: 'Terror let loose!'

<sup>30</sup>Flee, flee; make haste,  
take refuge in remote places, O people of Hazer,  
for the king of Babylon has laid his plans  
and formed a design against you,

says the LORD.

<sup>31</sup>Come, let us attack a nation living at peace,  
in fancied security,  
with neither gates nor bars,  
sufficient to themselves.

<sup>32</sup>Their camels shall be carried off as booty,  
their vast herds of cattle as plunder;  
I will scatter them before the wind to roam the fringes of the desert  
[them ... desert: *or to the wind those who clip the hair on their temples*],  
and bring ruin upon them from every side.

<sup>33</sup>Hazer shall become a haunt of wolves,  
for ever desolate;  
no man shall live there,  
no mortal make a home in her.  
This is the very word of the LORD.

<sup>34</sup>This came to the prophet Jeremiah as the word of the LORD concerning Elam, at the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah king of Judah: <sup>35</sup>Thus says the LORD of Hosts:

Listen, I will break the bow of Elam,  
the chief weapon of their might;

<sup>36</sup>I will bring four winds against Elam  
from the four quarters of heaven;  
I will scatter them before these four winds,  
and there shall be no nation  
to which the exiles from Elam shall not come.

<sup>37</sup>I will break Elam before their foes,  
before those who are bent on their destruction;  
I will vent my anger upon them in disaster;  
I will harry them with the sword  
until I make an end of them.

<sup>38</sup>Then I will set my throne in Elam,  
and there I will destroy the king and his officers.  
This is the very word of the LORD.

<sup>39</sup>Yet in days to come I will restore the fortunes of Elam.  
This is the very word of the LORD.

**50**<sup>1</sup>The word which the LORD spoke concerning Babylon, concerning the land of the Chaldeans, through the prophet Jeremiah:

<sup>2</sup>Declare and proclaim among the nations,  
keep nothing back, spread the news:  
Babylon is taken,  
Bel is put to shame, Marduk is in despair;  
the idols of Babylon are put to shame,  
her false gods are in despair.

<sup>3</sup>For a nation out of the north has fallen upon her;  
they will make her land a desolate waste  
where neither man nor beast shall live.

<sup>4</sup>In those days, at that time, says the LORD, the people of Israel and the people of

Judah shall come together and go in tears to seek the LORD their God; <sup>5</sup>they shall ask after Zion, turning their faces towards her, and they shall come and join themselves to the LORD in an everlasting covenant which shall not be forgotten.

<sup>6</sup>My people were lost sheep, whose shepherds let them stray and run wild on the mountains; they went from mountain to hill and forgot their fold. <sup>7</sup>Whoever found them devoured them, and their enemies said, 'We incur no guilt, because they have sinned against the LORD, the LORD who is the true goal and the hope of all their fathers.'

<sup>8</sup>Flee from Babylon, from the land of the Chaldeans;  
go forth, and be like he-goats leading the flock.

<sup>9</sup>For I will stir up a host of mighty nations  
and bring them against Babylon,  
marshalled against her from a northern land;  
and from the north she shall be captured.  
Their arrows shall be like a practised warrior  
who never comes back empty-handed;

<sup>10</sup>the Chaldeans shall be plundered,  
and all who plunder them shall take their fill.  
This is the very word of the LORD.

<sup>11</sup>You ravaged my patrimony; but though you rejoice and exult,  
though you run free like a heifer after threshing,  
though you neigh like a stallion,

<sup>12</sup>your mother shall be cruelly disgraced,  
she who bore you shall be put to shame.  
Look at her, the mere rump of the nations,  
a wilderness, parched and desert,

<sup>13</sup>unpeopled through the wrath of the LORD,  
nothing but a desolate waste;  
all who pass by Babylon shall be horror-struck  
and jeer in derision at the sight of her wounds.

<sup>14</sup>Marshal your forces against Babylon, on every side,  
you whose bows are ready strung;  
shoot at her, spare no arrows.

<sup>15</sup>Shout in triumph over her, she has thrown up her hands,  
her bastions are down, her walls demolished;  
this is the vengeance of the LORD.

Take vengeance on her;  
as she has done, so do to her.

<sup>16</sup>Destroy every sower in Babylon,  
every reaper with his sickle at harvest-time.  
Before the cruel sword every man will go back to his people,  
every man flee to his own land.

<sup>17</sup>Israel is a scattered flock  
harried and chased by lions:  
as the king of Assyria was the first to feed on him,  
so the king of Babylon was the last to gnaw his bones.

<sup>18</sup>Therefore the LORD of Hosts the God of Israel says this:

I will punish the king of Babylon and his country  
as I have punished the king of Assyria.

<sup>19</sup>I will bring Israel back to his pasture,  
and he shall graze on Carmel and Bashan;  
in the hills of Ephraim and Gilead he shall eat his fill.

<sup>20</sup>In those days, says the LORD, when that time comes, search shall be made for the iniquity of Israel but there shall be none, and for the sin of Judah but it shall not be found; for those whom I leave as a remnant I will forgive.

<sup>21</sup>Attack the land of Merathaim;  
attack it and the inhabitants of Pekod;  
put all to the sword and destroy them,  
and do whatever I bid you.  
This is the very word of the LORD.

<sup>22</sup>Hark, the sound of war in the land  
and great destruction!

<sup>23</sup>See how the hammer of all the earth  
is hacked and broken in pieces,  
how Babylon has become  
a horror among the nations.

<sup>24</sup>O Babylon, you have laid a snare to be your own undoing;  
you have been trapped, all unawares;  
there you are, you are caught,  
because you have challenged the LORD.

<sup>25</sup>The LORD has opened his arsenal  
and brought out the weapons of his wrath;  
for this is work for the Lord the GOD of Hosts  
in the land of the Chaldaeans.

<sup>26</sup>Her harvest-time has come:  
throw open her granaries [*Or* cattle-pens], pile her in heaps;  
destroy her, let no survivor be left.

<sup>27</sup>Put all her warriors to the sword;  
let them be led to the slaughter.  
Woe upon them! for their time has come,  
their day of reckoning.

<sup>28</sup>I hear the fugitives escaping from the land of Babylon  
to proclaim in Zion the vengeance of the LORD our God.

<sup>29</sup>Let your arrows be heard whistling against Babylon,  
all you whose bows are ready strung.  
Pitch your tents all around her  
so that no one escapes.  
Pay her back for all her misdeeds;  
as she has done, so do to her,  
for she has insulted the LORD the Holy One of Israel.

<sup>30</sup>Therefore her young men shall fall in her streets,  
and all her warriors shall lie still in death that day.

This is the very word of the LORD.

<sup>31</sup>I am against you, insolent city;  
for your time has come, your day of reckoning.  
This is the very word of the Lord GOD of Hosts.

<sup>32</sup>Insolence shall stumble and fall  
and no one shall lift her up,  
and I will kindle fire in the heath around her  
and it shall consume everything round about.

<sup>33</sup>The LORD of Hosts has said this:

The peoples of Israel and Judah together are oppressed;  
their captors hold them firmly and refuse to release them.

<sup>34</sup>But they have a powerful advocate,  
whose name is the LORD of Hosts;  
he himself will plead their cause,  
bringing distress on Babylon and turmoil on its people.

<sup>35</sup>A sword hangs over the Chaldaeans,  
over the people of Babylon, her officers and her wise men,  
says the LORD.

<sup>36</sup>A sword over the false prophets, and they are made fools,  
a sword over her warriors, and they despair,

<sup>37</sup>a sword over her horses and her chariots  
and over all the rabble within her,  
and they shall become like women;  
a sword over her treasures, and they shall be plundered,  
<sup>38</sup>a sword over her waters, and they shall dry up;  
for it is a land of idols  
that glories in its dreaded gods [*dreaded gods: or dire portents*].

<sup>39</sup>Therefore marmots and jackals shall skulk in it, desert-owls shall haunt it, nevermore shall it be inhabited by men and no one shall dwell in it through all the ages. <sup>40</sup>As when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah and their neighbours [*Or inhabitants*], says the LORD, no man shall live there, no mortal make a home in her.

<sup>41</sup>See, a people is coming from the north, a great nation,  
mighty [*Or many*] kings rouse themselves from earth's farthest corners;

<sup>42</sup>armed with bow and sabre, they are cruel and pitiless;  
bestriding horses, they sound like the thunder of the sea;  
they are like men arrayed for battle against you, Babylon.

<sup>43</sup>The king of Babylon has heard news of them  
and his hands hang limp;  
agony grips him, anguish as of a woman in labour.

<sup>44</sup>Look, like a lion coming up  
from Jordan's dense thickets to the perennial pastures,  
in a moment I will chase every one away  
and round up the choicest of [*the choicest of: prob. rdg, Heb who is chosen?*] the rams.

For who is like me? Who is my equal?  
What shepherd can stand his ground before me?

<sup>45</sup>Therefore listen to the LORD's whole purpose against Babylon and all his plans against the land of the Chaldeans:  
The young ones of the flock shall be carried off  
and their pasture shall be horrified at their fate.

<sup>46</sup>At the sound of the capture of Babylon  
the land quakes and her cry is heard among the nations.

**51**<sup>1</sup>For thus says the LORD:

I will raise a destroying wind  
against Babylon and those who live in Kambul [*Kambul: prob. rdg, Heb the heart of my opponents*],

<sup>2</sup>and I will send winnowers to Babylon,  
who shall winnow her and empty her land;  
for they shall assail her on all sides on the day of disaster.

<sup>3</sup>How shall the archer then string his bow  
or put on his coat of mail?

Spare none of her young men, destroy all her host,  
<sup>4</sup>and let them fall dead in the land of the Chaldeans,  
pierced through in her streets.

<sup>5</sup>Israel and Judah are not left widowed  
by their God, by the LORD of Hosts;  
but the land of the Chaldeans is full of guilt,  
condemned by the Holy One of Israel.

<sup>6</sup>Flee out of Babylon, every man for himself,  
or you will be struck down for her sin;  
for this is the LORD's day of vengeance,  
and he is paying her full recompense.

<sup>7</sup>Babylon has been a gold cup in the LORD's hand  
to make all the earth drunk;  
the nations have drunk of her wine,  
and that has made them mad.

<sup>8</sup>Babylon falls suddenly and is broken.  
Howl over her,  
fetch balm for her wound;  
perhaps she will be healed.

<sup>9</sup>We would have healed Babylon, but she would not be [*would not be: or was not*] healed.

Leave her and let us be off, each to his own country;  
for her doom reaches to heaven  
and mounts up to the skies.

<sup>10</sup>The LORD has made our innocence plain to see;  
come, let us proclaim in Zion  
what the LORD our God has done.

<sup>11</sup>Sharpen the arrows, fill the quivers.  
The LORD has roused the spirit of the king of the Medes;

for the LORD's purpose against Babylon is to destroy it,  
and his vengeance is the avenging of his temple.

<sup>12</sup>Raise the standard against Babylon's walls,  
mount a strong guard, post a watch, set an ambush;  
for the LORD has both planned and carried out  
what he threatened to do to the people of Babylon.

<sup>13</sup>O opulent city, standing beside great waters,  
your end has come, your destiny is certain.

<sup>14</sup>The LORD of Hosts has sworn by himself, saying,  
Once I filled you with men, countless as locusts,  
yet a song of triumph shall be chanted over you.

<sup>15</sup>[*vv15-19: cp 10.12-16*] God made the earth by his power,  
fixed the world in place by his wisdom,  
unfurled the skies by his understanding.

<sup>16</sup>At the thunder of his voice the waters in heaven are amazed [At the  
thunder ... amazed: *prob. rdg, Heb* At the sound of his giving tumult of  
waters in heaven];

he brings up the mist from the ends of the earth,  
he opens rifts [*riffts: prob. rdg, Heb* lightnings] for the rain  
and brings the wind out of his storehouses.

<sup>17</sup>All men are brutish and ignorant,  
every goldsmith is discredited by his idol;  
for the figures he casts are a sham,  
there is no breath in them.

<sup>18</sup>They are worth nothing, mere mockeries,  
which perish when their day of reckoning comes.

<sup>19</sup>God, Jacob's creator, is not like these;  
for he is the maker of all.  
Israel is the people he claims as his own;  
the LORD of Hosts is his name.

<sup>20</sup>You are my battle-axe, my weapon of war;  
with you I will break nations in pieces,  
and with you I will destroy kingdoms.

<sup>21</sup>With you I will break horse and rider,  
with you I will break chariot and rider,

<sup>22</sup>with you I will break man and woman,  
with you I will break young and old,  
with you I will break young man and maiden,

<sup>23</sup>with you I will break shepherd and flock,  
with you I will break ploughman and team,  
with you I will break viceroys and governors.

<sup>24</sup>So will I repay Babylon and the people of Chaldaea  
for all the wrong which they did in Zion in your sight.  
This is the very word of the LORD.

<sup>25</sup>I am against you, O destroying mountain [*Or O Mount of the Destroyer*],  
you who destroy the whole earth,

and I will stretch out my hand against you  
and send you tumbling from your terraces  
and make you a burnt-out mountain.

<sup>26</sup>No stone of yours shall be used as a corner-stone,  
no stone for a foundation;  
but you shall be desolate, for ever waste.  
This is the very word of the LORD.

<sup>27</sup>Raise a standard in the land [*Or earth*],  
blow the trumpet among the nations,  
hallow the nations for war against her,  
summon the kingdoms of Ararat, Minni, and Ashkenaz,  
appoint a commander-in-chief against her,  
bring up the horses like a dark swarm of locusts [*Or hoppers*];

<sup>28</sup>hallow the nations for war against her,  
the king of the Medes, his viceroys and governors,  
and all the lands of his realm.

<sup>29</sup>The earth quakes and writhes;  
for the LORD's designs against Babylon are fulfilled,  
to make the land of Babylon desolate and unpeopled.

<sup>30</sup>Babylon's warriors have given up the fight,  
they skulk in the forts;  
their courage has failed, they have become like women.  
Her buildings are set on fire, the bars of her gates broken.

<sup>31</sup>Runner speeds to meet runner,  
messenger to meet messenger,  
bringing news to the king of Babylon  
that every quarter of his city is taken,

<sup>32</sup>the river-crossings are seized,  
the guard-towers set on fire  
and the garrison stricken with panic.

<sup>33</sup>For the LORD of Hosts the God of Israel has spoken:  
Babylon is like a threshing-floor when it is trodden;  
soon, very soon, harvest-time will come.

<sup>34</sup>Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon has devoured me  
and sucked me dry,  
he has set me aside like an empty jar.  
Like a dragon he has gulped me down;  
he has filled his maw with my delicate flesh  
and spewed me up.

<sup>35</sup>On Babylon be the violence done to me,  
the vengeance taken upon me!',  
Zion's people shall say.  
'My blood be upon the Chaldaeans!',  
Jerusalem shall say.

<sup>36</sup>Therefore the LORD says:

I will plead your cause, I will avenge you;  
I will dry up her sea<sup>[Possibly the Euphrates]</sup> and make her waters fail;  
37and Babylon shall become a heap of ruins, a haunt of wolves,  
a scene of horror and derision, with no inhabitant.  
38Together they roar like young lions,  
they growl like the whelps of a lioness.  
39I will cause their drinking bouts to end in fever  
and make them so drunk that they will writhe and toss,  
then sink into unending sleep, never to wake.  
This is the very word of the LORD.  
40I will bring them like lambs to the slaughter,  
rams and he-goats together.  
41Sheshak<sup>[A name for Babylon]</sup> is captured,  
the pride of the whole earth taken;  
Babylon has become a horror amongst the nations!  
42The sea has surged over Babylon,  
she is covered by its roaring waves.  
43Her cities have become waste places,  
a land dried up and desert,  
a land in whose cities no man lives  
and through which no mortal travels.  
44I will punish Bel in Babylon  
and make him bring up what he has swallowed;  
nations shall never again come streaming to him.  
The wall of Babylon has fallen;  
45come out of her, O my people,  
and let every man save himself  
from the anger of the LORD.  
46Then beware of losing heart,  
fear no rumours spread abroad in the land,  
as rumour follows rumour,  
each year a new one:  
violence on earth and ruler against ruler.  
47Therefore a time is coming  
when I will punish Babylon's idols,  
and all her land shall be put to shame,  
and all her slain shall lie fallen in her midst.  
48Heaven and earth and all that is in them  
shall sing in triumph over Babylon;  
for marauders from the north shall overrun her.  
This is the very word of the LORD.  
49Babylon must fall for the sake of <sup>[for the sake of: *prob. rdg, Heb omitted*]</sup>  
Israel's slain,  
as the slain of all the world fell for the sake of Babylon.  
50You who have escaped from her sword, off with you, do not linger.  
Remember the LORD from afar  
and call Jerusalem to mind.  
51We are put to shame by the reproaches we have heard,

and our faces are covered with confusion:  
strangers have entered the sacred courts of the LORD's house.

<sup>52</sup>A time is coming therefore, says the LORD,  
when I will punish her idols,  
and all through the land there shall be the groaning of the wounded.

<sup>53</sup>Though Babylon should reach to the skies  
and make her high towers inaccessible,  
I will send marauders to overrun her.

This is the very word of the LORD.

<sup>54</sup>Hark, cries of agony from Babylon!  
Sounds of destruction from the land of the Chaldeans!

<sup>55</sup>For the LORD is despoiling Babylon  
and will silence the hum of the city,  
before the advancing wave that booms and roars  
like mighty waters.

<sup>56</sup>For marauders march on Babylon herself,  
her warriors are captured and their bows are broken;  
for the LORD, a God of retribution, will repay in full.

<sup>57</sup>I will make her princes and her wise men drunk,  
her viceroys and governors and warriors,  
and they shall sink into unending sleep, never to wake.  
This is the very word of the King,  
whose name is the LORD of Hosts.

<sup>58</sup>The LORD of Hosts says:

The walls of broad Babylon shall be razed to the ground,  
her lofty gates shall be set on fire.

Worthless now is the thing for which the nations toiled;  
the peoples wore themselves out for a mere nothing.

<sup>59</sup>The instructions given by the prophet Jeremiah to the quartermaster Seraiah son of Neriah and grandson of Mahseiah, when he went to Babylon with Zedekiah king of Judah in the fourth year of his reign.

<sup>60</sup>Jeremiah, having written down in a [*Or one*] book [*prob. rdg, Heb adds all these things which are written concerning Babylon*] a full description of the disaster which would come upon Babylon, <sup>61</sup>said to Seraiah, 'When you come to Babylon, look at this, read it all <sup>62</sup>and then say, "Thou, O LORD, hast declared thy purpose to destroy this place and leave it with no one living in it, man or beast; it shall be desolate, for ever waste." <sup>63</sup>When you have finished reading the book, tie a stone to it and throw it into the Euphrates, <sup>64</sup>and then say, "So shall Babylon sink, never to rise again after the disaster which I shall bring upon her." '

Thus far are the collected sayings of Jeremiah.

## **Historical note about the fall of Jerusalem**

**52**<sup>1</sup>*[vv1-27: cp 39.1-10 and 2Kgs. 24.18-25.21]* ZEDEKIAH WAS TWENTY-ONE YEARS OLD when he came to the throne, and he reigned in Jerusalem for eleven years; his mother was Hamutal daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah. <sup>2</sup>He did what was wrong in the eyes of the LORD, as Jehoiakim had done. <sup>3</sup>Jerusalem and Judah so angered the LORD that in the end he banished them from his sight; and Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon.

<sup>4</sup>In the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, on the tenth day of the month, Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon advanced with all his army against Jerusalem, invested it and erected watch-towers against it on every side; <sup>5</sup>the siege lasted till the eleventh year of King Zedekiah. <sup>6</sup>In the fourth month of that year, on the ninth day of the month, when famine was severe in the city and there was no food for the common people, <sup>7</sup>the city was thrown open. When Zedekiah king of Judah saw this, he and *[When Zedekiah ... and: prob. rdg, cp 39.4; Heb omitted]* all his armed escort left the city and fled by night through the gate called Between the Two Walls, near the king's garden. They escaped towards the Arabah, although the Chaldaeans were surrounding the city. <sup>8</sup>But the Chaldaean army pursued the king and overtook him in the lowlands of Jericho; and all his company was dispersed. <sup>9</sup>The king was seized and brought before the king of Babylon at Riblah in the land of Hamath, where he pleaded his case before him. <sup>10</sup>The king of Babylon slew Zedekiah's sons before his eyes; he also put to death all the princes of Judah in Riblah. <sup>11</sup>Then the king of Babylon put Zedekiah's eyes out, bound him with fetters of bronze, brought him to Babylon and committed him to prison till the day of his death.

<sup>12</sup>In the fifth month, on the tenth day of the month, in the nineteenth year of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, Nebuzaradan, captain of the king's bodyguard *[captain ... bodyguard: prob. rdg, cp 2Kgs. 25.8; Heb captain of the bodyguard stood before the king of Babylon]*, came to Jerusalem <sup>13</sup>and set fire to the house of the LORD and the royal palace; all the houses in the city, including the mansion of Gedaliah *[Gedaliah: prob. rdg, Heb the great man]* were burnt down. <sup>14</sup>The Chaldaean forces with the captain of the guard pulled down the walls all round Jerusalem. <sup>15</sup>*[prob. rdg, cp 39.9 and 2Kgs. 25.11; Heb prefixes The weakest class of the people (cp v16)]* Nebuzaradan captain of the guard deported the rest of the people left in the city, those who had deserted to the king of Babylon and any remaining artisans. <sup>16</sup>The captain of the guard left only the weakest class of people to be vine-dressers and labourers.

<sup>17</sup>The Chaldaeans broke up the pillars of bronze in the house of the LORD, the trolleys, and the sea of bronze, and took the metal to Babylon. <sup>18</sup>They took also the pots, shovels, snuffers, tossing-bowls, saucers, and all the vessels of bronze used in the service of the temple. <sup>19</sup>The captain of the guard took away the precious metal, whether gold or silver, of which the cups, firepans, tossing-bowls, pots, lamp-stands, saucers, and flagons were made. <sup>20</sup>The bronze of the two pillars, of the one sea and of the twelve oxen supporting it, which King Solomon had made for the house of the LORD, was beyond weighing. <sup>21</sup>The one pillar was eighteen cubits high and twelve cubits in circumference; it was hollow and the metal was four fingers thick. <sup>22</sup>It had a capital of bronze, five cubits high, and a decoration of network and pomegranates ran all round it, wholly of bronze. The other pillar, with its pomegranates, was exactly like it. <sup>23</sup>Ninety-

six pomegranates were exposed to view and there were a hundred in all on the network all round.

<sup>24</sup>The captain of the guard took Seraiah the chief priest and Zephaniah the deputy chief priest and the three on duty at the entrance; <sup>25</sup>he took also from the city a eunuch who was in charge of the fighting men, seven of those with right of access to the king who were still in the city, the adjutant-general [*prob. rdg, Heb adds commander-in-chief*] whose duty was to muster the people for war, and sixty men of the people who were still there. <sup>26</sup>These Nebuzaradan captain of the guard brought to the king of Babylon at Riblah. <sup>27</sup>There, in the land of Hamath. the king of Babylon had them flogged and put to death. So Judah went into exile from their own land.

<sup>28</sup>These were the people deported by Nebuchadrezzar in the seventeenth [*prob. rdg, Heb seventh*] year: three thousand and twenty-three Judaeans. <sup>29</sup>In his eighteenth year. eight hundred and thirty-two people from Jerusalem; <sup>30</sup>in his twenty-third year, seven hundred and forty-five Judaeans were deported by Nebuzaradan the captain of the bodyguard: all together four thousand six hundred people.

<sup>31</sup>[*vv31-34: cp 2Kgs. 25.27-30*] In the thirty-seventh year of the exile of Jehoiachin king of Judah, on the twenty-fifth day of the twelfth month, Evil-merodach king of Babylon in the year of his accession showed favour to Jehoiachin king of Judah. He brought him out of prison, <sup>32</sup>treated him kindly and gave him a seat at table above the kings with him in Babylon. <sup>33</sup>So Jehoiachin discarded his prison clothes and lived as a pensioner of the king for the rest of his life. <sup>34</sup>For his maintenance a regular daily allowance was given him by the king of Babylon as long as he lived, to the day of his death.