

JEREMIAH

Author:

Jeremiah was a priest from the village of Anathoth. He began his public ministry at the age of 20, during the 13th year of the reign of King Josiah (626 BC), and his service continued for more than 40 years. By nature he was gentle and had a tender heart, but he was very courageous when God asked him to preach harsh messages and warn of coming judgment on the people. So, though loved by God, he became unpopular with men. The whole nation rejected both him and God's message through him. It is no wonder that he is known as "the weeping prophet". Sometimes he found his responsibility as God's prophet very hard to bear, and longed to escape from it (20:9). But in the face of much persecution and sorrow he continued in this ministry, and by the grace of God stood as an "iron pillar" and like "bronze walls" (1:18).

Date:

Sometime about 580 BC.

Themes:

In the year 586 before Christ the armies of Babylon came, captured Jerusalem, and took many of its people into exile in Babylon. Up to then Jeremiah, with compassion and tears, had warned the people and pled with them to turn to God in repentance. When they refused to listen, he made God's message known to them: They would be in Babylonia for seventy years and then return to Jerusalem and Judah. He also revealed to them the new covenant that God would make with Israel, and the just judgments that would fall on Babylon and certain other nations. There are many lessons in this book for God's servants today. In many ways Jeremiah was an ideal person to show what a true servant of God should be like. The following verses speak of the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ: 23:5; 30:4-11; 31:31-34; 33:15-18.

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1 The words of Jeremiah the son of Hilkiah, of the priests who were in Anathoth in the land of Benjamin. ²The word of the LORD came to him in the days of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah, in the thirteenth year of his reign. ³It came also in the days of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah, up to the end of the eleventh year of Zedekiah the son of Josiah, king of Judah, until Jerusalem was carried away into exile in the fifth month.

⁴ Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying:

⁵ “Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you, and before you were born I sanctified you, and I ordained you a prophet to the nations”.

⁶ Then I said, “Ah, Lord God! Look, I cannot speak, for I *am* a child”.

⁷ But the LORD said to me, “Do not say,

‘I *am* a child’, for you will go to all to whom I send you, and you will speak whatever I command you. ⁸Do not be afraid of their faces, for I *am* with you to defend you”, said the LORD.

⁹ Then the LORD put out his hand, and touched my mouth. And the LORD said to me,

“Look, I have put my words in your mouth.

¹⁰ See, today I have set you over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant”.

¹¹ Moreover the word of the LORD came to me, saying, “Jeremiah, what do you see?” And I said, “I see a branch of an almond tree”.

¹² Then the LORD said to me, “You have

1:1 Anathoth was a town about 5 kilometers north of Jerusalem. It was set apart for the priests of Israel (Josh 21:18; 1 Kings 2:26).

1:2 “*The word of the LORD came*”—this phrase is very common in the prophets of the Bible (Ezek 1:3; Jonah 1:1; Hag 1:1; Zech 1:1). It indicates a revelation from God. The prophets spoke and wrote the very words God gave them – v 9.

1:3 The time period covered by vs 2 and 3 was 40 years, between 626 and 586 BC. Afterwards Jeremiah continued to prophesy a few more years. Of the kings mentioned here only Josiah was a good one. A brief history of those years is found in 2 Kings chapters 22–25 and 2 Chronicles chapters 34–36.

1:5 “*Formed*”—Ps 139:13; 119:73; Isa 44:24; 49:5. “*Knew*”—Ps 139:16; Rom 8:29; 11:2; 1 Pet 1:2. The same Hebrew word translated “knew” in this verse is translated “chosen” in Gen 18:19 and Amos 3:2, and may mean that here also.

“*Sanctified*”—this means that Jeremiah was set apart in God’s plan to be a servant of God even before his birth. Compare Isa 49:1,5; Luke 1:13-15; Gal 1:15; Eph 1:4.

“*I ordained you*”—God has a place and a work for each of His people (Rom 12:3-8; 1 Cor 12:27-31). What we do we should do because we know it is God’s appointment for us. Note on prophet at Gen 20:7. Jeremiah had a very high place in God’s plans. He was a prophet not simply to Israel but to the nations of earth – v 10; 25:15-26; chapters 46–51.

1:6 Jeremiah’s response was like that of Moses (Ex 4:10), unlike that of Isaiah (Isa 6:8). He did not think he was capable of being God’s spokesman and would gladly have escaped the responsibility.

“*LORD God*”—see the note at Gen 15:2.

1:7 When God appoints a man for a task He will

accept no excuses he may make to escape from it. Compare Ex 3:10-13; 4:1,10-17.

1:8 “*Afraid*”—Gen 15:11; 26:24; Deut 31:6; Josh 1:6-9; 8:1.

“*With you*”—Gen 26:3; Josh 1:5; Jer 15:20.

“*Deliver*”—v 19; 15:21; 26:24; 36:26; 42:11.

1:9 Ex 4:12; Num 22:38; 23:5,12,16; Deut 18:18; Isa 51:16. So the prophets who wrote the Bible could, and did, speak the very words of God without error of any kind. They spoke God’s words by the inspiration of God’s Spirit (2 Tim 3:16; 2 Pet 1:21).

1:10 It was the Word of God sent by God through Jeremiah that would accomplish these things among the nations. See Isa 55:10-11. Jeremiah’s utterances by God’s Spirit were to have two effects – one destructive, one constructive. God’s word will always have these two results depending on the condition and response of those who hear it. Sometimes for the good to flourish it is necessary to destroy the bad.

1:11-12 God sometimes used object lessons to bring His message to the prophets (v 13; Amos 7:8; 8:2; Zech 4:2; 5:2). The two He gave in the next few verses are basic to the teaching of the book of Jeremiah. In Hebrew the word for “almond tree” and the word for “watch over” are very similar (sha’ked and sho’ked). Aaron’s rod that budded was from the almond tree. See Num 17:1-13.

1:12 God will fulfill His word, in spite of unbelieving Israel and a world of nations and peoples who do not know Him, and Jeremiah was not to fear that He would not (compare Isa 55:11; Matt 5:17-18). This is God’s very first message to Jeremiah after His appointment as prophet. It is one of the first things about which God wants all of His servants in any time or place to be sure.

seen well; for I will watch over my word to fulfil it”.

¹³And the word of the LORD came to me the second time, saying, “What do you see?” And I said, “I see a boiling pot, and its face is toward the north”.

¹⁴Then the LORD said to me, “Out of the north a disaster will burst out on all the inhabitants of the land. ¹⁵For, see, I will call all the families of the kingdoms of the north, says the LORD,

“And they will come, and each of them will set his throne at the entrance of the gates of Jerusalem,

and against all its surrounding walls, and against all the cities of Judah.

¹⁶And I will utter my judgments against them concerning all their wickedness, because they have forsaken me and burned incense to other gods, and worshipped the works of their own hands.

¹⁷“Therefore make yourself ready, and arise and speak to them all that I command you.

Do not be afraid of their faces, so that I do not make you fear before them.

¹⁸For, see, today I have made you

a fortified city, and an iron pillar, and bronze walls against the whole land, against the kings of Judah, against its princes, against its priests, and against the people of the land.

¹⁹And they will fight against you, but they will not prevail against you; for I *am* with you, says the LORD, to deliver you”.

2 Moreover the word of the LORD came to me, saying, ²“Go and cry out in the ears of Jerusalem, saying, Thus says the LORD:

“I remember you, the kindness of your youth, the love of your bridal days, when you went after me in the wilderness, in a land *that was* not sown.

³ Israel *was* holiness to the LORD, and the firstfruits of his increase. All who devoured him were guilty; disaster came on them, says the LORD”.

⁴Hear the word of the LORD, O house of Jacob, and all the families of the house of Israel.

⁵Thus says the LORD: “What evil did your fathers

1:13-16 The second message concerns destruction on Israel. Nations would come from the north, hot and agitated as boiling water, and overflow the land (4:6; 6:1). As far as Jeremiah’s lifetime is concerned this happened when Babylon and its allies invaded and conquered Judah. See chapter 39; 2 Kings chapters 24,25; 2 Chronicles chapter 36. Perhaps a more complete fulfillment will come at the end of this age (see Ezekiel chapters 38,39 and Zechariah chapter 12).

1:16 The reason for God’s judgment is plain. They habitually broke the most important commandment of the law and forsook the Creator to worship things they had made. See Ex 20:1-6; Lev 26:14-39; Deut 27:14-26.

1:17 This is always the principal responsibility of God’s spokesman – to speak His word just as it is, without fear of men. This can be done when there is the fullness of the Holy Spirit (Acts 4:31). The choice is always between fearing men or fearing God (Matt 10:28; Isa 8:12-13).

1:18-19 Verse 8. Everyone would be against Jeremiah – rulers and people and religious leaders (the very ones who should have stood with him). He was to be alone against the world, but he was to know the truth later recorded in Rom 8:31. See

also Ps 118:6; Heb 13:6.

2:2 “*Bridal days*” – the nation Israel was the special people of Jehovah, the nation having a special intimate spiritual relationship with Him (the meaning of the reference to a bride here). This chapter (and the next few chapters) pictures that nation as having become unfaithful and adulterous. In connection with this theme read Isa 54:5; Jer 3:14; 31:32; Ezek 16; 23; Hos 2:7,16; John 3:29; Rom 7:4; 2 Cor 11:2; Eph 5:25-27; Rev 19:7-8.

“*Wilderness*” – refers to events recorded in Exodus and Numbers.

2:3 “*Holiness*” – Ex 19:6; 7:6; Note at Lev 20:7.

“*Disaster*” – refers to the defeat of Israel’s enemies recorded in Exodus and Numbers.

2:4 The great King of the universe surely has the right to demand that His people listen to Him (Isa 1:2,10; Ezek 13:2; Hos 4:1; Amos 7:16; Heb 12:25).

2:5 God asks this as a faithful husband would ask an unfaithful wife who runs after other men. Israel ran after other gods and thus showed their lack of love for the true God and a contempt for His word (Ex 20:2-6). God’s jealousy was aroused just as He said it would be.

- find in me,
that they went away far from me,
and walked after emptiness,
and became empty?
6 And they did not say,
'Where *is* the LORD who brought us
up out of the land of Egypt,
who led us through the wilderness,
through a land of deserts and pits,
through a land of drought and
the shadow of death,
through a land that no man passed
through,
and where no one lived?'
- 7 And I brought you into a land
of plenty,
to eat its fruit and its goodness.
But when you entered,
you defiled my land,
and made an abomination of
my inheritance.
- 8 The priests did not say,
'Where *is* the LORD?'
And those who dealt with the law
did not know me.
The leaders also transgressed
against me,
and the prophets prophesied by Baal,
and followed after worthless *things*.
- 9 Therefore I will bring charges against
you again", says the LORD,
"and I will bring charges against
your children's children.
10 For cross over the coasts of Kittim
and see;
and send to Kedar, and consider
carefully,
and see if there is such a thing *as this*.
11 Has a nation changed *its* gods,
which *are* not gods?
But my people have exchanged
their glory for *what* is worthless.
12 Be astonished, O heavens,
at this, and be horribly afraid;
be very desolate",
says the LORD.
13 "For my people have committed
two evils;
they have forsaken me,
the fountain of living waters,
and dug out cisterns for themselves,
broken cisterns that can hold
no water.
14 "Is Israel a servant?
Is he a home born *slave*?
Why is he plundered?
15 The young lions roared over him,
and growled,
and they laid his land waste.
His cities are burned, without
inhabitant.
16 Also the people of Noph and
Tahpanhes have broken the crown
of your head.

"*Emptiness*"—probably a reference to false gods and idols. Notes at Ps 115:4-8; 135:15-18.

2:6 In spite of God's repeated warnings, they forgot about Him. See note at Deut 8:1-5.

2:7 "*Land of plenty*"—as recorded in Joshua.

"*Fruit*"— Ex 3:8; Num 13:27; Deut 8:7-9; 11:10-12.

"*Defiled*"— 3:9; 7:30; 16:18; Ps 106:34-39; Ezek 11:21; 36:17. In fact, all the world belongs to God, and they who sin are defiling His world (Isa 24:5).

2:8 There was complete failure by all the leaders of Israel—priests, rulers, prophets. Those who knew God's law did not know God. Those who were raised up to rule for God rebelled against Him. Those who should have prophesied for God spoke for the false god Baal. Note on Baal at Jud 2:11.

2:9 25:31; Hos 4:1; 12:2; Micah 6:2. If God Himself brings a case against us how can we stand?

2:10-11 Israel acted in a more perverted and strange way than any nation to the east (Kedar was the home of nomadic tribes in the Syro-Arabian desert), or to the west (Kittim is Cyprus in the Mediterranean Sea). Though the gods of those peoples were false and worthless they remained

faithful to them.

2:11 "*Exchanged*"— Ps 106:20; Rom 1:23. This is the choice the Bible often speaks of—whether to serve the God of eternal glory or to have gods which are not gods at all (Ps 115:4; Isa 37:19; Jer 16:20; Gal 4:8).

2:12 Israel's sin was so great that the heavens themselves should feel the horror of it (compare Deut 4:26; 30:19; 31:28; Isa 1:2).

2:13 This two-fold sin is the sin of all humanity. Only God has the eternally satisfying water of spiritual life—in fact, He Himself is the "spring" of it (17:13; Ps 36:9; John 4:13-14; 7:37-38; Rev 22:17). To turn from Him and try to create some other source of satisfaction is wickedness, folly, madness.

2:14-17 The nation Israel was like a son to God, not a slave (31:9; Ex 4:22); like a wife, not a servant. Then why did disasters come on them? Why were their enemies able to destroy them? Why had Egypt (Memphis, Tahpanhes) been able to humiliate them? The answer is in v 17. They brought all their trouble on themselves by forsaking God (4:18). "Noph" is ancient "Memphis".

- ¹⁷ Have you not brought this
on yourself,
by your forsaking the LORD
your God,
when he led you in the way?
¹⁸ And now why should you go
on the way to Egypt to drink
the waters of Sihor?
Or why should you go on the way
to Assyria to drink the waters
of the *Euphrates* river?
¹⁹ Your own wickedness will chasten
you,
and your backslidings will rebuke
you.
Therefore know and see that *it is*
an evil and bitter *thing*,
that you have forsaken the LORD
your God,
and that my fear *is* not in you”,
says the Lord God of hosts.
²⁰ “For long ago I broke your yoke,
and tore off your bands;
and you said, ‘I will not transgress’,
when on every high hill and under
every green tree you wandered,
acting like a prostitute.
²¹ Yet I had planted you a choice vine,
a fully right seed.
How then have you turned against me
into the degenerate plant of a
strange vine to me?
²² For though you wash yourself
with lye, and use much soap,
yet your iniquity is marked
before me”, says the Lord God.
²³ “How can you say, ‘I am not defiled,

- I have not gone after the Baals?’
See your way in the valley,
know what you have done.
You are a swift she-camel rushing
here and there,
²⁴ A wild donkey used to the wilderness,
that sniffs at the wind in her desire;
in her heat who can turn her away?
Those pursuing her will not
tire themselves out;
in her month they will find her.
²⁵ “Keep your foot from being unshod,
and your throat from thirst.
But you say, ‘There is no hope;
no, for I have loved foreigners,
and after them I will go.’
²⁶ As the thief is disgraced when
he is found out, so is the house
of Israel disgraced,
they, their kings, their princes,
and their priests, and their prophets,
²⁷ Saying to a piece of wood,
‘You are my father’, and to a stone,
‘You have given me birth’;
for they have turned *their* backs
on me, and not *their* face.
But in the time of their trouble
they will say, ‘Arise, and save us.’
²⁸ But where are your gods
that you have made for yourselves?
Let them arise, if they can save you
in the time of your trouble;
for *according to* the number
of your cities are your gods,
O Judah.
²⁹ “Why do you bring charges
against me?

2:18 They will find there is no satisfaction, no safety, no enjoyment anywhere apart from God (2:36).

“*Assyria*”— note at 2 Kings 15:19.

2:19 Wickedness itself will be a rod on the sinner’s back, a knife in his heart, and his own backsliding will be a terrible teacher. God has arranged matters that sin will be shown to be an evil and bitter thing (4:18). Observe here the importance of the fear of God (notes at Gen 20:11; Job 28:28; Ps 34:11-14; 111:10; 130:3-4).

“*Lord God of hosts*”— note at 1 Sam 1:3.

2:20 5:5; Hos 4:16. They behaved like the peoples in Ps 2:3 which did not know God.

“*Prostitute*”— those hills and trees were spots where idols of false gods were placed. Forsaking God to go after them was behaving like a prostitute – Ex 34:15; Lev 17:7; 2 Chron 21:11.

2:21 Ps 80:8-16; Isa 5:1-7; Ezek 17:1-10; Hos 10:1-2; John 15:1-8.

2:22 No effort of sinners to cleanse themselves will be successful. But God can do what man cannot – Ps 51:2; Zech 13:1; Heb 9:14; 1 John 1:9.

2:23-25 Israel denied that she had fallen as God said she had (see Prov 16:2; 30:12). But she passionately ran after other gods like an animal in heat.

2:26 2:8; 1:18.

2:27-28 People of each town turned their backs on the God Who made them, and they made their own favorite gods from wood or stone. But in times of trouble they wanted God’s help. Compare Jud 2:10-19. Such is the sad nature of man. People want God to rescue them from danger, but then forget God and do all that God hates after the danger is removed.

2:29 As all other people the people of Israel, instead of confessing their great wickedness, wanted to argue with God (v 35).

You have all transgressed against me,
says the LORD.

³⁰ In vain have I struck your children;
they received no correction.
Your own sword has devoured
your prophets,
like a destroying lion.

³¹ O *you of this generation*,
see the word of the LORD.
Have I been a wilderness to Israel?
A land of darkness?
Why do my people say, ‘We are lords;
we will not come to you any more?’

³² Can a maiden forget her jewels,
or a bride her attire?
Yet my people have forgotten me
days without number.

³³ How gladly you prepare your way
to seek love!
Therefore you have taught even
the wicked women your ways.

³⁴ Also on your skirts is found
the lifeblood of the poor innocents.
I have not found it by secret search,
but on all these.

³⁵ Yet you say, ‘Because I am innocent,
surely his anger will turn from me.’
See, I will bring charges against you
because you say, ‘I have not sinned.’

³⁶ Why do you go around so much
to change your way?
You will also be ashamed of Egypt,
as you were ashamed of Assyria.

³⁷ Yes, you will go away from him
with your hands on your head,
for the LORD has rejected those
you trust,
and you will not prosper by them.

2:30 Isa 1:4-9; Lev 26:18-35. God’s punishments were sent in love to correct the people. And all God’s words here are in the language of pleading love.

2:31 What fault did they find in God that they decided to wander away from Him?

2:32-35 Four of the grievous sins of Israel – forgetting God, spiritual adultery, cruelty to the poor, and self-righteousness. They were utterly corrupted by their sins and yet thought and said they were innocent. Such is the spiritual blindness of men in general (Prov 30:12; Luke 18:9-12; Isa 65:5; Rev 3:17).

3:1 “*Divorces*” – 24:1-4.

“*Polluted*” – Lev 18:25-28.

“*Prostitute*” – 2:20. God showed incredible grace and love toward this fallen people.

3:3 God punished them by causing drought in

3 “They say, ‘If a man divorces his wife,
and she goes away from him
and becomes another man’s,
may he return to her again?
Would not the land be greatly
polluted?
But you have been the prostitute
with many lovers;
yet return to me again”,
says the LORD.

² “Lift up your eyes to the barren
high places and look.
Where have you not been ravished?
By the roads you sat for them,
like an Arabian in the desert,
and you have polluted the land
with your prostitution and
your wickedness.

³ Therefore the showers have been
withheld,
and there has been no latter rain,
for you had a prostitute’s forehead,
you refused to be ashamed.

⁴ Even at this time did you not cry
out to me,
‘My father, you *are* the guide
of my youth?’

⁵ Will he remain *angry* forever?
Will he maintain *it* to the end?’
See, you have said *this*,
and done what evil you could”.

⁶ The LORD also said to me in the days
of Josiah the king, “Have you seen what
backsliding Israel has done? She has gone
up on every high mountain and under every
green tree, and there has behaved like a
prostitute. ⁷And after she had done all these
things, I said, Return to me. But she did not

the land, but this did not produce the desired result.

3:4-5 Their prayers were mere empty words. Their hearts were set on evil. They called God “Father” but lived as if Satan were their father. So their prayers went unanswered (Isa 1:15-17; Prov 28:9; Jam 4:3-4).

3:6-9 About 930 BC, long before the days of King Josiah, the people of Israel had divided into two kingdoms (1 Kings 12). From the beginning the northern kingdom (called Israel) went into spiritual adultery and apostasy and refused to repent. Jehovah God “divorced” Israel and sent her into captivity in 721 BC. The history of all this is recorded in the books of Kings and Chronicles. The southern kingdom (Judah) saw all this but did not learn its lesson.

3:9 “*Stones and wood*” – idols made of these.

return. And her treacherous sister Judah saw *it*. ⁸And when, for all the causes backsliding Israel committed adultery, I had put her away, and given her a certificate of divorce, I saw that her treacherous sister Judah had no fear, but also went and behaved like a prostitute. ⁹And it happened through her thoughtless prostitution, that she defiled the land, and committed adultery with stones and wood. ¹⁰And in spite of all this her treacherous sister Judah has not turned to me with her whole heart, but in pretense, says the LORD”.

¹¹And the LORD said to me, “Backsliding Israel is less unrighteous than treacherous Judah. ¹²Go and proclaim these words toward the north, and say:

“Return, backsliding Israel,
says the LORD,
and I will not cause my anger
to fall on you;
for I *am* merciful, says the LORD,
and I will not remain *angry* forever.

¹³ Only acknowledge your guilt,
that you have transgressed against
the LORD your God,
and have scattered your favours
to foreigners under every green tree,
and have not obeyed my voice,
says the LORD.

¹⁴ “Return, O backsliding children,
says the LORD, for I am married
to you.
And I will take you, one from a city,
and two of a family,
and I will bring you to Zion.

¹⁵ And I will give you shepherds
after my heart,
who will feed you with knowledge
and understanding.

¹⁶And it will come about in those days, when you are multiplied and increased in the land, says the LORD, they will no longer say, ‘The ark of the covenant of the LORD’, nor will it come to mind, nor will they remember *it*, nor will they visit *it*, nor will *it* be made again. ¹⁷At that time they will call Jerusalem ‘The Throne of the LORD’, and all the nations will be gathered to it, to the name of the LORD, to Jerusalem; neither will they walk any more after the stubbornness of their evil heart. ¹⁸In those days the house of Judah will walk with the house of Israel, and they will come together out of the land of the north to the land that I have given as an inheritance to your fathers.

¹⁹ “But I said, How can I put you
among the children,
and give you a pleasant land,
the most beautiful inheritance
of nations?
and I said, You will call me,
‘My father’ and will not turn
away from me.

²⁰ Surely as a wife treacherously
departs from her husband,
so have you dealt treacherously
with me,
O house of Israel, says the LORD”.

²¹ A voice was heard on the high places,
the weeping *and* pleading
of the children of Israel;

3:10 There was a revival of religion in King Josiah’s day, but it evidently did not go very deep into the lives of the people. There was much pretense and hypocrisy.

3:11 Judah had the example of God’s dealings with Israel to learn a lesson. It also had more teaching of the truth, God’s temple, and better kings on the whole than Israel. So by comparison they were worse than Israel. Greater opportunities to know God’s truth means greater responsibilities to practice it.

3:12 “North”— Israel had been taken captive by Assyria which was to the north. Though God had severely punished His people He had not abandoned them forever.

“*I am merciful*”— Ex 34:6-7.

3:13 If they desire forgiveness they must understand, confess, and forsake their sin (Prov 28:13).

3:14 “*I am married to you*”— 2:2.

“*One*”, “*two*”— only a small percentage of the people would be able to return to Jerusalem.

3:15 Shepherds after God’s heart instead of the kind they had before (compare 2:8).

3:16-18 Jehovah God speaks here of a time far in the future. A time not yet come, for some of the predictions here remain unfulfilled.

3:16 This is the last mention in the Old Testament of the ark of the covenant (note at Ex 25:10-16).

“*No longer say*”— the ark symbolized Christ. When Christ appears there is no further need of that symbol.

3:17 Does this not still await fulfillment? See note at Isa 2:2-4. Certainly Israel to this day follows the stubbornness of their evil hearts.

“*All the nations*”— Ps 102:15; Isa 2:2-3; Micah 4:1.

3:18 30:3; Isa 11:12; Ezek 37:19-23; Hos 1:11.

3:19-20 As “sons” Israel had been disobedient; as a “wife” she had been unfaithful to God.

3:21 Suggests the beginning of repentance.

for they have perverted their way,
and they have forgotten
the LORD their God.

²² “Return, you backsliding children,
and I will heal your backslidings”.
See, we come to you, for you are
the LORD our God.

²³ Truly in vain *is salvation hoped for*
from the hills,
and from the many mountains.
Truly in the LORD our God *is*
the salvation of Israel.

²⁴ For *the thing of shame* has devoured
the labour of our fathers
from our youth,
their flocks and their herds,
their sons and their daughters.

²⁵ We lie down in our shame,
and our disgrace covers us,
for we have sinned against the LORD
our God,
we and our fathers,
from our youth up to this day,
and have not obeyed the voice
of the LORD our God.

4 “If you will return, O Israel”,
says the LORD,
“return to me.
And if you will put your
abominations
out of my sight,

then you will not be moved.

² And you will swear in truth,
in justice, in righteousness,
‘The LORD lives’;
and the nations will bless
themselves in him,
and in him they will glory”.

³ For thus says the LORD to the men of
Judah and Jerusalem:

“Break up your fallow ground,
and do not sow among thorns.

⁴ Circumcise yourselves to the LORD;
circumcise your heart,
you men of Judah and inhabitants
of Jerusalem,
so that my fury does not come out
like fire,

and burn so that no one can quench
it,
because of your evil deeds.

⁵ Declare in Judah, and proclaim
in Jerusalem, and say,
‘Blow the trumpet in the land!’
Cry out, gather together,
and say, ‘Assemble yourselves,
and let us go into the fortified cities.’

⁶ Set up the signal toward Zion.
Take refuge! Do not delay!
For I will bring disaster from the
north,
and a great destruction.

⁷ The lion has come out of his thicket,

3:22 Here is a wonderful promise for backsliders. God promised not merely to receive them but to heal them – Deut 32:19; Ps 41:4; Isa 57:18; Jer 30:17; 33:6; Hos 6:1; 14:1,4. Healing of the sickness of sin is the greatest of all healing. From the middle of this verse to the end of v 25 we have words that express the future confession and repentance of Israel. Neither Israel nor Judah spoke such words in Jeremiah’s day. Words like these spoken sincerely are the beginning of the healing God promises.

3:24 “*Thing of shame*” – possibly a reference to the false god Baal, or idol worship in general. Israel would finally see what terrible things that had done to them, and what it had cost them. See Lev 26:1,14-35; Deut 27:15; 28:15-68.

3:25 True enlightenment and the work of God in our hearts will bring us also to this sort of confession. And this is the way to peace with God (see Psalms 32 and 51).

4:1-2 Here we have the response of the LORD (Jehovah) to the confession of Israel in 3:22-25. The meaning is that words alone are not enough. There must be deep and genuine repentance, strong and resolute action. When they obey His

word great blessing will result, not merely to Israel, but to all nations. A principle is here for us all – our obedience to God brings blessing to many others (Gen 12:1-3; 22:15-18; Rom 5:18). **4:3** Hos 10:12; Mark 4:18-19; Heb 6:8. Much of the “ground” of their hearts and lives lay fallow, unused for God’s service, producing thorns, briars and weeds which would choke the word of God. It needed breaking up.

4:4 Lev 26:41; Deut 10:16; 30:6; Jer 6:10; 9:25-26; Ezek 44:7,9; Acts 7:51. People cannot, of course, literally circumcise their hearts to make them new and obedient. The meaning is that Judah should turn their hearts to God Who could make them new. Circumcision was a symbol of faith and obedience to God’s covenant (see Gen 17:10).

“*Fury*” – 21:12; 2 Thess 1:7-9; Heb 12:29. Notes at Num 25:3; Ps 90:7-11.

4:6 “*From the north*” – note at 1:13-16. The lion was a symbol of Babylon (Dan 7:4). Concerning Babylon’s destructive power see Hab 1:5-11. Observe what God says – “I will bring disaster”. The cause of the destruction to come on Judah was “the fierce anger of the LORD” (vs 4,8).

- and the destroyer of the Gentiles is
on his way.
He has come out of his place
to make your land desolate;
and your cities will be laid waste,
without an inhabitant”.
- ⁸ Because of this, tie on sackcloth!
Lament and wail!
For the fierce anger of the LORD
has not turned away from us.
- ⁹ “And it will happen in that day”,
says the LORD, “*that* the heart
of the king will fail,
and the heart of the princes;
and the priests will be astonished,
and the prophets will wonder”.
- ¹⁰ Then said I, “Ah, Lord God!
Surely you have caused this people
and Jerusalem to go utterly astray,
saying, ‘You will have peace’,
while the sword reaches for the
heart”.
- ¹¹ At that time it will be said to
this people and to Jerusalem,
“A dry wind from the high places
in the desert *blows* toward
the daughter of my people,
not to fan, or to cleanse,
¹² a wind too strong for these will come
at my command;
now also I will pronounce judgment
against them”.
- ¹³ See, he will come up like clouds,
and his chariots *will be* like a
whirlwind.
His horses are swifter than eagles.
Woe to us! for we are plundered.
- ¹⁴ O Jerusalem, wash your heart
from wickedness,
that you may be saved.
How long will your evil thoughts
lodge within you?
- ¹⁵ For a voice declares from Dan,
and proclaims affliction from
Mount Ephraim:
- ¹⁶ “Make mention to the nations, see,
proclaim against Jerusalem,
that watchers come from
a far country,
and raise their voice against
the cities of Judah.
- ¹⁷ Like keepers of a field,
they are against her all around,
because she has been rebellious
against me”, says the LORD.
- ¹⁸ “Your way and your deeds have
brought these *things* on you.
This *is* your wickedness.
How bitter it is! How it reaches
to your heart!”
- ¹⁹ My soul, my soul! I am pained
to my very heart.
My heart makes a noise in me.
I cannot keep silent, because
you have heard,
O my soul, the sound of the trumpet,
the alarm of war.
- ²⁰ Destruction on destruction is
announced,
for the whole land is ruined.
Suddenly my tents are ruined,
and my curtains in an instant.
- ²¹ How long will I see the standard,
and hear the sound of the trumpet?
- ²² “For my people *are* foolish;
they have not known me;

4:9 Rulers, priests and prophets will get what they deserve (2:8).

4:10 How boldly Jeremiah accused God of leading the people astray (the Hebrew word also means “to deceive”)! But it was not God Who led them astray by promising peace, but false prophets speaking in God’s name. See 6:14; 14:13-14; 23:16-17.

4:11-12 God’s coming wind of judgment would be only for the purpose of destruction, not for correcting or refining the people.

4:13-17 The Babylonians (Hab 1:5-8).

4:14 This was the only hope for the people of Jerusalem to escape disaster (compare Isa 1:16; Jam 4:8). They could cleanse their hearts by coming to Him Who alone can do so, and by obeying His word (John 15:3; Ps 119:9). Otherwise, “evil thoughts” would control them.

4:19-26 8:21; Lam 2:11. In a vision Jeremiah sees

the Babylonian destruction of Israel as though it had actually happened (see note at Isa 55:10-11). And he expresses his terrible grief. Can we not say he expresses God’s grief as well? (See 48:36-39; Gen 6:6-7; 2 Sam 24:16; Luke 19:41-44). God does not punish His people gladly. He is afflicted when they are afflicted (Isa 63:9). In this passage Jeremiah’s heart and God’s heart are united in suffering.

4:19 “Soul”— literally, “bowels”.

4:22 God speaks here (5:21; 10:8). The Hebrew word translated “foolish” means lacking moral sense. See Ps 14:1 and Prov 1:7.

“Have not known me”— Isa 1:3; Hos 4:1. When those who are called God’s people do not know God, they are ignorant of the one thing above all they should know and are headed for terrible trouble. Such people will not know how to do good but will develop great skill in doing evil.

- they *are* senseless children,
and they have no understanding.
They *are* clever in doing evil,
but to do good they have no
knowledge”.
- ²³ I looked at the earth,
and saw that *it was* formless
and empty, and the heavens,
and they *had* no light.
- ²⁴ I looked at the mountains,
and saw that they trembled,
and all the hills moved back and forth.
- ²⁵ I looked, and saw that *there was*
no man,
and all the birds of the heavens had fled.
- ²⁶ I looked, and saw that the fruitful
place was a wilderness,
and all its cities were broken down
at the presence of the LORD,
and by his fierce anger.
- ²⁷ For thus says the LORD,
“The whole land will be desolate;
yet I will not make a full end.
- ²⁸ For this the earth will mourn,
and the heavens above be black,
because I have spoken *it*,
I have purposed *it*,
and will not repent, nor will
I turn back from it.
- ²⁹ “The whole city will flee from
the noise of the horsemen and
archers.
They will go into thickets,
and climb up on the rocks.
Every city *will be* forsaken,
and not a man will live in them.
- ³⁰ And *when you are* ruined,
what will you do?
Though you clothe yourself
with crimson,
though you deck yourself
with gold ornaments,
though you enlarge your eyes
with paint,
you will make yourself beautiful
in vain;
your lovers will despise you,
they will seek your life.
- ³¹ For I have heard a voice like
a woman in labour pains,
and like the anguish of one who
gives birth to her first child,
the voice of the daughter of Zion,
crying out *for* herself,
spreading her hands *and* saying,
‘Ah, now woe *to* me!
For my soul is worn out because
of murderers.’
- 5** “Run to and fro through the streets
of Jerusalem,
and look now and understand,
and seek in its wide squares;
if you can find a man,
if there is *anyone* who acts
with justice and seeks the truth,
I will pardon it.
- ² For though they say,
‘As the LORD lives’,
they certainly swear falsely”.
- ³ O LORD, *are* not your eyes
on the truth?
You have struck them,
but they have not grieved;
you have consumed them,
but they have refused
to receive correction.
They have made their faces harder
than a rock;
they have refused to return.
- ⁴ Therefore I said,
“These *are* only the poor.

This is the story of mankind. This is what the human heart is like without God (17:9; Gen 8:21; Rom 1:18-23; Eph 4:17-19).

4:23 Jeremiah’s vision seems to go beyond the destruction of Israel by the Babylonians.

4:27-29 God would not change His mind unless His people repented, and He knew they would not. Nothing else could avert the coming disaster.

4:30 The nation of Judah may behave like Jezebel (2 Kings 9:30), but will not escape any more than she did.

“*Your lovers*”—Judah sought the help of foreign countries and lusted after their gods.

4:31 6:24; 13:21; 22:23; 30:6; Micah 4:10;

1 Thess 5:3.

5:1 In chapter 4 God speaks of the fearful punishment to come on Judah. In this chapter He continues to set forth the reasons why He must send such punishments. The first reason He gives is that there is no honesty, no love of truth whatever in the whole of Jerusalem. Such corrupt conditions whether in Jerusalem or anywhere cry out for God’s punishment.

5:2 4:2; Lev 19:12.

5:3-6 Jeremiah, from his experience with both the people and their leaders, is compelled to agree with God’s judgment.

5:3 2:30; Lev 26:23. Their faces reflected the state of their hearts (Ezek 36:26; Zech 7:12).

- They are foolish, for they do not know the way of the LORD, or the justice of their God.
- ⁵ I will go to the great men, and will speak to them; for they have known the way of the LORD, and the justice of their God". But they had completely broken the yoke and torn off the bonds.
- ⁶ Therefore a lion out of the forest will slay them, and a wolf from the desert will ruin them, a leopard will watch over their cities. Everyone who goes out will be torn in pieces, because their transgressions are many, and their backslidings have increased.
- ⁷ "How will I pardon you for this? Your children have forsaken me, and sworn by *gods who are not gods*. When I fed them to the full, then they committed adultery, and trooped to the houses of the prostitutes.
- ⁸ They were *like* well-fed lusty stallions; each one neighed after his neighbour's wife.
- ⁹ Will I not give punishment for these *things*? says the LORD. And will I not avenge myself on such a nation as this?
- ¹⁰ "Go up on her walls, and destroy. But do not make a full end. Take away her branches, for they are not the LORD's.
- ¹¹ For the house of Israel and the house of Judah have dealt very treacherously against me", says the LORD.
- ¹² "They have lied about the LORD and said: 'He is saying nothing. No disaster will come on us, and we will not see sword or famine.
- ¹³ And the prophets are but wind, and the word is not in them. Thus it will be done to them.' "
- ¹⁴ Therefore thus says the LORD God of hosts: "Because you have spoken this word, see, I will make my words in your mouth a fire, and this people wood, and it will consume them.
- ¹⁵ See, I will bring a nation against you from afar, O house of Israel", says the LORD. "It is a mighty nation, it is an ancient nation, a nation whose language you do not know, and whose speech you do not understand.
- ¹⁶ Their quiver is like an open grave; they are all mighty men.
- ¹⁷ And they will eat up your harvest, and your bread, *which* your sons and your daughters should eat. They will eat up your flocks and your herds. They will eat up your vines and your fig trees. With the sword they will destroy your fortified cities in which you trust.
- ¹⁸ "Nevertheless, in those days", says the

5:5 2:8,20.

5:6 Lev 26:22. Here these animals may signify hostile invading nations.

5:7-8 Again God speaks.

5:7 "How will I pardon you?"— the people did not give God any reason at all for forgiving them. There was not the slightest stirring of repentance.

"Gods who are not gods"— 2:11; 16:20; Gal 4:8.

"Adultery"— their adultery in spiritual matters resulted in physical adultery and the trampling underfoot of God's laws. When men depart from God they are capable of any evil act.

5:9 5:29; 9:9. Could anyone find any reason at all why God should not punish them?

5:10 Signifies permission to Israel's enemies to partially destroy her.

5:12-13 They lied by denying God's predictions in their own scriptures (Lev 26:14-39; Deut 28:15-68) and God's warnings through the prophets. To them Isaiah, Jeremiah, etc were windbags! They foolishly imagined that denying the truth of God's Word would do away with that Word.

5:14 Ex 24:17; Deut 4:24; 9:3; Heb 12:29.

5:15 "Ancient nation"— by then Babylon had already existed for many hundreds of years (Gen 10:10).

5:18 Mercy and faithfulness in the midst of anger — 4:27; 5:10; Lev 26:44-45.

LORD, "I will not make a complete end of you. ¹⁹And it will come about that when you say, 'Why does the LORD our God do all these *things* to us?' then you will answer them, 'Just as you have forsaken me, and served foreign gods in your land, so you will serve foreigners in a land *that is* not yours.'

²⁰ "Declare this to the house of Jacob, and publish it in Judah, saying,

²¹ Now hear this, O foolish and senseless people, who have eyes, but do not see, who have ears, but do not hear:

²² Do you not fear me? says the LORD. Will you not tremble at my presence, who have placed the sand as a boundary of the sea by a permanent decree, so that it cannot cross it? And though its waves toss themselves, yet they cannot prevail; though they roar, yet they cannot cross over it.

²³ "But this people have a stubborn and rebellious heart.

They have revolted and gone.

²⁴ Nor do they say in their heart, 'Let us now fear the LORD our God who gives rain, both the former and the latter, in its season, who reserves for us the appointed weeks of the harvest.'

²⁵ Your evil deeds have turned away these *things*, and your sins have withheld good *things* from you.

²⁶ For among my people are found wicked *men*.

They lie in wait like one who sets snares;

they set a trap, they catch men.

²⁷ As a cage is full of birds, so their houses are full of deceit. Therefore they have become great and grown rich.

²⁸ They have grown fat; they are sleek. Yes, they surpass the deeds of the wicked.

They do not plead the cause, the cause of the fatherless; yet they prosper; and they do not cause the needy to get justice.

²⁹ Will I not punish *them* for these *things*?" says the LORD.

"Will I not avenge myself on such a nation as this?"

³⁰ "A shocking and horrible thing is happening in the land:

³¹ The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests rule on their *own* authority, and my people love *to have it so*. But what will you do in the end?

6 "O children of Benjamin, gather yourselves to flee out of the midst of Jerusalem, and blow the trumpet in Tekoa, and set up a signal-fire in Beth-Hakkerem; for disaster appears out of the north, and great destruction. ² I have compared the daughter

5:19 Their asking this question reveals their spiritual blindness and ignorance of God's Word.

5:20-31 In this part the Lord fully answers the question of v 19.

5:21 If they had not been so senseless they would have known the answer (Deut 29:4; Isa 6:9; 42:20; Ezek 12:2; Matt 13:15).

5:22 People fear all sorts of things but refuse to fear God Who holds their life and eternal fate in His hands. This is evidence of a kind of madness in the hearts of people, the madness Solomon spoke about in Eccl 9:3. Notes on the fear of God at Gen 20:11; Job 28:28; Ps 34:11-14; 111:10; 130:3-4.

5:23 Everything in the universe follows the laws God has appointed except human beings, Satan and demons.

5:25 Ps 84:11. God cannot justly bless people as

He would like to do if they refuse His voice and trample underfoot His laws (Ps 78:41).

5:26 9:8; Ps 10:8; Micah 7:2.

5:27 "Deceit"— they became rich by deceiving others.

5:28 "Fatherless", "the needy"— Ex 22:21-24; Ps 82:3; Isa 1:23.

5:29 Verse 9.

5:30-31 6:13; 2:8. When God Himself says something is horrible and fearful we may be quite sure it is. Prophets telling lies in God's name and priests ruling arrogantly is bad enough, but it is even worse when God's people love to have it so. To be satisfied with lies brings any people into terrible danger (2 Thess 2:10).

6:1 "North"— though Babylon lay to the east of Judah, invasion routes were not from the east across the desert, but the easier route from the north.

- of Zion to a beautiful and delicate *woman*.
- ³ The shepherds with their flocks will come to her; they will pitch *their* tents against her all around; each of them will pasture in his place”.
- ⁴ “Prepare war against her! Arise, and let us go up at noon. Woe to us! for the day passes away, for the shadows of the evening are lengthened.
- ⁵ Arise, and let us go by night, and let us destroy her palaces”.
- ⁶ For thus the LORD of hosts has said: “Cut down trees, and throw up a *siege* mound against Jerusalem. This *is* the city to be punished; she *is* full of oppression to the center.
- ⁷ As a fountain pours out its waters, so she pours out her wickedness. Violence and plundering are heard in her. Grief and wounds *are* continually before me.
- ⁸ Be instructed, O Jerusalem, so that I do not depart from you, so that I do not make you desolate, a land not inhabited”.
- ⁹ Thus says the LORD of hosts: “They will thoroughly glean the remnant of Israel like a vine. Put your hand back into the branches like a grape gatherer”.
- ¹⁰ To whom will I speak, and give warning, that they may hear? See, their ear *is* not circumcised,
- and they cannot listen. See, the word of the LORD is an *object of scorn* to them; they have no delight in it.
- ¹¹ Therefore I am full of the fury of the LORD; I am weary of holding *it* in. “Pour it out on the children outside, and on the young men gathered together; for even the husband will be taken with the wife, the aged with *him who is* full of days.
- ¹² And their houses will be turned over to others, together *with their* fields and wives; for I will stretch out my hand on the inhabitants of the land”, says the LORD.
- ¹³ “For from the least of them to the greatest of them everyone *is* greedy for gain; and from the prophet to the priest everyone deals falsely.
- ¹⁴ They lightly heal the hurt *of the daughter* of my people, saying, ‘Peace, peace’, when *there is* no peace.
- ¹⁵ Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? No, they were not at all ashamed, nor could they blush. Therefore they will fall among those who fall. At the time *that* I punish them they will be thrown down”, says the LORD.
- ¹⁶ Thus says the LORD, “Stand by the roads and see,

6:3 “*Shepherds*”— rulers with their armies.

6:4-5 This is the voice of the enemy invaders.

6:6 Signifies God’s permission to the enemy to attack Jerusalem.

6:7 Outwardly Jerusalem may be “beautiful” and “delicate” (v 2), but in God’s eyes she was filthy and sick to the point of death.

6:8 Ignoring repeated warnings from God will bring disaster (19:15; 36:31; Prov 29:1).

6:9 That is, few of the people would be left.

6:10 Jeremiah speaks and reveals the sadness of his heart (and of the hearts of all of Christ’s true spokesmen when people will not obey the word of God).

“*Their ear is not circumcised*”— that is, they did

not listen to God as those in covenant relationship with God should have done.

6:11 15:17; 20:9. In the first part of the verse Jeremiah still speaks. He is experiencing God’s anger against the people and he is filled with an overflowing zeal for God’s name. Then God tells him not to try to hold it in but to speak it out and so pave the way for God’s judgments to follow (v 12).

6:13 2:8; 5:27,31.

6:14 Isa 30:10; 48:22; 57:20-21. Many so-called preachers in order to fill their pockets will tell the people what they want to hear.

6:15 Their conduct is extremely abominable because they keep people in ignorance and make them ripe for God’s judgment.

- and ask for the old paths,
 where the good way *is*,
 and walk in it,
 and you will find rest for your souls.
 But they said, 'We will not
 walk *in it*.'
- ¹⁷ Also I set watchmen over you,
 saying, 'Listen for the sound
 of the trumpet.' But they said,
 'We will not listen.'
- ¹⁸ Therefore hear, you nations,
 and know, O congregation,
 what *is* among them.
- ¹⁹ Hear, O earth! See,
 I will bring disaster on this people,
 the fruit of their plans, because
 they have not listened to my words,
 or to my law, but rejected it.
- ²⁰ To what purpose does incense come
 to me from Sheba,
 and sweet cane from a far country?
 Your burnt offerings *are* not
 acceptable,
 nor your sacrifices sweet to me".
- ²¹ Therefore thus says the LORD,
 "See, I will lay stumbling blocks
 before this people,
 and the fathers and the sons
 will fall on them together.
 The neighbour and his friend
 will perish".
- ²² Thus says the LORD, "See,
 a people is coming from the north
 country,
 and a great nation is being raised up
 from the ends of the earth.
- ²³ They will take hold of bow and spear;
 they *are* cruel and have no mercy.
 Their voice roars like the sea,
 and they ride on horses,
- as men of war set in array
 against you,
 O daughter of Zion".
- ²⁴ We have heard of its fame.
 Our hands have become feeble.
 Anguish *and* pain have seized us,
 like a woman in labour.
- ²⁵ Do not go out into the field,
 or walk by the road;
 for the sword of the enemy *and* fear
 are on every side.
- ²⁶ O daughter of my people,
 tie sackcloth on *yourselves*,
 and roll in ashes.
 Mourn in most bitter lamentation,
 as *for* an only son,
 for the despoiler will suddenly
 come on us.
- ²⁷ "I have appointed you as
 a tower *and* a fortress
 among my people,
 so that you may know and test
 their way.
- ²⁸ They *are* all stubborn rebels,
 going about with slanders.
 They *are* brass and iron.
 They *are* all corrupters.
- ²⁹ The bellows blow fiercely;
 the lead is consumed by the fire;
 the smelter refines in vain, because
 the wicked are not purged out".
- ³⁰ People will call them
 rejected silver,
 because the LORD has rejected them.

7 The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, ²"Stand in the gate of the LORD's house, and proclaim there this word and say: 'Hear the word of the LORD, all *you of* Judah who enter

6:16 "Old paths"— 18:15; Deut 32:17. The true worship of God the Creator set forth in the Bible is the most ancient of all ways. It goes clear back to Adam and Eve the first man and woman and the ancestors of us all. It is the "good" way, the way of rest (Matt 11:29), the way without idols, the way of faith and holiness.

6:17-19 What could God have done to save His people when they repeatedly refused to listen to Him? There remained only just judgment.

6:20 In spite of their wicked rebellion against God the people kept up some form of religion. But God will not accept such. See 1 Sam 15:22-23; Ps 50:7-23; Isa 1:10-17; Ps 51:17; Micah 6:8. Worship without obedience to His Word, and religion added on to a sinful life are detestable

to God.

6:22 1:15; 4:6; 6:1.

6:23 4:13; 8:16; Hab 1:6-11.

6:24 4:31. Words of Judah facing the Babylonians.

6:26 4:8; 25:34; Ezek 27:30; Job 2:8.

6:27-30 Here God speaks to Jeremiah. The word of God which Jeremiah spoke was that which tested the people. That word was like a fire – 5:14; 20:9; 23:29. Unfortunately, in this refining process, no true gold, no true silver appeared. The wicked would not repent, the hardened rebels would not melt. The Lord rejected them as something worthless.

7:2 Observe that the people still came to "worship" the Lord, though they would not obey Him and lived in wickedness. See 6:20.

in at these gates to worship the LORD. ³Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Amend your ways and your deeds, and I will cause you to dwell in this place. ⁴Do not trust in lying words, and say, "This is the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD!" ⁵For if you thoroughly amend your ways and your deeds, if you truly make justice prevail between a man and his neighbour, ⁶if you do not oppress the foreigner, the fatherless, and the widow, and do not shed innocent blood in this place, and do not walk after other gods to your harm, ⁷then I will cause you to live in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers, forever and ever.

⁸"See, you trust in lying words that cannot profit. ⁹Will you steal, murder, commit adultery, swear falsely, burn incense to Baal, and walk after other gods whom you do not know, ¹⁰and come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say, "We are delivered" to do all these abominations? ¹¹Has this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your eyes? See, I have been watching, says the LORD.

7:3-8 Another appeal to the people to repent. See how reluctant God is to punish.

7:4 The deceptive words were spoken by false prophets and backslidden priests (5:31). They told the people that as long as they continued their forms of worship all would be well, that God was not angry, that He would not punish them.

7:5-6 5:28. How important these matters are to God!

7:6 "To your harm"—v 19; 25:7; Ps 16:4. According to the Bible the worship of all idols and all gods other than the one true and living God will bring great harm to anyone who engages in it. It stirs up the anger of God Who has forbidden it (Ex 20:1-6). It helps to keep those who do it in bondage. It contributes to spiritual blindness (as long as men think God is like their idols they will never understand what God is really like). And at last it brings great punishment from God (Rev 21:8).

7:7 Gen 17:8; Josh 1:6.

7:8 This is true of the great bulk of mankind in every age and every place. Men in general prefer deceptive words that will let them do as they please. See John 3:19-20; 2 Thess 2:10-12.

7:9 "Baal"—note at Jud 2:11. In v 9 we see that the people willfully and continually broke five of the ten commandments (Ex 20:1-17), and yet thought God didn't care and would keep them

¹²"But now go to my place which was in Shiloh, where I set my name at first, and see what I did to it because of the wickedness of my people Israel. ¹³And now, because you have done all these deeds, says the LORD, and *because* I spoke to you, rising up early and speaking, but you would not listen; and I called you, but you would not answer; ¹⁴therefore I will do to *this* house, which is called by my name, in which you trust, and to the place which I gave to you and to your fathers, as I did to Shiloh. ¹⁵And I will hurl you out of my sight, as I have hurled out all your brethren, all the offspring of Ephraim.'

¹⁶"Therefore do not pray for this people, or lift up a cry or prayer for them, or make intercession to me; for I will not hear you. ¹⁷Do you not see what they are doing in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem? ¹⁸The children gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead *their* dough to make cakes for the 'queen of heaven,' and to pour out drink offerings to other gods, provoking me to anger. ¹⁹Do they provoke me to anger? says the LORD. *Do they not provoke themselves to the shame of their own faces?*

safe from their enemies.

7:11 See Matt 21:13. To them God's temple was like a hiding cave for thieves. Did they think that God was blind?! (16:17; 23:24; 29:23; Ps 33:13-15; Prov 5:21; Heb 4:13).

7:12-15 Shiloh was the place where the tabernacle was set up in the land of Canaan (Josh 18:1). It was the place where people went to worship (1 Sam 1:3). It was about 30 kilometers north of Jerusalem in the area of Ephraim. From there the ark of God's covenant was taken by the Philistines. Never again was it placed there (1 Sam 4:17; Ps 78:59-61). Shiloh fell into ruins, and Ephraim and the whole northern kingdom went into captivity (2 Kings 17:1-6). God here says that Judah and Jerusalem should learn their lesson from Shiloh.

7:14 Notice here that the people were not trusting in God but in the temple.

7:16 God speaks to Jeremiah. People can go so far in sin and rebellion that God will no longer even hear prayer for them (15:1; 1 John 5:16).

7:18 "Queen of heaven"—44:17-19. This was a goddess worshiped in many countries in that time under different names. The people of Tyre and Sidon called her Ashtoreth, the Babylonians called her Ishtar, the Greeks named her Astarte. She was the goddess of both fertility and war, their so-called "mother" goddess.

²⁰“Therefore thus says the Lord God: See, my anger and my fury will be poured out on this place, on man and on beast and on the trees of the field, and on the fruit of the ground. And it will burn, and will not be quenched”.

²¹Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: “Add your burnt offerings to your sacrifices, and eat meat. ²²For in the day that I brought your fathers out of the land of Egypt, I did not speak to them or give commands to them concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices, ²³but this is what I commanded them, saying, ‘Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and you will be my people; and walk in all the ways that I have commanded you, so that it may be well with you.’ ²⁴But they did not listen or turn their ear to me, but walked in the counsels and in the imagination of their evil heart, and went backward, and not forward. ²⁵From the day that your fathers came up out of the land of Egypt to this day I have sent to you all my servants the prophets, daily rising up early and sending them. ²⁶Yet they did not listen to me, or turn their ear to me, but hardened their neck. They did worse than their fathers.

²⁷“Therefore you shall speak all these words to them. But they will not listen to you. You shall also call to them. But they

will not answer you. ²⁸But you shall say to them, ‘This is a nation that does not obey the voice of the LORD their God, or receive correction. Truth has perished and has been cut off from their mouth. ²⁹Cut off your hair, O Jerusalem, and throw it away, and take up a lamentation on the barren heights, for the LORD has rejected and forsaken the generation of his wrath.’

³⁰“For the children of Judah have done evil in my sight, says the LORD. They have set their abominations in the house which is called by my name, defiling it. ³¹And they have built the high places of Tophet, which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire. I did not command this, and it did not come into my heart. ³²Therefore, see, the days are coming, says the LORD, that it will no longer be called Tophet, or the valley of the son of Hinnom, but the Valley of Slaughter; for they will bury in Tophet until there is no room left. ³³And the dead bodies of this people will be food for the birds of the sky and for the beasts of the earth; and no one will frighten them away. ³⁴Then I will put a stop to the sound of joy and the sound of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride from the cities of Judah and from the streets of Jerusalem; for the land will be desolate.

7:20 Verse 29. Notes on God's anger at Num 25:3; Ps 90:7-11.

7:21 Burnt offerings were not to be eaten (Lev 1:9). Here God is saying the ones the people were offering were not acceptable to Him so the people should eat them.

7:22-23 God first emphasized obedience to Himself and gave the ten commandments (Ex 19:5; 20:1-7). Later God gave commands about sacrifice (Leviticus chapters 1 through 7).

7:24 Since they did not obey God their sacrifices were worthless.

“*Evil heart*”– 3:17; 9:14; 11:8; 13:10; 16:12; 18:12. In the writings of Jeremiah there is much about the human heart. It is exposed in all its stubbornness, foolishness and wickedness. A key verse for the whole book is 17:9. But not only is the evil heart of man exposed, God's way of dealing with it is also revealed – see 24:7; 31:33.

7:25-26 Some people followed their evil hearts because they knew no better way. Israel and Judah did know the true way, so their sin was worse than that of any other people. Sin without the truth is bad; sin against truth is far worse.

7:27 God knew there had been no change in the people.

7:28-29 Cutting off the hair in the Bible was a sign of grief and mourning (Job 1:20; Micah 1:16). See Lev 21:5.

7:30 4:1; 32:34. How more fully could they have shown their contempt for God and His laws?

“*Their abominations*”– their detestable idols. Though the word “idols” is not in the original, the Hebrew word which means something abominable, a detested thing, here implies idols, as it does also in 4:1; 32:34; Deut 29:17.

7:31 “*Tophet*”– 19:6,11-14. The Ammonites sometimes offered their children in the fire to their god Molech (Lev 18:21; 20:1-5; 1 Kings 11:7; 2 Kings 16:2-3; 21:1,6). The people of Judah and Jerusalem adopted this abominable practice and built a place for it just outside the walls of Jerusalem. “Valley of Hinnom” in Hebrew is *ge-hinnom*. It became *Geenna* in Greek (*Gehenna* in English) and was used in the New Testament to indicate hell with its eternal fire (Matt 18:9; Mark 9:47-48).

7:32-34 19:6. Speaks of the slaughter of the people when the Babylonians invade the country.

8 “At that time”, says the LORD, “they will bring the bones of the kings of Judah, and the bones of its princes, and the bones of the priests, and the bones of the prophets, and the bones of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, out of their graves, ²and they will spread them out before the sun and the moon and all the *starry* host of heaven, which they have loved, and which they have served, and which they have followed, and which they have sought, and which they have worshipped. They will not be gathered, or buried. They will be like refuse on the surface of the earth. ³And death will be chosen rather than life by the remnant, all those who remain of this evil family, who remain in all the places where I have driven them, says the LORD of hosts. ⁴“Moreover you shall say to them, ‘Thus says the LORD: Will they fall and not rise? Will he turn away, and not return? ⁵ Why *then* has this people of Jerusalem slidden back in a perpetual backsliding? They hold firmly to deceit; they refuse to return. ⁶ I listened and heard, *but* they did not speak rightly. No man repented of his wickedness, saying, “What have I done?” Everyone turned to his own course, like a horse rushing into the battle. ⁷ Yes, the stork in the sky knows its appointed times, and the turtledove and the crane and the swallow observe the time of their coming. But my people do not know the judgment of the LORD.

8 “How do you say, “We are wise, and the law of the LORD *is* with us?” See, the lying pen of the scribes has made *it* into a lie. ⁹ The wise *men* are put to shame, they are dismayed and caught. See, they have rejected the word of the LORD, so what wisdom *is* in them? ¹⁰ Therefore I will give their wives to others, *and* their fields to those who will inherit *them*, for everyone from the least to the greatest is greedy for gain, from the prophet to the priest everyone deals falsely. ¹¹ For they have lightly healed the hurt of the daughter of my people, saying, “Peace, peace”, when *there is* no peace. ¹² Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? No, they were not at all ashamed, and they could not blush. Therefore they will fall among those who fall. In the time of their punishment they will be thrown down, says the LORD. ¹³ I will surely consume them, says the LORD. *There will be* no grapes on the vine, no figs on the fig tree, and the leaf will fade; and *the things that* I have given them will pass away from them.’ ” ¹⁴ Why do we sit still? Come together, and let us enter the fortified cities,

8:1 The contempt which they deserve will be shown even to their bones.

8:2 They committed the senseless and terrible sin of worshiping and serving creation rather than the Creator (2 Kings 23:5; Jer 19:13; Acts 7:42; Rom 1:25).

8:3 Compare Rev 9:6.

8:4 Prov 24:16; Micah 7:8; Jer 31:19.

8:5 “*Deceit*”—they refused to abandon the thing that was destroying them. This is common among the people of the world.

8:6 Isa 53:6; 56:11; 57:17; 7:13.

8:7 4:22; Deut 32:28; Isa 1:2-3; 5:13; 27:11. Their ignorance was willful and therefore blameworthy. God holds us responsible for not knowing the truth if we could know it and will not bother to do so.

8:8 Their religious teachers misinterpreted the law of God to the people. Compare Matt 15:3-9. Many

Jewish commentators on the law, instead of making it clear, twisted and perverted its meaning.

8:9 There is no true wisdom in those who disobey God’s Word. This includes educators, scientists, philosophers, writers and anyone else who ignores the Bible. Men can have much knowledge of various things without having wisdom. Notes on wisdom at Job 28:28; Ps 111:10; Prov 1:7; 1 Cor 1:20-21; 2:6-7; Col 2:3.

8:10-12 6:12-15.

8:13 What God gives He can justly take away. The meaning of the Hebrew for the last sentence of this verse is unclear.

8:14-16 Looks forward to the invasion of the land by the Babylonians. Jeremiah speaks for the people.

8:14 Even if the people did not yet know the reason for their punishment Jeremiah did.

and let us be silent there;
 for the LORD our God has put us
 to silence,
 and given us bitter water to drink,
 because we have sinned against
 the LORD.
¹⁵ We looked for peace, but no good
came, and for a time of health,
 and see trouble!
¹⁶ The snorting of his horses was heard
 from Dan.
 The whole land trembled at the sound
 of the neighing of his strong ones;
 for they have come and devoured
 the land,
 and all that is in it, the city,
 and those who dwell in it.
¹⁷ “For, see, I will send serpents
 among you,
 vipers which *will not be*
 charmed, and they will bite you”,
 says the LORD.
¹⁸ *When* I would comfort myself
 in sorrow, my heart *is* faint in me.
¹⁹ Mark the voice of the cry of the
 daughter of my people because
 of those who dwell in a far
 country:
 “Is the LORD not in Zion?
 Is her king not in her?”
 “Why have they provoked me
 to anger with their carved images,
 and with foreign idols?”
²⁰ The harvest is past,
 the summer has ended,

and we are not saved.
²¹ Because of the wound of the daughter
 of my people I am wounded;
 I mourn; horror has seized me.
²² *Is there* no balm in Gilead?
Is there no physician there?
 Why then has the health of the
 daughter of my people not
 recovered?

9 Oh, that my head were waters,
 and my eyes a fountain of tears,
 that I might weep day and night
 for the slain of the daughter
 of my people!
² Oh, that I had in the wilderness
 a lodging place for travelers,
 so that I might leave my people,
 and go away from them!
 For they *are* all adulterers,
 an assemblage of treacherous men.
³ “And *like* their bow they bend
 their tongues *for* lies;
 but they are not valiant for truth
 on the earth,
 for they proceed from evil to evil,
 and they do not know me”,
 says the Lord.
⁴ “Each one should be careful about
 his neighbour, and not trust in
 any brother;
 for every brother acts deceitfully,
 and every neighbour goes around
 as a slanderer.
⁵ And each one of them deceives

8:17 The Lord says He will do again what He had once done in their history (Num 21:6. See Deut 32:24).

8:18 Jeremiah cries to the Lord when he thinks of the coming destruction.

8:19 In the first part of the verse Jeremiah speaks of the people of Judah as though they were already in exile in Babylon. In the second part the Lord speaks and again gives one of the reasons why He punished His people. Notes on God's anger at Num 25:3; Ps 90:7-11.

8:20 The people in exile speak of their despair.

8:21-22 4:19-20; Lam 2:11. He speaks again and reveals the agony of his heart for his nation. He completely identified with the people even though they rejected and persecuted him and tried to kill him. Compare Luke 19:41-44; Rom 9:1-3; Ex 32:32; Dan 9:5.

8:21 “Mourn”– or “am ashen”.

9:1 Verse 10; 8:21; 13:17; 14:17; Ps 119:136. For good reason Jeremiah is called “the weeping

prophet”.

9:2 He wept for them, but their behavior was so ungodly that he could no longer bear to be around them.

9:3 “Bow”– v 8; Ps 7:13; 58:7; 64:3.

“Do not know me”– v 6; Jud 2:10; 1 Sam 2:12; Isa 1:3; Hos 4:1; John 16:3. They knew about Jehovah, they called themselves His people, but they did not know Him personally. There are many Christians today in the same sad condition. They have heard many things about Christ, they know something of the Bible, but they have not met Christ in their experience, they do not know Him as one person knows another. And they show they do not know Him by the way they behave.

9:4 Ps 12:2; Micah 7:5-6; Matt 10:35-36. When everyone tells lies, when deceit is rampant, suspicion displaces trust, bonds between friends and relatives strain to the breaking point, God's anger is upon all, and the man of truth suffers.

his neighbour, and does not speak the truth.
 They have taught their tongue to speak lies, *and* wear themselves out doing evil.
 6 Your dwelling place *is* in the midst of deceit.
 Through deceit they refuse to know me, says the LORD".
 7 Therefore thus says the LORD of hosts,
 "See, I will refine them, and test them;
 for what will I do for the daughter of my people?
 8 Their tongue *is like* a deadly arrow *shot out*; it speaks deceit.
 One speaks peaceably to his neighbour with his mouth, but in his heart he lies in wait.
 9 Will I not punish them for these *things*? says the LORD.
 Will I not avenge myself on such a nation as this?"
 10 I will take up a weeping and wailing for the mountains and a lamentation for the dwelling places in the wilderness,
 because they are burned up, so that no one can pass through *them*; and *people* cannot hear the sound of cattle.
 Both the birds of the heavens and the beasts have fled; they are gone.
 11 "And I will make Jerusalem heaps,

and a den for jackals, and I will make the cities of Judah desolate, without an inhabitant".

¹²Who *is* the wise man who can understand this? And *who is the one* to whom the mouth of the LORD has spoken, so that he might declare it? Why does the land perish, burned like a desert, so that no one passes through?

¹³And the LORD says, "Because they have forsaken my law which I set before them and have not obeyed my voice, or walked in the *law*, ¹⁴but have walked according to the imagination of their own heart, and after the Baals, which their fathers taught them, ¹⁵therefore thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: See, I will feed them, this people, with bitterness, and give them bitter water to drink. ¹⁶I will also scatter them among the nations whom neither they nor their fathers have known; and I will send a sword after them until I have consumed them".

¹⁷Thus says the LORD of hosts:
 "Consider, and call for the mourning women,
 that they may come. And send for skillful *women*,
 that they may come.

¹⁸And let them hurry and take up a wailing for us,
 that our eyes may run down with tears, and our eyelids pour out water.

¹⁹For a sound of wailing is heard from Zion,
 'How we are ruined!

9:7 6:27-30.

"*I will refine*"— God did this by sending the Babylonians to bring punishment, affliction, and destruction on the people.

9:8 Verse 3; 5:26; Ps 55:21; Prov 29:5.

9:9 5:9,29.

9:10 Verse 1; 4:23-26. Jeremiah speaks as though he was already in that future time of destruction.

9:11 10:22; 26:18; Ps 44:19; Lam 5:18.

"*Jackals*"— there is much question about the meaning of the Hebrew word translated "jackals". The KJV has "dragons" here, a very unlikely translation. It was formerly thought that the word meant "sea monster" or "serpent" or even "crocodile", but many present-day scholars think it probably means "jackals" or, possibly, "wolves".

9:12 Again Jehovah speaks. Why should God destroy His own land and people? Who can understand it?

9:13-16 The answer to the question in v 12 is very clear. God had to send judgments on His people because of their sins. To allow them to escape would be to pervert justice.

9:14 "*Baals*"— note at Jud 2:11.

9:16 13:24; 18:17; 30:11; 46:28; Lev 26:27,33; Deut 28:64.

9:17-19 In that time there were mourners for hire for sad occasions such as funerals. God is saying here that there is going to be plenty to wail about. In the Bible God often tells people to wail, to cry out, or to weep— 4:8; 25:34; 48:20; 49:3; Isa 14:31; 16:7; 23:1,6,14; Zeph 1:11; Zech 11:2; Jam 4:9; 5:1.

He tells others to rejoice — Ps 33:1; 97:12; Zech 2:10; 9:9; Matt 5:12; Luke 6:23; Phil 4:4; 1 Thess 5:16; Jam 1:9; 1 Pet 4:13; Rev 12:12; 18:20. We should note who should wail, who should rejoice and the reasons for both wailing and rejoicing.

We are greatly disgraced,
because we have forsaken the land,
because our dwellings have cast
us out.' ”

²⁰ Yet hear the word of the LORD,
O women, and let your ears receive
the word of his mouth,
and teach wailing to your daughters,
and each one *teach* lamentation
to her neighbour.

²¹ For death has come up
into our windows,
and has entered our palaces,
to cut off the children from the streets,
and the young men from the squares.

²² Say, “Thus says the LORD:
Even the corpses of men will fall
like refuse on the open field,
and like cut stalks after the harvester,
and no one will gather *them*”.

²³ Thus says the LORD:
“Let not the wise *man* glory
in his wisdom,
nor let the mighty *man* glory
in his might;
let not the rich *man* glory
in his riches;

²⁴ But let him who glories glory in this:
that he understands, and knows me,
that I *am* the LORD who acts
with loving kindness, justice,
and righteousness in the earth;
for in these *things* I delight,
says the LORD.

²⁵ See, the days are coming, says the
LORD, when I will punish all *those who*
are circumcised with the uncircumcised,

²⁶ Egypt, and Judah, and Edom, and the

children of Ammon, and Moab, and all
who are in the farthest corners, who live
in the wilderness. For all *these nations are*
uncircumcised, and all the house of Israel
are uncircumcised in heart”.

10 Hear the word which the LORD speaks
to you, O house of Israel. ² Thus says
the LORD:

“Do not learn the way of the nations,
and do not be dismayed at the signs
in the heavens, though the nations
are dismayed at them.

³ For the customs of the peoples
are worthless;
for *one* cuts a tree from the forest
with an axe, the work of the hands
of a craftsman.

⁴ They adorn it with silver and gold;
they fasten it with nails and
with hammers,
so that it does not totter.

⁵ They *are* upright like
the palm tree, but do not speak.
They must be carried, because they
cannot walk.
Do not be afraid of them,
for they cannot do evil,
and *it is* not in them to do good”.

⁶ For *there is* no one like you,
O LORD. You *are* great,
and your name *is* great in power.

⁷ Who would not fear you,
O King of nations? For this is your due.
For among all the wise *men*
of the nations, and in all their
kingdoms,
there is no one like you.

9:20-22 Jeremiah says there will be such cause
for wailing that all should learn how best to
do it. Death like an enemy soldier will get in
through the windows of their homes and palaces,
and pass through all their streets. There will
be much opportunity for mourning but not for
burying the dead.

9:23-24 About what do men in general boast?
Some about how clever they are. Others about
their caste or colour or religion or skill or looks
or strength. About what should God’s people
boast? None of the above or anything that relates
merely to self, but in the knowledge of God. This
is the most important matter there can be in a
person’s life. For causes of boasting see Ps 34:2;
44:8; Rom 5:3; 15:17; 2 Cor 10:17; 12:9; Gal 6:14.
See in v 24 the things about Himself that God
emphasizes – compare Ps 11:7; 33:5; 89:14; 99:4;
103:6,8; 106:1; 145:9; Ex 34:6-7.

9:25-26 In His anger against sin, in His judgments
on sinners God will make no distinction between
peoples. Their religion, their rites and ceremonies
cannot help them. True religion must be of the
heart – 4:4; Rom 2:12,25-29; John 4:24.

10:2 “*The way of the nations*” – a way without the
true God, the way of many religions, many gods,
and many superstitions.

“*Signs in the heavens*” – the nations made much of
the movements of planets, stars, comets, meteors,
etc, and all the superstitions of astrology. God
shows in His word the vanity and worthlessness
of all that (Isa 47:13-15; Dan 2:1-11; 4:18).

10:3-5 Notes at Ps 115:3-7; 135:15-17; Isa 44:9.

10:6-10 Jeremiah speaks as all the writers of the
Bible do on the subject of God and idols.

10:6 Ex 8:10; Ps 86:8; Isa 43:10-11; 44:6-7.

10:7 “*King*” – Ps 47:8-9; 96:10. Jehovah is no mere
tribal deity (Ps 22:28; 47:1-9; 95:3).

- ⁸ But they are altogether senseless and foolish; their worthless teaching *is about* wooden *idols*.
- ⁹ Silver hammered into plates is brought from Tarshish, and gold from Uphaz, the work of the craftsman, and of the hands of the goldsmith. Their clothing *is* of blue and purple; they *are* all the work of skillful *men*.
- ¹⁰ But the LORD *is* the true God; he *is* the living God, and everlasting king. At his wrath the earth trembles, and the nations cannot stand before his indignation.
- ¹¹ “Thus shall you say to them: The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth will perish from the earth, and from under these heavens”.
- ¹² He has made the earth by his power, he has established the world by his wisdom, and has stretched out the heavens by his understanding.
- ¹³ When he utters his voice, *there is* a roar of waters in the heavens, and he causes the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth. He makes lightning flashes with rain, and brings the wind out of his treasuries.
- ¹⁴ Every man is senseless and *without* knowledge. Every goldsmith is put to shame by carved images, for his cast metal image *is* a lie, and *there is* no breath in them.
- ¹⁵ They *are* worthless, and the product of error. In the time of their punishment they will perish.
- ¹⁶ The Portion of Jacob *is* not like them; for he *is* the maker of all *things*, and Israel *is* the tribe of his inheritance. The LORD of hosts *is* his name.
- ¹⁷ Gather up your goods *to go* out of the land, O inhabitant of the fortress.
- ¹⁸ For thus says the LORD, “See, at this time I will throw out the inhabitants of the land, and will distress them, that they may find *this true*”.
- ¹⁹ Woe is me for my injury! My wound is grievous. But I said, “Truly this *is* a grief, and I must bear it”.
- ²⁰ My tent is ruined, and all my ropes are broken. My children have gone away from me, and *are* no *more*. There is no longer anyone to stretch out my tent, and to set up my curtains.
- ²¹ For the shepherds have become senseless, and have not sought the LORD; therefore they will not prosper, and all their flocks will be scattered.
- ²² See, the sound of the report has come, and a great commotion out of the north country, to make the cities of Judah desolate

10:8 Ps 115:8; 135:18; Isa 44:18-20; Rom 1:21-23.

“*Altogether*”—the Bible teaches that no one who worships an idol has any spiritual understanding, no matter how brilliant he may be in other matters. **10:9-16** This is the difference between God and gods. The gods are made by men. God made the heavens and the earth. The gods are useless. God is the eternal King of the universe. They are dead and will perish from the world. He is the Immortal One.

10:10 “*Wrath*”—Ps 18:7; 76:7; Rev 6:16-17.

10:11 This is what Jeremiah was commanded to tell the nations which worshiped idols. This verse is not in Hebrew but Aramaic, a language which was more likely to be understood by some of those nations than Hebrew.

10:12-13 Gen 1; Ps 104:1-13.

10:14-15 Verse 8.

10:16 Deut 4:20; 7:6; 32:9; Ps 74:2; 146:5.

“*Portion of Jacob*”—the portion of other nations was the false gods of the world, but Jacob had the true God, the Creator of the universe.

“*LORD of hosts*”—note at 1 Sam 1:3.

10:19-20 Jeremiah laments for the people of Judah and Jerusalem as if the destruction had already come. He himself had neither wife nor children (16:2).

10:21 22:22; 23:1; 25:34; 50:6.

“*Shepherds*”—leaders of the people (the flock). They brought great trouble on the people because of their senseless behavior (vs 8,14). One way they show their lack of good sense was by refusing to pray to the true and living God.

10:22 1:14; 4:6; 6:22-23; 8:16.

and a den of jackals.

²³ O LORD, I know that the way
of man *is* not in himself;
it is not in man who walks
to direct his steps.

²⁴ O LORD, correct me, but with justice;
not in your anger, or you will
bring me to nothing.

²⁵ Pour out your fury on the nations
that do not know you,
and on the families that do not call
on your name, for they have eaten
up Jacob,
and devoured him, and consumed him,
and have made his dwelling place
desolate.

11 The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying: ²“Listen to the words of this covenant, and speak to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, ³and say to them, ‘Thus says the LORD God of Israel: Cursed *be* the man who does not obey the words of this covenant ⁴which I commanded your fathers in the day *that* I brought them up out of the land of Egypt, from the iron furnace, saying, Obey my voice, and do according to all which I command you; so you will be my people, and I will be your God, ⁵so that I may fulfil the oath which I swore to your fathers, to give them a land flowing with milk and honey, as *it is* this day.’ ” Then I answered and said, “So be it, O LORD”.

⁶Then the LORD said to me, “Proclaim

all these words in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem, saying: ‘Listen to the words of this covenant, and do them. ⁷For I have earnestly warned your fathers in the day *that* I brought them up out of the land of Egypt to this day, rising early and giving warnings, saying, Obey my voice. ⁸But they did not obey and did not incline their ear, but each one walked in the imagination of his evil heart. Therefore I will bring on them all the words of this covenant which I commanded *them* to do, for they did not do *them*.’ ”

⁹And the LORD said to me, “A conspiracy has been found among the men of Judah, and among the inhabitants of Jerusalem. ¹⁰They have turned back to the evil deeds of their forefathers who refused to hear my words, who went after other gods to serve them. The house of Israel and the house of Judah have broken my covenant which I made with their fathers. ¹¹Therefore thus says the LORD: See, I will bring disaster on them which they will not be able to escape; and though they cry out to me, I will not listen to them. ¹²Then the cities of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem will go and cry out to the gods to whom they offer incense; but they will not at all save them in the time of their trouble. ¹³For the number of your gods is *as many as* your cities, O Judah; and *as many as* the streets of Jerusalem *is* the number of the altars you have set up to *that* shameful thing, altars to burn incense to Baal.

10:23-25 Jeremiah prays that God will deal justly both with himself and ruined Judah and the nations that have destroyed the country.

10:23 Ps 37:23; Prov 3:5-6; 16:9; 20:24. A person cannot determine what is going to happen to him, and he should not try to direct his own life without God.

10:24 Ps 6:1; 38:1; 39:10-11.

10:25 See Ps 79:6-7. Notes on such prayers at Ps 35:8.

11:2 This covenant was the one God made with the people of Israel at Mount Sinai, first described in Exodus chapters 19 to 24. It was the basis of their whole existence as a nation, the most important thing of which Jeremiah need to remind them.

11:3 “Cursed”— see Deut 11:26-28; 27:15-26; 28:15-20; Gal 3:10.

11:4 Ex 19:5-6; Deut 6:3; Jer 7:23.

11:5 Ex 15:18; 17:7-8; Ex 3:8.

11:6-8 They did not do what God told them to do, so He brought on them the punishment for their sins that He said He would bring on them.

11:8 Compare with Ex 19:8; Deut 27:26.

11:9-10 They had agreed together not to follow the reforms brought in by good King Josiah (2 Kings 23). They determined to worship other gods and thus continued to break God’s covenant with them.

11:11 Their deliberate choice for evil was bound to bring God’s just judgment on them. It was now too late for them to escape it. Their cry for mercy would not be heard (14:12; Ezek 8:18).

11:12-28; Deut 32:38; Jud 10:14; 1 Kings 18:25-29; Isa 44:17-18; 57:13. If we choose the wrong source for help in trouble let us not be surprised if we receive no help. We should all understand that the failure of idols and gods does not mean the failure of the one true God.

11:13 “gods”— 2:28. When the one true God is not enough for people, there may be no limit to the number of gods they choose to worship. Baal is here called the shameful god. Sexual rites and sins were common in connection with his worship. Note at Jud 2:11.

¹⁴“Therefore do not pray for this people, or lift up a cry or prayer for them; for I will not listen to *them* when they cry out to me in their trouble.

¹⁵“What has my beloved to do in my house, since she has performed vile acts with many; and can the consecrated flesh avert disaster from you? When you do evil, then you rejoice.

¹⁶The LORD called your name, ‘A green olive tree, beautiful, and with good fruit’; with the noise of a great tumult he has set it on fire, and its branches are broken.

¹⁷“For the LORD of hosts who planted you, has proclaimed disaster against you, because of the evil of the house of Israel and of the house of Judah, which they have done against themselves, provoking me to anger by offering incense to Baal”. ¹⁸And the LORD has given me knowledge of it, and I know it, for you showed me their deeds. ¹⁹But I was like a gentle lamb that is brought to the slaughter; and I did not know that they had devised schemes against me, saying, “Let us destroy the tree with its fruit; and let us cut him off from the land of the living, that his name may no longer be remembered”.

²⁰But, O LORD of hosts, you who judge righteously, you who test the inner being and the heart,

let me see your vengeance on them; for to you I have committed my cause.

²¹Therefore thus says the LORD: “About the men of Anathoth who seek your life, saying, ‘Do not prophesy in the name of the LORD, so that you do not die by our hand’, ²²thus says the LORD of hosts, See, I will punish them. The young men will die by the sword; their sons and their daughters will die by famine, ²³and none of them will remain, for I will bring disaster on the men of Anathoth, the year of their punishment”.

12 You are righteous, O LORD, when I plead with you. Yet let me talk with you of your judgments.

Why does the way of the wicked prosper?

Why are all those who act very treacherously at ease?

² You have planted them; yes, they have taken root, they grow; yes, they produce fruit.

You are near on their lips, and far from their inner being.

³ But you, O LORD, know me. You have seen me, and tested my heart toward you.

Pull them out like sheep for the slaughter, and prepare them for the day of slaughter.

⁴ How long will the land mourn,

11:14 God speaks to Jeremiah. Compare 7:16; 15:1; 1 John 5:16.

11:15 “Beloved”— the people of Judah, God’s chosen people. Though they were terribly fallen, sinful and disobedient He still calls them “my beloved” (see also 3:1,14; 12:7; Song 8:6-7). But see how the beloved behaved! Temple worship by such people could not avert God’s judgment.

11:16-17 In the Bible individuals are compared to trees (Ps 1:3; 52:8; 128:3). Here the whole nation is called an olive tree, and God warns them that its branches will be broken. However much this might have been fulfilled by the Babylonian invasion the more complete fulfillment came after the Jews rejected Christ when He was on earth. See Rom 11:7-21.

11:18-23 The men of Anathoth, Jeremiah’s home town, plotted to kill him. They wanted to stop the preaching of the truth. Death was their reward.

11:19 “Lamb”— Ps 44:22; Rom 8:36.

“Remembered”— it is they who are not

remembered.

11:20 Ps 7:9,11.

“Vengeance”— Jeremiah did not take vengeance himself but left it to God. For notes on such prayers see Ps 35:8; 58:6-8; 69:22-28.

11:23 God has His time for everything He does.

12:1-2 Gen 18:25; Ps 9:8; 67:4; 75:2; 96:13; 98:9; John 17:25. Jeremiah knows God is just in all His actions, but he is troubled about the prosperity of the wicked. He asks the question that has troubled believers through the ages (Job 21:7-15; Ps 73:3-12; Eccl 7:15; Hab 1:13; Mal 3:15).

12:2 “Lips”, “inner being”— 3:10; Isa 29:13; Mark 7:6. The religion of hypocrites is in word, not deed.

12:3 Jeremiah knows he is not a hypocrite.

“Slaughter”— 11:19-20. They wanted to slaughter him like a sheep, so he appeals for God’s exact justice to be at work toward them. Note at Ps 18:25-26; 35:8.

12:4 “How long?”— Ps 6:3; 13:2; 35:17; 74:10; 89:46; 94:3.

- and the plants of every field wither
because the wickedness of those
who dwell in it?
The beasts and the birds are
consumed, because they said,
“He does not see the end we reach”.
- ⁵ *The LORD said*, “If you have run
with men on foot,
and they have worn you out,
then how can you compete with
horses?
And *if they wore you out* in the land
of peace,
in which you trusted,
then what will you do in the flooding
of Jordan?”
- ⁶ For even your brothers and the
household of your father have
dealt treacherously with you;
yes, they have called on many *to go*
after you.
Do not believe them, though
they speak smooth words to you.
- ⁷ “I have forsaken my house,
I have left my inheritance,
I have given my dearly beloved
into the hand of her enemies.
- ⁸ My inheritance is to me like
a lion in the forest;
it roars against me;
therefore I have hated it.
- ⁹ My inheritance *is* to me *like*
a speckled bird;
the birds all around *are* against it.
Come, assemble all the beasts of the
field, come to devour.
- ¹⁰ Many shepherds have destroyed
my vineyard,
they have trampled my portion
underfoot,
they have made my pleasant portion
a desolate wilderness.
- ¹¹ They have made it desolate,
and being desolate it mourns to me.
The whole land has been made
desolate,
because no one takes *it* to heart.
- ¹² The despoilers have come over all
the desolate heights in the
wilderness;
for the sword of the LORD will devour
from *one* end of the land
to the *other* end of the land.
No one will have peace.
- ¹³ They have sown wheat,
but will reap thorns.
They have taken pains,
but will not profit.
And they will be disappointed
about the harvest,
because of the fierce anger
of the LORD.
- ¹⁴ “Thus says the LORD against all my evil
neighbours who touch the inheritance which
I have caused my people Israel to inherit: See,
I will uproot them from their land, and uproot
the house of Judah from among them. ¹⁵ And
it will happen after I have uprooted them that
I will return, and have compassion on them,
and will bring them back, each man to his
inheritance, and each man to his land. ¹⁶ And
it will come about, if they will diligently learn
the ways of my people, to swear by my name,
‘The LORD lives’, as they taught my people

“*Wither*”— suggests a drought. God sent droughts during those days of wickedness in Judah (3:3).

12:5 God does not answer Jeremiah’s question, but warns him that even greater difficulties await him in the future. God tells us all we need to know, not necessarily all we want to know.

12:6 It seems from this that at least some of Jeremiah’s relatives participated in the plot to kill him (11:18-19).

12:7-13 God speaks of “my” house, “my” inheritance, “my” vineyard, “my” field. He means, of course, His temple, His people, His land. But He will give it all into the hands of destroyers. Notice that God calls Israel “my beloved” in v 7 and yet in v 8 speaks of hating. He loved Israel but her ways were so detestable He could not bear them any longer and turned her over to her enemies for punishment.

12:9 Some birds will attack a strange bird not of their kind.

12:10 Shepherds here refer to rulers.

12:11 “*No one takes it to heart*”— 5:1; Isa 64:7; Ex 22:30.

12:12 “*The sword of the Lord*”— Ezek 21:1-10; Isa 27:1; Deut 32:40-43. Israel’s enemies would be like a sword in God’s hand to punish His people.

12:13 Lev 26:20; Deut 28:38-42.

“*Anger*”— notes at Num 25:3; Ps 90:7-11.

12:14-17 God will punish the neighboring nations that seize any of Israel’s land. See 2 Kings 24:2. Observe the word of hope in these verses. God is compassionate – Ps 78:38; 86:15; 111:4; 145:8. But just as Israel had learned evil ways from the surrounding nations, so later on the nations must learn good ways from Israel, or else face annihilation.

to swear by Baal, then they will be established among my people. ¹⁷But if they will not obey, I will fully uproot and destroy that nation, says the LORD”.

13 Thus the LORD said to me, “Go and get yourself a linen sash and put it around your waist, but do not put it in water”. ²So I got a sash according to the word of the LORD, and put it around my waist.

³And the word of the LORD came to me the second time, saying: ⁴“Take the sash that you bought, which *is* around your waist, and get up and go to the Euphrates, and hide it there in a hole in the rock”. ⁵So I went, and hid it by the Euphrates, as the LORD commanded me.

⁶And after many days it came about that the LORD said to me, “Get up; go to the Euphrates, and take from there the sash which I commanded you to hide there”. ⁷Then I went to the Euphrates, and dug, and took the sash from the place where I had hidden it, and saw that the sash was ruined; it was not useful for anything.

⁸Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying, ⁹“Thus says the LORD: In this way I will ruin the pride of Judah, and the great pride of Jerusalem. ¹⁰This evil people who refuse to hear my words, who walk in the imagination of their heart, and follow other gods to serve and to worship them, will be like this sash which is good for nothing. ¹¹For as the sash clings to a man’s waist, so I caused the whole house of Israel and the whole house of Judah to cling to me, says the LORD, so that they might be my people for a name, and for praise, and for glory; but they would not listen.

13:1-11 Another object lesson to illustrate a truth (1:11-14; 18:1-6; 24:1-10). The people of Israel would be as useless to God as a ruined and useless belt (v 10).

13:4 The Hebrew word here (Pereth – just PRH in the original) may indicate either the Euphrates River or a town three miles from Anathoth called Parah. The River Euphrates is 400 kilometers from Jerusalem. It is unlikely (but certainly not impossible) that Jeremiah went there.

13:9 Lev 26:19; Prov 6:16-17; Isa 25:11; Amos 6:8; Zeph 3:11.

13:11 See here the reason God chose Israel (or any people or any individual) – Isa 43:21; Eph 1:4-6,12,14; 1 Pet 2:9.

13:12-13 25:15-19; Ps 60:3; Isa 51:17-20; Ezek 23:32-34; Rev 14:9-10.

¹²“Therefore you shall speak to them this word: ‘Thus says the LORD God of Israel, Every bottle will be filled with wine.’ And they will say to you, ‘Do we not know for a certainty that every bottle will be filled with wine?’ ¹³Then you shall say to them, ‘Thus says the LORD: See, I will fill all the inhabitants of this land, the kings who sit on David’s throne, and the priests, and the prophets, and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, with drunkenness. ¹⁴And I will dash them against one another, the fathers and the sons together, says the LORD. I will not take pity, or spare, or have mercy, but will destroy them.’ ”

¹⁵ Listen, and give ear. Do not be proud, for the LORD has spoken.

¹⁶ Give glory to the LORD your God before he causes darkness, and before your feet stumble on the dark mountains, and while you look for light he turns it into the shadow of death *and* makes *it* dense darkness.

¹⁷ But if you will not hear this, my soul will weep in secret places because of *your* pride, and my eyes will weep bitterly, and run down with tears, because the LORD’s flock will be carried away captive.

¹⁸ Say to the king and to the queen: “Humble yourselves, sit lower down, for your rule will come down, your glorious crown”.

¹⁹ The cities of the south will be closed up, and no one will open *them*.

13:14 God will not remove all pity and compassion from His heart. He will not, cannot change His nature. But He will not let these tender feelings keep Him from the necessary work of just judgment.

13:15 When men speak God’s message there is always the danger of arrogant rejection on the part of those who hear.

13:16 Repentance is the only thing that can avert the coming darkness (1 Sam 2:9; Isa 8:22; 59:9; Matt 8:12; Jude 13).

13:17 9:1; 14:17. Arrogance is always a reason for tears.

13:18 This probably refers to King Jehoiachin and his mother Nehushta (2 Kings 24:8-12 – fulfilled in 597 BC).

13:19 20:4.

All of Judah will be carried away captive;
it will be completely carried away captive.

- ²⁰ Lift up your eyes and see those who come from the north.
Where *is* the flock *that* was given to you, your beautiful flock?
- ²¹ What will you say when he punishes you?
For you have taught them *to be* leaders *and* heads over you.
Will not sorrows seize you like a woman in labour?
- ²² And if you say in your heart,
“Why have these things come on me?”
Because of the greatness of your iniquity your skirts will be removed,
and your heels made bare.
- ²³ “Can the Ethiopian change his skin,
or the leopard his spots?
Then you also may do good,
you who are accustomed to doing evil.
- ²⁴ Therefore I will scatter them
like the straw that vanishes by the wind from the desert.
- ²⁵ This *is* your lot,
your measured portion from me”,
says the LORD,
“because you have forgotten me,
and trusted in falsehood.
- ²⁶ Therefore I will strip off your skirts
over your face,
so that your shame may appear.
- ²⁷ I have seen your adulteries,
and your neighings, the vileness
of your prostitution,
and your abominations on the hills,
in the fields. Woe to you,

O Jerusalem! Will you not be made clean?
When *will it* ever be?”

- 14** The word of the LORD that came to Jeremiah concerning the drought:
- ² “Judah mourns, and its gates languish;
they mourn from the ground,
and the cry of Jerusalem has gone up.
- ³ And their nobles have sent their servants for water;
they came to the cisterns *and* found no water;
they returned with their vessels empty;
they were ashamed and dismayed,
and covered their heads,
- ⁴ because the ground was parched,
for there was no rain on the earth.
The plowmen were disappointed;
they covered their heads.
- ⁵ Yes, the deer also gave birth in the field, and left *it*,
because there was no grass.
- ⁶ And the wild donkeys stood on the high places;
they sniffed the wind like jackals;
their eyes failed, because *there was* no grass”.
- ⁷ O LORD, though our evil deeds testify against us,
act for your name’s sake;
for our backslidings are many.
We have sinned against you.
- ⁸ O the hope of Israel, its saviour in time of trouble,
why should you be like a stranger in the land,

13:20 “North”— 1:14; 4:6; 6:22.

“Flock”— the people of Judah.

13:21 “Woman”— 4:31; 6:24.

13:22 Verse 25; 2:17; 4:18; 5:8-9,19; 6:19; 2:35.

13:23 A man is unable to change even an outward thing in his nature such as the colour of his skin. How much more impossible for him to change his inner nature and his whole course of life (17:9; Ps 51; Rom 7:14,18,21). But what a man cannot do for himself God can do for him (Rom 8:1-4). This is the only hope for any person on earth.

13:24-25 Ps 1:4; Lev 26:33.

13:26-27 The people of Jerusalem had behaved like a harlot (2:2,5,20). Now they would be publicly disgraced and punished.

13:27 “Will you not be made clean?”— the people

could not cleanse themselves but they could turn to God and cry for cleansing (Ps 51:2,7).

14:1-6 3:3; 12:4; 23:10. This was a punishment for their sins (Lev 26:19-20). They could escape from this trouble only by repentance and turning to the true and living God.

14:7-9 Jeremiah speaks on behalf of the people. He knows very well the reason for their trouble.

14:8 “Like a stranger”— a sad thing indeed that the true God should be like a stranger in His own land, among His own people (2:8; 4:22; 8:7; 9:3. Compare John 1:10-11). A sad thing too that He should be a stranger to the large majority of the human race. Most people neither know Him nor wish to know Him.

and like a traveller *who* turns aside
to stay for a night?

⁹ Why should you be like a man
astonished,
like a mighty man *who* cannot save?
For you, O LORD, *are* in our midst,
and we are called by your name.
Do not leave us.

¹⁰ Thus says the LORD to this people:
“Thus they have loved to wander.
They have not restrained their feet;
therefore the LORD does not accept
them.
He will now remember their
wickedness,
and punish their sins”.

¹¹ Then the LORD said to me, “Do not
pray for this people for *their* good. ¹² When
they fast, I will not hear their cry; and
when they sacrifice burnt offerings and
offerings, I will not accept them, but I will
consume them by sword and by famine
and by plague”.

¹³ Then I said, “Ah, Lord God! See, the
prophets say to them, ‘You will not see the
sword, nor will you have famine, but I will
give you lasting peace in this place.’ ”

14:9 Jeremiah felt that God was still among them but inactive. He was not behaving like their “Saviour in times of trouble” – v 8.

14:10 Again and again God had to give the reason for the punishment He sent on the people. He was not lacking in ability to save them, but in His justice determined that He should not.

14:11 Evidently Jeremiah forgot God’s instruction to him in 7:16 when he made the prayer of vs 7-9.

14:12 We see again that God will not accept some kinds of worship (6:20; 7:21). Compare John 4:23-24. The three words “sword”, “famine”, and “plague” are repeated over and over in Jeremiah. They were the three chief instruments God used in the destruction of Israel (and often no doubt other peoples when He decides to destroy them). See Lev 26:25-26; Deut 28:20-26.

14:13 Jeremiah tries to find some excuse for the people. Does he wish to remove from them some of the responsibility for their behavior? But see 5:31.

14:14 23:16,25; 27:14; Ezek 13:2; Matt 7:15; 24:11,24; 2 Pet 2:1; 1 John 4:1. Notes on prophets at 28:1-17.

“*I did not send them*” – 23:21,32; 29:31; Ezek 13:6. Oh, how eager some are to have the name of prophet and how they run and deceive themselves and others! True prophets are often much more reluctant to go and speak (1:6; Ex 4:13). This

¹⁴ Then the LORD said to me, “The prophets prophesy lies in my name. I did not send them, and I have not given commands to them or spoken to them. They prophesy to you a false vision and divination, and a worthless thing, and the deceit of their heart. ¹⁵ Therefore thus says the LORD concerning the prophets who prophesy in my name though I did not send them and who say, ‘There will be no sword and famine in this land’; by sword and famine those prophets will come to an end. ¹⁶ And the people to whom they prophesy will be thrown out into the streets of Jerusalem because of the famine and the sword, and will have no one to bury them, *neither* them, *nor* their wives, nor their sons, nor their daughters; for I will pour their wickedness on them. ¹⁷ “Therefore you shall speak this word to them:

‘Let my eyes run down with tears
night and day, and let them not
cease,
for the virgin daughter of my people
has been broken with a great stroke,
with a very grievous blow.

¹⁸ If I go out into the field, then, see,

verse gives three ways in which false prophets get their false messages.

“*False vision*” – since God does not give any false vision it is safe to say that sometimes such things come from demons or Satan himself. Sometimes they come in the form of dreams (23:25).

“*Divination and a worthless thing*” – or “worthless divination” (Deut 18:10-14). False prophets think they get some supernatural message through signs and omens, sometimes by consulting idols or spirits.

“*Deceit of their own heart*” – false prophets in their proud hearts may accept their own thoughts and ideas as divinely inspired. Or this may mean that because their hearts are deceitful they knowingly prophesy false things. Through these three ways – false vision, worthless divination, and prophecies from deceitful hearts – much that is false in religion has gone out into the world, and still goes out.

14:15 False prophets will get what they deserve, will experience the exact outworking of justice.

14:16 People who willingly, gladly listen to false prophets (5:31) are also guilty and will be punished. Their punishment too will fit their crime.

14:17-18 8:21; 9:1; 13:17. God told Jeremiah to speak these words because they express the pain in His own heart as well as that of Jeremiah’s (note on 4:19-26).

those slain by the sword!
 And if I enter the city, then, see,
 those who are sick from the famine!
 Yes, both the prophet and the priest
 go away into a land that they
 do not know.’ ”

¹⁹ Have you utterly rejected Judah?
 Has your soul loathed Zion?
 Why have you struck us,
 and *there is* no healing for us?
 We looked for peace,
 but no good *has come*;
 and for the time of healing,
 but see trouble.

²⁰ We acknowledge, O LORD,
 our wickedness, *and*
 the guilt of our fathers,
 for we have sinned against you.

²¹ Do not abhor us,
 for your name’s sake do not disgrace
 your glorious throne.
 Remember, do not break your
 covenant with us.

²² Are there *any* among
 the worthless *idols* of the Gentiles
 that can cause rain?
 Or can the skies give showers?
 Are you not the one,
 O LORD our God?
 Therefore we will wait for you,
 for you have made all these *things*.

15 Then the LORD said to me, “Though
 Moses and Samuel stood before me,
 yet my mind *would not be favourable* toward
 this people. Throw them out of my sight, and
 let them go. ²And it shall be, if they say to
 you, ‘Where will we go?’ that you must tell

14:18 “*A land that they do not know*”— Babylonia.

14:19-22 God had twice told Jeremiah not to pray for the people. But they are in his heart and he cannot refrain from praying. How different from some people who will not pray no matter how much the Word of God urges them to do so!

14:20 Jeremiah is speaking for the people, but they themselves had not yet come to this place of confession.

14:21 Notice “your” name, “your” throne, “your” covenant. Jeremiah is concerned with God’s honor. Compare Ex 32:11-13.

14:22 Jeremiah was aware of two errors in people’s thinking regarding rain – one, gods other than Jehovah God can send it; or two, rain comes by mere natural causes apart from God. And he knew the truth – Lev 26:4; Deut 11:11,14; Job 5:10;

them, ‘Thus says the LORD,

Those who *are* for death,
 to death, and those who *are*
 for the sword,
 to the sword, and those who *are*
 for the famine, to the famine,
 and those who *are* for captivity,
 to captivity.’

³“And I will appoint over them four kinds *of destruction*, says the LORD: the sword to kill, and the dogs to tear, and the birds of the sky and the beasts of the earth to devour and destroy. ⁴And I will make them objects of horror to all kingdoms of the earth, because of Manasseh the son of Hezekiah, king of Judah, for *what* he did in Jerusalem.

⁵“For who will have pity on you,
 Jerusalem? Or who will mourn
 for you?
 Or who will turn aside to ask how
 you are doing?

⁶ You have forsaken me,
 says the LORD.
 You have gone backward.
 Therefore I will stretch out my hand
 against you, and destroy you.
 I am tired of relenting.

⁷ And I will winnow them with a
 winnowing fan at the gates of
 the land.

I will bereave *them* of children,
 I will destroy my people, *since*
 they do not turn from their ways.

⁸ Their widows will increase
 before me more than the sand of
 the seas.

38:28,37; Ps 68:9; 135:7; 147:8.

15:1 Moses and Samuel were probably the greatest intercessors for Israel in the whole Old Testament (Ex 32:11-14,30-34; Num 14:13-23; Deut 9:18-20; 1 Sam 7:5-9; 12:19-25). See Ps 99:6. But the people had become so wicked and rebellious that even the prayers of such men would not save them from destruction and exile.

15:2 God knows whom to appoint for what punishment.

15:4 “*All kingdoms*”— Deut 28:25; Jer 24:9; 29:18; 34:17.

“*Manasseh*”— the most wicked of all Judah’s kings until he repented (2 Kings 21:1-16; 23:26-27; 24:3-4).

15:5-9 The people refused to repent (v 7). God would no longer have pity on them (v 6; 13:14). Destruction was certain.

At midday I will bring a destroyer
on them, against the mothers
of the young men.
I will cause anguish and terror
to fall suddenly on *the city*.
9 She who has given birth to seven
will languish.
She will breathe her last.
Her sun will go down while *it is*
still day.
She will be put to shame and dismay;
and I will deliver the rest of them
to the sword before their enemies,
says the LORD".
10 Woe to me, my mother,
that you have given birth to me,
a man of strife and contention
to the whole land!
I have not lent *money* on usury,
nor have men lent to me on usury;
yet every one of them curses me.
11 The LORD said, "It will certainly be
well with your remnant.
I will certainly cause the enemy
to treat you *well* at the time
of disaster and in the time of
affliction.
12 Can anyone break iron,
the northern iron and the bronze?
13 I will give your wealth and your
treasures to plunder without cost,
because of all your sins,
throughout your territories.
14 And I will make *you* go with
your enemies into a land *which*

you do not know,
for a fire is kindled in my anger *that*
will burn against you".
15 O LORD, you understand.
Remember me, and look after me,
and avenge me on my persecutors.
Because of your patience do not take
me away.
Know that for your sake
I have suffered rebuke.
16 Your words were found,
and I ate them;
and your word was to me the joy
and rejoicing of my heart,
for I am called by your name,
O LORD God of hosts.
17 I did not sit in the gathering
of the mockers, or rejoice
with them.
I sat alone because of your hand,
for you filled me with indignation.
18 Why is my pain without end,
and my wound incurable?
It refuses to be healed.
Will you be to me like a deceptive
stream *whose waters fail*?
19 Therefore thus says the LORD,
"If you return, then I will
restore you,
and you will stand before me;
and if you take out the precious
from the vile,
you will be as my mouth.
Let them return to you, but do not
return to them.

15:10 "Birth"— Job 3:1; 10:18-19; Jer 20:14-15.

"Contention to the whole land"— Jeremiah should have expected this and refused to be cast down by it (1:18-19). But he had a sensitive, melancholy nature.

15:11 "I will certainly cause"— v 20; 1:8,19. God knew Jeremiah needed encouragement (Ps 103:13-14) and so repeated His promise and added another.

"To treat you well"— see 39:11-14.

15:12-14 God now speaks to the people of Judah through Jeremiah.

15:13 "Sins"— 4:18; 5:9; 6:19; 17:3.

15:14 Deut 32:22. Notes on God's anger at Num 25:3; Ps 90:7-11.

15:15 Comforting indeed it is to have a God of tender mercy and patience, Who understands completely and loves eternally.

15:16 "Ate"— 1:9; Ezek 2:8; 3:3; Rev 10:9-10.

"Joy and rejoicing"— Ps 1:2; 19:10; 119:72,103.

"Name"— God's spokesmen belong to Him and bear His name before the world.

15:17 The true man of God may be called to a

lonely life, the whole world seemingly against him and he alone against the world. Jeremiah did not marry and had few friends. He was filled with anger at the sins of the people and the way they had rebelled against the true and living God.

15:18 "Pain", "wound"— his ministry of warning and denouncing brought him no joy. He could feel in his own heart the sword that threatened the people of Judah. Yet it was the work God gave him to do and he bowed in obedience to God's will.

"Waters fail"— compare Job 6:15-20.

15:19-21 Did Jeremiah need to repent or turn to God anew? Evidently so. He had a tendency to complain against God's dealings with him, to sink into depression instead of going ahead in living faith. Jeremiah, as all God's servants, as all of Adam's descendants, had a sinful nature. The truth of 17:9 applied to him as much as to anyone else. See also Gen 9:21; 12:13; Ex 32:2-4; Num 20:9-12; 2 Sam 11; Matt 26:69-75; Jam 3:2.

²⁰ And I will make you to this people
a fortified bronze wall;
and they will fight against you,
but they will not prevail against you,
for I *am* with you to save you and
to deliver you, says the LORD.

²¹ And I will deliver you out of the hand
of the wicked,
and I will redeem you from the hand
of the violent”.

16 The word of the LORD came again to me, saying, ²“You must not marry, or have sons or daughters in this place. ³For thus says the LORD concerning the sons and the daughters who are born in this place, and concerning their mothers who gave them birth, and concerning their fathers who begot them in this land: ⁴They will die of deadly diseases. They will not be lamented, and they will not be buried, *but* will be like refuse on the surface of the ground. They will be consumed by sword and famine, and their corpses will be food for the birds of the sky, and for the beasts of the earth.

⁵“For thus says the LORD: Do not enter the house of mourning, or go to lament or mourn them; for I have taken away my peace, loving kindness and mercy from this people, says the LORD. ⁶Both the great and the small will die in this land. They will not be buried, and *people* will not lament for them, or cut themselves, or shave their heads for them, ⁷And *people* will not break *bread* in mourning for them, to comfort them for the dead, and *people* will not give them a comforting cup to drink for their father or

for their mother.

⁸“You also must not go into the house of feasting, to sit with them to eat and to drink. ⁹For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: See, in your sight and in your days I will put a stop to the voice of mirth, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride.

¹⁰“And it will come about, when you tell this people all these words, and they say to you, ‘Why has the LORD proclaimed all this great disaster against us?’ Or, ‘What *is* our iniquity, or what *is* our sin that we have committed against the LORD our God?’ ¹¹Then you shall say to them, ‘Because your fathers have forsaken me, says the LORD, and have followed other gods and served them and worshipped them, and have forsaken me and have not kept my law; ¹²and you have done worse than your fathers, for, see, every one of you follows the imagination of his evil heart, that they may not listen to me. ¹³Therefore I will throw you out of this land into a land that you do not know, *neither* you nor your fathers. And there you will serve other gods day and night. There I will not show you favour.

¹⁴“Therefore, see, the days are coming, says the LORD, when it will no longer be said, ‘The LORD lives, who brought the children of Israel up out of the land of Egypt’, ¹⁵But, ‘The LORD lives, who brought the children of Israel up from the land of the north, and from all the lands where he had driven them.’ And I will bring them back into their land that I gave to their fathers.

¹⁶“See, I will send for many fishermen, says the LORD, and they will fish for them; and

16:1-2 It is not God’s will for all to marry (1 Cor 7:1,7,8). It was not good for the man Adam to be alone (Gen 2:18), but it was good for Jeremiah – good because it was God’s will for him. **16:4** 14:12.

16:5 Ezek 24:16-17,22,23. God would not enter into the common events of the life of His rebellious people any more, and would not permit Jeremiah to do so (vs 6-9). They deserved only punishment and destruction and that is what He appointed for them.

16:10 Apart from the full enlightenment of God’s Spirit it is impossible for a people or an individual to see sin as God sees it (5:19; Mal 1:6-7; 2:17; 3:7-8). Judah’s people sunk so low in wickedness, unbelief, and rebellion, they wondered what God had against them to punish them so greatly. This is the spiritual blindness of fallen mankind. People usually tend to think they are far better

than they really are.

16:11-13 God gives a full answer to the people’s question. Their ancestors were bad enough. They were worse.

16:12 “*Evil heart*” – 3:17; 7:24; 9:14; 11:8; 13:10; 18:12; Acts 7:51; Rom 2:5. An evil heart is what we all have by nature. Compare 17:9; Matt 7:11; Rom 3:9; 7:18; Eph 2:3.

16:13 They rejected the true God and chose the gods of other nations, so God would see to it that they got their fill of that.

16:14-15 Suddenly in denunciation and words concerning punishment and destruction there comes this sweet promise for the future. How like God to do this!

16:16 The promise of v 15 would not be fulfilled for more than 70 years. Now Judah’s people must face God’s anger.

afterwards I will send for many hunters, and they will hunt them from every mountain, and from every hill, and out of the holes of the rocks. ¹⁷For my eyes are on all their ways. They are not hidden from my face, and their wickedness is not hidden from my eyes. ¹⁸And first I will repay *them* double for their wickedness and their sin, because they have defiled my land, they have filled my inheritance with the carcasses of their detestable and abominable idols”.

¹⁹ O LORD, my strength,
and my fortress,
and my refuge in the day of affliction,
the Gentiles will come to you
from the ends of the earth,
and will say,
“Surely our fathers have inherited
lies,
vanity, and profitless *things*”.

²⁰ Will a man make gods for himself?
But they are not gods.

²¹ “Therefore, see, this time I will
cause them to know;
I will cause them to know
my hand and my might,
and they will know that my name is
the LORD.

17 “The sin of Judah is written
with a pen of iron, and with
the point of a diamond.
*It is engraved on the tablet
of their heart, and on the horns*

of your altars,
² While their children remember
their altars and their groves
by the green trees on
the high hills.

³ O my mountain in the land,
I will give your wealth and
all your treasures to plunder,
together with your high places
because of sin throughout all
your territory.

⁴ And you, *you* yourself,
will let go of your inheritance
that I gave you.
And I will cause you to serve
your enemies in a land which you
do not know.
For you have kindled a fire
in my anger, *which* will burn
forever”.

⁵ Thus says the LORD:
“Cursed is the man who trusts
in man and makes flesh his arm,
and whose heart departs from
the LORD.

⁶ For he will be like a bush in
the desert,
and will not see when good comes,
but will live in the parched places
of the desert, *in* an uninhabited
salt land.

⁷ “Blessed is the man who trusts
in the LORD, and who has the
LORD as his hope.

16:17 32:19; Eccl 12:14; Heb 4:13.

16:18 Let us learn once and for all what the true God thinks of idolatry.

16:19-20 Jeremiah speaks.

16:19 “*Refuge*”— Ps 7:1; 18:2; 46:1.

“*Gentiles*”— non-Jewish nations— 3:17; Ps 45:17; 117:1-2; Isa 2:2-3. The nations will learn at last that the true and living God is Jehovah and that their gods are not God, nor a part of God, nor related to God in any way.

16:21 “*Cause them to know*”— God is a great Teacher. See Ps 25:4-5,8; 119:12,26; John 14:26; 16:13. He will teach us His power and might and His true name (Jehovah) and His nature.

17:1 This speaks of a permanent record. It would not be effaced from their hearts as long as they lived. Their altars to false gods revealed their sins for all to see.

17:2 Their sin was also in their children’s hearts.
“*Groves*”— or “*Asherah poles*”— symbols of the goddess Asherah, sometimes worshiped by Israel and Judah.

17:3-4 15:13-14.

17:4 “*You have kindled a fire*”— all that men lose of God’s good gifts, all the punishment that comes on them is altogether their own fault; all good things they receive is altogether God’s grace.

17:5-8 The great contrast between those who trust men and those who trust in Jehovah God.
17:5-6 2 Chron 32:7-8; Ps 108:12; 118:8; 146:3; Isa 10:3; 30:5; 31:3; Jer 2:36; 2 Cor 1:9. The tendency of men is to forget the living God and look to other men for help, strength, and deliverance from trouble. God here pronounces a curse on such.

17:7 Here is a key verse about blessedness. Every blessing promised in the Bible comes only in this way. Everywhere in His Word God emphasizes the importance of trusting Him— Ps 32:10; 34:8; 37:4-5; 40:4; Prov 3:5; 16:20; 29:25; Hebrews chapter 11. Notes on “blessed” at Gen 12:1-3; Num 6:22; Deut 28:2-14; Ps 1:1-3; 119:1-2.

- ⁸ For he will be like a tree planted
by the waters,
which spreads out its roots
by the river and does not see when
heat comes.
Its leaf will be green, and it will not be
anxious in the year of drought,
and it will not cease yielding fruit.
- ⁹ “The heart *is* deceitful above
all *things*,
and desperately wicked.
Who can know it?
- ¹⁰ I, the LORD. *I* search the heart,
I test the inner being,
to give to each one according
to his ways, *and* according
to the fruit of his deeds.
- ¹¹ As the partridge sits *on eggs*,
but does not hatch *them*,
so the one who unjustly gets riches
will leave them in the middle
of his days,
and at his end will *be shown to*
be a fool”.
- ¹² A glorious high throne from the
beginning *is* the place of our
sanctuary.
- ¹³ O LORD, the hope of Israel,
all who forsake you will be put to
shame.
“*And* those who depart from me
will be written in the earth,
because they have forsaken
the LORD,
the fountain of living waters”.
- ¹⁴ Heal me, O LORD, and I will be
healed.
Save me, and I will be saved,
for you *are* my praise.
- ¹⁵ Behold, they say to me,
“Where *is* the word
of the LORD? Let it come now”.
- ¹⁶ As for me, I have not hurried
away from *being* a shepherd
following you,
and I have not desired the day
of disaster. You know.
What came out of my lips was
right before you.
- ¹⁷ Be not a terror to me.
You *are* my hope in the day
of disaster.
- ¹⁸ Let those who persecute me be
put to shame,

17:8 Ps 1:3; 92:12-15.

17:9 Here is the word of God Himself concerning man’s heart. See also 5:23; 7:24; 16:12; 18:12. If we have any true wisdom at all we will believe what God reveals about us. Everywhere in the Bible He tells us what we are really like – Gen 6:5; 8:21; Ps 51:5; Eccl 9:3; Matt 15:19; Rom 1:21; 3:9; 7:18; Eph 2:1-3; 4:22.

“*Wicked*” – or “incurably sick”. Every human being has a sinful nature, a heart prone to follow evil, a nature spiritually sick. No man fully understands its moral sickness, its deceitfulness, its depravity. People’s hearts deceive them into thinking they are not nearly as bad as the above verses declare, and that they can manage to go to heaven without repenting, without asking the God of heaven to forgive and save them. They can think well of themselves even after breaking the most important commands in the Word of God or after committing the worst kind of crimes (see John 16:2-3). How few there are who view things as they really are, as Paul stated it in Rom 3:9. Many people, if they read that verse, in their hearts will want to answer “yes” to the question he asks there, feeling that they are better than a great many others. Such people lack the true enlightenment that comes from God to know what they are and what they need.

17:10 God examines the heart and mind and

knows all about the inner thoughts, desires and motives of men (1 Sam 16:7; 2 Chron 6:30; Ps 7:9; 17:3; 94:11; 139:23-24; Prov 17:3; Jer 11:20; Ezek 11:5; Matt 9:4; John 2:24-25). Let us listen to Him as He tells us the true state of things.

17:11 Jeremiah applies the truth of v 10. See Prov 23:5. “Fool” means without moral, ethical sense (Ps 14:1; Prov 1:7).

17:12 Ps 80:1; 99:1. God was said to sit enthroned over the mercy seat over the ark between the cherubim in the temple in Jerusalem.

17:13 There was no hope for Israel apart from Jehovah God. To forsake Him was to forsake any possibility of a blessed future. As writing in dust is soon blotted out so would they be. They who forsake God, the source of life, should not vainly imagine they are recorded in the book of life (Ps 69:28; Rev 3:6).

“*Fountain of living waters*” – 2:13; John 4:14; 7:38; Rev 22:17.

17:14 15:18; Ps 6:2.

17:15 “*Where*” – spoken sarcastically. At this time the people did not regard Jeremiah as a true prophet.

17:16 Though the people rejected him Jeremiah knew that God had appointed him, and he did not try to escape from his responsibility to be a shepherd to them.

17:17 Job 6:4; 9:34; 13:21; Ps 88:15-16.

17:18 Notes on such prayers at Ps 35:8.

but do not let me be put to shame.
 Let them be dismayed, but do not
 let me be dismayed.
 Bring on them the day of disaster,
 and destroy them with double
 destruction.

¹⁹Thus the LORD said to me: “Go and stand in the gate of the children of the people, where the kings of Judah come in, and where they go out, and in all the gates of Jerusalem, ²⁰and say to them, ‘Hear the word of the LORD, you kings of Judah, and all Judah, and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, who enter in by these gates, ²¹thus the LORD said: Take heed to yourselves, and carry no load on the Sabbath day, nor bring *it* in through the gates of Jerusalem, ²²nor carry a load out of your houses on the Sabbath day, nor do any work, but keep the Sabbath day holy, as I commanded your fathers. ²³But they did not obey or incline their ear, but made their necks stiff, so that they might not hear or receive instruction. ²⁴And it will come about, if you carefully listen to me, says the LORD, to bring no burden in through the gates of this city on the Sabbath day, but keep the Sabbath day holy, doing no work in it, ²⁵then through the gates of this city will enter kings and princes who sit on the throne of David, riding in chariots and on horses, they, and their princes, the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and this city will remain forever. ²⁶And they will come from the cities of Judah, and from the places around Jerusalem, and from the land of Benjamin, and from the plain, and from the mountains, and

17:19-22 Ex 20:8,10; Deut 5:12,14-16.

17:23 7:26; 19:15; Acts 7:51. One of the worst of all their many sins.

17:24-27 God’s commands about the Sabbath would be a test for the people. If they began to obey God in this it would be a sign of their repentance and God would be merciful to them (Isa 58:13-14). If they refused obedience in this, obedience could not be expected in anything, and the judgment of God would come on Jerusalem.

17:26 “*Sacrifices of praise*” – or “thank offerings” – note at Lev 7:12-13.

18:1-10 Another object lesson – 1:11-14; 13:1-11. If a clay vessel is marred in a potter’s hands the fault may be either in the clay or in the potter. If nations or individuals are marred in God’s

from the south, bringing burnt offerings and sacrifices and grain offerings and incense, and bringing sacrifices of praise, to the house of the LORD. ²⁷But if you will not listen to me to keep the Sabbath day holy, and not to carry a load, entering the gates of Jerusalem on the Sabbath day, then I will kindle a fire in its gates, and it will devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and it will not be quenched”.

18 The word which came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying: ²“Arise and go down to the potter’s house, and there I will cause you to hear my words”. ³Then I went down to the potter’s house, and saw that he doing a work on the wheel. ⁴And the pot that he was making of clay was marred in the hand of the potter. So he remade it into another pot, as seemed good to the potter to make *it*.

⁵Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying, ⁶“O house of Israel, cannot I do with you like this potter? says the LORD. See, as the clay *is* in the potter’s hand, so *are* you in my hand, O house of Israel. ⁷*At any moment* I may speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck *it up*, and to pull *it down*, and to destroy *it*. ⁸If that nation, against whom I have proclaimed *this*, turns from their evil, I will relent concerning the disaster that I thought to do to them. ⁹And *at any moment* I may speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build *it* and to plant *it*. ¹⁰If it does evil in my sight, not obeying my voice, then I will relent concerning the good with which I said I would bless them.

hands the fault can only be in them (7:13,26; 17:23; Matt 23:37). But though individuals or nations have wills and can resist God’s work, yet He retains control over them and can continue His work either to bring blessing or disaster on them. But here is good hope for anyone who has marred his (or her) life and cannot make it as he thinks it should be. Let us put our poor clay in the hands of the master Potter and let Him make a good vessel for His use.

18:7-10 In some measure God’s working will be according to the obedience or disobedience of individuals or nations to His word (26:13; 36:3; Ex 32:1,4; Ezek 18:30; Jonah 3:1-10). Observe that God as the sovereign of the universe is active in the world uprooting or planting kingdoms, destroying them or building them up.

¹¹“Now therefore go, speak to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, saying, ‘Thus says the LORD: See, I am preparing disaster against you, and devising a plan against you. Each one of you now turn from his evil way, and make your ways and your deeds good.’” ¹²And they said, “There is no hope; but we will follow our own plans, and each one of us will act according to the imagination of his evil heart”.

¹³Therefore thus says the LORD:

“Ask now among the nations,
who has heard such things?
The virgin of Israel has done a very
horrible thing.

¹⁴Will the snow of Lebanon leave
the rocky fields?
Or will the cold flowing waters
that come from another place
be forsaken?

¹⁵Because my people have forgotten me,
they have burned incense to
empty *idols*,

and have made themselves stumble
in their ways *from* the ancient
paths, to walk in pathways,
not *on* a way built up,

¹⁶making their land desolate,
and an object of perpetual hissing.
Everyone who passes by it will be
astonished and shake his head.

¹⁷I will scatter them before the enemy
as with an east wind.
I will show them the back, and not
the face,
in the day of their calamity”.

¹⁸Then they said, “Come, and let us devise

plans against Jeremiah; for the law will not perish from the priest, or counsel from the wise, or the word from the prophet. Come, and let us attack him with the tongue, and let us not pay attention to any of his words”.

¹⁹Listen to me, O LORD, and hear
the voice of those who contend
with me.

²⁰Will evil be repaid for good?
For they have dug a pit for my soul.
Remember that I stood before you
to speak good for them,
and to turn away your wrath
from them.

²¹Therefore deliver their children
to the famine,
and pour out their *blood* by the power
of the sword,
and let their wives be bereaved
of their children, and *become*
widows,
and let their men be put to death,
and let their young men be
slain by the sword in battle.

²²Let a cry be heard from their houses,
when you bring a troop suddenly
on them.

For they have dug a pit to capture me,
and hidden snares for my feet.

²³Yet, LORD, you know their
whole plot against me to kill *me*.
Do not forgive their iniquity,
or blot out their sin from your sight,
but let them be overthrown
before you.

Deal *thus* with them in the time
of your anger.

18:11 The Lord orders that Judah and its capital city apply the above truth to themselves. They should not blame the Potter for what is about to happen to them. But He knew what the people would say and tells Jeremiah in the next verse.

18:12 This is one of the most terrible things a people or an individual could say. Here is complete, willful, conscious abandonment of themselves to their evil natures, contrary to light, reason and the pleadings of God Himself. Here is human depravity approaching the utmost limits of unbelief, disobedience and despair. It is not a rare thing. Satan would, if he could, gladly bring us all to such a condition. And everyone of us has the tendency in us to go that way and that far. God's grace alone can preserve us from it.

18:13 5:30-31. What could be more horrible than the actions and words of God's own nation (here called “virgin”)? Even the wicked city Nineveh

did not behave so (Jonah 3:6-9).

18:14-15 Snow and cool waters always remain in the high mountains, but thoughts of God and the water of life He gives did not remain in the people's minds.

18:15 “*Ancient paths*” – 6:16.

“*Pathways*” – the worship of idols, of other gods is a by-path taking people out of God's ancient way of worship in spirit and truth (John 4:24).

18:16-17 4:11-12; 25:9-10.

18:18 Jeremiah's enemies thought nothing would be lost if Jeremiah were to be silenced. They did not realize that for those particular days Jeremiah was God's true spokesman in Jerusalem.

18:19-23 This portion sounds like some of the Psalms – Ps 35:12; 57:6; 63:10; 141:8-10; 142:3. Notes on such prayers at Ps 35:8; 58:6-8; 69:22-28.

19 Thus says the LORD: “Go and get a potter’s earthenware jar, and *take some* of the elders of the people, and *some* of the elders of the priests, ²and go out to the valley of the son of Hinnom, which *is* at the entrance of the Gate of the Potsherd, and there proclaim the words that I will tell you, ³and say, ‘Hear the word of the LORD, O kings of Judah, and inhabitants of Jerusalem. Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: See, I will bring disaster on this place; the ears of whoever hears of it will tingle, ⁴because they have forsaken me, and have made this a foreign place, and have burned incense in it to other gods, whom neither they nor their fathers have known, nor the kings of Judah, and have filled this place with the blood of innocents. ⁵They have also built the high places of Baal, to burn their sons with fire as burnt offerings to Baal. I did not command this, or speak of *it*, nor did *it* enter my mind. ⁶Therefore, see, the days are coming, says the LORD, that this place will no longer be called Tophet, or The Valley of the Son of Hinnom, but The Valley of Slaughter.

⁷“And I will make void the plans of Judah and Jerusalem in this place, and I will cause them to fall by the sword before their enemies, and by the hands of those who seek their lives, and I will give their corpses as food for the birds of the sky, and for the beasts of the earth. ⁸And I will make this city desolate, and an *object of hissing*. Everyone who passes by it will be astonished and hiss because of all its plagues. ⁹And I will cause them to eat the flesh of their sons

and the flesh of their daughters, and every one of them will eat the flesh of his friend in the siege and distress, with which their enemies and those who seek their lives, will distress them.’

¹⁰“Then you shall break the jar in the sight of the men who go with you, ¹¹and say to them, ‘Thus says the LORD of hosts: Like this I will break this people and this city, as *one* breaks a potter’s jar that cannot be made whole again; and they will bury *them* in Tophet, until *there is* no room to bury. ¹²I will do so to this place, says the LORD, and to its inhabitants, and *even* make this city like Tophet. ¹³And the houses of Jerusalem, and the houses of the kings of Judah, will be defiled like the place of Tophet, because of all the houses on whose roofs they have burned incense to all the *starry* host of heaven, and poured out drink offerings to other gods.’ ”

¹⁴Then Jeremiah came from Tophet, where the LORD had sent him to prophesy, and he stood in the court of the LORD’s house, and said to all the people, ¹⁵“Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: ‘See, I will bring on this city and on all her towns all the disaster that I have proclaimed against it, because they have hardened their necks, that they might not hear my words.’ ”

20 Now Pashur the son of Immer, the priest, who was also the chief official in the house of the LORD, heard that Jeremiah prophesied these things. ²Then Pashur had Jeremiah the prophet beaten, and put him in the stocks that were at the Upper Gate of Benjamin, which was by the

19:1 Another object lesson – 1:11-14; 13:1-11; 18:1-4; 24:1-3.

19:2-9 Notes on 7:30-34.

19:2 “*Gate of the Potsherd*” – it would seem from this that the gate got its name from some broken piece of pottery found there (or perhaps many broken pieces). The KJV has “East gate”, but the Hebrew word does not mean east, and the valley of Hinnom was not at the eastern side of Jerusalem.

19:9 Lev 26:29; Deut 28:49-57; Lam 2:20; 4:10 – cannibalism actually occurred during the Babylonian siege of Jerusalem.

19:10-11 God has no more difficulty in smashing a nation than Jeremiah in smashing a clay pot.

19:12-13 Tophet was defiled by death, and by the action of King Josiah (2 Kings 23:10). Josiah probably leveled the shrines there to the ground. So would God do to Jerusalem.

19:13 “*Starry host*” – another command of God the people ignored to their own great harm (Deut 4:14; 2 Kings 17:16; Jer 8:2; Acts 7:42; Rom 1:25).

19:14-15 Jeremiah was determined, at whatever danger to himself (18:23), to declare God’s message to all the people. Compare Acts 20:24; 21:13.

19:15 “*Hardened*” – see Prov 29:1.

20:1-2 The first of Jeremiah’s enemies whose name is given. He was a false prophet (v 6). He was second to the high priest in authority. His job was to keep order in the temple and to expel or punish troublemakers. He evidently considered Jeremiah one such (see 38:4 and 1 Kings 18:16-17). The truth is troubling to those who do not want it, and those who proclaim it are often regarded as troublemakers (Luke 23:4-5; Acts 16:19-24; 17:5-7; 21:28; 24:5).

house of the LORD. ³And it came about the next day that Pashur brought Jeremiah out of the stocks. Then Jeremiah said to him, "The LORD has not called your name Pashur, but Magor-Missabib. ⁴For thus says the LORD: 'See, I will make you a terror to yourself, and to all your friends; and they will fall by the sword of their enemies, and your eyes will see *it*. And I will give all Judah into the hands of the king of Babylon, and he will carry them captive into Babylon, and will kill them with the sword. ⁵Moreover, I will deliver up all the wealth of this city, and all its products, and all its costly things; and all the treasures of the kings of Judah I will give into the hands of their enemies, who will plunder them, and capture them and carry them to Babylon. ⁶And you, Pashur, and all who live in your house will go into captivity. And you will come to Babylon, and there you will die and there be buried, you, and all your friends, to whom you have prophesied lies.' "

⁷O LORD, you persuaded me, and I was persuaded.
You are stronger than I, and have prevailed.
I am ridiculed daily, everyone mocks me.

⁸For when I speak, I cry out, proclaiming violence and plunder, because the word of the LORD has resulted

in reproach and ridicule to me, daily.

⁹Then I said, "I will not make mention of him, or speak any more in his name".

But *his word* was in my heart like a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary of holding it in, and I was not able to *do so*.

¹⁰For I heard the whispering of many: "Fear on every side!" "Report", *they said*, "and we will report it".

All my acquaintances watched for my stumbling, *saying*, "Perhaps he will be enticed, and we will prevail against him, and take our revenge on him".

¹¹But the LORD *is with me* like a mighty, awe-inspiring one; therefore my persecutors will stumble, and will not prevail.

They will be greatly ashamed, for they will not prosper. *Their* everlasting disgrace will never be forgotten.

¹²But, O LORD of hosts, who tests the righteous, and sees the inner being and the heart,

let me see your vengeance on them, for to you I have presented my cause.

¹³Sing to the LORD! Praise the LORD!

20:3-6 Unjust punishment did not keep God's prophets from speaking (v 9; Acts 4:3,18-20; 7:52; Heb 11:32-38). Magor-Missabib means "terror on every side".

20:7-18 Jeremiah's prayer and complaint. God's spokesmen may be bold as lions when speaking to the people, but know their own fears, weakness, and depression when in secret with God. Jeremiah lays bare his soul before the Lord. He did not try to hide anything. Compare Job 10:1-2; Ps 62:8. He did not want to be a prophet (1:6). God compelled him, and Jeremiah is not happy with the result.

20:7 "*Persuaded*"—the KJV has "deceived" here. The Hebrew word means both things, but surely we should not translate this "deceived" when there is an alternative which is also accurate. Can we really think that Jeremiah accused God of deceiving him? He probably meant "I was a simple young man and so you were able to persuade me or entice me to be a prophet".

20:8 6:10; 15:10,15; 2 Pet 3:3-4.

20:9 Sometimes speaking for God seemed to him too much to bear. He was tempted to give

up such ministry. It brought him nothing but sorrow. But God had put in his heart a fire, an inner compulsion that would not let him escape. Compare Acts 4:20; 1 Cor 9:16; 2 Cor 5:14; 2 Pet 1:21. God's compulsion, God's fire in the heart make His spokesmen willing to face any insult, any persecution, any danger. They must ease themselves of the Word of God forcing its way out of their hearts.

20:10 His enemies were mocking him for the name he gave Pashhur (v 3). His friends were friends in name only, for he had offended them with his message of God's judgment. Compare Gal 4:16. Betrayal by friends is harder to bear than oppression by enemies.

20:11 "*The LORD is with me*"— here was his confidence. This is how he could keep going in his very unpopular ministry.

20:12 11:20.

"*LORD of hosts*"— note at 1 Sam 1:3.

20:13 The weeping prophet does not experience much joy in his own heart, but knows God's deliverance and knows, too, that God should be praised for it.

For he has delivered the soul
of the poor from the hands
of evildoers.

- ¹⁴ Cursed *be* the day on
which I was born.
Do not let the day on which
my mother gave me birth be blessed.
- ¹⁵ Cursed *be* the man who
brought news to my father,
saying, "A male child is born to you",
making him very glad.
- ¹⁶ And let that man be like the cities
which the LORD overthrew,
without relenting;
and let him hear the cry
in the morning,
and the shouting at noon,
- ¹⁷ Because he did not kill me
from the womb that my mother
might have been my grave,
and her womb *have been* always
enlarged *with me*.
- ¹⁸ Why did I come out of the womb
to see labour and sorrow,
that my days should be consumed
with shame?

21 This word came to Jeremiah from the LORD, when King Zedekiah sent Pashur the son of Melchiah, and Zephaniah the son of Maaseiah, the priest, to him saying, ²"Please consult the LORD for us, for Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon is making war against us. Perhaps the LORD will deal with us in accordance with all his wonderful deeds, so that he may depart from us".

20:14-18 Jeremiah gives in to feelings of pain, sorrow, and despair as Job once did (Job 3; Eccl 4:1-3). But he does not abandon his faith in God or his responsibility as a prophet. It is a great thing to go on trusting and serving God even when one's thoughts bring torture like this.

21:1 Zedekiah refused to obey the Word of God spoken through Jeremiah. The Pashhur in this verse is not the one in 20:1 and the Zephaniah here is not the prophet of that name. The event described here took place when the Babylonian armies had already besieged Jerusalem.

21:2 King Zedekiah wanted information from the Lord through Jeremiah, but he did not want instruction in righteousness or messages of repentance. Though he did not have the good character and faith of King Hezekiah he was hoping for a miraculous deliverance such as the one that took place in the time of Hezekiah (2 Kings 19:32-36).

21:3-7 Jeremiah was no man-pleaser, no

³Then Jeremiah said to them, "This is what you shall say to Zedekiah: ⁴"Thus says the LORD God of Israel: See, I will turn back the weapons of war that *are* in your hands, with which you are fighting against the king of Babylon and *against* the Chaldeans who are besieging you outside the walls, and I will gather them in the middle of this city. ⁵And I myself will fight against you with an outstretched hand and with a strong arm, in anger and in fury and in great wrath. ⁶And I will strike the inhabitants of this city, both man and beast. They will die from a great plague. ⁷And afterwards, says the LORD, I will deliver Zedekiah king of Judah and his servants and the people and those who are left in this city from the plague, from the sword and from the famine, into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and into the hands of their enemies, and into the hands of those who seek their life. And he will strike them with the edge of the sword. He will not spare them, or have pity, or have mercy.'

⁸"And you shall say to this people, 'Thus says the LORD: See, I set before you the way of life, and the way of death. ⁹He who stays in this city will die by the sword and by the famine and by the plague, but he who goes out and defects to the Chaldeans who are besieging you, will live, and will be to him like plunder. ¹⁰For I have set my face against this city for disaster and not for good, says the LORD. It will be given into the hands of the king of Babylon, and he will burn it with fire.'

king-pleaser, nor should we be (Gal 1:10). He, being a true prophet, spoke God's message just as it came to him (see also 1 Kings 22:13-14).

21:4 Chaldea made up the southern part of the land of Babylon.

21:5 God says that not only the Babylonians but He Himself would be against them. Many times He had fought for Israel; now He would fight against them (6:12; Lev 26:17,23-25,27,28. Compare Rev 2:16). The Babylonian armies would be a weapon in His hand to bring them down. Notes on God's anger at Num 25:3; Ps 90:7-11.

21:6 14:12.

21:7 Nebuchadnezzar was the most famous and powerful ruler of the Babylonian empire. He reigned 605-562 BC. He showed no pity to the inhabitants of Jerusalem or to King Zedekiah (see 52:8-16,24-27).

21:8 Deut 30:15.

21:9-10 27:12-13; 38:2-3,17,18.

¹¹“And concerning the house of the king of Judah, say, ‘Hear the word of the LORD.

¹²O house of David, thus says the LORD:

“Administer justice every morning,
and rescue *the one who is* plundered
out of the hands of the oppressor,
so that my fury does not go out
like fire and burn so that no one
can quench it,

because of the evil of your deeds.

¹³See, I *am* against you,
O inhabitant of the valley *and*
rocky plain, says the LORD,
you who say, “Who will come down
against us?

Or who will enter our dwelling
places?”

¹⁴But I will punish you according
to the results of your deeds,
says the LORD;
and I will kindle a fire in its forest,
and it will devour everything
around it.’ ”

22 Thus says the LORD: “Go down to the house of the king of Judah, and speak there this word ²and say, Hear the word of the LORD, O king of Judah, who sits on the throne of David, you and your servants and your people who enter by these gates. ³Thus says the LORD: Administer justice and righteousness, and deliver those plundered out of the hands of the oppressor; and do no wrong, no violence to the foreigner, the fatherless, or the widow, and shed no innocent blood in this place. ⁴For if you really do this, then kings who sit on the throne of David will enter by the

gates of this house, riding in chariots and on horses, each one with his servants and his people. ⁵But if you will not hear these words, I swear by myself, says the LORD, that this house will become a desolation”.

⁶For thus says the LORD to the house of the king of Judah:

“You *are like* Gilead to me
and the summit of Lebanon.

But I will certainly make you
a wilderness,
and uninhabited cities.

⁷And I will prepare destroyers
against you,
every one with his weapons;
and they will cut down your choice
cedars and throw *them*
into the fire.

⁸“And many nations will pass by this city, and each man will say to his neighbour, ‘Why has the LORD done thus to this great city?’ ⁹Then they will answer, ‘Because they forsook the covenant of the LORD their God, and worshipped other gods, and served them.’

¹⁰“Do not weep for the dead,
or mourn him, *but* weep bitterly
for the one who goes away;
for he will not return again
or see his native country”.

¹¹For thus says the LORD concerning Shallum the son of Josiah king of Judah, who reigned in the place of his father Josiah, who has gone out of this place: “He will not return here again, ¹²but will die in the place where they have led him away captive, and

21:11-12 Zedekiah had not asked for a word on repentance and righteousness, but that is what he most needed and what God sent him. To us also God sends what we need, not necessarily the things for which we ask.

21:13-14 Lam 4:12. On three sides of Jerusalem there were valleys, and the city was easy to defend. So the inhabitants thought they were safe. But there can be no safety if God arises in anger.

22:1-2 13:18; 34:2; Matt 10:18. This king was probably Zedekiah (21:1). But this is not certain because the chapters of Jeremiah are not always arranged in chronological order.

22:3 21:12. On the just administration of God’s kingdom in accordance with God’s law see Ps 72:1-4,12-14; 110:1-7; Isa 9:7; 11:4-5; Jer 23:5-6.

“*Fatherless*”, “*widow*”— see note and references

at Ex 22:22-24.

22:4-5 God will not forever permit wicked rulers who have contempt for His laws to rule over His people and His earth.

22:6-7 Gilead and Lebanon were elevated areas of beautiful forests. The cedar beams for the king’s palace came from one or the other of these places.

22:8-9 Deut 29:24-26; 1 Kings 9:8-9; Jer 16:10-11.

22:10-12 The one who had died was King Josiah (2 Chron 35:23-25). He was a good king and died on the battlefield. His son Shallum, also called Jehoahaz, reigned only 3 months. He was captured by the king of Egypt and taken to that country (2 Chron 36:1-4). He never returned to Israel. The meaning of v 10 is this: Do not weep for the honored dead but for those being punished for their sins.

will see this land no more.

- ¹³ “Woe to him who builds his house through unrighteousness, and his rooms through wrong, who uses his neighbour’s service without wages, and gives him nothing for his work,
¹⁴ Who says, ‘I will build a spacious house and large rooms for myself’, and cuts out windows for it, and panels *it* with cedar, and paints *it* with vermilion.
¹⁵ Will you reign, because you enclose *yourself* with cedar? When your father ate and drank and administered justice and righteousness, was *it* not well with him?
¹⁶ He *justly* judged the cause of the poor and needy; then *it* was well *with him*. Is this not what it means to know me? says the LORD.
¹⁷ But your eyes and your heart are for nothing except your greed for gain, and for shedding innocent blood, and for perpetrating oppression and violence.
¹⁸ “Therefore thus says the LORD concerning Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah: “They will not lament for him, saying, ‘Alas my brother!’ or, ‘Alas sister!’ They will not lament for him,

saying, ‘Alas master!’ or, ‘Alas his glory!’

- ¹⁹ He will be buried with a donkey’s burial, dragged away and thrown out beyond the gates of Jerusalem.
²⁰ Go up to Lebanon, and cry out, and lift up your voice in Bashan, and cry out from the *mountain* passages; for all your lovers are destroyed.
²¹ I spoke to you in your prosperity, but you said, ‘I will not listen.’ This *has been* your way from your youth, not obeying my voice.
²² The wind will consume all your shepherds, and your lovers will go into captivity. Surely then you will be ashamed and dismayed for all your wickedness.
²³ O inhabitant of Lebanon, who makes your nest in the cedars, how you will be pitied when pangs come on you, pain like a woman in labour!
²⁴ “As I live, says the LORD, though Coniah the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah were the signet ring on my right hand, yet I would uproot you from there. ²⁵ And I will give you into the hands of those who seek your life, and into the hands of *those* whose face you fear, into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and into the hands of the Chaldeans. ²⁶ And I will throw you out, and your mother who gave you birth, into another country, where you were not born;

22:13-19 These verses are concerning Jehoiakim (v 18). He was the brother of Jehoahaz, who became king after the exile of Jehoahaz (2 Chron 36:4-8). Apparently he built a new palace for himself and refused to pay the laborers (see Deut 24:14-15). Actually the king should have been seeking God and trying to create a just administration, and not building a palace. Leaders should do what is just and right and not try to outdo one another in erecting splendid buildings for themselves (v 15). In verses 15 and 16 observe what it means to know God (Jam 1:27; Deut 10:12-13; Hos 6:6; Micah 6:8). The true knowledge of God will result in lives of justice and honesty and mercy and obedience. If we say we know God and do not practice these things we are deceived (1 John 2:3-4; 3:6).

22:19 Jehoiakim was treated as he had treated others (2 Chron 36:5-6. The king of Babylon

bound him to take him to Babylon, but it seems he changed his mind and killed him near Jerusalem).

22:20-23 It is very difficult to determine whether these verses were spoken to King Jehoiakim, or to some other king, or to the people of Israel. In any case, from the language of v 20, we can judge that God wanted the message to be heard widely. And the message was clear (4:31).

22:24-30 Now God speaks to another king of Judah, the next to the last one before the final destruction of Jerusalem by the armies of Babylon. His full name was Jehoiachin but he was also called Jeconiah or simply Coniah (as it is here). See 24:1; and 29:1-2 for the fulfillment of these verses. It seems from v 28 he had children (see also 1 Chron 3:17-19), but God treated him as if he had none. No descendants of Jehoiachin ever became king over Judah. His grandson Zerubbabel later on was governor, not king.

and there you will die. ²⁷And they will not return to the land to which they will desire to return.

²⁸ “Is this man Coniah *like* a despised broken idol?
Is *he* an unwanted vessel?
Why are they thrown out,
he and his offspring, thrown
into a land which they do not know?”

²⁹ O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the LORD!

³⁰ Thus says the LORD: Write you this man childless, a man *who* will not prosper in his days; for none of his offspring will prosper, sitting on the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah.

23 “Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! says the LORD. ²Therefore thus says the LORD God of Israel against the shepherds who tend my people: You have scattered my flock, and driven them away, and have not visited them. See, I will punish you for your evil deeds, says the LORD. ³And I will gather the remainder of my flock out of all countries where I have driven them, and will bring them back to their folds. And they will be fruitful and increase. ⁴And I will raise up shepherds over them who will tend them; and they will no longer fear or be dismayed; and not *one of them* will be missing, says the LORD.

⁵ “See, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and a King will reign and prosper, and will administer judgment and justice in the earth.

⁶ In his days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell safely. And this *is* his name, *the one* by which he will be called, The LORD Our Righteousness.

⁷“Therefore, see, the days are coming, says the LORD, when they will no longer say, ‘The LORD lives, who brought the children of Israel up out of the land of Egypt’, ⁸But, ‘The LORD lives, who brought up and led the offspring of the house of Israel out of the north country’, and from all countries where I had driven them. And they will live in their own land”.

⁹ My heart within me is broken because of the prophets. All my bones tremble. I am like a drunken man, and like a man overcome by wine, because of the LORD, and because of his holy words.

¹⁰ For the land is full of adulterers; for because of swearing the land mourns. The pleasant places of the wilderness are dried up, for their course is evil, and their might *is* not right.

22:29 How strongly God emphasizes the obedient hearing of His Word! – Deut 11:27-28; 13:4; 27:26; Matt 7:24-27; Heb 12:25.

23:1-2 The sheep were the people of Judah, the shepherds were their wicked leaders and rulers. God would repay them in full for what they had done to Judah.

23:2 “Punish” – or “visit”. The Hebrew word means both.

23:3-4 The prophets often spoke of the return of Israel from exile – Isa 11:10-12; Jer 27:22; 29:10-11; 34:11-16; Ezek 37:20-28; Amos 9:15. Some of their prophecies were fulfilled in the days following the fall of the Babylonian empire (2 Chron 36:20-23; Ezra 1:1-5). But a more complete restoration than that seems required to fulfill the language of the prophets.

23:5 “Branch” – a name for the Messiah (33:15; Isa 11:1; Zech 3:8; 6:12). As man He was a branch of the royal house of David (Luke 1:30-33; Rom 1:3). His future reign as king is briefly

described in several Old Testament Scriptures (Ps 2:6-9; 45:1-7; 72:5-17; Isa 9:6-7; 11:1-9; 32:1-3; Zech 14:9-21). See note at Isa 2:2-4.

23:6 This did not occur at Christ’s first coming.

“The LORD Our Righteousness” – 33:16; see Gen 15:6; 1 Cor 1:30; Phil 3:8-9. All men are sinners and have no true righteousness of their own (Isa 64:6). God in His great mercy provides the perfect righteousness of Christ to those who turn to Him. This is to be received by faith. When we trust in Him the Lord Himself becomes our righteousness, and so in God’s eyes our righteousness becomes as perfect as His. This is the way God has provided for fallen man to gain righteousness and enter God’s holy heaven (Rom 3:21-26).

23:7-8 16:14-15.

23:9-10 Jeremiah again speaks of his inner pain that came because of what was then taking place in his land, and the message of destruction the Lord had given.

- ¹¹ “For both prophet and priest
are profane. Yes, in my house
I have found their wickedness,
says the LORD.
- ¹² Therefore their way will be to them
like slippery *paths*
in the darkness.
They will be driven on, and fall
in them;
for I will bring disaster on them,
the year of their punishment,
says the LORD.
- ¹³ And I saw folly in the prophets
of Samaria.
They prophesied by Baal, and caused
my people Israel to go astray.
- ¹⁴ I have also seen a horrible thing
in the prophets of Jerusalem.
They commit adultery and walk in lies,
and they strengthen the hands
of evildoers,
so that no one turns from his
wickedness.
All of them are like Sodom to me,
and its inhabitants like Gomorrah.
- ¹⁵ Therefore thus says the LORD of hosts
concerning the prophets:
See, I will feed them with wormwood,
and make them drink bitter water.
For from the prophets of Jerusalem
godlessness has gone out into
the whole land.
- ¹⁶ Thus says the LORD of hosts:
Do not listen to the words of
the prophets who prophesy to you.
- They give you vain hopes.
They speak a vision of their
own heart,
and not from the mouth
of the LORD.
- ¹⁷ They still say to those who
despise me,
‘The LORD has said,
You will have peace’, and they
say to everyone who follows the
imagination of his own heart,
‘No harm will come on you.’
- ¹⁸ For who has stood in the council
of the LORD, and has seen
and heard his word?
Who has paid attention to his word,
and heard *it*?
- ¹⁹ See, a whirlwind from the LORD
has gone forth in fury, a violent
whirlwind.
It will fall violently on the head
of the wicked.
- ²⁰ The anger of the LORD will not
return,
until he has carried out the thoughts
of his heart and until he has
performed them.
In the last days you will understand
it perfectly.
- ²¹ “I have not sent these prophets,
yet they ran.
I have not spoken to them,
yet they prophesied.
- ²² But if they had stood in my council,
and had caused my people

23:11 Beginning here and going on to the end of this chapter God speaks of the false prophets who were such a plague in Jeremiah’s day. Neither they nor the priests tried to conceal their wickedness, even in the temple. They were openly contemptuous of both man and God.

23:12 Deut 32:35.

“*Year*”– 11:23.

23:13 Samaria was the capital of the northern kingdom. God is reminding Judah of the sins of Samaria which brought its destruction (2 Kings 17:7-20).

“*Baal*”– note at Jud 2:11.

23:14-15 This is the most severe condemnation imaginable of Jerusalem’s prophets. They said they were God’s spokesmen, but lived for Satan. They were wicked themselves and encouraged wickedness in others. They were no better than the people of Sodom and had no right to expect a better fate (Gen 13:13; 19:24-25; Isa 1:9-10; 2 Pet 2:6). Alas, such people are still with us

propagating lies and promoting wickedness in the churches (2 Tim 3:1-7; 2 Pet 2:1).

23:15 “*LORD of hosts*”– note at 1 Sam 1:3.

23:16 “*Vain hopes*”– this is one of the terrible things about the teaching of lies. People believe them and acquire false hopes of salvation.

“*Own heart*”– 14:14. Their lies in v 17 are lies common in the world today. Those who know the Bible know that it will not be well with those who do not love the true God, and that there is no peace to the wicked (11:7-16; 32:10; Isa 3:10-11; 48:22; Matt 23:33; Rom 2:5-11; 1 Cor 16:22; Heb 2:1-3; Rev 21:8).

23:18-21 The false prophets were ignorant of God’s plans. They were saying that no harm would come to a sinful people. God declared that great harm was on the way. Verses 19,20 are repeated in 30:23-24.

23:22 This is the work of true prophets of God. It can be accomplished only by those who spend time in God’s presence and get God’s message.

to hear my words,
then they would have turned them
from their evil way,
and from their evil deeds.

²³ Am I a God at hand,
says the LORD, and not a God
afar off?

²⁴ Can anyone hide himself in secret
places so that I will not see him?
says the LORD.

Do I not fill heaven and earth?
says the LORD.

²⁵“I have heard what the prophets said,
those prophesying lies in my name, saying,
‘I have dreamed, I have dreamed.’ ²⁶How
long will *this* be in the heart of the prophets
who prophesy lies? Yes, *they are* prophets of
the deceit of their own heart, ²⁷who think
they can make my people forget my name
by their dreams which each one of them tells
to his neighbour, as their fathers forgot my
name for Baal.

²⁸ The prophet who has a dream,
let him tell a dream;
and he who has my word,
let him speak my word faithfully.
What *is* the chaff to the wheat?
says the LORD.

²⁹ Is not my word like a fire?
says the LORD, and like a hammer
that breaks the rock in pieces?

³⁰“Therefore, see, I *am* against the prophets
each of whom steals my words from his

23:23-24 Did not the false prophets know how
impossible it was to conceal anything from
the omnipresent God? (Gen 3:8; Ps 139:7-12;
Amos 9:2-4; Heb 4:13).

23:25-27 Having dreams was one of the ways
the false prophets claimed to receive messages
from God. For other ways see 14:14. The falsity
of their so-called revelations from God is seen
in their results (v 27. See Deut 13:1-5; 18:22).

23:28-29 God did not use force to keep false
prophets from speaking their lies (“chaff”). He
only encouraged His true spokesmen to speak
the truth of His word (“wheat”). God knew that
in spite of lying prophets His powerful word
would accomplish what His wisdom planned
(1:12; Isa 55:11).

23:30 False prophets were taking from each other
false interpretations of God’s words, or words
that they wrongly supposed came from God.

23:31 This is not uncommon in our own day. Then
and now there are those who are called prophets

neighbour, says the LORD. ³¹See, the
LORD says, I *am* against the prophets who
use their tongues and say, ‘He says.’ ³²See,
the LORD says, I *am* against those who
prophesy false dreams, and tell them, and
make my people go astray by their lies, and
by their recklessness, yet I did not send them
or command them. Therefore they will not
profit this people at all, says the LORD.

³³“And when this people, or a prophet, or a
priest, asks you, saying, ‘What *is* the oracle
of the LORD?’ you shall then say to them,
‘What oracle? I will forsake you, says the
LORD.’ ³⁴And *as for* the prophet, and the
priest, and the people, who say, ‘The oracle
of the LORD’, I will punish that man and
his household. ³⁵Thus every one of you will
say to his neighbour, and every one to his
brother, ‘What has the LORD answered?’
and, ‘What has the LORD spoken?’ ³⁶And
you will not mention the oracle of the LORD
any more; for every man’s word will be his
oracle; for you have perverted the words
of the living God, the LORD of hosts, our
God. ³⁷Thus you shall say to the prophet,
‘What has the LORD answered you?’ and,
‘What has the LORD spoken?’ ³⁸But since
you say, ‘The oracle of the LORD’, therefore
thus says the LORD: Because you say this
word, ‘The oracle of the LORD’, and I have
sent *word* to you, saying, ‘You must not
say, The oracle of the LORD’, ³⁹Therefore,
see, I, I myself, will utterly forget you, and
I will forsake you and the city that I gave
you and your fathers, *and drive you* from my
presence. ⁴⁰And I will bring an everlasting

or God’s spokesmen who falsely declare that the
words which come out of their own minds are
revelations from God.

23:32 “*Recklessness*”— the Hebrew word seems
to include the idea also of “boasting”. False
prophets exalt themselves, pass themselves off
as great ones and so draw people after them (see
Acts 8:9; 2 Pet 2:10,12).

23:33-40 Terrible punishment awaits those
who declare that their own words are messages
revealed by God. Observe carefully in v 36 how
widespread this practice was in Jeremiah’s day
and what the result of it was.

23:33 “*Oracle*”— Num 23:7.

23:36 “*Perverting the words of the living God*”—
Gal 1:7-8; 2 Pet 3:16. Actually the people then
did not really want God’s messages spoken by
God’s true prophet. They preferred to hear the
pleasant lies of the false prophets and to think
themselves spiritual because they seemed to be
inquiring about God’s message.

reproach on you, and a perpetual shame, which will not be forgotten”.

24 The LORD caused me to see two baskets of figs set in front of the temple of the LORD. *This occurred* after Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had carried away captive Jeconiah the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah, and the princes of Judah, with the craftsmen and smiths, from Jerusalem, and had brought them to Babylon. ²One basket *had* very good figs, like the figs *that are* first ripe, and the other basket *had* very bad figs, which were so bad they could not be eaten.

³Then the LORD said to me, “What do you see, Jeremiah?” And I said, “Figs. The good figs, very good; and the bad, very bad, so bad that they cannot be eaten”.

⁴Again the word of the LORD came to me, saying, ⁵“Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: Like these good figs, so I will regard as good those who are carried away captive from Judah, whom I have sent from this place into the land of the Chaldeans. ⁶For I will set my eyes on them for good, and I will bring them back to this land; and I will build them up and not pull *them* down, and I will plant them, and not uproot *them*. ⁷And I will give them a heart to know me, that I *am* the LORD. And they will be my people, and I will be their God, for they will return to me with their whole heart.

⁸“And like the bad figs, which are so bad they cannot be eaten”, the LORD definitely says this, “so I will deal with Zedekiah the king of Judah, and his princes, and the rest

of Jerusalem who remain in this land, and those who live in the land of Egypt; ⁹and I will deliver them up to be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth for misery, *to be an object of scorn* and a proverb, *of a taunt and a curse*, in all the places where I drive them. ¹⁰And I will send the sword, the famine, and the plague among them, until they are consumed from the land that I gave to them and to their fathers”.

25 The word that came to Jeremiah concerning all the people of Judah, in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, which was the first year of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon; ²Jeremiah the prophet spoke this to all the people of Judah, and to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, saying, ³“From the thirteenth year of Josiah the son of Amon king of Judah, to this day, which *is* the twenty-third year, the word of the LORD has come to me, and I have spoken to you, rising early and speaking; but you have not listened.

⁴“And the LORD has sent to you all his servants the prophets, rising early and sending *them*; but you have not listened, or turned your ear to hear. ⁵They said, ‘Now every one of you turn back from his evil way, and from your evil deeds, and live in the land that the LORD has given to you and to your fathers forever and ever, ⁶and do not go after other gods to serve them and to worship them, and do not provoke me to anger with the works of your hands; and I will do you no harm.’

⁷“Yet you have not listened to me, says the

24:1-3 Other object lessons at 1:11-14; 13:1-11; 18:1-4.

24:1 “Carried away” – 2 Kings 24:10-16.

“Jehoniah” – another name for Jehoiachin.

24:4-10 The exiles who went to Babylon are likened to good figs because they accepted God’s dealings with them and submitted to the king of Babylon (21:8-9; 38:2,17,18). God had a good purpose in sending them away. He would keep them as good fruit should be kept and bring them back.

24:7 A mind to know God is one of His great and glorious gifts (Jer 31:33-34; John 17:3; 2 Cor 4:6; Heb 8:11).

“My people” – Ex 19:5; Lev 26:12; 2 Cor 6:16-18; Heb 8:10.

24:8-10 God sorted the people as a man would

sort fruit. After sending the good fruit to Babylon, He saw to it that the rebels who were left behind would perish in one way or another.

25:1-3 Jeremiah had twenty-three years of very difficult and apparently fruitless ministry. Actually he was a success – all through those years he faithfully stood for God and delivered God’s messages just as God gave them to him. Success is doing what God tells us to do, not in appearing to be great before men. If the people did not listen it was not Jeremiah’s fault.

25:4-6 He is referring to the prophets who came before him (7:25-26).

25:7 “Not listened to me” – since it was God Who sent the prophets, refusing to hear them was the same as refusing to hear Him.

LORD, provoking me to anger with the works of your hands to your own harm. ⁸Therefore thus says the LORD of hosts: Because you have not heard my words, ⁹see, I will send and take all the clans of the north, says the LORD, and my servant Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, and will bring them against this land, and against its inhabitants, and against all these surrounding nations, and will utterly destroy them, and make them an *object of astonishment* and of hissing, and a perpetual desolation. ¹⁰Moreover, I will take away from them the sound of joy, and the sound of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the sound of the millstones, and the light of the candle. ¹¹And this whole land will be a desolation, and an *object of astonishment*. And these nations will serve the king of Babylon seventy years.

¹²“And it will come about when seventy years are completed, *that* I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, the land of the Chaldeans, for their sin, says the LORD, and will make it a perpetual desolation. ¹³And I will bring on that land all I have spoken and proclaimed against

it, all that is written in this book, which Jeremiah has prophesied against all the nations. ¹⁴For many nations and great kings will enslave them also; and I will repay them in accordance with their deeds, and in accordance with the works of their own hands.’

¹⁵“For thus said the LORD God of Israel to me: ‘Take this wine cup of fury from my hand, and cause all the nations, to whom I send you, to drink it. ¹⁶And they will drink, and be shaken, and go mad, because of the sword that I will send among them.’ ”

¹⁷Then I took the cup from the LORD’s hand, and caused all the nations to whom the LORD sent me to drink it: ¹⁸*namely* Jerusalem and the cities of Judah and its kings and its princes, to make them a desolation, an *object of astonishment*, a hissing, and a curse, as *it is* today; ¹⁹Pharaoh king of Egypt and his servants and his princes and all his people, ²⁰and all the mixed people, and all the kings of the land of Uz, and all the kings of the land of the Philistines, and Ashkelon, and Azzah, and Ekron, and the rest of Ashdod, ²¹Edom, and Moab, and the children of Ammon, ²²and all the kings of

“*Works of your hands*”— idols.

“*Your own harm*”— note at 7:6.

25:8 “*Therefore*”— there are always unpleasant consequences of disobedience.

25:9 “*North*”— includes the allies of Babylon.

“*My servant*”— 27:6. Nebuchadnezzar at that time did not know the true God, but God used him as His instrument to punish Judah and in this sense called him His servant. See also Isa 41:2; 44:28. People may unknowingly be used by God to accomplish His purposes.

25:11 “*Desolation*”— Lev 26:31-32; Jer 4:26-27; 12:11-12.

“*These nations*”— vs 17-26.

“*Seventy years*”— this was not an arbitrary figure. God commanded Israel in Lev 25:1-6 to let their lands rest every seventh year. They were to plant no crops at all on those years but to live on the abundance God would give every 6th year (Lev 25:20-22). Eventually Israel disobeyed this command as they did the other commands of God. God knew they would disobey and warned them of the consequences in Lev 26:33-35. The captivity of Judah in Babylon fulfilled both this word and the prophecy of Jeremiah (2 Chron 36:21). Evidently God’s command about rest for the land had been disobeyed 70 times during the stay of God’s people in Canaan. For every year of disobedience they had to spend a year in exile. In this way God again showed

them (and us) the importance of obedience to His word.

25:12 50:18. God used Babylon to punish Judah and Jerusalem, but this does not mean Babylon was a righteous nation. In fact, they were a very wicked nation, and God, after using them against Judah, punished them too. Observe that Jehovah, the God of the Bible, is the God over all nations and exercises authority over all (27:5). This is a truth the king of Babylon himself learned (Dan 4:34-35).

25:13 50—51 chapters.

25:14 “*Nations*”— the Medes and their allies and successors (51:11,28; and 5:30-31).

“*Repay*”— Deut 32:41; Rom 12:19.

25:15-16 The cup of wrath here signifies God’s proclamations of judgments against the nations named in verses 18 to 26.

25:17 See 1:10. Jeremiah’s making the nations drink from the cup signifies his proclamation of God’s revelation against them. He did not need to go to the nations named, and of course would not have taken a literal cup even if he had gone. He merely declared and wrote God’s revelation and thus it became effective (1:12; Isa 55:11). The very speaking of God’s words by the prophet made this fulfillment certain. Whenever God spoke through His prophets He purposed to do what He said He would do.

25:20 Job 1:1.

Tyre, and all the kings of Sidon, and the kings of the coastlands which are across the sea, ²³Dedan, and Tema, and Buz, and all who are in the farthest corners, ²⁴and all the kings of Arabia, and all the kings of the mixed people who live in the desert, ²⁵and all the kings of Zimri, and all the kings of Elam, and all the kings of the Medes, ²⁶and all the kings of the north, far and near, one with the other, and all the kingdoms of the world which are on the surface of the earth; and after them, the king of Sheshach will drink.

²⁷“Therefore you shall say to them, Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: ‘Drink, and be drunk, and vomit, and fall, and rise no more, because of the sword which I will send among you.’ ²⁸And it will be, if they refuse to take the cup from your hand to drink, that you must say to them, ‘Thus says the LORD of hosts: You will certainly drink. ²⁹For, see, I begin to bring disaster on the city which is called by my name, and should you be completely unpunished? You will not be unpunished, for I will call for a sword on all the inhabitants of the earth, says the LORD of hosts.’

³⁰“Therefore prophesy against them all these words, and say to them,

“The LORD will roar from on high,
and utter his voice from
his holy dwelling place.
He will roar mightily against
his habitation;
he will give a shout, like those
who trample grapes,
against all the inhabitants
of the earth.

³¹ A noise will come to the ends
of the earth, for the LORD has
a controversy with the nations,
he will plead *his case* with all flesh.
He will give those who are wicked
to the sword,”
says the LORD.

³² Thus says the LORD of hosts:
“See, disaster will spread from nation
to nation,
and a great whirlwind will be raised
up from the ends of the earth.

³³ And on that day *those* slain by the LORD
will be from *one* end of the earth even to
the *other* end of the earth. They will not be
lamented, or gathered, or buried. They will
be refuse on the ground”.

³⁴ Wail, you shepherds, and cry,
and roll yourselves *in the ashes*,
you leader of the flock,
for the time for your slaughter
and for your dispersion has come,
and you will fall like a choice vessel.

³⁵ And the shepherds will have
no way to flee,
or the leader of the flock to escape.

³⁶ A sound of the cry of the shepherds,
and a wailing of the leader of
the flock, *will be heard*;
for the LORD has ruined
their pasture.

³⁷ And the peaceful folds are cut down
because of the fierce anger
of the LORD.

³⁸ He has left his lair, like the lion;
for their land is desolate because
of the fierceness of the oppressor,
and because of his fierce anger.

25:26 Verses 18 to 25 list places and peoples not too far distant from Israel. Here the word of God through the prophet reaches out to the ends of the earth. God will punish every country in the world for their sins.

“*Sheshach*”— 51:41; indicates Babylon.

25:27 “*Drink*”— means they will experience the disasters God has revealed against them.

25:28 No doubt the nations would like to reject God’s cup of wrath but none can escape.

25:29 “*City which is called by my name*”— Jerusalem. If God punishes His own special people will He let other nations escape? The answer is obvious. Compare 1 Pet 4:17-18.

25:30-38 The Babylonian conquest of western Asia and Judah, the fall of Babylon a few decades later, and the rise of the Medo-Persian empire ushered in a time of great

upheaval among the nations. Invasions, fierce battles with great slaughter, destruction and misery everywhere – these are the themes of these verses. In v 31 the reason for it all is given (and the reason for similar times throughout human history). It was a time of God’s judgment on wicked peoples. The tumult of battle is the Lord’s roar from heaven, His shout is like those treading grapes (v 30; Isa 63:3; Joel 3:13; Rev 14:19-20). Those slain in battle are “slain by the LORD” (v 33). The destruction brought by armies is His work of destruction (v 36). All is a result of His fierce anger (vs 37,38).

These verses are a small picture of what will happen at the end of this age when God arises in wrath against all the nations of earth (Isa 24:1-6; 26:20-21; Matt 24; Heb 12:26; Rev 8—9; 15—19).

26 In the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah this word came from the LORD, saying, ²“Thus says the LORD: Stand in the courtyard of the LORD’s house, and speak to all the *people of the cities* of Judah who come to worship in the LORD’s house, all the words that I command you to speak to them. Do not omit a word. ³Perhaps they will listen, and each one turn from his evil way, so that I may relent concerning the disaster which I have planned to do to them because of their evil deeds. ⁴And you shall say to them, ‘Thus says the LORD: If you will not listen to me, to walk in my law, which I have set before you, ⁵to listen to the words of my servants the prophets, whom I sent to you, both rising up early and sending *them* (but you have not listened), ⁶then I will make this house like Shiloh, and will make this city an *object of cursing* to all the nations of the earth.’ ”

⁷So the priests and the prophets and all the people heard Jeremiah speaking these words in the house of the LORD. ⁸Now it came to pass, when Jeremiah had finished speaking all that the LORD had commanded *him* to speak to all the people, that the priests and the prophets and all the people seized him, saying, “You shall surely die. ⁹Why have you prophesied in the name of the LORD, saying, ‘This house will be like Shiloh, and this city will be desolate without an inhabitant?’ ”

26:1-6 This message was given several years before the Babylonians captured Judah and Jerusalem. At that time God offered the people a way of escape. God would much rather save people than destroy them (Ezek 18:32; 33:11). He will forgive when He sees repentance (18:7-8). He will watch for it and delay His punishments as long as possible. But if there is no repentance, no obedience there can be no escape (compare Luke 13:1-5; Rom 2:5).

26:2 “*All the words*”—no word God speaks can lack importance. Every one of them will be fulfilled, and He wants men to know everything He says (Deut 4:2; 6:6-9; Ps 12:6; Prov 30:5-6; Matt 5:18; 2 Tim 3:16-17; Rev 22:18-19).

26:6 “*Shiloh*”—note at 7:12-15.

26:8 Jeremiah was completely faithful to God’s instructions in v 2. But see how men would reward him for it. Jeremiah was not the first of God’s servants nor the last to be treated like that (Acts 7:52; Heb 11:35-38).

26:10 These officials came to judge the dispute.

And all the people were gathered against Jeremiah in the house of the LORD.

¹⁰When the officials of Judah heard these things, then they came up from the king’s house to the house of the LORD, and sat down at the entrance of the new gate of the LORD’s *house*. ¹¹Then the priests and the prophets spoke to the officials and to all the people, saying, “This man deserves to die, for he has prophesied against this city, as you have heard with your ears”.

¹²Then Jeremiah spoke to all the officials and to all the people, saying, “The LORD sent me to prophesy against this house and against this city all the words that you have heard. ¹³Therefore now amend your ways and your doings, and obey the voice of the LORD your God; and the LORD will relent concerning the disaster that he has proclaimed against you. ¹⁴As for me, see, I *am* in your hands. Do with me as seems good and right to you. ¹⁵But know for certain, that if you put me to death, you will surely bring innocent blood on yourselves and on this city and on its inhabitants. For truly the LORD has sent me to you to speak all these words in your ears”.

¹⁶Then the officials and all the people said to the priests and to the prophets, “This man *does* not deserve to die, for he has spoken to us in the name of the LORD our God”.

¹⁷Then some of the elders of the land got up and spoke to all the assembly of the people,

26:11 The priests and false prophets make their case before the officials. They did not seem at all interested to find out whether Jeremiah spoke the truth. Here is full-grown prejudice and intolerance, and willful ignorance. Compare Matt 26:62-66. Such things are met with in our day also.

26:12-15 This is Jeremiah’s defense. He was interested only in the truth. The matter of living or dying was a much smaller thing in his eyes. This is what God wants in every generation – people who love truth more than life itself. Compare Ps 51:6; Acts 20:24.

26:16 In this matter at least the officials and people had more regard for truth and justice than the priests and prophets who should have been their greatest defenders.

26:17-19 Micah’s prophecy, uttered about one hundred years previously, was still known in Judah (Micah 3:12). Hezekiah’s repentance is mentioned in 2 Chron 32:25-26. The wisdom of these elders reminds us of that exercised by Gamaliel (Acts 5:33-39).

saying, ¹⁸“Micah the Morasthite prophesied in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah, and spoke to all the people of Judah, saying,

‘Thus says the LORD of hosts:
Zion will be plowed *like* a field,
and Jerusalem will become heaps,
and the mountain of the house
like the high places of a forest.’

¹⁹“Did Hezekiah king of Judah and all Judah ever put him to death? Did he not fear the LORD and seek the LORD? And the LORD relented concerning the disaster which he had proclaimed against them. Thus we might we bring a great disaster against our souls”.

²⁰And there was another man who prophesied in the name of the LORD, Urijah the son of Shemaiah of Kirjath-Jearim, who prophesied against this city and against this land, just like all the words of Jeremiah.

²¹And when Jehoiakim the king, with all his mighty men, and all the officials, heard his words, the king sought to put him to death. But when Urijah heard it, he was afraid and fled, and went to Egypt. ²²And Jehoiakim the king sent men to Egypt, *namely*, Elnathan the son of Achbor, and *some men who went* with him to Egypt. ²³And they brought Urijah out of Egypt, and took him to Jehoiakim the king, who killed him with the sword, and threw his dead body into the burial place of the common people.

²⁴But the hand of Ahikam the son of Shaphan was with Jeremiah, so that he was not given into the hands of the people to be put to death.

27 In the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah this word came from the LORD,

26:20-23 This material is inserted like a parenthesis in the narrative. It reveals the difference between King Hezekiah and King Jehoiakim. It shows, too, the mortal danger Jeremiah faced. What prevented Jehoiakim doing to Jeremiah as he did to Uriah? See 1:8,19. This Uriah is not mentioned anywhere else in the Bible.

26:24 Ahikam served good King Josiah and was the father of Gedaliah who later governed Judah for a time (2 Kings 22:12; 25:22). God here used Ahikam to help save Jeremiah’s life. To fulfill His will God uses human means when He chooses to do so (another example – Acts 23:12-24).

speaking to Jeremiah. ²Thus the LORD said to me: “Make bonds and yokes, and put them on your neck, ³and send them to the king of Edom, and to the king of Moab, and to the king of the Ammonites, and to the king of Tyre, and to the king of Sidon, by the hand of the messengers who have come to Jerusalem to Zedekiah king of Judah; ⁴and command them to say to their masters, “Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; thus you must tell your masters: ⁵I have made the earth, the men and the beasts that *are* on the earth, by my great power and by my outstretched arm, and I give it to whomever I please. ⁶And now I have given all these lands into the hands of my servant Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon; and I have also given him the beasts of the field to serve him. ⁷And all nations will serve him, and his son, and his son’s son, until the very time for his land comes; and then many nations and great kings will make him their servant.

⁸“And this will happen: the nation and kingdom which will not serve this Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, and which will not put their neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon, that nation I will punish with the sword and with the famine and with the plague until I have consumed them by their hand, says the LORD. ⁹Therefore do not listen to your prophets, or to your diviners, or to your dreamers, or to your magicians, or to your sorcerers, who speak to you, telling you *that you will not serve the king of Babylon*, ¹⁰for they prophesy a lie to you, *resulting* in your removal far from your land; and I will drive you out, and you will perish. ¹¹But the nations which bring their neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon and serve him, those I will still let remain in their own land, says the

27:1-11 Jeremiah was a prophet to the nations (1:5,10). Here he sends God’s message to some of them. Putting on a yoke was a striking way of calling attention to the message. The message is the same as that which he gave to Judah. Speaking to them Jehovah God emphasizes that He is the great Creator and Governor of the universe (v 5. Note at Ps 47:2). And He warns them against false and harmful messages from other sources (vs 9,10. Compare Deut 18:9-12). In this way God showed His concern for the nations on the borders of Israel, some of which were ancient enemies of His people.

LORD; and they will till it, and live in it.’ ”

¹²I also spoke to Zedekiah king of Judah in accordance with all these words, saying, “Bring your necks under the yoke of the king of Babylon and serve him and his people, and live. ¹³Why will you die, you and your people, by the sword, by the famine, and by the plague, as the LORD has spoken against the nation that will not serve the king of Babylon? ¹⁴Therefore do not listen to the words of the prophets who speak to you, saying, ‘You will not serve the king of Babylon’, for they prophesy a lie to you. ¹⁵‘For I have not sent them’, says the LORD, ‘yet they prophesy a lie in my name, resulting in my driving you out and your perishing, you, and the prophets who prophesy to you.’ ”

¹⁶Also I spoke to the priests and to all this people, saying, “Thus says the LORD: ‘Do not listen to the words of your prophets who prophesy to you, saying, “See, the articles in the LORD’s house will now shortly be brought back from Babylon”, for they prophesy a lie to you. ¹⁷Do not listen to them. Serve the king of Babylon, and live. Why should this city be laid waste?’ ¹⁸But if they *are* prophets, and if the word of the LORD is with them, let them now make intercession to the LORD of hosts, that the articles which are left in the house of the LORD and *in* the house of the king of Judah and in Jerusalem, do not go to Babylon. ¹⁹For thus says the LORD of hosts concerning the pillars, and concerning the sea, and concerning the stands, and concerning the rest of the articles that remain in this city, ²⁰which Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon

did not take when he carried away captive Jeconiah the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah and all the officials of Judah and Jerusalem from Jerusalem to Babylon; ²¹yes, thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, concerning the articles that remain *in* the house of the LORD, and *in* the house of the king of Judah and of Jerusalem: ²²‘They will be carried to Babylon, and they will be there until the day that I visit them, says the LORD. Then I will bring them up, and restore them to this place.’ ”

28 And it happened the same year, in the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah king of Judah, in the fourth year, and in the fifth month, *that* the prophet Hananiah the son of Azur, who was from Gibeon, spoke to me in the house of the LORD, in the presence of the priests and all the people, saying, ²“Thus the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, has spoken, saying, ‘I have broken the yoke of the king of Babylon. ³Within two full years I will bring back to this place all the articles of the LORD’s house that Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon took away from this place and carried to Babylon. ⁴And I will bring back to this place Jeconiah the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah, with all the captives of Judah who went to Babylon, says the LORD, for I will break the yoke of the king of Babylon.’ ”

⁵Then the prophet Jeremiah spoke to the prophet Hananiah in the presence of the priests, and in the presence of all the people who stood in the house of the LORD, ⁶and the prophet Jeremiah said, “Amen! May the

27:12-15 21:8-10; 38:2-3,17,18.

27:15 14:14; 23:21.

27:16 An example of the lies told by the false prophets (28:1-4). Several years before this (in 605 BC) the Babylonians carried off some articles from the temple.

27:17 Resistance to the king of Babylon would stir up his wrath and cause him to destroy Jerusalem.

27:18 The mark of a true prophet of God is not the telling of lies but the ability to plead with God.

27:19-22 These articles were taken to Babylon in 586 BC (52:12-19; 2 Kings 25:13-17).

“Jeconiah” (vs 20; 28:4; 29:2) – a variant of Jehoiachin.

27:22 “I will bring them” – fulfilled in 538 BC (Ezra 1:7-11).

28:1 Hananiah is the second false prophet to be named in Jeremiah (Pashhur was the first – 20:1-6; see also 29:21,31,32). In the Bible people are exposed for what they are,

and prophets and apostles informed God’s people about false prophets and teachers, or those who opposed God’s work, sometimes naming them (Acts 8:18-23; 13:6-11; 2 Tim 2:17; 4:14; 3 John 9).

28:2 Hananiah claimed to be in touch with God and to speak with the same authority as the great prophets of the Bible. He may have been consciously trying to deceive, or may have been totally deceived himself and was persuaded he was really speaking for God.

28:3 27:16.

28:4 Hananiah flatly contradicted the word of God that came through Jeremiah in 22:24-27. This is one way that false prophets can be known – they will inevitably deny some part or other of the Word of God (2 Pet 2:1).

28:5-9 Such an event as Hananiah foretold was something Jeremiah wished could happen. But he knew very well it would not.

LORD do so. May the LORD perform your words which you have prophesied, to bring back the articles of the LORD's house, and all who were carried away captive, from Babylon to this place. ⁷But listen now to this word that I speak in your hearing, and in the hearing of all the people: ⁸The prophets who were before me and you long ago prophesied both against many countries and against great kingdoms, about war and disaster, and plague. ⁹The prophet who prophesies peace, when the word of the prophet comes true, then it will be known that the LORD has really sent that prophet".

¹⁰Then the prophet Hananiah took the yoke from the prophet Jeremiah's neck, and broke it. ¹¹And Hananiah spoke in the presence of all the people, saying, "Thus says the LORD: 'Just so I will break the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon from the neck of all nations within the space of two full years.' " And the prophet Jeremiah went his way.

¹²Then the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet, after the prophet Hananiah had broken the yoke from the neck of the prophet Jeremiah, saying, ¹³"Go and tell Hananiah, saying, 'Thus says the LORD: You have broken the wooden yokes, but you shall make iron yokes for them. ¹⁴For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: I have put an iron yoke on the neck of all these nations, that they may serve Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon; and

they will serve him. And I have given him the beasts of the field also.' "

¹⁵Then the prophet Jeremiah said to the prophet Hananiah, "Listen now, Hananiah. The LORD has not sent you, but you make this people trust in a lie. ¹⁶Therefore thus says the LORD: 'See, I will hurl you from the surface of the earth. This year you will die, because you have taught rebellion against the LORD.' "

¹⁷So the prophet Hananiah died the same year in the seventh month.

29 Now these are the words of the letter that Jeremiah the prophet sent from Jerusalem to the remaining elders who had been carried away captives, and to the priests, and to the prophets, and to all the people whom Nebuchadnezzar had carried away captive from Jerusalem to Babylon. ²This occurred after Jeconiah the king, and the queen, and the eunuchs, the leaders of Judah and Jerusalem, and the craftsmen, and the smiths, had gone from Jerusalem. ³He sent it by the hand of Elashah the son of Shaphan, and Gemariah the son of Hilkiyah (whom Zedekiah king of Judah sent to Babylon to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon), saying, ⁴Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, to all who have been carried away as captives, whom I have caused to be carried away from Jerusalem to Babylon: ⁵"Build houses for yourselves and live in them, and plant gardens, and eat their produce. ⁶Marry,

28:9 False prophets spoke of peace because they thought that was what people wanted to hear. Many so-called Bible teachers suit their message to what people like rather than to what God has revealed (Rom 16:18; Col 2:4; 2 Tim 4:3).

"Comes true"—see Deut 18:22. This is the final test of anyone who is called a prophet. And it is a test Biblical prophets gloriously pass, thus proving the truth of 2 Pet 1:21.

28:10-17 Here is clearly given the contrast between a false prophet and a true one. Outwardly they may not seem greatly different, but in the heart of the true prophet there is truth, in the heart of the false prophet there is deceit. The one saves men by turning them to God and His truth; the other destroys men by getting them to trust in lies (v 15). The end of the true prophet is to have honor with God (John 12:26); the end of the false prophet is dishonor and destruction (2 Cor 11:15; 2 Pet 2:1). See also 14:14-15.

29:1-14 God had a message to the exiles in Babylon who had been taken there in 597 BC.

False prophets had arisen there (vs 21,31) and were confusing them. So God chose Jeremiah to write His message to the exiles. By then many of them, seeing the fulfilment of some of his prophecies, must have regarded him as a true prophet and man of God. The message reveals God's loving concern for His people and gives them practical instruction. The exiles must be prepared to stay in Babylon until the period of 70 years is complete (v 10). They should try to live normal lives and work and pray for the prosperity of the country of their exile (vs 5-7). They must reject the lies of the false prophets among them (vs 8,9). Verses 10-14 enlarge on the promise that had been given in Judah (16:14-15; 24:4-7).

God promises to bring them back to the land of Israel but He tells them that they will seek Him for this (Dan 9:1-3). This is the relationship between God's promises and men's requests. God means His promises to be claimed and turned into believing prayer.

and have sons and daughters. And find wives for your sons, and give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters, so that you may increase there, and not decrease. ⁷And seek the peace of the city where I have caused you to be carried away as captives, and pray to the LORD for it. For in its peace you will have peace”.

⁸For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: “Do not let your prophets and your diviners, who *are* among you, deceive you, and do not listen to your dreams which you have *them* dream. ⁹For they prophesy falsely to you in my name. I have not sent them”, says the LORD.

¹⁰For thus says the LORD: “After seventy years are completed at Babylon I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, causing you to return to this place. ¹¹For I know the thoughts that I think toward you”, says the LORD, “thoughts of peace, and not of disaster, to give you a future and a hope. ¹²Then you will call to me, and you will go and pray to me, and I will listen to you. ¹³And you will seek me, and find *me*, when you search for me with all your heart. ¹⁴And I will be found by you”, says the LORD. “And I will turn away your captivity, and I will gather you from all the nations, and from all the places where I have driven you”, says the LORD, “and I will bring you back to the place where I caused you to be carried away as captives”.

¹⁵*I write* because you have said, “The LORD has raised up prophets for us in Babylon”. ¹⁶*Know* that the LORD has said this concerning the king who sits on the throne of David, *and* concerning all the people who live in this city, and concerning your brethren who have not gone away with you into captivity: ¹⁷Thus says the LORD of hosts: “See, I will send on them the sword, the famine, and the plague, and I will make them like rotten figs, that are so bad they cannot be eaten. ¹⁸And I will pursue them with the sword, with the famine, and with the plague, and will hand them over to be removed to all the kingdoms of the earth, to

be an *object of cursing* and *of astonishment* and of hissing and of scorn among all the nations where I drive them, ¹⁹because they have not listened to my words”, says the LORD, “which I sent to them by my servants the prophets, rising up early and sending *them*. But you would not listen, says the LORD.

²⁰“So hear the word of the LORD, all you exiles, whom I have sent from Jerusalem to Babylon. ²¹Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, concerning Ahab the son of Kolaiah and Zedekiah the son of Maaseiah, who prophesy a lie to you in my name: See, I will deliver them into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon; and he will kill them before your eyes. ²²And because of them a curse will be taken up by all the exiles of Judah who *are* in Babylon, saying, ‘The LORD make you like Zedekiah and like Ahab, whom the king of Babylon roasted in the fire.’ ²³Because they have done vile things in Israel, have committed adultery with their neighbours’ wives, and have spoken lying words in my name, which I have not commanded them. I know, and *am* a witness, says the LORD”.

²⁴Tell *this* to Shemaiah the Nehelamite, saying, ²⁵“Thus speaks the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, saying, Because you have sent letters in your name to all the people who *are* in Jerusalem, and to Zephaniah the son of Maaseiah the priest, and to all the priests, saying, ²⁶*that* the LORD has made you priest in place of Jehoiada the priest, that you should be the overseer of the house of the LORD, over every madman *who* makes himself a prophet, to put him in prison, and in the stocks. ²⁷Now therefore why have you not rebuked Jeremiah of Anathoth, who makes himself a prophet to you? ²⁸For he sent *word* to us *in* Babylon, saying, ‘This *captivity is* long. Build houses for yourself and live *in them*, and plant gardens, and eat their produce.’ ”

²⁹And Zephaniah the priest read this letter in the hearing of Jeremiah the prophet. ³⁰Then the word of the LORD came to

29:13 Here is a truth for all men. God can be found, can be known. He hears prayer and answers those who seek with the whole heart (Deut 4:29; Hos 10:12; Matt 7:7-8; Luke 11:5-10; 18:1).

29:14 “*Will bring you back from captivity*”—or “*will restore your well-being*”. The Hebrew can mean either one. See note at Ps 14:7.

29:15 That is, they may see no need of Jeremiah or his letter. They did not understand that their prophets were liars.

29:20-32 Three false prophets and their end. God has His eye on all the false prophets of the world and will deal with them in His time and in His way.

Jeremiah, saying, ³¹“Send word to all those of the captivity, saying, ‘Thus says the LORD concerning Shemaiah the Nehelamite: Because Shemaiah has prophesied to you, though I did not send him, and he caused you to trust in a lie, ³²therefore thus says the LORD: See, I will punish Shemaiah the Nehelamite, and his offspring. He will not have a man to live among this people; nor will he see the good that I will do for my people, says the LORD, because he has taught rebellion against the LORD.’ ”

30 The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, ²“Thus speaks the LORD God of Israel, saying, Write all the words that I have spoken to you in a book. ³For, see, the days are coming, says the LORD, that I will bring back my people Israel and Judah from captivity, says the LORD, and I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they will possess it”.

⁴And these are the words that the LORD spoke concerning Israel and concerning

Judah. ⁵“For thus says the LORD:

We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace.

⁶ Ask now and see whether a man ever bears a child?

Why do I see every man with his hands on his loins, like a woman in labour, and all faces turned pale?

⁷ Alas! For that day is great, so that none is like it.

So it is the time of Jacob’s trouble, but he will be saved out of it.

⁸ “For it will happen in that day, says the LORD of hosts, that

I will break his yoke off your neck, and will tear off your bonds, and foreigners will no longer make him their servant.

⁹ But they will serve the LORD their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up for them.

30:1 The four chapters 30–33 form a unit. In them God gives repeated promises that He will restore both Israel and Judah to the land of Canaan. In contrast to many other parts of Jeremiah’s writing this whole section abounds with words of comfort and hope for the future.

30:2 We now have the privilege of studying the things Jeremiah wrote down nearly 2,600 years ago. This “book” was in the form of a scroll. See 36:2.

30:3-4 16:14-15; 23:3-8; 24:4-7; 29:14. Israel means the northern kingdom taken into captivity by Assyria in 721 BC; Judah means the southern kingdom destroyed finally in 586 BC. What follows concerns people from both kingdoms.

30:3 “I will bring back my people Israel and Judah from captivity”– or “I will restore the well-being of my people Israel and Judah”.

30:5-11 From some expressions in this section we may judge that the return of the exiles of Judah from Babylon in 537-538 BC was only a partial fulfilment of Jeremiah’s prophecies (if even that).

30:7 The time (the meaning of “day” here) referred to in verses 5 and 6 will be so terrible that there will never be one like it again. The Lord Jesus also spoke of a time of trouble unequalled in the whole history of the world (Matt 24:21). Since there cannot be two distinct times both of which are unequalled, it is reasonable to think that both Jeremiah and the Lord Jesus refer to the same period of time. The Scriptures sometimes speak of a time of terrible trouble at the end of this age followed by the outpouring of God’s wrath.

Notes on the great tribulation at Matt 24:21,29; Rev 6:9-17; 7:14. Notes on the Day of the LORD at Joel 1:15.

Though that future time will mean great trouble for Jacob (the Jewish people), this does not mean that others also will not experience this trouble. Verses 9 and 14 of Revelation chapter 7, chapter 16, 19:11-21 and other Scriptures reveal that both the great tribulation and the Day of the Lord will affect every nation. As for the people of Israel they will not be completely destroyed in that future time but “will be saved out of it”.

30:8 A prophecy of permanent freedom for the people of Israel. Notice the words “foreigners will no longer make him their servant”. This certainly was not true of the Jews through the centuries following their return from Babylon. At times during those centuries they endured some of the very worst treatment in their long history. So the words still await the future for their complete fulfilment.

30:9 “David their king”– here is another indication that this passage did not have a complete fulfilment at the return of the Jews from Babylon. David, of course, had been dead for centuries by then, and God did not raise him from the dead to be king of Israel again. Since it is said they will “serve” God and “David” it is very probable that “David” here means “the Son of David”, the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. Him has God raised up for them. But as a nation they have rejected Him and do not serve Him – yet.

- ¹⁰ “Therefore do not be afraid,
O Jacob, my servant, says the LORD,
nor be dismayed, O Israel.
For, see, I will save you from afar,
and your offspring from the land
of their captivity;
and Jacob will return, and will be
at rest,
and be quiet, and no one
will make *him* afraid.
- ¹¹ For I *am* with you,
says the LORD, to save you.
Though I make a full end of all
nations where I have scattered you,
yet I will not make a full end of you;
but I will correct you in measure,
and will not leave you altogether
unpunished.
- ¹² For thus says the LORD:
Your injury *is* incurable,
and your wound *is* grievous.
- ¹³ *There is* no one to plead your case,
so that you may be bandaged.
You have no healing medicines.
- ¹⁴ All your lovers have forgotten you.
They are not looking for you.
For I have wounded you with
the wound of an enemy,
with the discipline of a cruel one,
for your many evil deeds,
because your sins had increased.
- ¹⁵ Why do you cry for yourself
in your affliction?
Your sorrow *is* incurable.
Because of your many iniquities,
because your sins had increased,
I did these things to you.
- ¹⁶ Therefore all those who devour
you will be devoured;
and all your adversaries,
every one of them,
will go into captivity;
and those who plunder
you will be a plunder;
and all who prey on you
I will give as a prey.
- ¹⁷ For I will restore health to you,
and I will heal you of your wounds,
says the LORD, because they
called you an outcast,
saying, ‘This *is* Zion,
whom no one seeks.’
- ¹⁸ “Thus says the LORD:
See, I will bring back Jacob’s tents
from captivity,
and have mercy on his dwelling
places;
and the city will be built on
its own ruins,
and the palace will stand in its
proper place.
- ¹⁹ And out of them will issue
thanksgiving and the voice
of those who make merry.
And I will increase their number,
and they will not be few.
I will also glorify them, and
they will not be insignificant.
- ²⁰ Their children also will be as before,
and their congregation will be
established before me,
and I will punish all
who oppress them.
- ²¹ And their nobles will be from
among them,
and their governor will come
from among them;
and I will cause him to draw near,
and he will approach me.
For who *else* would venture

30:10 46:27-28. The promise of “rest” and “quiet”, and the words “no one will make him afraid” were not completely fulfilled after the return from Babylon. There were almost constant troubles from that time till the Romans destroyed Jerusalem in AD 70 and scattered the Jews, and since then there has been trouble wherever they have gone.

30:11 God will destroy wicked peoples, He disciplines His own people (Prov 3:11-12; Heb 12:5-6).

30:12-15 The Lord describes the wounds He has had to inflict on His people.

30:12-13 8:22; 10:19; Isa 1:5-9; Hos 5:13. There was no human remedy for their wounds.

30:14 “Lovers”— 22:20; Lam 1:2.

“I have wounded”— 4:6; 11:11; 18:11.

30:15 2:35; 4:18; 5:9; 6:19.

30:16 3:24; 5:17; 8:16; 10:25; 25:26,29.

30:17 God can heal the wounds that are beyond the help of man (v 12). And He will heal Israel because of the scorn of other nations.

30:18-22 16:14-15; 24:4-7; 29:10-14.

30:18 Nehemiah records the beginnings of this work of rebuilding (see 2:1-9).

30:19 “Thanksgiving”— Ps 7:17; 50:14-15; 56:12; Lev 7:12-13; 1 Thess 5:18.

30:21 “I will cause him to draw near”— a principle that applies to all whoever truly come to God (John 6:44).

to approach me? says the LORD.
²² And you will be my people,
 and I will be your God".
²³ See, the whirlwind of the LORD
 goes out with fury, a sweeping
 whirlwind.
 It will fall violently on the head
 of the wicked.
²⁴ The fierce anger of the LORD
 will not go back until he has done *it*,
 and until he has carried out the
 purposes of his heart.
 In the latter days you will
 understand it.

31 "At that time", says the LORD, "I
 will be the God of all the families of
 Israel, and they will be my people".

² Thus says the LORD:
 "The people *who* survived the sword,
 Israel, found grace in the wilderness,
 when I went to give him rest".
³ The LORD has appeared to me
 in the past,
 saying, "Yes, I have loved you
 with an everlasting love;
 therefore with loving kindness
 I have drawn you.
⁴ I will build you again, and you will

be built,
 O virgin of Israel. You will again be
 adorned with your tambourines,
 and will go out in the dances of those
 who make merry.
⁵ You will yet plant vines on the
 mountains of Samaria.
 The planters will plant, and will eat
them like common things.
⁶ For there will be a day *when*
 the watchmen on Mount Ephraim
 will cry out,
 'Arise, and let us go up to Zion
 to the LORD our God.' "
⁷ For thus says the LORD:
 "Sing with gladness for Jacob,
 and shout among the chief
 of the nations. Proclaim!
 Praise! And say, 'O LORD,
 save your people, the remnant of
 Israel.'
⁸ See, I will bring them from the north
 country,
 and gather them from the ends
 of the earth, *and* with them
 the blind and the lame,
 the woman with child together
 with the one in labour with child.
 A great throng will return there.

30:22 7:23; Ex 6:7; Lev 26:12; 2 Cor 6:16.

30:23-24 23:19-20. God doesn't say when Israel
 will understand what He has done, only that they
 will understand eventually. But other references
 in the Bible make it clear that men can understand
 God's words, actions, and ways only when their
 spiritual eyes are opened and they are taught by
 the Holy Spirit (see notes at Eph 1:17-18).

31:1 "*Families*"— here means the ten tribes of
 the northern kingdom called Israel and the two
 tribes of the southern kingdom called Judah.
 Both kingdoms are in view in this chapter. Verses
 4-22 speak of the northern kingdom; verses 23-26
 speak of the southern kingdom; verses 27-40
 speak of the two kingdoms together.

31:2 This may refer to the coming of God's people
 Israel out of Egypt recorded in Exodus. Or it
 may be a prophecy of the future using the past
 tenses of verbs – as though the prophecy were
 already fulfilled.

31:3 This gives the essence of Deut 4:37; 7:7-8;
 10:15; Hos 11:4. Believers now have verses such
 as Eph 1:4-6; 1 Thess 1:4; 2 Thess 2:13. The
 salvation of all who will ever be saved has its
 source in the eternal love of God.

"*The LORD appeared to me in the past*"— or it
 could be translated "The LORD appeared to
 me from afar".

31:4-22 It is clear that the ten northern tribes

are in view here because of the use of the words
 Samaria (v 5) and Ephraim (vs 6,9,18,20).
 Samaria, the heart of the northern kingdom,
 was captured in 721 BC. From that time on until
 our day the people of Israel have not returned
 to God and possessed Samaria. In our day
 Israel has occupied Samaria, but as a nation
 is still in unbelief, rejecting their Messiah,
 the Lord Jesus Christ. Since there has been
 no complete fulfilment of these prophecies in
 the past we may assume there will be a future
 fulfilment. Compare Isaiah chapter 53 with its
 use of the past tense. See note at Isa 55:10-11.

31:6 The people of the northern kingdom,
 when they broke away from Judah, for the most
 part stopped coming to Jerusalem to worship
 (1 Kings 12:25-33). But in the future this will
 be changed (v 12).

31:7 "*Chief*"— this could refer to Israel or to large
 nations where they had been scattered. If God is
 speaking here of Israel as the chief of the nations,
 it is not because of its size or strength, but because
 of its importance as a channel for His Word and
 for the coming of Christ.

31:8 "*Great throng*"— this surely indicates a number
 far in excess of the few from the northern kingdom
 probably included in the 42,360 (mostly exiles
 from the southern kingdom) who returned from
 Babylon (see Ezra 2:64).

- ⁹ They will come with weeping,
and as *they are making* supplications
I will lead them.
I will cause them to walk by the rivers
of water in a straight way,
in which they will not stumble.
For I am a father to Israel,
and Ephraim *is* my firstborn”.
- ¹⁰ Hear the word of the LORD,
O you nations, and declare *it*
in the islands far away,
and say, “He who scattered Israel
will gather him, and keep him,
as a shepherd *does* his flock”.
- ¹¹ For the LORD has redeemed Jacob,
and ransomed him from the hand
of *one who was* stronger than he.
- ¹² Therefore they will come and sing
on the heights of Zion,
and will stream together to the
goodness of the LORD,
for wheat and for wine and for oil and
for the young of the flock
and of the herd.
And their soul will be like a watered
garden,
and they will not grieve any more
at all.
- ¹³ “Then will the virgin rejoice
in the dance,
and the young men and the old
together.
For I will turn their mourning
into joy,
and will comfort them, and give
them joy in place of their sorrow.
- ¹⁴ And I will satisfy the soul
of the priests with fatness,
and my people will be satisfied
with my goodness”,
says the LORD.
- ¹⁵ Thus says the LORD:
“A voice was heard in Ramah,
lamentation *and* bitter weeping,
Rachel weeping for her children
refused to be comforted for her
children,
because they *were* no *more*”.
- ¹⁶ Thus says the LORD:
“Restrain your voice from weeping,
and your eyes from tears,
for your work will be rewarded,
says the LORD,
and they will come back from
the land of the enemy.
- ¹⁷ And there is hope in your future,
says the LORD, that your
children will come back into
their own borders.
- ¹⁸ I have surely heard Ephraim
mourning,
‘You have disciplined me,
and I have been disciplined, like an ox
unaccustomed *to the yoke*.
Turn me, and I will be turned;
for you *are* the LORD my God.
- ¹⁹ Surely after I had turned away,
I repented, and after I was instructed,
I slapped *my* thigh.
I was ashamed, yes, humiliated,
because I bore the disgrace of my
youth.’
- ²⁰ *Is* Ephraim my dear son?
Is he a delightful child?

31:9 Weeping and praying suggest repentance and turning to God, and the following verses speak of the joy of salvation and restoration (vs 10-14).

“*Ephraim*” – here stands for the whole northern kingdom.

31:12 “*Not grieve any more at all*” – indicates the permanence of their restoration.

31:15 Ramah was about 8 kilometers north of Jerusalem in the territory of Benjamin. Rachel was the mother of Benjamin, the grandmother of Ephraim, Joseph’s son. Judging from the context and the verses which follow this verse refers primarily to the continuing sorrow concerning the captivity and destruction of Israel. In Matt 2:18 it is applied to the killing of infants in Bethlehem and vicinity after the birth of the Lord Jesus. Old Testament prophecies sometimes seem to have more than one fulfillment, more than one

application.

31:16-17 Weeping will continue only until the final restoration of Israel.

31:18 Israel will at last respond to God’s discipline and fully turn to Him. As with Israel so with every one of us – we will turn to God only when He turns us (John 6:44).

31:19 A picture of full repentance.

31:20 Ephraim means here the people of Israel. In other places Israel is compared to the bride and the wife of Jehovah (2:2; 4:14). Here the people are likened to a dearly loved son. No one human relationship can suggest all that God’s people mean to Him. When Jeremiah recorded these words Ephraim had been in captivity for about 130 years. Before the final fulfilment of the prophecies in this chapter many more centuries would elapse. But still in God’s heart, He loved and longed for Israel.

For though I have spoken
against him,
I earnestly remember him still.
Therefore my inmost being yearns for
him.
I will certainly have mercy on him”,
says the LORD.

²¹ “Set up road signs, make guideposts,
set your heart toward the highway,
the way *which* you went.
Turn back, O virgin of Israel,
turn back to these cities of yours.

²² How long will you gad about,
O backsliding daughter?
For the LORD has created a
new thing in the earth: A woman
surrounding a man”.

²³ Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God
of Israel: “They will once more use this
speech in the land of Judah and in its cities,
when I bring them back from captivity, ‘The
LORD bless you, O habitation of justice, and
mountain of holiness.’ ²⁴ And in Judah itself,
and in all its cities, there will live farmers,

31:21-22 Israel is not only like a rebellious son,
but also like a daughter gone astray. But she
will return to her land and God will use her
in an altogether new way, which He does not
clearly describe.

31:22 “*A woman surrounding*”— or it could be
translated “a woman protecting”.

31:23-24 God will restore Judah too. All that is
said of Israel in the above verses may fittingly be
said of the people of the southern kingdom also.

31:23 “*Bring them back from captivity*”— or “restore
their well-being”.

“*Justice*”, “*holiness*”— Ps 48:1-2; Isa 1:21,26.

31:25 Isa 40:29-31.

31:26 It appears from this that this revelation
(from 30:1) was given to Jeremiah in a dream.
See also Gen 15:12-21; Dan 10:9; Zech 4:1.

31:27 From here to the end of the chapter both
Israel and Judah are in view. God uprooted both
from the land and sent them into captivity. He will
plant them again in the land and prosper them.

31:29 Ezek 18:2. This was a misunderstanding
of God’s word and God’s ways.

31:30 Deut 24:16; Ezek 18:3,20; 33:7-18.

31:31-34 Here is the great prophecy of the new
covenant which gives its name to the second
part of the Bible. For other references see
Isa 61:8; Jer 32:40; 50:5; Matt 26:28; Luke 22:20;
1 Cor 11:25; 2 Cor 3:6; Heb 8:8; 9:15; 12:24; 13:20.
It is called “new” in contrast to the covenant
made with Israel through Moses at Mt Sinai
(notes at Ex 19:5-6).

That old covenant commanded obedience to

and those *who* go out with flocks. ²⁵For I
will satisfy the weary soul, and refresh every
sorrowful soul”.

²⁶At this I awoke, and looked around. And
my sleep had been sweet to me.

²⁷“See, the days are coming”, says the
LORD, “when I will sow the house of Israel
and the house of Judah with the offspring of
man, and with the offspring of beast. ²⁸And
it will come about, *that* just as I watched
over them to uproot *them*, and to break and
throw *them* down, and to ruin and afflict
them, so I will watch over them, to build
and plant *them*, says the LORD.

²⁹“In those days they will no longer say,
‘The fathers have eaten a sour grape,
and the children’s teeth have been
set on edge.’

³⁰But everyone will die for his own guilt;
the teeth of each one who eats a sour grape
will be set on edge.

³¹“See, the days are coming, says the
LORD, when I will make a new covenant
with the house of Israel, and with the house
of Judah,

God’s law. Since man is sinful and disobedient
by nature, and since God’s law cannot make
him holy and obedient, the old covenant was
certain to fail (see Rom 7:5-25; 8:3; Heb 10:1-4).
That it did fail is clear from the whole history of
Israel (Jer 11:6-8; 7:25-26; 16:11; 22:9). No one
could be saved by the laws or regulations of the
old covenant. Indeed, the law brought a curse
(Gal 3:10-12). So God promises a new covenant
which is not based on man’s obedience to law. It
is based on what God does. Notice the words “I
will” in verses 33,34 repeated five times. This is
a covenant of grace which has its foundation, not
in man’s frail and fallen nature, but in God alone.

31:31 “*With the house of Israel*”, “*Judah*”— it is
not said anywhere in the Bible that this new
covenant is made directly with Christ’s New
Testament Church or with Gentiles or Gentile
Christians. These share in the new covenant
because they are grafted into the “olive tree”
whose root was Abraham and whose branches
in the Old Testament were the tribes of Israel (see
Rom 11:13-21). The apostles of Christ to whom
He gave the new covenant were all Israelites,
and for several years all members of the New
Testament Church were either Jews or Jewish
proselytes. Later more and more Gentiles came
into the Church and before long became the vast
majority of Christians and began to dominate
the Church. However, this does not change the
fact that the covenant was made with Israel or
that in the future God will fulfil the covenant
with that nation as a whole.

³²Not like the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day *that* I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt. This covenant of mine they broke, although I was a husband to them, says the LORD.

³³But this *will be* the covenant that I make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and I will be their God, and they will be my people.

³⁴And no longer will everyone teach his neighbour, and everyone his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD', for they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the LORD, For I will forgive their wickedness, and I will remember their sin no more.

³⁵ "Thus says the LORD, who gives the sun as a light by day, and the fixed order of the moon and of the stars as a light by night, who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar, the LORD of hosts *is* his name:

³⁶ If this fixed order departs from before me, says the LORD, *then* the offspring of Israel will also cease from being a nation

before me forever.

³⁷ Thus says the LORD:

If the heavens above can be measured,

and the foundations of the earth searched out below,

I will also cast off all the offspring of Israel for all that they have done, says the LORD.

³⁸ "See, the days are coming, says the LORD,

when the city will be built for the LORD from the Tower of Hananeel to the Corner Gate. ³⁹And the measuring line will yet go out opposite it on the hill Gareb, and will go around to Goath. ⁴⁰And the whole valley of the dead bodies and the ashes, and all the fields to the Kidron valley, to the corner of the Horse Gate on the east, *will be* holy to the LORD. It will not be uprooted or thrown down any more forever".

32 *This is* the word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD in the tenth year of Zedekiah king of Judah, which was the eighteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar. ²For then the king of Babylon's army besieged Jerusalem, and Jeremiah the prophet was imprisoned in the courtyard of the prison, which was at the palace of the king of Judah.

31:32 Ex 19:5; 24:8.

"*A husband*"— 2:2; 3:14.

31:33 "*Inward parts*", "*hearts*"— under the old covenant God's laws were written on tablets of stone (Ex 31:8; 34:1; 2 Cor 3:7). Under the new covenant God's laws are written in the mind and heart (2 Cor 3:3). This indicates a new nature which wants to obey God, a new birth, a new creation (2 Cor 5:17; Eph 2:4-5). It means an inner disposition to have the righteousness of the law fulfilled in them. Without all this there is no evidence that an individual is a partaker of the new covenant. "I will be their God", etc— Lev 26:12; Ezek 37:27; 2 Cor 6:16; Rev 21:3.

31:34 The eternal forgiveness of sins and the personal knowledge of God— these are two of the supreme blessings of the new covenant. Only God can give these and they are altogether a gift of His grace.

"*Know*"— 9:23-24; 1 Sam 3:7; Hos 2:20; John 17:3; Eph 4:13; Phil 1:3.

"*Forgive*"— Lev 4:20; Ps 32:1; 85:2; 86:5; 130:4; Luke 24:45-47; Eph 1:7; 1 John 1:9.

The word "all" in this verse speaks of a complete national salvation of Israel sometime in the future (compare Rom 11:26).

31:35-37 God speaks of the absolute faithfulness of His promises to Israel. Israel's continuing existence as a nation is as certain as the laws of nature which God has established. It is as impossible for His purposes toward that people to fail as it is for someone to measure stellar space or penetrate to the core of the earth.

31:35 "*LORD of hosts*"— note at 1 Sam 1:3.

31:38-40 To show that He means the literal nation of Israel God speaks of its city of Jerusalem. Certain specific areas in the city will be rebuilt. The most defiled area will become holy. Thereafter the city will remain permanently. Compare Zech 14:9-11,20,21. Because Jerusalem was completely destroyed by the Romans in 70 AD this prophecy looks to a time after that. And since Jerusalem is still in unbelief rejecting their Messiah, the Lord Jesus, the city is still not holy to the Lord as described in Jeremiah and Zechariah. Compare Matt 23:37-39. So we may judge that this prophecy will be fulfilled sometime in the future.

32:1 This was the year before the Babylonians captured Jerusalem.

32:2 King Zedekiah had arrested Jeremiah (37:21).

³For Zedekiah king of Judah had imprisoned him, saying, “Why do you prophesy, and say, ‘Thus says the LORD, See, I will give this city into the hands of the king of Babylon, and he will take it, ⁴and Zedekiah king of Judah will not escape out of the hands of the Chaldeans, but will certainly be delivered into the hands of the king of Babylon, and will speak with him mouth to mouth, and his eyes will see his eyes, ⁵and he will lead Zedekiah to Babylon, and there he will be until I visit him, says the LORD. Though you fight with the Chaldeans, you will not prosper.’ ”

⁶And Jeremiah said, “The word of the LORD came to me, saying, ⁷See, Hanameel the son of your uncle Shallum will come to you, saying, ‘Buy my field that *is* in Anathoth; for the right of redemption *is* yours to buy it.’

⁸“So Hanameel, my uncle’s son, came to me in the courtyard of the prison in accordance with the word of the LORD, and said to me, ‘Please buy my field that *is* in Anathoth, which *is* in the region of Benjamin; for the right of inheritance *is* yours, and the redemption *is* yours. Buy *it* for yourself.’ Then I knew that this was the word of the LORD. ⁹And I bought the field of Hanameel, my uncle’s son, that was in Anathoth, and weighed out the money to him, seventeen shekels of silver. ¹⁰And I signed and sealed the deed, took witnesses, and weighed out the money *to him* in the balances. ¹¹So I took the deed of purchase,

both the one that was sealed *in accordance* with the law and custom, and the one which was open, ¹²and I gave the deed of purchase to Baruch the son of Neriah, the son of Maaseiah, in the sight of Hanameel, my uncle’s son, and in the presence of the witnesses that signed the deed of purchase, before all the Jews who were sitting in the courtyard of the prison.

¹³“And I charged Baruch before them, saying, ¹⁴“Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Take these deeds, this deed of purchase, both the sealed one, and this open deed, and put them in an earthenware jar, so that they may last a long time.’ ¹⁵For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: ‘Houses and fields and vineyards will be possessed again in this land.’

¹⁶“Now when I had delivered the deed of purchase to Baruch the son of Neriah, I prayed to the LORD, saying, ¹⁷‘Ah Lord God! See, you have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and outstretched arm, *and* there is nothing too hard for you. ¹⁸You show loving kindness to thousands, and repay the guilt of the fathers into the bosom of their children after them. The Great, the Mighty God, the LORD of hosts, *is* his name, ¹⁹great in counsel, and mighty in work. For your eyes *are* open to all the ways of the sons of men, to give every one according to his ways, and according to the result of his deeds. ²⁰You set signs and wonders in the land of Egypt to this day,

32:3-5 The answer to Zedekiah’s question “why” was obvious. Jeremiah spoke what God told him to say. But this weak and evil king was not interested in the truth. These words of Jeremiah were fulfilled to the letter (52:7-14).

32:4 “*Chaldeans*”— Babylonians.

32:6-15 God had used object lessons with Jeremiah before (24:1-3). Now He uses Jeremiah himself as an object lesson to the people. God had spoken of the return of Israel from exile (23:3-4; 29:14; 30:10). Now with the armies of Babylon at the gates He orders His prophet to buy a field in Israel. Jeremiah thus demonstrated that he himself believed and obeyed God. All of God’s servants must show by their actions that they believe God. If they do not, how can they expect to convince others that they should believe God?

32:7 “*Right of redemption*”— see Lev 25:25; Ruth 2:20; 4:3.

32:9 “*Seventeen shekels*”— about 200 grams.

32:11 One reason God gave this record of a kinsman with the right to redeem (buy back)

a field, and a sealed scroll containing the deed with its terms and conditions may be this: to help us understand the meaning of the sealed scroll in Rev 5:1-10. The Lord Jesus is man’s kinsman-redeemer (see notes at Lev 25:24-31; Ruth 2:20). The title deed of the earth is His to open, the earth is His to claim – which He does in Revelation chapters 6–20.

32:12 Baruch was Jeremiah’s closest friend. See 36:4-32.

32:15 Normal life would resume in Israel after the Babylonian captivity.

32:16 Jeremiah was a man of prayer, an example to us all (8:18-19; 12:1-4; 14:7-9,19-22; 15:15-18; 16:19-20; 17:12-18; 18:19-23; 20:7-18).

32:17 “*Arm*”— 27:5; 2 Kings 19:15; Ps 102:25.

“*Nothing too hard*”— v 27; Gen 18:14.

32:18 Ex 20:5-6; 34:7.

32:19 “*Great in counsel...in work*”— Ps 66:5; Isa 28:29; Rom 11:33-36.

32:20 Ex 3:20; 7:3; Ps 78:4,12. God continued to do signs and wonders not simply among Israel but among all peoples.

and in Israel, and among *other* men, and have made a name for yourself, as at this day. ²¹And you brought your people Israel out of the land of Egypt with signs, and with wonders, and with a strong hand, and with an outstretched arm, and with great terror, ²²and gave them this land, which you swore to their fathers to give them, a land flowing with milk and honey. ²³And they came in and possessed it. But they did not obey your voice, or walk in your law. Of all that you commanded them to do they have done nothing. Therefore you have caused all this disaster to come on them.

²⁴“See the siege mounds. They have come to the city to take it, and the city is given into the hands of the Chaldeans who are fighting against it, because of the sword and the famine and the plague. And what you have spoken has happened; and now you see it. ²⁵And you have said to me, O Lord God, Buy the field for money, and take witnesses, though the city is given into the hands of the Chaldeans.’ ”

²⁶Then the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah, saying, ²⁷“See, I *am* the LORD, the God of all those living. Is there anything too hard for me? ²⁸Therefore thus says the LORD: See, I will give this city into the hands of the Chaldeans, and into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and he will take it. ²⁹And the Chaldeans who are fighting against this city, will come and set fire to this city, and burn it with the houses, on the roofs of which they have offered incense to Baal, and poured out drink offerings to other gods, provoking me to anger.

32:21 Deut 4:34; 26:8.

32:23 “Possessed it”– Josh 11:23; Ps 44:2; 78:54-55.
“But they did not obey”– 11:8.

32:24 14:12.

32:25-26 Jeremiah wonders why God asked him to buy the field. He knew the captivity in Babylon would last for 70 years (25:11-12), and he was already an old man who would not live to see the return of Israel. What good, then, would the land be to him? Moreover, he had no children who could inherit it (16:1-2). Evidently he did not clearly understand that what he did was a symbolic action to teach a lesson to Israel (vs 42-44).

32:27 “All”– Num 16:22; 27:16; Job 12:10; Ezek 18:14; Acts 17:28.

32:29 “Baal”– note at Jud 2:11.
“Other gods”– 7:9-10.

³⁰“For the children of Israel and the children of Judah have done only evil in my sight from their youth, for the children of Israel have only provoked me to anger with the work of their hands, says the LORD. ³¹For this city has been to me a *cause* for my anger and my fury from the day that they built it even to this day, so that I must remove it from in front of my face, ³²because of all the evil of the children of Israel and the children of Judah which they have done, provoking me to anger, they, their kings, their princes, their priests, and their prophets, and the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. ³³And they have turned *their* backs to me, and not *their* faces. Though I taught them, rising early and teaching *them*, yet they have not listened to receive instruction. ³⁴But they placed their abominations in the house which is called by my name, defiling it. ³⁵And they built the high places of Baal, which *are* in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to make their sons and their daughters pass through *the fire* to Molech, though I did not command them, and it did not come into my mind, that they should do this abomination, to cause Judah to sin.

³⁶“And now, therefore, thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, concerning this city, about which you say, ‘It will be delivered into the hands of the king of Babylon by the sword and by the famine and by the plague’: ³⁷See, I will gather them out of all countries where I have driven them in my anger, and in my fury and great wrath, and I will bring them back to this place, and I will cause them to dwell safely. ³⁸And they will be

32:30 22:21.

32:31 Before David captured Jerusalem and made it his capital it was in the hands of the idolatrous Jebusites (2 Sam 5:6-9). David’s son Solomon polluted the city with idols (1 Kings 11:7-8), and many kings after him did likewise. God’s wrath against all that was continually increasing until He could justly restrain it no longer. Notes on God’s anger at Num 25:3; Ps 90:7-11.

32:32 2:8, 26-28.

32:33 2:27; 7:13; 18:17.

32:34-35 7:30-31; 2 Kings 21:4-5; Ezek 8:3-16.

32:35 “Pass through the fire”– note at 2 Kings 16:3.

32:36-44 In the midst of His denunciation of Israel’s sin God again gives His gracious promise of restoration.

my people, and I will be their God. ³⁹And I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me forever, for their good, and *the good* of their children after them. ⁴⁰And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from doing good to them, but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they will not depart from me. ⁴¹Yes, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will assuredly plant them in this land with my whole heart and with my whole soul.

⁴²“For thus says the LORD: Just as I have brought all this great disaster on this people, so I will bring on them all the good that I have promised them. ⁴³And fields will be bought in this land, about which you say, ‘It is desolate without man or beast; it is given into the hands of the Chaldeans.’ ⁴⁴Men will buy fields for money, and sign deeds and seal *them*, and take witnesses in the land of Benjamin, and in the places around Jerusalem, and in the cities of Judah, and in the cities of the mountains, and in the cities of the valley, and in the cities of the south. For I will cause them to return from captivity, says the LORD”.

33 Moreover the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah a second time, when he was still shut up in the courtyard of the prison, saying, ²“Thus says the LORD the maker of *the earth*, the LORD who formed it to establish it; the LORD is his name: ³Call to me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not

know. ⁴For thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, concerning the houses of this city, and concerning the houses of the kings of Judah which have been torn down *to use* against the siege mounds and the sword, ⁵as they come to fight with the Chaldeans: *it is* only to fill them with the dead bodies of men, whom I will slay in my anger and in my fury, since I have hidden my face from this city because of all their wickedness.

⁶“See, I will bring health and healing to it, and I will heal them, and will reveal to them an abundance of peace and truth. ⁷And I will cause the captives of Judah and the captives of Israel to return, and will build them up, as at the first. ⁸And I will cleanse them from all their wickedness, in which they have sinned against me; and I will pardon all their iniquities, in which they have sinned and in which they have transgressed against me. ⁹And it will be for me a name of joy, a praise and an honour before all the nations of the earth, which will hear of all the good that I do for them; and they will fear and tremble for all the goodness and for all the prosperity that I provide for it.

¹⁰“Thus says the LORD: Again there will be heard in this place, which you say *will be* desolate without man and without beast, *even* in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem, that are desolate, without man and without inhabitant and without beast, ¹¹the voice of joy and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the voice of those who will say, ‘Praise the LORD of hosts,

32:39 “*One heart*”— Ps 86:11; Acts 4:32.

“*Fear*”— notes at Gen 20:11; Ps 34:11-14.

“*Forever*”— since this is not true of Israel today the complete fulfilment awaits the final turning of Israel to God at the end of this age.

32:40 The new covenant of 31:31-34 will never be broken, will never fail in its purposes. It is eternal in contrast with the covenant made through Moses (Isa 55:3; Ezek 16:60; 37:26; Heb 8:7-8,13).

“*Not depart from me*”— another indication that this has not yet been fulfilled toward Israel as a nation. In vs 37 to 42 only one people is in view – the nation Israel, not the Church of the New Testament.

32:41 See how God loves to do good! It delights Him! He will always do all the good He justly can to everyone (note at Ps 78:41). He hates to do harm to anyone; it grieves Him to punish and destroy anyone. When He does it, it is because He must do so according to the demands of justice.

32:42-44 This is an expansion of v 15.

32:44 “*Cause them to return from captivity*”— or “will restore their well-being” (v 44).

33:2 10:12; 32:17; 51:15.

33:3 When we pray to Jehovah the God of the Bible, we are praying to the mighty Creator of the universe. Prayer from a believing and upright heart (such as Jeremiah had) will reach His ears, will bring wonderful answers (Gen 18:32; Ps 3:4; 4:3; 18:6; 27:7; 28:1-2; 30:8; 55:17; Matt 7:7; Jam 5:16). Some of the great and unsearchable things of which God speaks here are recorded in the rest of the chapter.

33:5 32:31.

33:6 30:17.

33:7 29:14; 30:3.

“*Will cause...to return*”— or “will restore the well-being of”.

33:8 31:34.

33:9 3:17.

33:11 Ps 136:1. Notes on thanksgiving at Lev 7:12-13; Ps 7:17; 50:14-15; 56:12.

for the LORD *is* good,
for his mercy *continues on* forever,
and the voice of those who will
bring the sacrifice of praise
into the house of the LORD.

For I will restore the captive land, as at the first, says the LORD.

¹²“Thus says the LORD of hosts: Again in this place, which is desolate without man and without beast, and in all its cities, there will be dwelling places of shepherds causing *their* flocks to lie down. ¹³In the cities of the mountains, in the cities of the vale, and in the cities of the south, and in the land of Benjamin, and in the places about Jerusalem, and in the cities of Judah, once more the flocks will pass under the hands of the one counting *them*, says the LORD.

¹⁴“See, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will perform that good thing which I have promised to the house of Israel and to the house of Judah.

¹⁵ “In those days, and at that time,
I will cause the Branch of
righteousness to grow up for David;
and he will administer justice
and righteousness in the land.

¹⁶ In those days Judah will be saved,
and Jerusalem will dwell safely.
And this *is the name* by
which it will be called:

The LORD Our Righteousness.

¹⁷“For thus says the LORD: David will

never lack a man to sit on the throne of the house of Israel, ¹⁸and the priests the Levites will not lack a man before me to offer burnt offerings, and to burn grain offerings, and to offer continual sacrifices”.

¹⁹And the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah, saying, ²⁰“Thus says the LORD: If you can break my covenant with the day, and my covenant with the night, so that day and night do not exist in their fixed times, ²¹*then* my covenant with David my servant may also be broken, so that he will not have a son to reign on his throne, and with the Levites the priests, my ministers. ²²As the *starry* host of the heavens cannot be numbered, nor the sand of the sea measured, so I will increase the descendants of my servant David, and the Levites who minister to me”.

²³Moreover the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah, saying, ²⁴“Have you not considered what this people have spoken, saying, ‘The LORD has rejected the two families which he chose?’ So they have despised my people; they are no longer a nation, in their sight. ²⁵Thus says the LORD: If my covenant *is* not with day and night, *and if* I have not appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth, ²⁶then I will reject the offspring of Jacob, and my servant David, so that I do not take *any* of his offspring as rulers over the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; for I will cause them to return from captivity, and have mercy on them”.

34 The word which came to Jeremiah from the LORD when Nebuchadnezzar

33:14 We may be sure that God always fulfils His promises (1 Kings 8:56; Titus 1:2; Heb 6:18).

33:15-16 These verses speak of the Lord Jesus Christ. Notes at 23:5-6. God’s promises to Israel and Judah were not completely fulfilled at the time of the return from Babylon. “*It*” (v 16) – or “*He*”.

33:17 2 Sam 7:13; 2 Chron 7:18; Ps 89:29-37; Luke 1:31-33.

33:18 The Lord Jesus as a man was descended from David and so could inherit his throne. It is more difficult to see how Jesus can fulfil the word here, for He was not descended from Levi, and His priesthood is not a continuation of the priesthood of Aaron. Jesus is a priest after the order of Melchisedek (Heb 7:11-22). All believers in the New Testament are called priests (1 Pet 2:5,9; Rev 1:6), but they have no connection with Levi. The words of this verse may be fulfilled in ways at present unknown to us (compare Ezek 40:44-46).

“*Offerings*”, “*sacrifices*” – see notes on Ezek 40:38-43.

33:19-22 Compare 31:35-37.

33:22 Gen 22:17; 26:4; 32:12.

33:23-26 31:35-37; 33:19-22.

33:24 “*Two families*” – if this looks back to v 22, it means Judah and Levi. Some commentators think it means the two kingdoms of Judah and Israel.

33:26 The words “offspring of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob” suggest their physical descendants. So does the reference to “the two families” in v 24. In the New Testament Gentile believers are the spiritual children of Abraham (Rom 4:11,16,17; Gal 3:7,29), but they are not called the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. And the vast majority of Christians now were never a part of either of the two families mentioned in v 24.

“*Cause them to return from captivity*” – or “restore their well-being”.

34:1-5 This is similar to the warning in 21:3-10. Here Zedekiah is promised that he will not die in the capture of Jerusalem but will end his days quietly in Babylon and not without some honor from the people. So God shows mercy even to the wicked.

king of Babylon, and all his army, and all the kingdoms of the earth in his dominion, and all the people, fought against Jerusalem, and against all its cities, saying, ²“Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel. Go and speak to Zedekiah king of Judah, and tell him the LORD says this: See, I will give this city into the hands of the king of Babylon, and he will burn it with fire, ³and you will not escape from his hands, but will certainly be captured and delivered into his hands. And your eyes will see the eyes of the king of Babylon, and he will speak with you mouth to mouth, and you will go to Babylon.

⁴“Yet hear the word of the LORD, O Zedekiah king of Judah. The LORD says this about you: You will not die by the sword, ⁵but you will die peacefully; and as in the burning ceremonies for your fathers, the former kings who were before you, so they will burn spices for you, and will lament for you, saying, ‘Alas, master!’ for I have proclaimed the word, says the LORD”.

⁶Then Jeremiah the prophet spoke all these words to Zedekiah king of Judah in Jerusalem, ⁷when the king of Babylon’s army fought against Jerusalem, and against all the cities of Judah that were left, against Lachish, and against Azekah (for these fortified cities remained of the cities of Judah).

⁸A word came to Jeremiah from the LORD, after King Zedekiah had made a covenant with all the people who were at Jerusalem, to proclaim liberty to them, ⁹so that every man should let his male or female servant who was a Hebrew man or woman, go free, that no one should keep any of them, that is, his brother Jew, in bondage. ¹⁰Now when all the princes and all the people who had entered into the covenant, heard that every one should let his male or female servant go free, that no one should keep them in bondage any longer, they obeyed and let

them go. ¹¹But afterwards they turned right around and caused the servants and the maid servants, whom they had let go free, to return, and brought them into bondage as servants and as maidservants.

¹²Therefore the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, ¹³“Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: I made a covenant with your fathers in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondmen, saying, ¹⁴At the end of each seven years every one of you must release his Hebrew brother who has been sold to you; and when he has served you six years, you shall let him go free from you. But your fathers did not listen or turn their ear to me. ¹⁵And recently you changed and did right in my sight, each one proclaiming liberty to his neighbour; and you made a covenant before me in the house which is called by my name. ¹⁶But you turned right around and profaned my name, each one causing his servant or his maid servant, whom he had set at liberty at their wish, to return, and brought them into bondage, to be servants and maidservants for you.

¹⁷“Therefore thus says the LORD: You have not listened to me. Each man has not proclaimed liberty to his brother and to his neighbour. See, I am proclaiming a ‘liberty’ for you, says the LORD, to the sword, to the plague, and to the famine, and I will cause you to be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth. ¹⁸And I will give the men who have broken my covenant, who have not performed the words of the covenant which they had made before me, when they cut the calf in two and passed between its parts, ¹⁹the princes of Judah and the princes of Jerusalem, the eunuchs, and the priests, and all the people of the land, who passed between the parts of the calf, ²⁰I will give them into the hands of their enemies and into

34:5 2 Chron 16:14.

34:8-10 This was based on instructions in the law (Ex 21:2; Lev 25:10,39-43; Deut 15:12-15).

34:11 Here is another indication of the sad and evil condition of the people in Jerusalem. They very quickly broke their solemn promise to the king, and disobeyed the commands of God’s word. The Babylonians temporarily departed from the siege of Jerusalem, and the people thought they were safe again to do as they pleased (34:21).

34:12-16 Could the people imagine that God did not observe their behavior?

34:17 God would show them what He thought of their broken promise and disobedience to His commands. He would proclaim a “liberty” for them – a release from life itself. This is in accordance with the principle laid down in various places in the Word of God – men shall reap what they sow (Deut 19:21; Ps 18:25-26; Prov 22:8; Gal 6:7).

34:18-20 In ancient times when making a solemn covenant sometimes an animal was killed and divided into two parts, and those making the covenant walked between the parts. Compare Gen 15:9-19.

the hands of those who seek their life; and their dead bodies will be food for the birds of the sky, and for the beasts of the earth.

²¹“And I will give Zedekiah king of Judah and his princes into the hands of their enemies and into the hands of those who seek their life and into the hands of the army of the king of Babylon, which has gone away from you. ²²See, I will give a command, says the LORD, and cause them to return to this city; and they will fight against it, and take it, and burn it with fire. And I will make the cities of Judah a desolation without an inhabitant”.

35 The word which came to Jeremiah from the LORD in the days of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, saying, ²“Go to the house of the Rechabites, and speak to them, and bring them into the house of the LORD, into one of the rooms, and give them wine to drink”.

³Then I took Jaazaniah the son of Jeremiah, the son of Habaziniyah, and his brethren, and all his sons, and the whole house of the Rechabites, ⁴and I brought them into the house of the LORD, into the room of the sons of Hanan, the son of Igdaliah, a man of God, which was by the room of the princes, which was above the room of Maaseiah the son of Shallum, the doorkeeper. ⁵And I set jars full of wine and cups in front of the sons of the house of the Rechabites, and I said to them, “Drink wine”.

⁶But they said, “We will drink no wine; for Jonadab the son of Rechab our father commanded us, saying, ‘You shall never drink wine, *neither* you nor your sons. ⁷And you shall not build houses, or sow seed, or plant a vineyard, or have *any of these*; but all your days you shall live in tents, so that you may live a long time in the land where you *are* staying.’ ⁸So we have obeyed the voice of Jonadab the son of Rechab our father in all that he commanded

us, to drink no wine all our days, we, our wives, our sons, and our daughters, ⁹and to build no houses for us to live in; and we have no vineyard, or field, or seed. ¹⁰But we have lived in tents and been obedient, acting in accordance with all that Jonadab our father commanded us. ¹¹But it so happened, when Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up into the land, that we said, ‘Come and let us go to Jerusalem’, for fear of the army of the Chaldeans and for fear of the army of the Syrians. So we are living in Jerusalem”.

¹²Then the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah, saying, ¹³“Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Go and tell the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, ‘Will you not receive instruction to listen to my words?’ says the LORD. ¹⁴‘The words of Jonadab the son of Rechab, commanding his sons not to drink wine, are being performed. For to this day they drink none, but obey their father’s command. However I have spoken to you, rising early and speaking, but you have not listened to me. ¹⁵I have also sent all my servants the prophets to you, rising up early and sending *them*, saying, Each of you turn now from his evil way, and amend your actions, not following other gods to serve them, and you will live in the land which I have given to you and to your fathers. But you have not turned your ear to me or listened. ¹⁶Because the sons of Jonadab the son of Rechab have done according to the command of their father, which he commanded them, but this people have not listened to me, ¹⁷thus says the LORD God of hosts, the God of Israel: See, I will bring on Judah and on all the inhabitants of Jerusalem all the disaster that I have proclaimed against them, because I have spoken to them, and they have not listened, and I have called to them, and they have not answered.’ ”

34:22 The armies of Babylon were under the control of the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel. Indeed, all armies, all human beings are under His control (Ps 135:6; Dan 4:34-35).

35:2 The Recabites did not belong to any of the tribes of Israel. They were related to the Kenites (1 Chron 2:55). Moses’ father-in-law was a Kenite (Jud 1:16). In this chapter God has Jeremiah test them to reveal their

faithfulness to their forefather’s instructions (vs 6-10). He then contrasts the Recabites with the unfaithful people of Israel. It is a sad thing that people are much more likely to obey the instructions of men, and to follow traditions, than to obey the commands of God Himself (v 14; Matt 15:3-9). Shall we not learn the lesson God was teaching through this example (v 13)? If we do not, will not God mark it and take action against us (v 17)?

¹⁸And Jeremiah said to the house of the Rechabites, “Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: ‘Because you have obeyed the command of your father Jonadab, and kept all his precepts, and done according to all that he has commanded you, ¹⁹therefore thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Jonadab the son of Rechab will not lack a man to stand before me forever.’ ”

36 And it came about in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, *that* this word came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, ²“Take a scroll and write on it all the words that I have spoken to you against Israel, and against Judah, and against all the nations, from the day I *first* spoke to you, from the days of Josiah, to this day. ³It could be that the house of Judah, hearing of all the disaster which I intend to bring on them, will turn, each one *of them*, from his evil way, so that I may forgive their iniquity and their sin”.

⁴Then Jeremiah called Baruch the son of Neriah; and from the mouth of Jeremiah Baruch wrote down on a scroll all the words of the LORD which he had spoken to him. ⁵And Jeremiah commanded Baruch, saying, “I *am* locked up. I cannot go into the house of the LORD. ⁶Therefore you go and read the words of the LORD from the scroll which you have written from my mouth, in the hearing of the people in the LORD’s house on a day of fasting. And you shall also read them in the hearing of all Judah who come out of their cities. ⁷It could be that they will present their supplication before the LORD, and that each one will

turn from his evil way; for great is the anger and the fury that the LORD has proclaimed against this people”.

⁸And Baruch the son of Neriah did everything that Jeremiah the prophet commanded him, reading the words of the LORD in the book, in the LORD’s house. ⁹And it came to pass in the fifth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, in the ninth month, *that* they proclaimed a fast in the presence of the LORD to all the people in Jerusalem, and to all the people who came from the cities of Judah to Jerusalem. ¹⁰Then Baruch read the words of Jeremiah from the book, in the house of the LORD, in the room of Gemariah the son of Shaphan the scribe, in the upper court, at the entrance of the new gate of the LORD’s house, in the hearing of all the people.

¹¹When Michaiah the son of Gemariah, the son of Shaphan, heard from the book all the words of the LORD, ¹²he went down to the king’s house, into the scribe’s chamber, and there sat all the leaders, Elishama the scribe and Delaiah the son of Shemaiah and Elnathan the son of Achbor and Gemariah the son of Shaphan and Zedekiah the son of Hananiah, and all the *other* leaders. ¹³Then Michaiah declared to them all the words that he had heard as Baruch was reading the book in the hearing of the people. ¹⁴Therefore all the princes sent Jehudi the son of Nethaniah, the son of Shelemiah, the son of Cush, to Baruch, saying, “Take in your hand the scroll from which you read in the hearing of the people, and come”. So Baruch the son of Neriah took the scroll in his hand, and came to them. ¹⁵And they said to him, “Sit down now and read it in our hearing”. So

35:18-19 Since that family knew what faithfulness was, God would chose some from among them to show that same faithfulness toward Himself. Because of the terrible unfaithfulness of Israel, God is emphasizing here how highly He regards faithfulness (on faithfulness see Matt 24:45; 25:21-23; Luke 16:10-12; 1 Cor 4:2; 1 Tim 1:12; 3:11; 2 Tim 2:2; Heb 3:2).

36:2 1:1-3.

36:3 18:8; 26:3. God is swift to forgive when He can, slow to punish when He must.

36:4 “*Baruch*”– 32:12; 43:3,6; 45:1.

36:5 The ungodly will often try to restrict the activities of God’s spokesmen. Jeremiah’s messages spoken in the temple were very unpopular with the priests and prophets there

(20:1-2). They could not endure the truth so they tried to keep it away. Compare Acts 4:1-3,18; 5:17-18,27,28.

36:6-8 The word of God which He sends cannot be stopped (1:12; Isa 55:11). If men try to shut it up one way it will come in another. If one spokesperson is silenced God will choose another. Wicked men would gladly keep the truth shut out of the world altogether, and they will try to bind God’s servants, but God’s word cannot be bound (2 Tim 2:9).

36:9 Verse 6. This was many months after God’s command in v 1. It seems Baruch had to wait this long for a good opportunity. The fast was probably called because of the danger from the Babylonian armies.

Baruch read *it* in their hearing.

¹⁶Now it came about, when they heard all these words, they turned to one another in fear, and said to Baruch, “We will surely tell the king of all these words”. ¹⁷And they asked Baruch, saying, “Tell us now, how did you write down all these words from his mouth?”

¹⁸Then Baruch answered them, “He dictated all these words to me with his mouth, and I wrote *them* with ink in the book”.

¹⁹Then the officials said to Baruch, “Go *and* hide, you and Jeremiah, and do not let anyone know where you are”.

²⁰And they went in to the king in the courtyard; but they stored the scroll in the room of Elishama the scribe, and told all the words in the hearing of the king. ²¹So the king sent Jehudi to bring the scroll, and he brought it from the room of Elishama the scribe. And Jehudi read it in the hearing of the king, and in the hearing of all the officials who stood beside the king. ²²Now the king was sitting in the winter house, *it being* the ninth month; and *there was a fire* burning on the hearth in front of him. ²³And it came about when Jehudi had read three or four columns, *that* he cut it off with a scribe’s knife and threw *it* into the fire that was on the hearth, until the whole scroll was burned up in the fire on the hearth. ²⁴Yet they were not afraid, and they did not tear their garments, *neither* the king nor any of his servants who heard all these words. ²⁵Nevertheless Elnathan and Delaiah and Gemariah had begged the king not to burn the scroll, but he would not listen to them. ²⁶And the king commanded Jerahmeel the son of Hammelech, and Seraiah the son of Azriel, and Shelemiah the son of Abdeel,

to seize Baruch the scribe and Jeremiah the prophet; but the LORD hid them.

²⁷Then, after the king had burned the scroll and the words from the mouth of Jeremiah which Baruch wrote down, the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah, saying, ²⁸“Take again another scroll, and write on it all the former words, that were in the first scroll, which Jehoiakim the king of Judah has burned up. ²⁹And you shall say to Jehoiakim king of Judah, Thus says the LORD: You have burned that scroll, saying, ‘Why have you written in it saying that the king of Babylon will certainly come and destroy this land, and will bring to an end *both* man and beast here?’ ³⁰Therefore thus says the LORD about Jehoiakim king of Judah: He will have no one to sit on the throne of David. And his dead body will be thrown out to the heat of the day and to the frost of the night. ³¹And I will punish him and his offspring and his servants for their wickedness, and I will bring on them, and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and on the men of Judah, all the disaster that I have proclaimed against them, for they did not listen”.

³²Then Jeremiah took another scroll, and gave it to Baruch the scribe, the son of Neriah. He wrote on it, from the mouth of Jeremiah, all the words of the scroll which Jehoiakim king of Judah had burned in the fire; and to them were added many similar words.

37 And King Zedekiah the son of Josiah reigned in the place of Coniah the son of Jehoiakim, whom Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon made king in the land of Judah. ²But neither he, nor his servants, nor the people of the land, listened to the words of the LORD, which he spoke through the

36:16 They were afraid that Jeremiah had spoken the truth of God. All his messages written down together made an impact on at least some of the authorities.

36:18 Baruch was faithful to put down on paper exactly what Jeremiah dictated. All the writers of the Bible faithfully and carefully put down exactly what God revealed to them and inspired them to write (Jer 30:2; Ex 24:4; 34:27; 2 Sam 23:2; 2 Tim 3:16; 2 Pet 1:21).

36:19 These authorities knew that in those days to speak the truth was to be in danger (compare 26:20-23).

36:23-26 There are still those who try to destroy those parts of the Bible they don’t like. Do they

vainly imagine that by destroying or denying the words written on paper that they can destroy God’s truth? Those who attack the truth of God’s word will only harm themselves (v 30; 22:18-19).

36:26 See v 19. God did a better job of hiding them than they could have done.

36:27-31 Words of truth written on paper may be cut to pieces and burned in the fire, but the truth itself lives on and will prevail and be fulfilled to the letter (Ps 119:89; Matt 5:18; 24:35; 1 Pet 1:25).

36:32 God has always looked after His Word. If some men try to destroy it, God will use other men to preserve it.

37:1 “Coniah”— a variant of Jehoiachin.

37:2 2 Kings 24:18-20.

prophet Jeremiah.

³And Zedekiah the king sent Jehucal the son of Shelemiah and Zephaniah the son of Maaseiah the priest to the prophet Jeremiah, saying, “Now pray to the LORD our God for us”.

⁴Now Jeremiah came in and went out among the people, for they had not yet put him in prison. ⁵Then Pharaoh’s army came up out of Egypt, and when the Chaldeans who were besieging Jerusalem heard news of them, they departed from Jerusalem.

⁶Then the word of the LORD came to the prophet Jeremiah, saying, ⁷“Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: This is what you shall say to the king of Judah who sent you to me to inquire of me: ‘See, Pharaoh’s army, which has come out to help you, will return to Egypt to their own land. ⁸And the Chaldeans will come back and fight against this city, and take it, and burn it with fire.

⁹“Thus says the LORD: Do not deceive yourselves, saying, “The Chaldeans will surely depart from us”, for they will not depart. ¹⁰For even though you had struck down the whole army of the Chaldeans that fights against you, and there remained *only* wounded men among them, every man of them would *still* rise up in his tent, and burn this city with fire.’ ”

¹¹And it came about when the army of the Chaldeans had withdrawn from Jerusalem for fear of Pharaoh’s army, ¹²that Jeremiah went out of Jerusalem to go to the land of Benjamin, to take possession of his *assigned* portion there among the people. ¹³And when he was at the Gate of Benjamin, a captain of the guard was there, whose name was Irijah. *He* was the son of Shelemiah, the son of Hananiah. And he seized Jeremiah the prophet, saying, “You are defecting to the Chaldeans”.

¹⁴Then Jeremiah said, “*That is false.* I am not defecting to the Chaldeans”. But he did not listen to him. So Irijah took Jeremiah and brought him to the officials. ¹⁵Therefore the officials were angry with Jeremiah, and struck him, and imprisoned him in the house of Jonathan the scribe; for they had made that the prison.

¹⁶So Jeremiah went into the dungeon and into a vaulted cell, and Jeremiah remained there many days. ¹⁷Then Zedekiah the king sent and brought him out, and the king questioned him secretly in his house, and said, “Is there *any* word from the LORD?” And Jeremiah said, “There is. He said, ‘For you will be delivered into the hands of the king of Babylon.’ ”

¹⁸Moreover Jeremiah said to King Zedekiah, “How have I offended against you, or against your servants, or against this people, that you have put me in prison? ¹⁹Where now *are* your prophets who prophesied to you, saying, ‘The king of Babylon will not come against you, or against this land?’ ²⁰Therefore please listen now, O my master the king. Please let my plea be acceptable to you, so that you do not make me return to the house of Jonathan the scribe, lest I die there”.

²¹Then King Zedekiah gave a command that they should commit Jeremiah into the courtyard of the prison, and that they should give him daily a piece of bread from the bakers’ street, until all the bread in the city was gone. So Jeremiah remained in the courtyard of the prison.

38 Then Shephatiah the son of Mattan, and Gedaliah the son of Pashur, and Jucal the son of Shelemiah, and Pashur the son of Malchiah, heard the words that Jeremiah had spoken to all the people,

37:3 If people refuse to hear and obey God’s word to what does their request for prayer amount? or even answered prayer for them? – Ex 8:8,28; 9:28; 10:17; 21:7; 1 Sam 12:19; 1 Kings 13:6; Acts 8:24. Very often people ask for prayer without a desire for repentance or a new heart because they want God to rescue them from danger or trouble. This is trifling with God.

37:4-11 No request for prayer by unrepentant, disobedient people can cause God to change what He has purposed to do.

37:12 Jeremiah’s town, Anathoth, was located in the territory of Benjamin.

37:15-16 Another example of the mistreatment God’s servants often encounter in this world (Gen 39:20; Acts 4:4; 12:1-4; 16:22-24; Heb 11:36-38).

37:17 Evidently King Zedekiah was a weak man, afraid of His own officials. Jeremiah, as usual, told him the plain truth (21:3-7). He would not soften God’s message to escape from trouble or danger.

37:18 1 Sam 26:18. It is not wrong to appeal to rulers against unjust treatment.

37:19 14:13-14.

37:21 A better place than the jail in which he had been (v 16).

saying, ²“Thus says the LORD: ‘He who remains in this city will die by the sword, by the famine, and by the plague; but he who goes out to the Chaldeans will live; for his life will be like plunder to him, and he will live.’ ³Thus says the LORD: ‘This city will certainly be given into the hands of the army of the king of Babylon, which will take it.’”

⁴Therefore the officials said to the king, “We beg you, let this man be put to death, for in this way he is weakening the hands of warriors who remain in this city, and the hands of all the people, by speaking such words to them. For this man is not seeking the welfare of this people, but *their* harm”.

⁵Then Zedekiah the king said, “See, he is in your hands; for the king cannot do anything against you”.

⁶Then they took Jeremiah and threw him into the pit of Malchiah the son of Hammelech, that was in the courtyard of the prison. And they let Jeremiah down with ropes. And *there was* no water in the pit, only mud. So Jeremiah sank down in the mud.

⁷Now Ebed-Melech the Ethiopian, one of the eunuchs who was in the king’s house, heard that they had put Jeremiah in the pit. when the king was sitting in the Gate of Benjamin, ⁸Ebed-Melech went out of the king’s house, and spoke to the king, saying, ⁹“My lord the king, these men have done evil in all that they have done to Jeremiah the prophet, whom they have thrown into the pit. And he is likely to die from hunger in the place where he is, for *there is* no more bread in the city”.

¹⁰Then the king commanded Ebed-Melech the Ethiopian, saying, “Take with you thirty men from here, and take Jeremiah the prophet up out of the pit, before he dies”.

¹¹So Ebed-Melech took the men with him, and went into the king’s house under the treasury, and took from there old rags and old worn-out clothes, and let them down by ropes into the pit to Jeremiah. ¹²And Ebed-Melech the Ethiopian said to Jeremiah, “Now put *these* old rags and worn-out clothes under the ropes under your armpits”. And Jeremiah did so. ¹³So they pulled Jeremiah up with ropes, and took him out of the pit. And Jeremiah remained in the courtyard of the prison.

¹⁴Then Zedekiah the king sent *men* and had Jeremiah the prophet brought to him at the third entrance of the house of the LORD; and the king said to Jeremiah, “I am going to ask you something. Do not hide anything from me”.

¹⁵Then Jeremiah said to Zedekiah, “If I tell *it* to you, will you not surely put me to death? And if I give you advice, you will not listen to me”.

¹⁶So Zedekiah the king swore secretly to Jeremiah, saying, “As the LORD lives, who made these souls of ours, I will not put you to death, and I will not give you into the hands of these men who seek your life”.

¹⁷Then Jeremiah said to Zedekiah, “Thus says the LORD, the God of hosts, the God of Israel: ‘If you will definitely go out to the officials of the king of Babylon, then your soul will live, and this city will not be burned with fire; and you and your household will live. ¹⁸But if you will not go out to the officials of the king of Babylon, then this city will be given into the hands of the Chaldeans, and they will burn it with fire, and you will not escape from their hands”.

¹⁹And King Zedekiah said to Jeremiah, “I am afraid of the Jews who have defected to the Chaldeans, that they may deliver me into their hands, and they will mock me”.

38:4 Often in the eyes of ungodly men those who faithfully proclaim God’s truth are worthy of death. They misunderstand the ministry and the motives of God’s servants (Acts 22:22). Jeremiah’s faithfulness to God’s word made him seem like a traitor to his nation.

38:5 Verses 24-26; 37:17.

38:6 Jeremiah sought the good of the people with his whole heart (8:21—9:1; 13:17). This was his reward in this world (compare John 15:18-19; Heb 11:35-38).

38:7-13 When there was none among the people of Israel to help Jeremiah, God chose an outsider,

an Ethiopian, and put compassion in his heart for the prophet. God can send help to His suffering people from the most unlikely sources. Ebed-melech acted as he did because he had faith in the true and living God (39:18).

38:14-18 If Zedekiah was expecting Jeremiah to change God’s message he was disappointed. God’s prophets could not and did not pervert the truth to please the rulers of this world.

38:19 Verse 5; 37:17. If he had feared God as he ought he would not have feared men. If he had ruled justly and well he would not have feared the Jews who had defected to Babylon.

²⁰But Jeremiah said, “They will not deliver you up. I beg you, obey the voice of the LORD which I speak to you. Then it will be well with you, and your soul will live. ²¹But if you refuse to go out, this *is* the word that the LORD has revealed to me: ²²‘Now, see, all the women who are left in the house of the king of Judah *will be* brought out to the officials of the king of Babylon, and those women will say,

“Your friends have misled you,
and have prevailed against you.
Your feet have sunk in the mud,
and they have turned away”.

²³So they will bring out all your wives and your children to the Chaldeans; and you will not escape from their hands, but will be seized by the hands of the king of Babylon; and you will cause this city to be burned with fire.’ ”

²⁴Then Zedekiah said to Jeremiah, “Do not let anyone know of these words, and you will not die. ²⁵But if the officials hear that I have talked with you, and they come to you and say to you, ‘Tell us now what you said to the king. Do not hide it from us, and we will not put you to death. *Tell us* also what the king said to you’; ²⁶then you shall say to them, ‘I presented my plea before the king, that he would not make me return to Jonathan’s house, to die there.’ ”

²⁷Then all the officials came to Jeremiah, and questioned him; and he spoke to them in accordance with all these words that the king had commanded. So they stopped speaking with him, since that conversation had not been overheard.

²⁸So Jeremiah stayed in the courtyard of the prison until the day that Jerusalem was taken, and he was *there* when Jerusalem was taken.

39 In the ninth year of Zedekiah king of Judah, in the tenth month,

38:24-26 Jeremiah’s words did not remove Zedekiah’s fear of men. Zedekiah’s life is an example of the truth of Prov 29:25. We must never let the fear of others prevent us from doing what God tells us to do. What a contrast there is between the king on his throne and the imprisoned prophet! The king was bound by fear wherever he turned; the prophet was free in spirit to serve God.

39:1-10 2 Kings 25:1-21; 2 Chron 36:15-20. This

Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and all his army came against Jerusalem and besieged it. ²And in the eleventh year of Zedekiah, in the fourth month, the ninth *day* of the month, the city wall was breached. ³And all the officials of the king of Babylon, Nergal-Sharezer, Samgar-Nebo, Sarsechim, Rabsaris, Nergal-Sharezer, Rabmag, with all the rest of the officials of the king of Babylon, came in and sat at the Middle Gate. ⁴And it came about when Zedekiah the king of Judah and all the warriors saw them, *that* they fled and went out of the city at night, by way of the king’s garden, by the gate between the two walls; and he went out on the road to the *Jordan* valley.

⁵But the Chaldeans’ army pursued them, and caught up to Zedekiah in the plains of Jericho; and when they seized him, they brought him up to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon to Riblah in the land of Hamath, where he gave judgment on him. ⁶Then the king of Babylon killed the sons of Zedekiah in Riblah before his eyes. The king of Babylon also killed all the officials of Judah. ⁷Moreover he put out Zedekiah’s eyes, and bound him with chains, to carry him off to Babylon.

⁸And the Chaldeans burned the king’s house, and the houses of the people, with fire, and broke down the walls of Jerusalem. ⁹Then Nebuzaradan, the commander of the guard, carried away captive into Babylon the rest of the people who remained in the city, and those who had defected, who defected to him, with the rest of the people who remained. ¹⁰But Nebuzaradan the commander of the guard left some of the poor of the people, who had nothing, in the land of Judah, and at the same time gave them vineyards and fields.

¹¹Now Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon gave a command concerning Jeremiah to Nebuzaradan the commander of the guard, saying, ¹²“Take him and look after him well,

was the sad penalty for Jerusalem’s disobedience to God’s word. This was also a vindication of Jeremiah as a prophet of God.

39:11-14 The cruel conquerors showed far more mercy to Jeremiah than his own people had. How far Israel had fallen from God’s standards of justice, mercy, fair-dealing, compassion, ethics and morality! Their shame and disgrace at the hands of their enemies were all deserved.

and do him no harm, but do for him just as he tells you". ¹³So Nebuzaradan the commander of the guard, and Nebu-Shasban, Rabsaris, and Nergal-Sharezer, Rabmag, and all the officials of the king of Babylon, ¹⁴sent and took Jeremiah out of the courtyard of the prison, and entrusted him to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, that he should take him home. So he lived among the people.

¹⁵Now the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah when he was shut up in the courtyard of the prison, saying, ¹⁶"Go and speak to Ebed-Melech the Ethiopian, saying, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: See, I will bring to pass my words on this city for disaster, and not for good; and on that day they will be *fulfilled* in front of you. ¹⁷But I will deliver you in that day, says the LORD, and you will not be given into the hands of the men whom you fear. ¹⁸For I will certainly deliver you, and you will not fall by the sword, but your life will be like plunder for you, because you have put your trust in me, says the LORD.' "

40 The word came to Jeremiah from the LORD, after Nebuzaradan the commander of the guard let him go from Ramah, where he had taken him bound in chains among all those of Jerusalem and Judah being carried away captive, who were being exiled to Babylon. ²And the commander of the guard took Jeremiah, and said to him, "The LORD your God proclaimed this disaster on this place. ³Now the LORD has brought *it about*, and done just as he said. This thing has come on you because you sinned against the LORD, and did not obey his voice. ⁴And now, see, I am loosing you today from the chains which *are* on your hands. If it seems good to you to come with me to Babylon, come; and I will look after you well. But if it does not seem good to you to come with me to Babylon, then don't come. See, the whole

39:15-18 God was ruling in the affairs of men, controlling the activities of Babylon's armies, bringing destruction on His own people and city. Yet He did not overlook a single individual who trusted Him, did not forget that one deed of kindness to His prophet. This is a part of the greatness and goodness of God (Heb 6:10; Matt 10:42).

40:2-6 This officer from a far place and

land is before you. Go wherever it seems good and convenient for you to go". ⁵Then before he left, *he said*, "Go back also to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, whom the king of Babylon has made governor over the cities of Judah, and live with him among the people; or go wherever it seems convenient to you to go". So the commander of the guard gave him provisions and a present, and let him go.

⁶Then Jeremiah went to Mizpah to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, and lived with him among the people who were left in the land.

⁷Now when all the officers of the army who were in the fields, they and their men, heard that the king of Babylon had made Gedaliah the son of Ahikam governor in the land, and had committed to him men, women, and children, and some of the poor of the land, among those who had not been carried away captive to Babylon, ⁸then they came to Gedaliah to Mizpah. *They were* Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, and Johanan and Jonathan the sons of Kareah, and Seraiah the son of Tanhumeth, and the sons of Ephai the Netophathite, and Jezaniah the son of a Maachathite. They and their men *came*. ⁹And Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, swore to them and to their men, saying, "Do not be afraid to serve the Chaldeans. Live in the land and serve the king of Babylon, and it will be well with you. ¹⁰As for me, look, I will live at Mizpah to serve the Chaldeans, who will come to us. But as for you, you gather wine and summer fruits and oil, and put *them* in your *storage* vessels, and live in your cities that you have taken over".

¹¹Likewise when all the Jews who were in Moab and among the Ammonites and in Edom, and who were in all the countries, heard that the king of Babylon had left a remnant of Judah, and that he had appointed Gedaliah the son of Ahikam the son of Shaphan over them, ¹²all the Jews returned

another religion had more understanding of what had been happening than the priests, prophets, and rulers of God's people in Jerusalem! And he treated God's true prophet with far greater kindness than they had (39:11-14).

40:7 Ahikam had served good King Josiah and had shown kindness to Jeremiah (26:24). Gedaliah followed in his father's footsteps.

from all the places where they had been driven, and came to the land of Judah, to Gedaliah at Mizpah, and gathered an abundance of wine and summer fruits.

¹³Moreover Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the officers of the army who were in the fields, came to Gedaliah at Mizpah, ¹⁴and said to him, “Are you well aware that Baalis the king of the Ammonites has sent Ishmael the son of Nethaniah to kill you?” But Gedaliah the son of Ahikam did not believe them.

¹⁵Then Johanan the son of Kareah spoke to Gedaliah in Mizpah secretly, saying, “Please let me go, and I will kill Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, and no one will know *it*. Why should he kill you, causing all the Jews who are gathered around you to be scattered, and the remnant in Judah to perish?”

¹⁶But Gedaliah the son of Ahikam said to Johanan the son of Kareah, “You shall not do this thing, for you are speaking falsely about Ishmael”.

41 Now it came about in the seventh month *that* Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, the son of Elishama, of the royal family and of the officials of the king, came with ten men to Mizpah to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, and there in Mizpah they ate bread together. ²Then Ishmael the son of Nethaniah and the ten men who were with him got up and with the sword struck and killed Gedaliah the son of Ahikam the son of Shaphan, whom the king of Babylon had made governor over the land. ³Ishmael also killed all the Jews who were with him at Mizpah, *that is*, with Gedaliah, and the Chaldeans who were found there, the soldiers.

⁴And it so happened on the second day after he had killed Gedaliah, without anyone knowing *it*, ⁵that some eighty men from Shechem, from Shiloh and from Samaria, with their beards shaved and their clothes torn, having made cuts on themselves, came with offerings and incense in their hands,

to bring *them* to the house of the LORD. ⁶And Ishmael the son of Nethaniah went out from Mizpah to meet them, weeping as he went along; and it came about when he met them that he said to them, “Come to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam”. ⁷And it happened when they came into the middle of the city, that Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, and the men who were with him, killed them *and threw them* down into the pit. ⁸But ten men were found among them who said to Ishmael, “Do not kill us, for we have hidden stores of wheat and barley and oil and honey in a field”. So he refrained and did not kill them with their brethren. ⁹Now the cistern where Ishmael had thrown all the dead bodies of the men he had killed because of Gedaliah, was the one which Asa the king had made for fear of Baasha king of Israel; and Ishmael the son of Nethaniah filled it with *those who had been* killed.

¹⁰Then Ishmael took away captive all the rest of the people who were in Mizpah, the king’s daughters and all the people who remained in Mizpah, whom Nebuzaradan the commander of the guard had committed to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam; and Ishmael the son of Nethaniah took them captive and left to go over to the Ammonites.

¹¹But when Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the officers of the army who were with him, heard of all the evil that Ishmael the son of Nethaniah had done, ¹²they took all the men and went out to fight with Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, and found him by the great pool in Gibeon. ¹³Now it happened when all the people who were with Ishmael saw Johanan the son of Kareah and all the officers of the army who were with him, *that they were* glad. ¹⁴So all the people whom Ishmael had taken away captive from Mizpah turned around, came back and went to Johanan the son of Kareah. ¹⁵But Ishmael the son of Nethaniah escaped from Johanan with eight men, and went to the Ammonites.

40:16 Gedaliah, as so many leaders in every generation, lacked discernment. He rudely rejected the word of the man who was telling the truth and trusted the man who was plotting to kill him. This cost him his life (41:2). The ability to discern the character and truthfulness of those we deal with is a gift of God – one we all need to seek. See 1 Kings 3:9-12. Without it we may

ignorantly bring much harm to ourselves and to God’s work.

41:1-15 In chapter 24 God revealed to Jeremiah that those left behind by the Babylonians would be like bad figs (24:8). For the most part they were without spiritual life or the fear of God. These verses record what we might expect from such people.

¹⁶Then Johanan the son of Kareah and all the officers of the army who were with him took all the rest of the people from Mizpah whom he had recovered from Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, after he had killed Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, the mighty warriors and the women and the children and the eunuchs whom he had brought back from Gibeon, ¹⁷and they departed and stayed at the dwelling place of Kimham, which is near Bethlehem, going on the way to Egypt, ¹⁸because of the Chaldeans; for they were afraid of them, because Ishmael the son of Nethaniah had killed Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, whom the king of Babylon made governor in the land.

42 Then all the officers of the army, and Johanan the son of Kareah, and Jezaniah the son of Hoshaiiah, and all the people from the least to the greatest, came near ²and said to Jeremiah the prophet, “Please let our plea be acceptable to you, and pray for us to the LORD your God, and for this whole remnant (for we remain *only* a few out of many, as you can see), ³that the LORD your God will show us the way in which we should walk, and the thing that we should do”.

⁴Then Jeremiah the prophet said to them, “I have heard you. See, I will pray to the LORD your God in accordance with your words; and it will be *that* whatever answer the LORD gives you, I will declare *it* to you. I will keep nothing back from you”.

⁵Then they said to Jeremiah, “May the LORD be a true and faithful witness between us, if we do not act in accordance

with everything which the LORD your God sends us by you, ⁶whether *it is* good or bad, we will obey the voice of the LORD our God, to whom we send you, so that it may be well with us, when we obey the voice of the LORD our God”.

⁷And ten days later it came about that the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah. ⁸Then he called Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the officers of the army who were with him, and all the people from the least to the greatest, ⁹and said to them, “Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, to whom you sent me to present your request before him: ¹⁰If you will still remain in this land, then I will build you up, and not tear *you* down, and I will plant you, and not uproot *you*, for I relent concerning the disaster that I have brought on you. ¹¹Do not be afraid of the king of Babylon, of whom you are afraid. Do not be afraid of him, says the LORD, for I *am* with you to save you, and to deliver you from his hand. ¹²And I will show mercy on you, so that he may have mercy on you, and cause you to return to your own land.

¹³“But if you say, ‘We will not live in this land’, disobeying the voice of the LORD your God, ¹⁴saying, ‘No! But we will go to the land of Egypt, where we will not see any war or hear the sound of the trumpet, or be hungry for bread; and we will live there’, ¹⁵Then in that case hear the word of the LORD, you remnant of Judah. Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: If you definitely set your faces to go into Egypt, and do go to settle there, ¹⁶then it will happen *that* the sword, which you fear, will overtake you there in the land

41:16-18 Running away from trouble is the only answer some people have. God did not tell them to go to Egypt. But in any case, as the next chapter reveals, they did not have a mind to do what God said.

42:1 This whole chapter and the first three verses of the next chapter give an illustration of self-deception in praying for God’s will. All the people together with their leaders were involved in this sad affair. They thought they wanted God’s will (v 2), they asked for prayer that they might know it (v 3), and evidently they were convinced of their willingness to obey it (v 6). But when God revealed His will they refused to do a single thing He told them. Obviously they hoped that God would tell them to do only what they wanted to do anyway.

42:4 “I will declare...I will keep nothing back”—1:17;

Ps 40:10; Acts 20:20,27. This is what the true servant of God must do. If he hides the truth from others because of fear, or the desire for popularity, he will be harming both them and himself.

42:5-6 These words sound very humble, very submissive. But let us compare them with Ex 19:8; 24:3,7, and let us remember Jer 17:9 and apply the lesson of this chapter to ourselves.

42:7 Jeremiah would not speak until He got God’s message, and it took ten days to receive an answer from God. Years may pass before God answers some prayers.

42:8-18 Nothing could be more plain, more solemn than this message.

42:12 1 Kings 8:50. When God has compassion on us He can and will cause men to show compassion toward us, and the compassion they show should cause us to recognize God’s compassion to us.

of Egypt, and the famine, which you fear, will follow you closely there in Egypt; and there you will die. ¹⁷So it will be with all the men who set their faces to go to Egypt to settle there. They will die by the sword, by famine, and by the plague, and none of them will remain or escape from the disaster that I will bring on them. ¹⁸For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Just as my anger and my fury were poured out on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so will my fury be poured out on you when you enter Egypt; and you will become an oath, and an *object of astonishment* and cursing and scorn; and you will see this place no more.

¹⁹“The LORD has said concerning you, O remnant of Judah, Do not go to Egypt. Know for a certainty that I have warned you this day. ²⁰For you dissembled in your hearts when you sent me to the LORD your God, saying, ‘Pray for us to the LORD our God. Declare to us all that the LORD our God says and we will act accordingly.’ ²¹And now today I have declared *it* to you, but you have not obeyed the voice of the LORD your God, or anything which he has sent to you by me. ²²Now therefore know for a certainty that you will die by the sword, by famine, and by the plague, in the place where you desire to go *and settle*”.

43 And it so happened when Jeremiah finished speaking to all the people all the words of the LORD their God, which the LORD their God had sent to them by him, all these words, ²that Azariah the son

42:19-22 Jeremiah adds his personal loving exhortation to the people. But God has enabled him to discern the true state of their hearts (v 20). All the time they were waiting for God’s will to be revealed to Jeremiah they were (possibly unconsciously) determined to have their own way. This is just one more example among a great many in the Bible of what fallen human beings are like. We may think we want to know and do God’s will when actually we only want God to tell us to do what we want to do.

43:1-2 What is in the heart will eventually come out. Men under the control of their sinful nature will usually do what they please regardless of God’s promises or warnings, or the pleadings of God’s servants.

43:2 “*Proud*”— how hard it is for proud people to submit in simple faith to God’s word! Pride and a sinful heart are the real reasons for the attacks of critics on the Bible. It is the cause of

of Hoshaiiah, and Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the proud men, spoke up, saying to Jeremiah, “You are telling a lie. The LORD our God has not sent you to say, ‘Do not go to Egypt to settle there’, ³but Baruch the son of Neriah is setting you against us, to deliver us into the hands of the Chaldeans, that they might put us to death, or carry us away as captives to Babylon”.

⁴So Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the officers of the army, and all the people, disobeyed the voice of the LORD *telling them* to live in the land of Judah. ⁵But Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the officers of the army, took the whole remnant of Judah that had returned from all the nations where they had been driven to live in the land of Judah, ⁶men, women, and children, and the king’s daughters, and every person whom Nebuzaradan the commander of the guard had left with Gedaliah the son of Ahikam the son of Shaphan, and Jeremiah the prophet and Baruch the son of Neriah, ⁷and they went to the land of Egypt; for they did not obey the voice of the LORD. So they came to Tahpanhes.

⁸Then the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah in Tahpanhes, saying, ⁹“Take large stones in your hand, and hide them in the clay in the brick kiln which *is* at the entrance of Pharaoh’s house in Tahpanhes, in the sight of the men of Judah, ¹⁰and say to them, ‘Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: See, I will send and get Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, my servant, and will set his throne on these stones that I have

much unbelief among men with its resulting disobedience. This is why the Lord Jesus spoke as He did in Mark 10:15.

“*You are telling a lie*”— they had no evidence for this. The simple fact of the matter is God’s word to them was against what they wanted to do, and so they denied that God had spoken. The sinful heart will always try to find a way to deny that God has forbidden what it craves.

43:3 Perhaps they thought it safer to blame Baruch than Jeremiah.

43:4-7 They acted on their own just as if God had never spoken.

43:7 Tahpanhes was probably in the northeast region of Egypt.

43:8-13 God was revealing to the people that there would be no safety for them in Egypt. In their unbelief and disobedience they were fleeing from one disaster into another. There was no nation on earth at that time able to successfully resist the Babylonian armies.

hidden; and he will spread his royal canopy above them. ¹¹And when he comes, he will defeat the land of Egypt *and deliver* those *who are* for death to death, and those *who are* for captivity to captivity, and those *who are* for the sword to the sword. ¹²And I will kindle a fire in the temples of the gods of Egypt; and he will burn them, and carry them away as captives. And he will wrap Egypt around himself as a shepherd wraps his garment around himself; and he will depart from there in peace. ¹³He will also break the idols of Beth-Shemesh that *are* in the land of Egypt, and burn the temples of the gods of the Egyptians with fire.’”

44 The word that came to Jeremiah concerning all the Jews living in the land of Egypt, living at Migdol and at Tahpanhes and at Noph and in the country of Pathros, saying, ²“Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: You have seen the whole disaster that I have brought on Jerusalem, and on all the cities of Judah; and, see, today they *are* a desolation, and no one lives in them, ³because of their evil which they did, provoking me to anger by going to burn incense, *and* to serve other gods, which they did not know, *neither* they, *nor* you, nor your fathers. ⁴However I sent to you all my servants the prophets, rising early and sending *them*, saying, ‘Oh, do not do this abominable thing that I hate.’ ⁵But they did not listen or incline their ear to turn from their wickedness, and to burn no incense to other gods. ⁶Therefore my fury and my anger were poured out, and burned in the cities of Judah and in the streets of

Jerusalem; and they became ruined *and* desolate, as at this day.

⁷“Therefore now thus says the LORD, the God of hosts, the God of Israel: Why do you do *this* great evil against your souls, to cut off from you man and woman, child and infant from Judah, to leave you no one remaining? ⁸You are provoking me to wrath by the works of your hands, burning incense to other gods in the land of Egypt where you have gone to live, causing you to be cut off and to become an *object of cursing* and scorn among all the nations of the earth. ⁹Have you forgotten the wickedness of your fathers, and the wickedness of the kings of Judah, and the wickedness of their wives, and your own wickedness, and the wickedness of your wives, which they have committed in the land of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem? ¹⁰They are not humbled *even* to this day, and they have not been afraid, nor walked in my law or in my statutes that I set before you and before your fathers.

¹¹“Therefore thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: See, I will set my face against you for disaster, and to cut off all Judah. ¹²And I will take the remnant of Judah that set their faces to go to the land of Egypt to settle there, and they will all be consumed, *and* fall in the land of Egypt; they will be consumed by the sword *and* by famine. They will die, from the least to the greatest, by the sword and by famine, and they will become an oath, and an *object of astonishment and cursing* and scorn. ¹³For I will punish those who live in the land of Egypt, as I have punished Jerusalem, by the sword, by famine, and by the plague, ¹⁴so

43:12 “*Wrap Egypt around himself*”—this probably means that Egypt will be completely in his control to do with as he pleases.

44:1 “*Noph*”—another name for Memphis.

“*Pathros*”—a name for what is called “Upper Egypt”, the southern part of the country.

44:2 “*You have seen*”—God wants people to learn lessons from what they see taking place in the world (3:7,10; Deut 3:21-22; Josh 23:3; Luke 21:28).

44:3 1:16; 11:17; 19:4; 32:32. Idolatry was the chief cause of God’s anger against them.

44:4 “*Abominable thing*”—idolatry (see Deut 7:25-26; 27:15; Isa 44:19). The true and holy God of the Bible hates it utterly, fiercely, eternally. Again and again He pleaded with His people not to engage in it.

44:5 7:26; 25:4; 35:15.

44:6 7:20. Notes on God’s anger at Num 25:3;

Ps 90:11-14.

44:7-10 They saw with their own eyes what had happened. Would they not learn their lesson, repent, and turn to God? The evil in human nature is not so easily overcome. See Rom 1:32. **44:8** “*Egypt*”—this suggests either that they had been in Egypt for some time before this message came to Jeremiah, or that there were already some Jews living in Egypt who had been engaging in the worship of the gods there.

“*Causing you to be cut off*”—according to the Bible the worship of idols brings destruction on those who practice it (Ex 22:20; Deut 17:2-5; Hos 13:2,9; Rev 21:8). In the case of the Jews living in Egypt God reveals to them in vs 11-14 just how He will cause this to happen. He had given the same warning in the land of Judah (42:17-18).

that none of the remnant of Judah, who has gone into the land of Egypt to settle there, will escape or survive to return to the land of Judah, where they desire to return to live; for no one will return except a few refugees”.

¹⁵Then all the men who knew that their wives burned incense to other gods, and all the women who stood by, a great crowd, all the people who were living in the land of Egypt, in Pathros, answered Jeremiah, saying, ¹⁶“As for the word that you have spoken to us in the name of the LORD, we will not listen to you. ¹⁷But we will certainly do whatever comes out of our own mouth, burning incense to the queen of heaven, and pouring out drink offerings to her, as we have done, we, and our fathers, our kings, and our officials, in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem; for *then* had we plenty of provisions, and were well off, and did not see any disaster. ¹⁸But since we stopped burning incense to the queen of heaven, and pouring out drink offerings to her, we have lacked everything, and have been consumed by the sword and by famine”.

¹⁹And *the women added*, “When we burned incense to the queen of heaven, and poured out drink offerings to her, did we make her cakes to worship her, and pour out drink offerings to her, without our men?”

²⁰Then Jeremiah said to all the people, to the men, and to the women, and to all the people who had given him *that* answer, saying, ²¹“The incense that you burned

in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem, you, and your fathers, your kings, and your officials, and the people of the land, did not the LORD remember them, and did it *not* come into his mind?

²²So the LORD could no longer bear it, because of your evil deeds *and* because of the abominations which you committed. Therefore your land is a desolation, and an *object of astonishment*, and a curse, without an inhabitant; as *it is* to this day. ²³Because you have burned incense, and because you have sinned against the LORD, and have not obeyed the voice of the LORD or walked in his law, in his statutes, or in his testimonies, this disaster has happened to you; as *it is* to this day”.

²⁴Moreover Jeremiah said to all the people, and to all the women, “Hear the word of the LORD, all you of Judah who *are* in the land of Egypt. ²⁵Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: You and your wives have spoken with your mouths, and fulfilled with your hand, saying, ‘We will surely perform the vows that we have vowed to burn incense to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings to her.’ You will surely fulfil your vows, and surely perform your vows. ²⁶Therefore hear the word of the LORD, all you of Judah who live in the land of Egypt. See, I have sworn by my great name, says the LORD, that my name shall no more be invoked in the mouth of anyone of Judah in all the land of Egypt, saying, ‘The Lord God lives.’ ²⁷See, I will watch over them for

44:15-18 The people leave no doubt that they intend to do just what they please. They loved their idols and after them they would go, regardless of what anyone, including God, said. This reveals again the desperate wickedness of the human heart. Compare Rev 9:20-21 – when the whole world is being punished and is heading for disaster at the end of this age mankind will still not give up its beloved idols.

44:15 “*Pathros*”— v 1.

44:17-18 They give their reasons for clinging to idol-worship. It is a reason men everywhere will give. They thought their goddess was giving them prosperity and guarding them from harm. Their worship was rooted in selfishness. They cared nothing for God or for what God said in His word; they were not concerned with truth or the ethics of the matter. And they praised the goddess for what the true and living God Jehovah had done. Little did they realize that it was their worship of her, and not the renouncing of her worship, that would bring death and destruction

to them. This story has been repeated again and again even in our days.

44:19 According to the Bible the husband was to be the head of the house and to be responsible for what took place there. These men knew of the false worship of their wives and did nothing. So they shared their guilt.

44:20-23 Jeremiah tries to use the facts of their recent history to appeal to their reason. But when people are determined to do as they please facts and reason are as nothing to them.

44:24-25 Their abominable idolatry was not enough for them. They actually made solemn vows to continue it.

44:26 Those who reject the truth of God and run after idols have no business swearing by His name.

44:27 Let us learn from this that God, seeing the behavior of individuals or groups or peoples or even nations, will sometimes determine to do them harm rather than good. This fact alone should bring men to their knees seeking God’s mercy.

disaster, and not for good; and all the men of Judah who *are* in the land of Egypt will be consumed by the sword and by famine, until there is an end of them. ²⁸Yet a small number who escape the sword will return from the land of Egypt to the land of Judah, and the whole remnant of Judah, that has gone into the land of Egypt to settle there, will know whose words will stand, mine, or theirs.

²⁹“And this *will be* a sign to you, says the LORD, that I will punish you in this place, that you may know that my words will surely stand against you for disaster: ³⁰Thus says the LORD, See, I will give Pharaoh Hophra king of Egypt into the hands of his enemies, and into the hands of those who seek his life, just as I gave Zedekiah king of Judah into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, his enemy who sought his life”.

45 The word that Jeremiah the prophet spoke to Baruch the son of Neriah,

44:28 “*Whose words will stand*”—in the world today there is the Bible, the Word of God, and there are innumerable books of men which contain their thoughts, hopes and predictions in opposition to God’s word. By fulfilling His word to the letter (Matt 5:18) God will show which will stand—His word or theirs.

44:30 This was fulfilled in 570 BC. Hophra was killed by rivals for the throne.

45:1 The smallest chapter in Jeremiah but containing a great lesson for all of us.

“*When he had written*”— 36:1-4.

45:2-3 Baruch’s association with Jeremiah in the ministry brought him much trouble and sorrow. God has never promised an easy, trouble-free life to His prophets and servants—in fact, quite the contrary (Jer 1:19; Matt 10:17; John 15:18-21; 16:33; Acts 9:15-16; 14:22). In this service for God they all learn sooner or later what sorrow, groaning and difficulties are. Judging from v 5 Baruch was tempted to escape from his trouble by seeking a position that would bring him some personal honor and peace. Baruch’s brother Seraiah was later an officer in the time of King Zedekiah (51:59), and for all we know, occupied some important position before that. So perhaps Baruch was tempted to quit God’s service with Jeremiah and seek some high place through his brother’s influence.

45:4-5 God’s just judgments were about to be fulfilled, disaster was coming on the people. It was no time for any of God’s servants to be seeking great things for themselves. Actually God’s servants should never seek great things

when he had written these words from the mouth of Jeremiah in a book, in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, saying, ²“Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, to you, O Baruch: ³You said, ‘Woe to me now! For the LORD has added grief to my sorrow. I fainted in my sighing, and I find no rest.’

⁴“You shall say this to him: ‘Thus says the LORD: See, I will break down what I have built, and I will uproot what I have planted, this whole land. ⁵And do you seek great things for yourself? Do not seek *them*. For, see, I will bring disaster on all flesh, says the LORD. But I will give your life to you like plunder every place you go.’ ”

46 The word of the LORD which came to Jeremiah the prophet against the Gentiles, ²against Egypt, against the army of Pharaoh Necho king of Egypt, which was

for themselves—especially perhaps in our day when there is reason to believe that the end of this age is near, and that God’s wrath is soon to bring disaster on the world. God’s people selfishly seeking position, money, power, and man’s honors is madness. Would it not be madness to be hanging a record of one’s honors and greatness on the walls of a house when the house is on fire and the roof is about to collapse? But, alas, it is a madness one sees everywhere. Compare Phil 2:21.

Let us see that God’s command to Baruch is for us too, and learn always to be God-seekers, not self-seekers. Let us seek great things for Christ and not for ourselves. And let us learn and apply the truth of Matt 10:38-39. We have reason to think Baruch listened to God’s word. He remained Jeremiah’s faithful assistant (32:1,12,13; 43:3,6—both of these events took place many years after the event in chapter 45).

46:1 See 1:10; 25:17; 27:3. In chapters 46–51 Jeremiah is engaged in his ministry as prophet to the nations. He records God’s revelation concerning ten places and nations. They were all in a large area from Egypt, southwest of Israel, to Elam east of Israel beyond the Euphrates and Tigris rivers. In these chapters God shows again that He is sovereign over all nations, the great King of the universe (note at Ps 47:2). Throughout history He has been actively working to put down or raise up nation after nation. He still does so.

46:2 “*Egypt*”—except for the closing two verses the rest of this chapter is concerning Egypt.

by the river Euphrates in Carchemish, which Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon defeated in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah:

- ³ “Set in array the large shield and the small shield,
and draw near to battle.
⁴ Harness the horses; and get up, you horsemen, and stand forth with *your* helmets.
Polish the spears, and put on the armour.
⁵ Why have I seen them dismayed *and* turning back?
And their mighty ones are beaten down,
and are rapidly fleeing,
and not looking back, *because* fear was all around,
says the LORD.
⁶ Do not let the swift run away, or the mighty man escape;
they will stumble and fall toward the north at the River Euphrates.
⁷ “Who *is* this coming up like a flood, like rivers of surging water?
⁸ Egypt rises up like a flood, and like rivers of surging water.
And he says, ‘I will go up *and* cover the earth.
I will destroy the city and its inhabitants.’
⁹ Come up, you horses, and drive madly,
you chariots, and let the mighty men come out,
the Ethiopians and the Libyans who handle the shield,
and the Lydians who handle *and* bend the bow.
¹⁰ For this day *belongs* to the Lord God of hosts; *it is* a day of vengeance, that he may avenge himself on his

adversaries.

And the sword will devour, and it will be sated and made drunk with their blood.

For the Lord God of hosts has a sacrifice in the north country by the River Euphrates.

¹¹ “Go up into Gilead and get balm, O virgin, the daughter of Egypt.
In vain you will use many medicines, *for* you will not be cured.

¹² The nations have heard of your shame,
and your cry has filled the land, for the mighty man has stumbled against the mighty,
and both of them have fallen together”.

¹³ The word that the LORD spoke to Jeremiah the prophet *about* how Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon would come *and* attack the land of Egypt:

¹⁴ “Declare *it* in Egypt,
and proclaim *it* in Migdol,
and proclaim *it* in Noph
and in Tahpanhes;
say, ‘Stand fast, and prepare yourselves’,
for the sword will devour all around you.

¹⁵ Why are your brave *men* swept away? They did not stand, because the LORD drove them away.

¹⁶ He made many fall; yes,
one fell on another. And they said, ‘Arise, and let us go back to our own people,
and to the land of our birth,
from the oppressing sword.’

¹⁷ They cried out there.
Pharaoh king of Egypt *is only* a noise.

He has passed by the appointed time.

“*Carchemish*”— in 605 BC at this place the armies of Babylon defeated Egypt’s armies. It was one of the most important battles of the ancient world. It broke the power of Egypt in western Asia and made possible the full rise of the Babylonian empire.

46:3-12 This poetical section in vivid symbolic language sets forth Egypt’s crushing defeat.

46:9 Soldiers from these regions were in Egypt’s armies.

46:10 Was the battle at Carchemish merely a matter between Egypt and Babylon? Not at all. Jehovah God, the Lord of hosts, was there working out His purposes. He was punishing Egypt for its sins. See also note on 25:30-38.

46:13-26 This took place in 568-567 BC, many years after the battle of Carchemish.

46:14 “*Noph*”— another name for Memphis.

46:16 “*Own people*”— the speakers are hired soldiers from other regions (vs 9,21).

- ¹⁸ As I live, says the King,
whose name is the LORD of hosts,
as surely as Tabor is among
the mountains,
and as Carmel is by the sea, so
he will come.
- ¹⁹ O daughter living in Egypt,
prepare yourself to go into captivity,
for Noph will become a waste and
desolate
without an inhabitant.
- ²⁰ "Egypt is like a beautiful heifer,
but destruction is coming.
It is coming out of the north.
- ²¹ And her mercenaries in her
midst are like fattened bulls,
but they also have turned back and
fled away together.
They did not stand, because
the day of their calamity had come
on them,
and the time of their punishment.
- ²² Its sound will move along like
a serpent;
for they will march with an army,
and come against her with axes,
like woodcutters.

²³They will cut down her forest, says the LORD, unsearchable though it may be, for they are more than grasshoppers; they are innumerable.

²⁴The daughter of Egypt will be put to shame. She will be delivered into the hands of the northern people".

²⁵The LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, says: "See, I will punish the multitude of No, and Pharaoh, and Egypt, with their gods and their kings, Pharaoh, and all those who trust in him. ²⁶And I will deliver them into the hands of those who seek their lives, and into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and into the hands of his servants.

46:18 See what God calls Himself here – He is the King. He is the King of the universe, the real King over all nations. See Ps 47:2. Tabor and Carmel are two mountains in Israel.

46:22 "Serpent" – see Ex 4:3.

46:25 "Multitude" – or "Amon". Amon was the chief god not only of the city of Thebes (No), but of the whole of Egypt during some of its history. God was about to "punish" Amon and all the other gods of Egypt, that is, put them to shame, reveal their powerlessness and nothingness. Compare Ex 12:12.

46:26 God did not plan the complete destruction

And afterwards it will be inhabited, as in the days of old, says the LORD.

- ²⁷ "But do not be afraid, O Jacob, my servant, and do not be dismayed, O Israel; for, see, I will save you from a distant place, and your offspring from the land of their captivity; and Jacob will return, and be at rest and at ease, and no one will make him afraid.
- ²⁸ Do not be afraid, O Jacob, my servant, says the LORD, for I am with you. For I will make a full end of all the nations where I have driven you, but I will not make a full end of you, but will correct you in measure; for I will not leave you wholly unpunished".

47 The word of the LORD that came to Jeremiah the prophet against the Philistines, before Pharaoh struck Gaza.

²"Thus says the LORD:

See, waters are rising up out of the north,
and will become an overflowing flood,
and they will overflow the land
and all that is in it,
the city and those who live in it.
Then the men will cry out,
and all the inhabitants
of the land will wail.

- ³ At the noise of the stamping hooves of his strong horses,
at the rushing of his chariots,
and at the rumbling of his wheels,
the fathers will not look back

of Egypt.

46:27-28 30:10-11.

47:1-7 The Philistines lived along the coast of the land of Canaan and were enemies of Israel throughout much of their history up to the time of the Babylonian invasion. For other messages concerning them see Isa 14:28-32; Ezek 25:15-17; Amos 1:6-8; Zeph 2:4-7; Zech 9:5-7. God decided to completely obliterate these people from the land of Canaan. They have passed out of existence. There is no mention of them in the New Testament.

for *their* children
 because their hands will be feeble,
⁴ because of the day that is coming
 to destroy all the Philistines,
 and to cut off from Tyre and Sidon
 every helper who remains.
 For the LORD will destroy the
 Philistines,
 the remainder of the country of
 Caphtor.
⁵ A shaven head has come on Gaza;
 Ashkelon is cut off *with* the rest
 of their valley.
 How long will you cut yourself?
⁶ O sword of the LORD,
 how long *will it be* before
 you are quiet?
 Put yourself away in your scabbard;
 rest, and be still.
⁷ How can it be quiet, since
 the LORD has given it a command
 against Ashkelon,
 and against the seashore?
 There he has appointed it *to work*".

48 The LORD of hosts, the God of
 Israel, says this against Moab:
 "Woe to Nebo! For it is destroyed.
 Kiriathaim has been disgraced
 and captured.
 Misgab has been disgraced
 and shattered.
² *There will be* no more praise
 for Moab.
 In Heshbon they have plotted
 disaster for it:

'Come, and let us cut it off from
being a nation.'
 You also will be cut down,
 O Madmen;
 the sword will pursue you.
³ A sound of crying *will be heard*
 from Horonaim, plundering and
 great destruction.
⁴ Moab is destroyed.
 Her little ones have caused *their*
 cry to be heard.
⁵ For in the ascent to Luhith continual
 weeping will rise up,
 for in the descent to Horonaim the
 enemies have heard a cry
 of destruction.
⁶ Flee! Save your lives, and be like
 a bush in the desert.
⁷ For because you have trusted in your
 works and in your treasures,
 you will also be captured,
 and Chemosh will go into captivity
 together *with* his priests and
 his officials.
⁸ And the destroyer will come
 on every city, and no city will
 escape.
 The valley too will perish,
 and the plain will be destroyed,
 as the LORD has spoken.
⁹ Give wings to Moab, that it may
 flee and get away;
 for its cities will be desolate,
 without anyone to live in them.
¹⁰ "Cursed *be* he who does the work
 of the LORD deceitfully,

47:4 Caphtor is probably the island in the Mediterranean Sea called Crete today. Tyre and Sidon were important cities on the coast north of the Philistines.

47:5 Gaza and Ashkelon were two of the most important Philistine cities.

48:1 This whole chapter predicts in poetic language the destruction of the land of Moab. In it we can learn much about God's reign over the earth. Moab was located due east of Judah and the Dead Sea. Its people were descended from Abraham's nephew Lot (Gen 19:36-37). The destruction predicted here occurred probably during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon.

"*Nebo*", "*Kiriathaim*"— both these towns at one time belonged to Israel (Num 32:3,37,38; Josh 13:19). Moab had claimed them for itself.

"*Misgab*"— the word means "stronghold".

48:2-6 Heshbon also had once belonged to Israel

(Num 32:37; Josh 13:17). The locations of these other towns are not known.

48:2 "*Madmen*"— the name of a town in Moab. It sounds like the Hebrew word that means "be silenced".

48:7 Any individual, any people, anywhere, any time, who trust in their own works and wealth will come to a sad, hopeless end (Ps 52:5-7; Luke 12:15-21).

"*Chemosh*"— the national god of Moab, pronounced Key-mosh. In 1 Kings 11:7,33 and 2 Kings 23:13 he is called a detestable, vile god. He was very like Molech, the god of the Ammonites (note at Jer 7:31). In the destruction of Moab he was no more able to save himself or the people than they were.

48:10 "*Deceitfully*"— or "laxly" or "carelessly". How important it is for every Christian worker to keep this warning in mind whatever his work.

- and cursed *be* he who keeps
his sword back from blood.
- ¹¹ “Moab has been at ease from
his youth,
and he has settled *like wine*
on his dregs, and not been emptied
from vessel to vessel;
nor has he gone into captivity.
Therefore his flavour remains
in him,
and his aroma has not changed.
- ¹² Therefore, see, the days are coming,
says the LORD, when I will send
to him those who tilt *bottles*,
and they will tilt him over and empty
his jars and break his bottles.
- ¹³ And Moab will be ashamed
of Chemosh,
as the house of Israel was ashamed
of Bethel their confidence.
- ¹⁴ “How can you say,
‘We are mighty and strong men
for the war?’
- ¹⁵ Moab is destroyed, and has gone up
out of her cities,
and his chosen young men have
gone down to the slaughter,
says the King,
whose name is the LORD of hosts.
- ¹⁶ The calamity of Moab *is* coming
soon,
and his affliction comes quickly.
- ¹⁷ All of you around him, mourn
for him,
and all of you who know
his name say,
‘How the strong staff is broken,
the beautiful rod!’
- ¹⁸ “You, daughter, who live in Dibon,
come down from *your* glory,
and sit on the thirsty *ground*;
for the destroyer of Moab will come
on you *and* will destroy
your strongholds.
- ¹⁹ O inhabitant of Aroer,
stand by the way,
and see! Question him who is fleeing
and her who is escaping,
and say, ‘What has happened?’
- ²⁰ Moab is put to shame,
for it is shattered.
Wail and cry. Tell in Arnon
that Moab is ruined,
- ²¹ And judgment has come on the land
of the plain, on Holon,
and on Jahazah, and on Mephaath,
- ²² And on Dibon, and on Nebo,
and on Beth-Diblathaim,
- ²³ And on Kiriathaim, and on
Beth-Gamul,
and on Beth-Meon,
- ²⁴ And on Kerioth, and on Bozrah,
and on all the cities of the land
of Moab, far or near.
- ²⁵ Moab’s horn is cut off, and his arm
is broken, says the LORD.
- ²⁶ Make him drunk, for he exalted
himself against the LORD.
Moab will also wallow
in his vomit,
and become *an object* of derision.
- ²⁷ For was not Israel an *object of*
derision to you? Was he found
among thieves,
for you to shake your head when
you speak of him?
- ²⁸ O you who live in Moab,
leave the cities, and live among
the rocks,
and be like the dove *that* makes her

“*Blood*”— this word refers, of course, only to the destruction of Moab and its people at that time. But always when God uses others as an instrument for punishing individuals or peoples He wants the work done thoroughly. Compare Ex 32:25-29.

48:11 Moab as a nation enjoyed a comparatively easy time.

48:13 Verse 7. They will be ashamed because Chemosh will be proved to be a helpless, useless, dead god. The northern kingdom of Israel experienced the same shame regarding their idol at Bethel (1 Kings 12:28-33; Hos 10:15; Amos 5:5-6). The worship of Israel there did not keep them from destruction and exile.

48:15 “*The King*”— 46:18.

48:18 “*Dibon*”— a town once in Israel’s possession, then in Moab’s hands.

48:19-20 Aroer was a town on the banks of the Arnon river.

48:21 The plateau of Moab is about 3000 feet above sea level.

48:25 Horn and arm signify authority, power, strength.

48:26-27 Here are two further reasons why Moab would be destroyed. It defied God and it ridiculed God’s people. Moab will be treated as it treated others (Zeph 2:8-10). This is a principle seen in many places in God’s Word. The cup of God’s anger will make them senseless and fainting (see 25:15-17,21).

nest in the sides of a cave's mouth.
 29 "We have heard of the pride of Moab
 (he is exceedingly proud),
 his self-exaltation and his arrogance
 and his pride,
 and the haughtiness of his heart.

30 I know his excessive rage,
 says the LORD, but *it is* useless;
 his lying boasts will not accomplish
anything.

31 Therefore I will wail for Moab,
 and I will cry out for all of Moab.
 My heart will mourn for the men
 of Kir-Heres.

32 O vine of Sibmah, I will weep for you
 like the weeping for Jazer.
 Your branches have gone over the sea,
 they reach *even* to the sea of Jazer.
 The destroyer has fallen on your
 summer fruits and on your vintage.

33 And joy and gladness has been taken
 from the fruitful field, and from
 the land of Moab;
 and I have caused the wine to fail
 from the winepresses.
 No one will trample *the grapes*
 with shouting.
*Their shouting will not be shouts
 of joy.*

34 "From the cry of Heshbon to Elealeh and
 to Jahaz they have made their voice heard,
 from Zoar to Horonaim, *like* a three-year
 old heifer, for the waters of Nimrim also
 will become desolate.

35 Moreover I will put a stop in Moab,

says the LORD, to him who offers on the
 high places, and to him who burns incense
 to his gods.

36 Therefore my heart will sound for Moab
 like flutes, and my heart will sound like flutes
 for the men of Kir-Heres, because the riches
that he has gotten have perished.

37 For every head *will be* shaved bald, and
 every beard cut off. There *will be* cuts on
 every hand, and sackcloth around the waist.

38 *There will be* lamentation everywhere,
 on all the housetops of Moab, and in its
 streets, for I have broken Moab like a jar in
 which *I have* no pleasure, says the LORD.

39 They will wail, *saying*, 'How it is broken
 down! How Moab has turned *his* back with
 shame!' So Moab will be an *object of* derision
 and dismay to all those around him.

40 "For thus says the LORD:

See, he will fly like an eagle,
 and will spread his wings over Moab.

41 Kerioth will be taken,
 and the strongholds will be surprised,
 and in that day the hearts of the
 mighty men in Moab will be like
 the heart of a woman in labour.

42 And Moab will be destroyed
 as a people,
 because he has exalted *himself*
 against the LORD.

43 Fear and the pit and the snare
will be on you,
 O inhabitant of Moab, says
 the LORD.

44 He who flees from the fear will fall
 into the pit,

48:29 A further reason for Moab's destruction (Prov 6:16-17; 11:2; 16:18; 18:12; 29:23; Jam 4:6). Moab's pride was well known (Isa 25:10-11; Zeph 2:8,10). But what reasons for pride did Moab have? The founder of their nation was the offspring of an incestuous relationship (Gen 19:36-37). Their god was vile and they sometimes sacrificed their children in the fire to him; they were never a large or strong or wise or righteous nation. Let us learn from this that human pride does not need any outward circumstances to feed on. People who have least reason to be proud sometimes have more pride than anyone else. And pride, a dark and destructive force, lurks in the hearts of all men until it is dealt with in the presence of God. **48:30-39** In this remarkable section God, Who was bringing justly deserved destruction on Moab, expresses His great sorrow over them. This was a people other than His people Israel, who were often enemies of Israel. Still God could not see

their destruction without pain in His heart. To punish men for their many sins and great evils God justly causes armies to march on earth and through them bring much bloodshed, destruction, and misery. But He groans when He has to do it (v 31), His compassionate heart makes mournful noises like the sad notes of a flute (v 36 – flutes were often played by mourners at funerals). Compare Luke 19:41-44.

48:35 This is the fifth reason why God determined to destroy Moab (the other reasons are in vs 7,26,27,29). They had other gods besides Chemosh. Idolaters do not usually stop at one god.

48:37 Signs of mourning (16:6).

48:38 Notice the Lord's words "I have broken Moab". He both broke and groaned and lamented at the breaking.

48:40 Deut 28:49; Ezek 17:3,12. Nebuchadnezzar and his army.

48:42 Verse 26.

and he who gets out of the pit will be captured in the snare;
for I will bring on it, on Moab,
the year of their punishment,
says the LORD.

⁴⁵ “Those who fled stand under
the shadow of Heshbon without
strength;
but a fire will come out of Heshbon,
and a flame from inside Sihon,
and will devour the forehead of Moab,
and the crown of the head
of the riotous ones.

⁴⁶ Woe to you, O Moab!
The people of Chemosh perish;
for your sons are taken as captives,
and your daughters as captives.

⁴⁷ “Yet I will bring back the captives
of Moab in the latter days,
says the LORD”.
Thus far the judgment on Moab.

49 Concerning the Ammonites thus
says the LORD:

“Has Israel no sons? Has he no heir?
Why *then* does their king inherit
Gad,
and his people live in his cities?

² Therefore, see, the days are coming,
says the LORD, when I will cause
an alarm of war to be heard in
Rabbah of the Ammonites;
and it will become a desolate heap,

and its daughters will be burned
with fire.

Then Israel will be the heir of those
who were his heirs, says the LORD.

³ Wail, O Heshbon, for Ai is ruined.
Cry out, you daughters
of Rabbah! Tie on sackcloth!
Lament, and run to and fro by
the walls!
For their king will go into captivity,
together with his priests and
his officials.

⁴ Why do you glory in the valleys,
your flowing valley,
O backsliding daughter?
You who trusted

in *your* treasures, *saying*,
‘Who will come to me?’

⁵ See, I will bring fear on you,
says the Lord God of hosts,
from all those who are around you;
and every one of you will be driven
out headlong, and no one will
gather the fugitives.

⁶ But afterwards I will bring back
the captives of the children
of Ammon, says the LORD”.

⁷ Concerning Edom thus says
the LORD of hosts:
“Is wisdom no longer in Teman?
Has counsel perished from
the prudent?
Has their wisdom vanished?

48:44 “*Year of their punishment*”— 11:23; 23:12.

48:45-46 Num 21:28-29.

48:47 Moab was destroyed as a nation (v 42). But some of its people survived. The time of the restoration of Moab is not given. This word may be fulfilled during Christ’s future reign on earth.

49:1-6 Other messages concerning the Ammonites are Ezek 25:1-7; Amos 1:13-15; Zeph 2:8-11. The land of Ammon was north of Moab, east of the Jordan River. The Ammonites were related to the Moabites, being descended, as they were, from Abraham’s nephew Lot (Gen 19:36-38).

49:1 “*Their king*”— or “Malcom”, another name for Molech god of Ammon. The Hebrew word means “king”, but here it may be taken as a name of a false god, sometimes written “Molech”, sometimes “Malcom”, sometimes “Milcom”. Note at Jer 7:31.

“*Gad*”— the territory of the Israelite tribe of Gad east of the Jordan River (Josh 13:24-28). After the fall of the northern kingdom of Israel the Ammonites took possession of Gad’s territory.

49:2 Rabbah was the chief city of the Ammonites.

Today the capital of the kingdom of Jordan is located in the same place.

49:3 “*Heshbon*”— 48:45.

“*Ai*”— not the city in Joshua chapter 8.

“*King*”— or “Molech”. This god would prove as worthless and powerless as Chemosh of Moab (48:7).

49:4 God here calls a people other than Israel “daughter”. He uses this same phrase concerning Judah in 31:22.

“*Treasures*”— 48:7.

49:6 “*Bring back the captives*”— or “restore the well-being”.

49:7-22 Other messages concerning Edom are Isa 21:11-12; Ezek 25:12-14; Amos 1:11-12; Oba 1-16; Mal 1:3-5. Edom was located south of Moab, south of the Dead Sea. Edom’s people were descended from Esau, Jacob’s brother (Gen 36:1,9).

49:7 “*Wisdom*”— Edomites were famous for worldly wisdom.

“*Teman*”— one of Edom’s important towns. One of Job’s friends, Eliphaz, was from there (Job 2:11).

- ⁸ Flee! Turn back! Live in the deep
places,
O inhabitants of Dedan;
for I will bring on Esau the calamity
due to him,
the time when I will punish him.
- ⁹ If grape pickers came to you,
would they not leave some
gleaning grapes?
If thieves came at night,
they would destroy only until
they have enough.
- ¹⁰ But I have made Esau bare.
I have uncovered his secret places,
and he will not be able to hide
himself.
His offspring and his brethren
and his neighbours are ruined,
and he is no more.
- ¹¹ Leave your fatherless children;
I will keep them alive.
And let your widows trust in me.
- ¹² “For thus says the LORD:
See, those who were not sentenced
to drink from the cup have
assuredly drunk;
and are you the one who is
to go altogether unpunished?
You will not go unpunished,
but you will surely drink it.
- ¹³ For I have sworn by myself,
says the LORD,
that Bozrah will become a desolation,
a reproach, a wasteland, and a curse,
and all its cities will be wastelands
forever”.
- ¹⁴ I have heard a message from
the LORD,
and an ambassador has been sent
to the nations:
“Gather together and come
against her,
and rise up for the battle.
- ¹⁵ For, see, I will make you small among
the nations, and despised
among men.
- ¹⁶ The terror you inspire and
the pride of your heart have
deceived you,
O you who live in the clefts
of the rock,
who hold the height of the hill.
Though you make your nest
as high as the eagle,
I will bring you down from there,
says the LORD.
- ¹⁷ And Edom will become a desolation.
Everyone who goes by it will be
astonished, and will hiss at all
its plagues.
- ¹⁸ As in the overthrow of Sodom
and Gomorrah and their
neighbouring cities,
says the LORD,
no one will remain there, and
no son of man will live in it.
- ¹⁹ See, he will come up like a lion
from the flooding of the Jordan
against the dwelling place of the
strong;
but I will make him suddenly
run away from her.
And who is the chosen man whom
I may appoint over her?
For who is like me?
And who will appoint me the time?
And who is that shepherd
who will stand before me?
- ²⁰ Therefore hear the plan of the LORD
that he has devised against Edom,
and his purposes that he has formed
against the inhabitants of Teman.
Surely they will draw away the least
of the flock;
surely he will make their pastures
desolate by them.
- ²¹ The earth is shaken at the noise
of their fall, the noise of their cry is
heard at the Red Sea.
- ²² See, he will come up and fly like an
eagle,
and spread his wings over Bozrah;

49:10 “No more”— God determined to leave no survivors whatever among the Edomites, unlike His purpose for the Moabites and Ammonites (Obad 18. For the reason for this severe judgment of God see Ezek 25:12-14; Oba 1:10-14).

49:12 25:28-29.

49:13 This Bozrah is not the Bozrah of 48:24, which was in Moab.

49:14-16 See Oba 1:1-4. Like Moab Edom had much pride with little reason for it.

49:18 “Sodom”— Gen 19:24-25.

49:19 God states that He Himself is the one behind the destruction of Edom. The proud rulers of that people would learn that there is no success in resisting the God of Israel, the King of the universe.

49:22 “Eagle”— 48:40.

- and on that day the heart of the mighty men of Edom will be like the heart of a woman in labour”.
- ²³ Concerning Damascus:
“Hamath and Arpad are put to shame,
for they have heard bad news *and* they are disheartened.
There is trouble on the sea;
it cannot be quiet.
- ²⁴ Damascus has become feeble, *and* has turned around to flee, and fear has seized *her*.
Anguish and pain have seized *her*, like a woman in labour.
- ²⁵ Why has the praised city not been deserted, the city of my joy!
- ²⁶ Therefore in that day her young men will fall in her streets, and all the men of war will be cut off, says the LORD of hosts.
- ²⁷ And I will kindle a fire in the wall of Damascus, and it will consume the palaces of Ben-Hadad”.
- ²⁸ Concerning Kedar, and concerning the kingdoms of Hazor, which Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon attacked: “Thus says the LORD:
Arise, go up to Kedar, and despoil the men of the east.
- ²⁹ They will take away their tents and their flocks;
they will take their *tent* curtains, and all their goods, and their camels for themselves;
and they will cry out to them, ‘Fear *is* on every side.’
- ³⁰ Flee! Go far away!
- Live in the deep places,
O inhabitants of Hazor,
says the LORD,
for Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon has made a plot against you, and has conceived of a plan against you.
- ³¹ Arise, go up to the wealthy nation, which lives without care,
says the LORD,
which has neither gates nor bars, *which* lives alone.
- ³² And their camels will become booty, and their many cattle plunder;
and I will scatter to all the winds those *who are* in the farthest corners,
and I will bring their calamity from every side of it, says the LORD.
- ³³ And Hazor will become a den for jackals, *and* a desolation forever.
No man will remain there,
and no son of man will live in it”.
- ³⁴ The word of the LORD that came to Jeremiah the prophet against Elam in the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah king of Judah, saying,
- ³⁵ “Thus says the LORD of hosts:
See, I will break the bow of Elam, the chief of their might.
- ³⁶ And I will bring the four winds from the four quarters of heaven on it,
and will scatter them toward all those winds;
and there is no nation where those thrown out of Elam will not go.

49:23 Damascus was and is the capital city of Syria. Hamath and Arpad were cities north of Damascus. For other messages concerning Damascus see Isa 17:1-3 and Amos 1:3-5.

49:25 Damascus even then was an old city (Gen 14:15), famous for beauty.

49:26 “*That day*”— we cannot be sure exactly what time is referred to here. Isa 17:1 speaks of a complete destruction of Damascus that has not yet taken place.

49:27 God Himself will see to the punishment of Damascus.

“*Ben-Hadad*”— the king of Damascus in the days of Asa, king of Judah (1 Kings 15:18).

49:28 Kedar was the home of wandering tribes in the Arabian desert (Isa 21:13-15). A son of

Ishmael named Kedar probably gave his name to this tribe and area (Gen 25:13). This Hazor is not the city of the same name north of the Sea of Galilee (Josh 11:1), but an area in the Arabian desert near Kedar.

49:31 The language suggests the people were nomads with no settled towns. There is no promise concerning these people such as we see in 46:26; 48:47; 49:6.

49:33 “*Jackals*”— see the note at 9:11.

49:34 Elam was the name of a region east of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers in what is today the country of Iran.

49:36 This indicates trouble from every direction. “The four winds” signify forces of destruction sent by God in judgment.

³⁷ For I will cause Elam to be
dismayed before their enemies,
and before those
who seek their life,
and I will bring disaster on them,
my fierce anger, says the LORD;
and I will send the sword after them,
until I have consumed them;
³⁸ And I will set my throne in Elam,
and will destroy from there the king
and the princes, says the LORD.
³⁹ But it will come to pass
in the latter days,
that I will bring back the captives
of Elam, says the LORD”.

50 The word that the LORD spoke
against Babylon, against the land
of the Chaldeans by Jeremiah the prophet.

² “Declare *it* among the nations,
and proclaim *it*, and set up a
banner.
Proclaim *it*, and do not conceal *it*.
Say, ‘Babylon is taken, Bel has been
put to shame, Merodach is broken
in pieces.
Her idols have been put to shame,
her images are broken in pieces.’
³ For from the north a nation comes up
against her, which will make her
land desolate,
and no one will live in it.
They will move, they will depart,

both man and beast.
⁴ In those days, and at that time,
says the LORD, the children
of Israel will come, they and the
children
of Judah together,
walking along and weeping;
they will come and seek the LORD
their God.
⁵ They will ask the way to Zion
with their faces toward it, *saying*,
‘Come, and let us join ourselves
to the LORD in a permanent
covenant *that* will not be
forgotten.’
⁶ “My people have been lost sheep.
Their shepherds have caused them
to go astray.
They have turned away *on*
the mountains.
They have gone from mountain
to hill.
They have forgotten their resting
place.
⁷ All who found them devoured them,
and their adversaries said,
‘We are not to blame, because
they have sinned against the LORD,
the habitation of justice, the LORD,
the hope of their fathers.’
⁸ Move out of the midst of Babylon,
and go out of the land of the
Chaldeans,

49:38 “*Set my throne*”— means He will manifest
His power and authority over that people.
Compare 1:15.

49:39 46:26; 48:47; 49:6; Acts 2:9.

“*Bring back the captives*”— or “restore the
well-being”.

50:1 Babylonia was the dominant political
and military power during much of Jeremiah’s
ministry. He had seen the rise of Babylon and
had spoken God’s word concerning its victories
(20:4-6; 27:3-7; 46:24). In this chapter and the
next he prophesies its defeat and fall. See also
25:12-14,26; Isa 13; 21:1-9.

“*Chaldeans*”— (also in vs 8,25,35,45)
– Babylonians.

50:2 “*Proclaim*”— all the nations should know
what God is going to do to Babylon. Jeremiah
sent the contents of these two chapters to Babylon
itself (51:59-64).

“*Bel*” means Lord. He was the same as
Marduk, the chief god of Babylon. Bel was
similar to the god Baal worshiped by several
nations around Israel and by Israel too at times
in their history (7:9; 11:13; 19:5; 23:27). The true

God says Bel will be proved as worthless and
powerless as the gods of the nations Babylon
conquered (48:7; 49:3). Babylon possibly above
all nations at that time was a land of many gods
and idols (v 38). But all of them put together
would be helpless when Jehovah God arose to
punish Babylon.

50:3 “*From the north a nation*”— in Jeremiah this
sometimes means the alliance of the Medes and
Persians. This nation captured Babylon in 539
BC (Dan 5:28-31).

50:4-5 3:18; 29:11-14; 30:3; Isa 11:12; Ezek 37:19-23;
Hos 1:11.

50:5 “*Covenant*”— 31:31-34; 32:40; 33:20-21.

50:6 Verse 17; 23:1; Isa 53:6; Luke 15:3-7. Their
true resting place was God Himself (v 7; Ps 37:7;
90:1; 91:1; 116:7; Matt 11:28-29).

50:7 What Israel’s enemies said about them was
true, but they were still guilty for devouring
them and must face God’s judgment. If we are
cruel to others God will not accept any excuse
we make for it.

50:8-10 51:28-29; Isa 13:4.

50:8 “*Chaldea*”— Babylonia.

- and be like the male goats
in front of the flocks.
- ⁹ For, see, I will raise up against
Babylon an assembly of great
nations from the land of the north,
and cause them to come;
and they will set themselves
in array against her.
From there she will be taken.
Their arrows *will be like those*
of a skillful warrior;
none will return in vain.
- ¹⁰ And Chaldea will become plunder.
All who plunder her will be
satisfied, says the LORD.
- ¹¹ Because you were glad,
because you rejoiced,
O you destroyers of my
inheritance,
because you have grown fat like
a heifer threshing grain,
and you bellow like bulls,
- ¹² Your mother will be greatly
disgraced;
she who gave you birth will be
ashamed.
See, *she will become* the least
of the nations, a wilderness,
a dry land, and a desert.
- ¹³ Because of the wrath of the LORD
it will not be inhabited,
but will be completely desolate.
Everyone who goes by Babylon
will be astonished,
and hiss at all her plagues.
- ¹⁴ “Put yourselves in array against
Babylon all around.
All you who bend the bow,
shoot at her, spare no arrows,
for she has sinned against the
LORD.
- ¹⁵ Shout against her all around.
She has given her hand *in*
surrender,
her foundations have fallen,
her walls have been torn down;
for it *is* the vengeance of the LORD.
Take vengeance on her.
Do to her as she has done.
- ¹⁶ Cut off the sower from Babylon,
and the one who handles the sickle
in the time of harvest.
Every one of them will turn away
to his people for fear of the
oppressing sword,
and everyone will flee to his
own land.
- ¹⁷ Israel *is like* scattered sheep.
The lions have driven *him* away.
First the king of Assyria
devoured him,
and at last this Nebuchadnezzar king
of Babylon has broken his bones.
- ¹⁸ “Therefore thus says the LORD
of hosts,
the God of Israel:
See, I will punish the king of Babylon
and his land, as I have punished
the king of Assyria.
- ¹⁹ And I will bring Israel back
to his dwelling place,
and he will feed on Carmel
and Bashan,
and his soul will be satisfied
on Mount Ephraim and Gilead.
- ²⁰ In those days, and at that time,
says the LORD,
the wickedness of Israel will be
sought, and none *will be there*,
and the sins of Judah,
and they will not be found,
for I will pardon those whom I keep.
- ²¹ “Go up against the land of
Merathaim,
against it and against the inhabitants
of Pekod.

50:11-13 Here is the reason God was sending destruction on Babylon. That people had plundered God’s property (Judah), and had been very happy about it.

50:13 Verses 3,12,39,40. Today Babylon is a heap of ruins.

50:14 “*Sinned against the Lord*”— the reason for its downfall.

50:15 Men were then used to take vengeance on Babylon because the Lord was using them to take His own vengeance on her. Babylon was being repaid in her own coin – Ps 137:8; Jer 25:14; Rev 18:6.

50:17 Verse 6.

50:18 The capital of Assyria, Nineveh, fell in 612 BC. Note on Assyria at 2 Kings 15:19.

50:20 This is what God’s forgiveness means. It makes the guilty as if they had not sinned at all. See notes on forgiveness and justification at Gen 15:6; Ps 32:1-2; Matt 6:12; Rom 3:21-26.

50:21 Merathaim means “double rebellion”. Because of its rebellion against Him (vs 24,29), God may be calling Babylon by this name. Pekod means “punishment” in Hebrew. In Babylonia it was an area just beyond the Tigris River (Ezek 23:23).

- Lay waste and utterly destroy after them,
says the LORD, and act in accordance with all that I have commanded you.
- ²² A sound of battle and of great destruction *is* in the land.
- ²³ How the hammer of the whole earth is cut in two and broken!
How Babylon has become a desolation among the nations!
- ²⁴ I have laid a snare for you, and you were also caught, O Babylon, and you were not aware *of it*.
You were found, and also captured, because you have fought against the LORD.
- ²⁵ The LORD has opened his armoury, and has brought out the weapons of his indignation;
for this *is* the work of the Lord God of hosts in the land of the Chaldeans.
- ²⁶ Come against her from the farthest border.
Open her storehouses.
Pile her up like heaps *of grain*, and completely destroy her.
Let nothing of her be left.
- ²⁷ Slay all her bulls; let them go down to the slaughter. Woe to them!
For their day has come, the time of their punishment.
- ²⁸ The voice of those who flee and escape from the land of Babylon declares in Zion the vengeance of the LORD our God,
the vengeance concerning his temple.
- ²⁹ "Call together the archers against Babylon.
All you who bend the bow, camp against it all around.
Let no one belonging to it escape.
Repay her according to her deeds,
- do to her in accordance with all that she has done;
for she has been proud against the LORD,
against the Holy One of Israel.
- ³⁰ Therefore her young men will fall in the streets,
and all her warriors will be cut off in that day, says the LORD.
- ³¹ See, I *am* against you, O most proud, says the Lord God of hosts,
and your day has come,
the time *when* I will punish you.
- ³² And the most proud one will stumble and fall, and no one will raise him up;
and I will kindle a fire in his cities, and it will devour all around him".
- ³³ Thus says the LORD of hosts: "The children of Israel and the children of Judah were oppressed together,
and all who took them captive held them fast;
they refused to let them go.
- ³⁴ Their Redeemer *is* strong.
The LORD of hosts *is* his name.
He will thoroughly plead their case, that he may give rest to the land, but unrest to the inhabitants of Babylon.
- ³⁵ A sword *is* over the Chaldeans, says the LORD, and over the inhabitants of Babylon, and over her princes,
and over her wise *men*.
- ³⁶ A sword *is* over the false prophets and they will behave like fools.
A sword *is* over her mighty men, and they will be dismayed.
- ³⁷ A sword *is* over their horses and over their chariots and over all the mixed people who *are* in her midst,

50:23 "*Hammer*"— Babylon was an instrument in God's hands to shatter the nations. Now it would be shattered. Compare Isa 10:5; Jer 51:20-23.

50:24 The Medes and Persians captured Babylon in a surprise attack.

50:25 "*Weapons*"— other nations (Isa 13:5).

50:27 Bulls may mean here the soldiers of Babylon.

50:28 "*Those who flee*"— Jews who escaped from Babylon and returned to Judah.

"*Vengeance concerning his temple*"— 2 Kings 24:13;

Jer 51:11; 52:13.

50:29-32 Pride was one of the great sins of Babylon also (48:29; 49:16). An example of it is seen in Dan 4:29-30.

50:33 Compare Ex 5:2; 7:14; 8:32.

50:34 Jehovah God was not defeated when Israel was defeated. He was not weak because they had to weakly submit to their enemies (as those enemies might have thought). The time to show His strength on their behalf was coming.

"*Redeemer*"— note at Ps 78:35.

and they will become like women.
 A sword *is* over her treasures,
 and they will be robbed.
³⁸ A drought *is* on her waters,
 and they will be dried up.
 For it *is* the land of carved images,
 and they are crazy about *their* idols.
³⁹ “Therefore the wild beasts
 of the desert together with jackals
 will live *there*,
 and the owls will live in it;
 and it will no longer be inhabited,
 forever;
 it will not be lived in from generation
 to generation.
⁴⁰ As God overthrew Sodom and
 Gomorrah and their neighbouring
cities, says the LORD,
 so no one will remain there,
 and no son of man will live in it.
⁴¹ “See, a people will come from
 the north,
 and a great nation and many kings
 will be raised up from the ends of
 the earth.
⁴² They will hold the bow and the lance.
 They *are* cruel,
 and will not show mercy.
 Their voice will roar like the sea,
 and they will ride on horses,
 everyone set in array like
 men for battle, against you,
 O daughter of Babylon.
⁴³ The king of Babylon has heard
 the report about them,
 and his hands have become weak.
 Anguish has seized him, *and* pangs
 like a woman in labour.
⁴⁴ See, he will come up like a lion

from the flooding of the Jordan
 to the dwelling place of the
 strong;
 but I will make them suddenly
 run away from her.
 And who *is* the chosen *man whom*
 I may appoint over her?
 For who *is* like me?
 And who will appoint me the time?
 And who *is* that shepherd
 who can stand against me?”
⁴⁵ Therefore hear the plan of the LORD,
 that he has devised against Babylon,
 and his purposes, that he has formed
 against the land of the Chaldeans:
 Surely the least of the flock will
 drag them away;
 surely he will make *their* dwelling
 place desolate by them.
⁴⁶ At the sound of the capture
 of Babylon the earth will shake,
 and the cry will be heard among the
 nations.

51 Thus says the LORD:
 “See, I will raise up against
 Babylon,
 and against those who live
 in the midst of those who rise up
 against me, a destroying wind,
² And will send winnowers to Babylon
 who will winnow her and empty
 her land;
 for in the day of trouble they will be
 against her all around.
³ Against *him who* bends a bow
 let the archer bend his bow,
 and against *him who* lifts
 himself up in his armour;

50:38 No land that gives itself to idolatry as Babylon did can finally prosper. The idolatry in which she was delighted was one of the main causes of her downfall.

“Crazy about their idols”– or “glory in their idols” or “boast about their idols” or “foolish about their idols”. However it is translated it reveals the madness in the hearts of those people who prefer a dumb idol to the living God.

50:39-40 Verse 13; 51:37,62; Isa 13:19-22. This did not happen immediately after their defeat by the Medes and Persians. The city gradually decayed, completely lost its importance, and was at last utterly abandoned. Only heaps of ruins remain today. Its place became as barren and devoid of human life as Sodom and Gomorrah. Some Bible teachers think that Babylon will be rebuilt at the

end of this age and will become the Babylon of Revelation chapters 17 and 18. The language of Jeremiah and Isaiah seems to make impossible the rebuilding of a literal great city of Babylon. **50:41-43** See 6:22-24 where Babylon itself is meant. Here the same words refer to the armies coming against Babylon.

50:44-46 See 49:19-21 where the words are spoken against Edom. Here the same words refer to Babylon’s fall.

51:1 “I will raise up”– v 11; 1 Chron 5:26; 2 Chron 21:16; Isa 13:17; Ezek 23:22; Amos 6:14; Hab 1:6. To fulfill His purposes in the earth God can and sometimes does stir up one nation against another.

“Those who rise up against me”– here refers to Babylonia.

- and do not spare her young men.
Completely destroy all her army.
- ⁴ Thus the slain will fall in the land
of the Chaldeans,
and *those who are pierced*
in her streets.
- ⁵ For neither Israel nor Judah *has been*
forsaken by his God, by the LORD
of hosts,
even though their land was filled
with sin against the Holy One
of Israel”.
- ⁶ Flee out of the midst of Babylon,
and everyone rescue his soul.
Do not be cut off in her wickedness.
For this *is* the time of the LORD’s
vengeance; he will repay her.
- ⁷ Babylon *has been* a golden cup
in the LORD’s hand,
that has made the whole earth drunk.
The nations have drunk of her wine,
therefore the nations have gone mad.
- ⁸ Babylon has suddenly fallen
and been destroyed. Wail for her.
Take balm for her pain;
perhaps she may be healed.
- ⁹ “We would have healed Babylon,
but she is not healed. Forsake her,
and let each of us go to his own
country,
for her judgment reaches to heaven,
and is lifted up to the skies.
- ¹⁰ The LORD has revealed our
righteousness.
Come, and let us declare in Zion
the work of the LORD our God.
- ¹¹ Make the arrows bright! Gather
the shields!
- The LORD has raised up the spirit of
the kings of the Medes, for his plan
against Babylon *is* to destroy it;
because it *is* the vengeance
of the LORD,
the vengeance concerning his temple.
- ¹² Set up the banner on the walls
of Babylon! Make the guard strong!
Station the watchmen! Prepare
the ambushes!
For the LORD has both planned
and done what he spoke against
the inhabitants of Babylon.
- ¹³ O you who live on many waters,
abundant in treasures,
your end has come,
and the measure of your
covetousness.
- ¹⁴ The LORD of hosts has sworn
by himself, *saying*,
“Surely I will fill you with men,
as with locusts; and they will raise
a shout against you”.
- ¹⁵ He has made the earth by his power,
has established the world
by his wisdom, and has stretched
out the heavens by his
understanding.
- ¹⁶ When he utters *his* voice,
there is a roar of waters
in the heavens,
and he causes the vapours to ascend
from the ends of the earth.
He makes lightning with rain,
and brings the wind out of his
treasuries.
- ¹⁷ Every man is stupid, without
knowledge.

51:5 When God acts as He does among the nations He always has His people in His heart and mind (Zech 2:8).

51:6 “*Flee*”— this looks forward many years from the time of writing. Rev 18:4 has a similar call to come out of figurative Babylon at the end of this age.

“*Vengeance*”— 50:15; Rev 18:5-8.

51:7 “*In the LORD’s hand*”—the Lord used Babylon to punish other nations, to make them senseless and staggering, to make them suddenly fall.

51:8-9 Jewish (and other) exiles in Babylon had lived there long enough to try to heal her, to pity her when she fell. In the book of Daniel we see something of the witness for the true God given in Babylon (2:27; 3:16-18; 4:24-25; 5:18-23).

51:10 This is a prophecy that looks forward many

years. The exiles from Judah and Jerusalem speak. They have learned many lessons in Babylon, have repented, sought and found God (29:10-14). Now God brings their righteousness to the light (Ps 37:6).

51:11 “*Medes*”— v 28; Isa 13:17; Dan 5:28,31.

“*Temple*”— 50:28.

51:13 “*Waters*”— the great river Euphrates, with the river Tigris not far distant, and a very extensive system of canals.

51:15-19 See 10:12-16. Many peoples of that day made the mistake of thinking that Jehovah, the God of Israel, was only one deity among a great many (just as many people today mistakenly think the God of Christians is only one of many). Here God proclaims to the Babylonians who He really is, and how worthless is all worship other than the worship of the true God.

- Every metal worker is put to shame
by the carved image,
for his cast metal image *is* a lie,
and *there is* no breath in them.
- ¹⁸ They *are* worthless,
the work of error.
In the time of their punishment
they will perish.
- ¹⁹ The Portion of Jacob *is* not
like them; for he *is* the Maker
of all things,
and *Israel is* the tribe of his
inheritance.
The LORD of hosts *is* his name.
- ²⁰ “You *are* my war club,
my weapons for battle;
for with you I will break the nations
in pieces, and with you I will
destroy kingdoms,
- ²¹ And with you I will break the horse
and its rider in pieces,
and with you I will break the chariot
and its rider in pieces,
- ²² With you I will also break man
and woman in pieces,
and with you I will break old
and young in pieces,
and with you I will break
the young man and the maiden
in pieces;
- ²³ With you I will also break the
shepherd and his flock in pieces,
and with you I will break the farmer
and his yoke of oxen in pieces,
and with you I will break captains
and rulers in pieces.
- ²⁴ And I will repay Babylon and all
the inhabitants of Chaldea all their
evil that they have done in Zion
in your sight,
says the LORD.
- ²⁵ “See, I *am* against you,
O destroying mountain, who destroys
the whole earth, says the LORD,
and I will stretch out my hand
- over you,
and roll you down from the rocks,
and will make you a burnt mountain.
- ²⁶ And they will not take a stone
for a corner from you,
or a stone for foundations;
but you will be desolate forever,
says the LORD.
- ²⁷ “Set up a banner in the land.
Blow the trumpet among the nations.
Prepare the nations against her.
Call together the kingdoms of
Ararat, Minni,
and Ashkenaz against her.
Appoint a commander against her.
Cause the horses to come up like
the bristling locusts.
- ²⁸ Prepare the nations against her,
with the kings of the Medes,
its commanders, and all its rulers,
and the whole land of his dominion.
- ²⁹ And the land will tremble and writhe,
for every purpose of the LORD
will be accomplished against
Babylon,
to make the land of Babylon
a desolation without an inhabitant.
- ³⁰ The mighty men of Babylon have
stopped fighting.
They remain in *their* strongholds.
Their might has failed.
They have become like women.
They have burned her dwelling
places.
The bars of her *gates* are broken.
- ³¹ One courier runs to meet another,
and one messenger to meet another,
to tell the king of Babylon that his city
has been captured from end *to* end,
- ³² And that the *river* fords
are blocked, that they have burned
the reeds with fire,
that the warriors are terrified.
- ³³ “For thus says the LORD of hosts,
the God of Israel:

51:20 “*My war club*”— in 50:23 Babylon is compared to a hammer in 50:23 and to a gold cup in 51:7. Now it is called a war club (though some think this means the Medes and Persians). But see whose hand holds this “war club”. Though Babylon shattered nations and peoples it was only an instrument which God used.

51:24 Nations will be judged according to their behavior to God’s people. See Deut 32:10;

Zech 2:8; compare Matt 25:31-46.

51:25 God used Babylon to destroy others but will in turn destroy it, make it like an extinct volcano (mountain here signifies a kingdom. Compare Dan 2:35,44,45).

51:27 Verse 11. Other kingdoms were allied to the Medes and Persians. These three were located north of Babylon and the land of the Medes. They had come under the power of the Medes (v 28).

- The daughter of Babylon *is* like a threshing floor;
it is time to thresh her.
 Yet a little while, and the time of her harvest will come”.
- ³⁴ “Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, has devoured me. He has crushed me. He has made me an empty jar. He has swallowed me up like a monster. He has filled his stomach with my delicacies. He has thrown me out.
- ³⁵ The violence done to me and to my flesh *be* on Babylon”, says the inhabitant of Zion. “And my blood *be* on the inhabitants of Chaldea”, says Jerusalem.
- ³⁶ Therefore thus says the LORD: “See, I will plead your case, and take vengeance for you; and I will dry up her sea, and make her springs dry.
- ³⁷ And Babylon will become ruins, a dwelling place for jackals, an *object of* astonishment and hissing, without an inhabitant.
- ³⁸ They will roar together like lions; they will growl like lion cubs.
- ³⁹ In their feverish *activity* I will make feasts for them, and I will make them drunk, so that they may rejoice, and sleep a permanent sleep, and not wake up, says the LORD.
- ⁴⁰ I will bring them down like lambs to the slaughter, like rams with male goats.
- ⁴¹ How Sheshach is captured! And how the praise of the whole earth is surprised! How Babylon has become an *object of* astonishment among the nations!
- ⁴² The sea has come up on Babylon. She is covered with its many waves.
- ⁴³ Her cities are a desolation, a dry land, and a wilderness, a land where no one lives, where no son of man passes by.
- ⁴⁴ And I will punish Bel in Babylon, and I will bring out of his mouth what he has swallowed up. And the nations will no longer go streaming to him; yes, the wall of Babylon will fall.
- ⁴⁵ “My people, go out of her midst, and each one of you rescue his soul from the fierce anger of the LORD.
- ⁴⁶ Then do not let your heart faint, or fear for the rumour that will be heard in the land. A rumour will come *one* year, and after that, in *another* year, a rumour *will come*, and violence *will be* in the land, ruler against ruler.
- ⁴⁷ Therefore, see, the days come, when I will bring judgment on the carved images of Babylon, and her whole land will be put to shame, and all her slain will fall in her midst.
- ⁴⁸ Then the heavens and the earth, and all that *is* in them, will shout for joy over Babylon; for the destroyers will come to her from the north, says the LORD.
- ⁴⁹ “As Babylon *has caused* the slain of Israel to fall, so at Babylon will fall the slain of all the earth.
- ⁵⁰ You who have escaped the sword, go away. Do not stand still. Remember the LORD from afar, and let Jerusalem come into your mind”.
- ⁵¹ “We are ashamed because we have heard reproach.

51:33 “*Daughter*”— 4:31; 49:4; 50:42.

51:34-35 The exiles from Jerusalem speak. For notes on such prayers against enemies see Ps 35:8.

51:36 “*Therefore*”— God will act according to their cries to Him.

51:37 “*Jackals*”— see note at 9:11.

51:41 “*Sheshach*”— 25:26. Indicates Babylon.

51:42 “*Sea*”— probably used here symbolically for enemy armies (v 55; compare 46:7-8; Isa 17:12).

51:44 “*Bel*”— note at 50:2.

51:47 “*Judgment*”— v 52. Compare Ex 12:12.

51:48 Compare Rev 19:1-3. The fall of a cruel, blood-stained, God-defying system will be a cause of great joy.

51:49 Verses 5,10,24; Zech 2:8.

51:50 “*Remember*”— 29:10-14; Ps 137:6.

51:51 The exiles of Judah and Jerusalem speak. Nebuchadnezzar’s army had defiled the temple in Jerusalem.

Shame has covered our faces,
 for foreigners have come into the
 sanctuaries of the LORD's house".
⁵² "Therefore, see, the days
 are coming, says the LORD,
 when I will judge her carved images;
 and through all her land the wounded
 will groan.
⁵³ Even though Babylon mounts up
 to heaven, and though she fortifies
 her high stronghold,
 yet destroyers will come
 from me to her, says the LORD".
⁵⁴ A sound of a cry comes from Babylon,
 and great destruction from
 the land of the Chaldeans;
⁵⁵ Because the LORD has destroyed
 Babylon, and silenced her
 loud voice,
 when her waves roared like great
 waters,
 and the noise of their
 voice sounded out,
⁵⁶ Because the destroyer has
 come on her, on Babylon,
 and her mighty men are captured.
 Every one of their bows is broken.
 For the LORD God of retribution
 will certainly repay.
⁵⁷ "And I will make her princes
 and her wise men drunk,
 also her captains and her rulers,
 and her mighty men;
 and they will sleep a permanent sleep,
 and not wake up, says the King,
 whose name is the LORD of hosts".
⁵⁸ Thus says the LORD of hosts:
 "The broad walls of Babylon will be
 utterly broken down,
 and her high gates will be burned
 with fire;
 and the people will labour in vain,
 and the nation, because of the fire;
 and they will be faint".
⁵⁹ This is the word which Jeremiah the
 prophet commanded Seraiah the son of

Neriaiah, the son of Maaseiah, when he
 went with Zedekiah the king of Judah to
 Babylon in the fourth year of his reign.
 And *this* Seraiah was a quiet officer. ⁶⁰ So
 Jeremiah wrote in a book the whole disaster
 that would come on Babylon, all these
 words that are written against Babylon.
⁶¹ And Jeremiah said to Seraiah, "When
 you arrive in Babylon, and see *it*, and read
 all these words, ⁶² then you shall say, 'O
 LORD, you have spoken against this place
 to cut it off, so that nothing remains in it,
 whether man or beast. It will be desolate
 forever.' ⁶³ And it shall be, when you have
 finished reading this book, *that* you will
 tie a stone to it, and hurl it into the middle
 of the Euphrates; ⁶⁴ and you shall say,
 'Babylon will sink like this, and will not
 rise from the disaster that I will bring on
 her; and they will be faint.' " Thus far the
 words of Jeremiah.

52 Zedekiah was twenty-one years
 old when he began to reign, and he
 reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. And his
 mother's name was Hamutal, who was the
 daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah. ² And he
 did *what was evil* in the eyes of the LORD,
 in accordance with all that Jehoiakim had
 done. ³ For through the anger of the LORD
 this happened in Jerusalem and Judah,
 until he had cast them out of his presence.
 And Zedekiah rebelled against the king of
 Babylon.

⁴ And it came about in the ninth year of
 his reign, in the tenth month, in the tenth
 day of the month, *that* Nebuchadnezzar
 king of Babylon came, he and all his army,
 against Jerusalem and encamped against it
 and built siege works against it all around.
⁵ So the city was besieged until the eleventh
 year of King Zedekiah.

⁶ And in the fourth month, in the ninth
 day of the month, the famine was severe
 in the city, so that there was no bread for
 the people of the land. ⁷ Then the city walls

51:56 "God of retribution"— Deut 32:35,40-43;
 Ps 54:5; Rom 12:19.

51:57 "Drunk"— v 39; 25:15-16,26.

51:58 "Burned with fire"— how often this is
 true of the great works of men, and even
 of the effort of some servants of Christ
 (1 Cor 3:12-15).

51:59 Seraiah was the brother of Baruch,
 Jeremiah's colleague.

51:61 Compare 36:5-6.

51:63-64 Rev 18:21.

51:64 "Thus far the words of Jeremiah"— it seems,
 then, that chapter 52 was added by another
 servant of God.

52:1-27 This is found almost word for word
 in 2 Kings 24:18—25:21. See notes there. The
 Jeremiah in verse 1 here is not, of course, Jeremiah
 the prophet.

were breached, and all the warriors fled, and went out of the city at night by way of the gate between the two walls, which was by the king's garden, though the Chaldeans were surrounding the city, and went away on the road to the plain. ⁸But the army of the Chaldeans pursued the king, and caught up with Zedekiah in the plains of Jericho; and all his army scattered from him.

⁹Then they took the king, and led him up to the king of Babylon at Riblah in the land of Hamath. There he gave judgment on him. ¹⁰And the king of Babylon killed the sons of Zedekiah in front of his eyes. Also at Riblah he killed all the officials of Judah. ¹¹Then he put out the eyes of Zedekiah. And the king of Babylon bound him in chains, and took him to Babylon, and put him in prison until the day of his death.

¹²Now in the fifth month, in the tenth day of the month, which was in the nineteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, Nebuzaradan, commander of the guard, serving the king of Babylon, came to Jerusalem, ¹³and burned the house of the LORD, and the king's house. And he burned with fire all the houses of Jerusalem, and all the houses of the great men. ¹⁴And all the army of the Chaldeans that was with the commander of the guard, broke down all the surrounding walls of Jerusalem. ¹⁵Then Nebuzaradan the commander of the guard took away captive some of the poor people and the rest of the people who remained in the city, and those who had defected, who had gone over to the king of Babylon, and the rest of the craftsmen. ¹⁶But Nebuzaradan the commander of the guard left some of the poor of the land as vineyard workers and farmers.

¹⁷Also the Chaldeans broke up the bronze pillars that were at the house of the LORD, and the stands and the bronze sea that were at the house of the LORD, and carried away all their bronze to Babylon. ¹⁸They also took away the pots and the shovels and the snuffers and the bowls and the spoons, and all the bronze articles with which the priests ministered. ¹⁹And the commander of the guard took away the basins and the fire-pans and the bowls and the pots and the lampstands and the spoons and the cups,

what had been made of gold as gold, and what had been made of silver as silver, ²⁰and the two pillars, one sea, and the twelve bronze bulls that were under the stands, which King Solomon had made at the house of the LORD. The bronze of all these articles was beyond weighing. ²¹And concerning the pillars: the height of each pillar was eighteen cubits, and its circumference was twelve cubits, and its thickness was four fingers; it was hollow. ²²And a capital of bronze was on it, and the height of one capital was five cubits, with a network and pomegranates all around the capitals, all of bronze. The second pillar also and the pomegranates were like these. ²³And there were ninety-six pomegranates on each side; and all the pomegranates all around on the network were a hundred.

²⁴And the commander of the guard took away Seraiah the chief priest, and Zephaniah the second priest, and the three doorkeepers. ²⁵He also took away from the city an officer in charge of the warriors, and seven of the king's advisors who were found in the city, and the principal scribe of the army who mustered the people of the land, and sixty of the people of the land who were found in the midst of the city. ²⁶So Nebuzaradan the commander of the guard took them and brought them to the king of Babylon at Riblah. ²⁷And the king of Babylon struck them and put them to death in Riblah in the land of Hamath. Thus Judah was carried away captive from his own land.

²⁸These are the people whom Nebuchadnezzar carried away captive: in the seventh year three thousand and twenty-three Jews; ²⁹in the eighteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar he carried away captive eight hundred and thirty-two persons from Jerusalem; ³⁰in the twenty-third year of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuzaradan the commander of the guard carried away captive seven hundred and forty-five of the Jews; altogether these people were four thousand six hundred.

³¹And it happened in the thirty-seventh year of the captivity of Jehoiachin king of Judah, in the twelfth month, in the twenty-fifth day of the month, that Evil-Merodach king of Babylon, in the first

52:21 "Cubits"—a cubit is about 18 inches.

52:31-34 This is found almost word for word in 2 Kings 25:27-30.

52:31 "Evil-Merodach"—he was also called "Amel-Marduk".

year of his reign, lifted up the head of Jehoiachin king of Judah, and brought him out of prison, ³²and spoke kindly to him, and appointed his throne above the thrones of the kings who were with him in Babylon, ³³and changed his prison garments;

and *Jehoiachin* ate food regularly in his presence all the days of his life. ³⁴And as for his provisions, there was a permanent ration given him by the king of Babylon, a portion each day until the day of his death, all the days of his life.

