

Jeremiah



Before the Babylonians destroyed Judah, the prophet Jeremiah warned the kings, priests, and people about the coming of God's judgment.

While many of these messages were harsh and disturbing, Jeremiah also pointed to a time when God would make a new covenant with his chosen people.

1 My name is Jeremiah. I am a priest, and my father Hilkiah and everyone else in my family are from Anathoth in the territory of the Benjamin tribe. This book contains the things that the LORD told me to say. **2** The LORD first spoke to me in the thirteenth year that Josiah was king of Judah, **3** and he continued to speak to me during the rule of Josiah's son Jehoiakim. The last time the LORD spoke to me was in the fifth month of the eleventh year that Josiah's son Zedekiah was king. That was also when the people of Jerusalem were taken away as prisoners.

The LORD Chooses Jeremiah

4 The LORD said:

5 "Jeremiah, I am your Creator, and before you were born, I chose you to speak for me to the nations."

6 I replied, "I'm not a good speaker, LORD, and I'm too young."

7 "Don't say you're too young," the LORD answered. "If I tell you to go and speak to someone, then go! And when I tell you what to say, don't leave out a word! **8** I promise to be with you and keep you safe, so don't be afraid."

9 The LORD reached out his hand, then he touched my mouth and said, "I am giving you the words to say, **10** and I am sending you with authority to speak to the

nations for me. You will tell them of doom and destruction, and of rising and rebuilding again."

11 The LORD showed me something in a vision. Then he asked, "What do you see, Jeremiah?"

I answered, "A branch of almonds that ripen early."

12 "That's right," the LORD replied, "and I always rise early to keep a promise."

13 Then the LORD showed me something else and asked, "What do you see now?"

I answered, "I see a pot of boiling water in the north, and it's about to spill out toward us."

14 The LORD said:

I will pour out destruction
all over the land.

15 Just watch while I send
for the kings of the north.
They will attack and capture
Jerusalem and other towns,
then set up their thrones
at the gates of Jerusalem.

16 I will punish my people,
because they are guilty
of turning from me
to worship idols.

17 Jeremiah, get ready!
Go and tell the people
what I command you to say.

Don't be frightened by them,
or I will make you terrified
while they watch.

- 18 My power will make you strong
like a fortress
or a column of iron
or a wall of bronze.
You will oppose all of Judah,
including its kings and leaders,
its priests and people.
- 19 They will fight back,
but they won't win.
I, the LORD, give my word—
I won't let them harm you.

Israel's Unfaithfulness

2 The LORD told me **2** to go to Jerusalem and tell everyone that he had said:

- When you were my young bride,
you loved me and followed me
through the barren desert.
- 3 You belonged to me alone,
like the first part of the harvest,
and I severely punished
those who mistreated you.
- 4 Listen, people of Israel,
5 and I, the LORD, will speak.
I was never unfair
to your ancestors,
but they left me
and became worthless
by following worthless idols.
- 6 Your ancestors refused
to ask for my help,
though I had rescued them
from Egypt
and led them through
a treacherous, barren desert,
where no one lives
or dares to travel.
- 7 I brought you here to my land,
where food is abundant,
but you made my land filthy
with your sins.
- 8 The priests who teach my laws
don't care to know me.
Your leaders rebel against me;
your prophets
give messages from Baal
and worship false gods.

The LORD Accuses His People

- 9 I will take you to court
and accuse you
and your descendants
*10 of a crime that no nation
has ever committed before.
Just ask anyone, anywhere,
from the eastern deserts
to the islands in the west.
- 11 You will find that no nation
has ever abandoned its gods
even though they were false.
I am the true and glorious God,
but you have rejected me
to worship idols.
- 12 Tell the heavens
to tremble with fear!
- 13 You, my people, have sinned
in two ways—
you have rejected me, the source
of life-giving water,
and you've tried to collect water
in cracked and leaking pits
dug in the ground.
- 14 People of Israel,
you weren't born slaves;
you were captured in war.
- 15 Enemies roared like lions
and destroyed your land;
towns lie burned and empty.
- 16 Soldiers from the Egyptian towns
of Memphis and Tahpanhes
have cracked your skulls.
- 17 It's all your own fault!
You stopped following me,
the LORD your God,
18 and you trusted the power
of Egypt and Assyria.[▷]
- 19 Your own sins will punish you,
because it was a bitter mistake
for you to reject me
without fear of punishment.
I, the LORD All-Powerful,
have spoken.
- 20 Long ago you left me
and broke all ties between us,
refusing to be my servant.
Now you worship other gods
by having sex
on hilltops or in the shade
of large trees.

21 You were a choice grapevine,
but now you produce nothing
but small, rotten grapes.

Israel Is Stained with Guilt

22 The LORD said:

People of Israel,
you are stained with guilt,
and no soap or bleach
can wash it away.

23 You deny your sins
and say, "We aren't unclean.
We haven't worshiped Baal."▷
But think about what you do
in Hinnom Valley.▷
And you run back and forth
like young camels,
as you rush to worship one idol
after another.

24 You are a female donkey
sniffing the desert air,
wanting to mate
with just anyone.

You are an easy catch!

25 Your shoes are worn out,
and your throat is parched
from running here and there
to worship foreign gods.
"Stop!" I shouted,
but you replied, "No!
I love those gods too much."

26 You and your leaders
are more disgraceful
than thieves—
you and your kings,
your priests and prophets

27 worship stone idols
and sacred poles
as if they had created you
and had given you life.
You have rejected me,
but when you're in trouble,
you cry to me for help.

28 Go cry to the gods you made!
There should be enough of them
to save you,
because Judah has as many gods
as it has towns.

Israel Rebels against the LORD

29 The LORD said to Israel:

You accuse me of not saving you,
but I say you have rebelled.

30 I tried punishing you,
but you refused
to come back to me,
and like fierce lions
you killed my prophets.

31 Now listen to what I say!
Did I abandon you in the desert
or surround you with darkness?

You are my people,
yet you have told me,
"We'll do what we want,
and we refuse
to worship you!"

32 A bride could not forget
to wear her jewelry
to her wedding,
but you have forgotten me
day after day.

33 You are so clever
at finding lovers
that you could give lessons
to a prostitute.

34 You killed innocent people
for no reason at all.
And even though their blood
can be seen on your clothes,

35 you claim to be innocent,
and you want me to stop
being angry with you.
So I'll take you to court,
and we'll see who is right.

36 When Assyria let you down,
you ran to Egypt,
but you'll find no help there,

37 and you will leave
in great sadness.▷
I won't let you find help
from those you trust.

Sin and Shame

3 The LORD said to the people of Israel:

If a divorced woman marries,
can her first husband
ever marry her again?

No, because this
would pollute the land.

But you have more gods
than a prostitute has lovers.

Why should I take you back?

- 2 Just try to find one hilltop
where you haven't gone
to worship other gods
by having sex.
You sat beside the road
like a robber in ambush,
except you offered yourself
to every passerby.
Your sins of unfaithfulness
have polluted the land.
- 3 So I, the LORD, refused
to let the spring rains fall.
But just like a prostitute,
you still have no shame
for what you have done.
- 4 You call me your father
or your long-lost friend;
- 5 you beg me to stop being angry,
but you won't stop sinning.

The LORD Asks Israel To Come Back to Him

6 When Josiah was king, the LORD said:
Jeremiah, the kingdom of Israel was like an unfaithful wife who became a prostitute on the hilltops and in the shade of large trees. 7-8 I knew that the kingdom of Israel had been unfaithful and committed many sins, yet I still hoped she might come back to me. But she didn't, so I divorced her and sent her away.

Her sister, the kingdom of Judah, saw what happened, but she wasn't worried in the least, and I watched her become unfaithful like her sister. 9 The kingdom of Judah wasn't sorry for being a prostitute, and she didn't care that she had made both herself and the land unclean by worshipping idols of stone and wood. 10 And worst of all, the people of Judah pretended to come back to me. 11 Even the people of Israel were honest enough not to pretend.

12 Jeremiah, shout toward the north:

Israel, I am your LORD—
come back to me!
You were unfaithful
and made me furious,
but I am merciful,
and so I will forgive you.

13 Just admit that you rebelled
and worshiped foreign gods
under large trees everywhere.

14 You are unfaithful children,
but you belong to me.
Come home!

- I'll take one or two of you
from each town and clan
and bring you to Zion.
- 15 Then I'll appoint wise rulers
who will obey me,
and they will care for you
like shepherds.
- 16 You will increase in numbers,
and there will be no need
to remember the sacred chest
or to make a new one.
- 17 The whole city of Jerusalem
will be my throne.
All nations will come here
to worship me,
and they will no longer follow
their stubborn, evil hearts.
- 18 Then, in countries to the north,
you people of Judah and Israel
will be reunited,
and you will return to the land
I gave your ancestors.
- 19 I have always wanted
to treat you as my children
and give you the best land,
the most beautiful on earth.
I wanted you to call me "Father"
and not turn from me.
- 20 But instead, you are like a wife
who broke her wedding vows.
You have been unfaithful to me.
I, the LORD, have spoken.

The People Confess Their Sins

The LORD said:

- 21 Listen to the noise
on the hilltops!
It's the people of Israel,
weeping and begging me
to answer their prayers.
They forgot about me
and chose the wrong path.
- 22 I will tell them, "Come back,
and I will cure you
of your unfaithfulness."
They will answer,
"We will come back, because you
are the LORD our God."
- 23 On hilltops, we worshiped idols
and made loud noises,

but it was all for nothing—
only you can save us.

24 Since the days of our ancestors
when our nation was young,
that shameful god Baal[▷] has taken
our crops and livestock,
our sons and daughters.

25 We have rebelled against you
just like our ancestors,
and we are ashamed of our sins.”

How Israel Can Return to the LORD

4 The LORD said:

Israel, if you really want
to come back to me, get rid
of those disgusting idols.

2 Make promises only in my name,
and do what you promise!
Then all nations will praise me,
and I will bless them.

3 People of Jerusalem and Judah,
don't be so stubborn!
Your hearts have become hard,
like unplowed ground
where thornbushes grow.

4 With all your hearts,
keep the agreement
I made with you.
But if you are stubborn
and keep on sinning,
my anger will burn like a fire
that cannot be put out.

Disaster Is Coming

The LORD said:

*5 Sound the trumpets, my people.

Warn the people of Judah,[▷]
‘Run for your lives!

6 Head for Jerusalem
or another walled town!

‘Jeremiah, tell them I'm sending
disaster from the north.

7 An army will come out,
like a lion from its den.
It will destroy nations
and leave your towns empty
and in ruins.”

8 Then I said
to the people of Israel,
‘Put on sackcloth!
Mourn and cry out,

‘The LORD is still angry
with us.’”

9 The LORD said,

“When all this happens,
the king and his officials,
the prophets and the priests
will be shocked and terrified.”

10 I said, “You are the LORD God. So why have
you fooled everyone, especially the people of Jeru-
salem? Why did you promise peace, when a knife is
at our throats?”

The Coming Disaster

11-12 When disaster comes, the LORD will tell you
people of Jerusalem,

‘I am sending a windstorm
from the desert—
not a welcome breeze.[▷]
And it will sweep you away
as punishment for your sins.

13 Look! The enemy army
swoops down like an eagle;
their cavalry and chariots
race faster than storm clouds
blown by the wind.”

Then you will answer,
“We are doomed!”

14 But Jerusalem, there is still time
for you to be saved.

Wash the evil from your hearts
and stop making sinful plans,

15 before a message of disaster
arrives from the hills of Ephraim
and the town of Dan.

16-17 The LORD said,

“Tell the nations that my people
have rebelled against me.

And so an army will come
from far away
to surround Jerusalem
and the towns of Judah.
I, the LORD, have spoken.

18 ‘People of Judah,
your hearts will be in pain,
but it's your own fault
that you will be punished.”

Jeremiah's Vision of the Coming Punishment

- 19 I can't stand the pain!
My heart pounds,
as I twist and turn in agony.
I hear the signal trumpet
and the battle cry of the enemy,
and I cannot be silent.
- 20 I see the enemy defeating us
time after time,
leaving everything in ruins.
Even my own home
is destroyed in a moment.
- 21 How long will I see enemy flags
and hear their trumpets?
- 22 I heard the LORD say,
"My people ignore me.
They are foolish children
who do not understand
that they will be punished.
All they know is how to sin."
- 23 After this, I looked around.
The earth was barren,
with no form of life.
The sun, moon, and stars
had disappeared.
- 24 The mountains were shaking;
25 no people could be seen,
and all the birds
had flown away.
- 26 Farmland had become a desert,
and towns were in ruins.
The LORD's fierce anger
had done all of this.

The Death of Jerusalem

27-28 The LORD said:

- I have made my decision,
and I won't change my mind.
This land will be destroyed,
although not completely.
The sky will turn dark,
and the earth will mourn.
- 29 Enemy cavalry and archers
shout their battle cry.
People run for their lives
and try to find safety
among trees and rocks.
Every town is empty.

- 30 Jerusalem, your land
has been wiped out.
But you act like a prostitute
and try to win back your lovers,
who now hate you.
You can put on a red dress,
gold jewelry, and eye shadow,
but it's no use—
your lovers are out to kill you!
- 31 I heard groaning and crying.
Was it a woman giving birth
to her first child?
No, it was Jerusalem.
She was gasping for breath
and begging for help.
"I'm dying!" she said.
"They have murdered me."

Is Anyone Honest and Faithful?

The LORD said to me:

- 5 Search Jerusalem
for honest people
who try to be faithful.
If you can find even one,
I'll forgive the whole city.
- 2 Everyone breaks promises
made in my name."
- 3 I answered, "I know
that you look for truth.
You punished your people
for their lies,
but in spite of the pain,
they became more stubborn
and refused to turn back
to you."
- 4 Then I thought to myself,
"These common people
act like fools,
and they have never learned
what the LORD their God
demands of them.
- 5 I'll go and talk to the leaders.
They know what God demands."
But even they had decided
not to obey the LORD.
- 6 The people have rebelled
and rejected the LORD
too many times.
So enemies will attack
like lions from the forest
or wolves from the desert.

Those enemies will watch
the towns of Judah,
and like leopards
they will tear to pieces
whoever goes outside.

Enemies Will Punish Judah

The LORD said:

- 7 People of Judah,
how can I forgive you?
I gave you everything,
but you abandoned me
and worshiped idols.
You men go to prostitutes
and are unfaithful
to your wives.
- 8 You are no better than animals,
and you always want sex
with someone else's wife.
- 9 Why shouldn't I punish
the people of Judah?
- 10 I will tell their enemies,
"Go through my vineyard.
Don't destroy the vines,
but cut off the branches,
because they are the people
who don't belong to me."
- 11 In every way, Judah and Israel
have been unfaithful to me.
*12 Their prophets lie and say,
"The LORD won't punish us.
We will have peace
and plenty of food."
- 13 They tell these lies in my name,
so now they will be killed in war
or starve to death.
- 14 I am the LORD God All-Powerful.
Jeremiah, I will tell you
exactly what to say.
Your words will be a fire;
Israel and Judah
will be the fuel.
- 15 People of Israel,
I have made my decision.
An army from a distant country
will attack you.
I've chosen an ancient nation,
and you won't understand
their language.

- 16 All of them are warriors,
and their arrows bring death.
- 17 This nation will eat your crops
and livestock;
they will leave no fruit
on your vines or trees.
And although you feel safe
behind thick walls,
your towns will be destroyed
and your children killed.

Israel Refused To Worship the LORD

18 The LORD said:

Jeremiah, the enemy army won't kill everyone
in Judah. 19 And the people who survive will ask,
"Why did the LORD our God do such terrible things
to us?" Then tell them:

- I am the LORD,
but you abandoned me
and worshiped other gods
in your own land.
Now you will be slaves
in a foreign country.
- 20 Tell these things to each other,
you people of Judah,
you descendants of Jacob.
- 21 You fools! Why don't you listen
when I speak?
Why can't you understand
- 22 that you should worship me
with fear and trembling?
I'm the one who made the shore
to hold back the ocean.
Waves may crash on the beach,
but they can come no farther.
- 23 You stubborn people have rebelled
and turned your backs on me.
- 24 You refuse to say,
"Let's worship the LORD!
He's the one who sends rain
in spring and autumn
and gives us a good harvest."
- 25 That's why I cannot bless you!
- *26 A hunter traps birds
and puts them in a cage,
but some of you trap humans
and make them your slaves.
- 27 You are evil, and you lie and cheat
to make yourselves rich.
You are powerful

- 28 and prosperous,
but you 'refuse to help' the poor
get the justice they deserve.
- 29 You need to be punished,
and so I will take revenge.
- 30 Look at the terrible things
going on in this country.
I am shocked!
- 31 Prophets give their messages
in the name of a false god,▷
my priests don't want
to serve me,▷
and you—my own people—
like it this way!
But on the day of disaster,
where will you turn for help?

A Warning for the People of Jerusalem

The LORD said:

- 6 Run for your lives,
people of Benjamin.
Get out of Jerusalem.
Sound a trumpet in Tekoa
and light a signal fire
in Beth-Haccherem.
Soon you will be struck
by disaster from the north.
*2 'Jerusalem is a lovely pasture,
but shepherds will surround it
and divide it up,
3 then let their flocks
eat all the grass.'
4 Kings will tell their troops,
'If we reach Jerusalem
in the morning,
we'll attack at noon.
But if we arrive later,
5 we'll attack after dark
and destroy its fortresses.'
6 I am the LORD All-Powerful,
and I will command these armies
to chop down trees
and build a ramp up to the walls
of Jerusalem.
People of Jerusalem,
I must punish you
for your injustice.
7 Evil pours from your city
like water from a spring.
Sounds of violent crimes
echo within your walls;

victims are everywhere,
wounded and dying.

- 8 Listen to me,
you people of Jerusalem
and Judah.
I will abandon you,
and your land will become
an empty desert.
9 I will tell your enemies
to leave your nation bare
like a vine stripped of grapes.
I, the LORD All-Powerful,
have spoken.

Jeremiah's Anger

- 10 I have told the people
that you, LORD,
will punish them,
but they just laugh
and refuse to listen.
11 Your anger against Judah
flames up inside me,
and I can't hold it in
much longer.

The LORD's Anger Will Sweep Everyone Away

The LORD answered:

- Don't hold back my anger!
Let it sweep away everyone—
the children at play
and all adults,
young and old alike.
12 I'll punish the people of Judah
and give to others
their houses and fields,
as well as their wives.
I, the LORD, have spoken.
13 Everyone is greedy and dishonest,
whether poor or rich.
Even the prophets and priests
cannot be trusted.
14 All they ever offer
to my deeply wounded people
are empty hopes for peace.
15 They should be ashamed
of their disgusting sins,
but they don't even blush.
And so, when I punish Judah,
they will end up on the ground,
dead like everyone else.
I, the LORD, have spoken.

The People of Judah Rejected God's Way of Life

¹⁶ The LORD said:

My people, when you stood
at the crossroads,
I told you, "Follow the road
your ancestors took,
and you will find peace."
But you refused.

¹⁷ I also sent prophets
to warn you of danger,
but when they sounded the alarm,
you paid no attention.

*¹⁸ So I tell all nations on earth,
"Watch what I will do!

¹⁹ My people ignored me
and rejected my laws.
They planned to do evil,
and now the evil they planned
will happen to them."

²⁰ People of Judah,
you bring me incense from Sheba
and spices from distant lands.
You offer sacrifices of all kinds.
But why bother?

I hate these gifts of yours!

²¹ So I will put stumbling blocks
in your path,
and everyone will die,
including parents and children,
neighbors and friends.

An Army from the North

²² The LORD said,

"Look toward the north,
where a powerful nation
has prepared for war.

²³ Its well-armed troops are cruel
and never show mercy.
Their galloping horses sound
like ocean waves
pounding on the shore.
This army will attack you,
lovely Jerusalem."

²⁴ Then the people said,

"Just hearing about them
makes us tremble with fear,
and we twist and turn in pain
like a woman giving birth."

²⁵ The LORD said,

"Don't work in your fields
or walk along the roads.
It's too dangerous.

The enemy is well armed
²⁶ and attacks without warning.
So mourn, my people, as though
your only child had died.
Wear clothes made of sackcloth
and roll in the ash pile."

The LORD's People Must Be Tested

The LORD said:

²⁷ Jeremiah, test my people
as though they were metal.

²⁸ And you'll find they are hard
like bronze and iron.

They are stubborn rebels,
always spreading lies.

*²⁹ Silver can be purified
in a fiery furnace,

³⁰ but my people are too wicked
to be made pure,
and so I have rejected them.

Jeremiah Speaks in the Temple

7 ¹⁻³ The LORD told me to stand by the gate of
the temple[>] and to tell the people who were
going in that the LORD All-Powerful, the God of
Israel, had said:

Pay attention, people of Judah! Change your
ways and start living right, then I will let you keep
on living in your own country.[>] ⁴ Don't fool your-
selves! My temple is here in Jerusalem, but that
doesn't mean I will protect you. ⁵ I will keep you
safe only if you change your ways. Be fair and hon-
est with each other. ⁶ Stop taking advantage of for-
eigners, orphans, and widows. Don't kill innocent
people. And stop worshiping other gods. ⁷ Then I will
let you enjoy a long life in this land I gave your an-
cestors.

⁸ But just look at what is happening! You put
your trust in worthless lies. ⁹ You steal and murder;
you lie in court and are unfaithful in marriage. You
worship idols and offer incense to Baal, when
these gods have never done anything for you.
¹⁰ And then you come into my temple and worship
me! Do you think I will protect you so that you can
go on sinning? ¹¹ You are thieves, and you have
made my temple your hideout. But I've seen ev-
erything you have done.

¹²Go to Shiloh, where my sacred tent once stood. Take a look at what I did there. My people Israel sinned, and so I destroyed Shiloh!

¹³While you have been sinning, I have been trying to talk to you, but you refuse to listen. ¹⁴Don't think this temple will protect you. Long ago I told your ancestors to build it and worship me here, but now I have decided to tear it down, just as I destroyed Shiloh. ¹⁵And as for you, people of Judah, I'm going to send you away from my land, just as I sent away the people of Ephraim and the other northern tribes.

Punishment for Worshiping Other Gods

¹⁶Jeremiah, don't pray for these people! I, the LORD, would refuse to listen. ¹⁷Do you see what the people of Judah are doing in their towns and in the streets of Jerusalem? ¹⁸Children gather firewood, their fathers build fires, and their mothers mix dough to bake bread for the goddess they call the Queen of Heaven. They even offer wine sacrifices to other gods, just to insult me. ¹⁹But they are not only insulting me; they are also insulting themselves by doing these shameful things.

²⁰And now, I, the LORD All-Powerful, will flood Judah with my fiery anger until nothing is left—no people or animals, no trees or crops.

It Is Useless To Offer Sacrifices

²¹The LORD told me to say to the people of Judah:

I am the LORD All-Powerful, the God of Israel, but I won't accept sacrifices from you. So don't even bother bringing them to me. You might as well just cook the meat for yourselves.

²²At the time I brought your ancestors out of Egypt, I didn't command them to offer sacrifices to me. ²³Instead, I told them, "If you listen to me and do what I tell you, I will be your God, you will be my people, and all will go well for you."²⁴But your ancestors refused to listen. They were stubborn, and whenever I wanted them to go one way, they always went the other. ²⁵Ever since your ancestors left Egypt, I have been sending my servants the prophets to speak for me. ²⁶But you have ignored me and become even more stubborn and sinful than your ancestors ever were!

Slaughter Valley

The LORD said:

²⁷Jeremiah, no matter what you do, the people won't listen. ²⁸So you must say to them:

People of Judah, I am the LORD your God, but you have refused to obey me, and you didn't change when I punished you. And now, you no longer even pretend to be faithful to me.

²⁹Shave your head bald
and throw away the hair.
Sing a funeral song
on top of a barren hill.
You people have made me angry,
and I have abandoned you.

³⁰You have disobeyed me by putting your disgusting idols in my temple, and now the temple itself is disgusting to me. ³¹At Topheth in Hinnom Valley you have built altars where you kill your children and burn them as sacrifices to other gods. I would never think of telling you to do this. ³²So watch out! Someday that place will no longer be called Topheth or Hinnom Valley. It will be called Slaughter Valley, because you will bury your dead there until you run out of room, ³³and then bodies will lie scattered on the ground. Birds and wild animals will come and eat, and no one will be around to scare them off. ³⁴When I am finished with your land, there will be deathly silence in the empty ruins of Jerusalem and the towns of Judah—no happy voices, no sounds of parties or wedding celebrations.

8 Then the bones of the dead kings of Judah and their officials will be dug up, along with the bones of the priests, the prophets, and everyone else in Jerusalem ²who loved and worshiped the sun, moon, and stars. These bones will be scattered and left lying on the ground like trash, where the sun and moon and stars can shine on them.

³Some of you people of Judah will be left alive, but I will force you to go to foreign countries, and you will wish you were dead. I, the LORD God All-Powerful, have spoken.

The People Took the Wrong Road

⁴The LORD said:

People of Jerusalem,
when you stumble and fall,
you get back up,
and if you take a wrong road,
you turn around and go back.

⁵So why do you refuse
to come back to me?
Why do you hold so tightly
to your false gods?

- 6 I listen carefully,
but none of you admit
that you've done wrong.
Without a second thought,
'you run down the wrong road'
like cavalry troops
charging into battle.
- 7 Storks, doves, swallows,
and thrushes
all know when it's time
to fly away for the winter
and when to come back.
But you, my people,
don't know what I demand.
- 8 You say, 'We are wise
because we have the teachings
and laws of the LORD.'
But I say that your teachers
have turned my words
into lies!
- 9 Your wise men
have rejected what I say,
and so they have no wisdom.
Now they will be trapped
and put to shame;
they won't know what to do.
- 10 I'll give their wives and fields
to strangers.
- Everyone is greedy and dishonest,
whether poor or rich.
Even the prophets and priests
cannot be trusted.
- 11 All they ever offer
to my deeply wounded people
are empty hopes for peace.
- 12 They should be ashamed
of their disgusting sins,
but they don't even blush.
And so, when I punish Judah,
they will end up on the ground,
dead like everyone else.
- 13 'I will wipe them out.'
They are vines without grapes;
fig trees without figs or leaves.
'They have not done a thing
that I told them!'
I, the LORD, have spoken.

The People and Their Punishment

- 14 The people of Judah
say to each other,

- 'What are we waiting for?
Let's run to a town with walls
and die there.
We rebelled against the LORD,
and we were sentenced to die
by drinking poison.'
- 15 We had hoped for peace
and a time of healing,
but all we got was terror.
- 16 Our enemies have reached
the town of Dan in the north,
and the snorting of their horses
makes us tremble with fear.
The enemy will destroy Jerusalem
and our entire nation.
No one will survive."
- 17 "Watch out!" the LORD says.
'I'm sending poisonous snakes
to attack you,
and no one can stop them."

Jeremiah Mourns for His People

- 18 I'm burdened with sorrow
and feel like giving up.
- 19 In a foreign land
my people are crying.
Listen! You'll hear them say,
'Has the LORD deserted Zion?
Is he no longer its king?'
- I hear the LORD reply,
'Why did you make me angry
by worshiping useless idols?'
- 20 The people complain,
'Spring and summer
have come and gone,
but still the LORD
hasn't rescued us.'
- 21 My people are crushed,
and so is my heart.
I am horrified and mourn.
- 22 If medicine and doctors
may be found in Gilead,
why aren't my people healed?
- S** I wish that my eyes
were fountains of tears,
so I could cry day and night
for my people
who were killed.
- 2 I wish I could go into the desert
and find a hiding place

from all who are treacherous
and unfaithful to God.

The LORD Answers Jeremiah

³ The LORD replied:

Lies come from the mouths
of my people,
like arrows from a bow.
With each dishonest deed
their power increases,
and not one of them will admit
that I am God.

⁴ Jeremiah, all your friends
and relatives
tell lies about you,
so don't trust them.

⁵ They wear themselves out,
always looking for a new way
to cheat their friends.

⁶ Everyone takes advantage
of everyone else,
and no one will admit
that I am God.

⁷ And so I will purify
the hearts of my people
just as gold is purified
in a furnace.

I have no other choice.

⁸ They say they want peace,
but this lie is deadly,
like an arrow that strikes
when you least expect it.

⁹ Give me one good reason
not to punish them
as they deserve.
I, the LORD All-Powerful,
have spoken.

Jeremiah Weeps for His People

¹⁰ I weep for the pastureland
in the hill country.
It's so barren and scorched
that no one travels there.
No cattle can be found there,
and birds and wild animals
have all disappeared.

¹¹ I heard the LORD reply,
"When I am finished,
Jerusalem and the towns of Judah
will be piles of ruins
where only jackals live."

Why the Land Was Destroyed

¹² I said to the LORD, "None of us can understand why the land has become like an uncrossable desert. Won't you explain why?"

¹³ The LORD said:

I destroyed the land because the people disobeyed me and rejected my laws and teachings. ¹⁴ They were stubborn and worshiped Baal,[▷] just as their ancestors did. ¹⁵ So I, the LORD All-Powerful, the God of Israel, promise them poison to eat and drink.[▷] ¹⁶ I'll scatter them in foreign countries that they and their ancestors have never even heard of. Finally, I will send enemy soldiers to kill every last one of them.

The Women Who Are Paid To Weep

¹⁷ The LORD All-Powerful said,
"Send for the women
who are paid to weep
at funerals,[▷]
especially the women
who can cry the loudest."

¹⁸ The people answered,
"Let them come quickly
and cry for us,
until our own eyes
are flooded with tears.

¹⁹ Now those of us on Zion cry,
'We are ruined!
We can't stand the shame.
Our homes have been destroyed,
and we must leave our land.'

²⁰ We ask you women
to pay attention
to what the LORD says.
We will teach you a funeral song
that you can teach
your daughters and friends:

²¹ 'We were in our fortress,
but death sneaked in
through our windows.
It even struck down
children at play
and our strongest young men.'

²² "The LORD has told us
the ground will be covered
with dead bodies,
like stalks of ungathered grain
or like manure."

What the LORD Likes Best

²³ The LORD says:

Don't brag about your wisdom
or strength or wealth.

²⁴ If you feel you must brag,
then have enough sense
to brag about worshipping me,
the LORD.

What I like best
is showing kindness,
justice, and mercy
to everyone on earth.

²⁵⁻²⁶ Someday I will punish the nations of Egypt, Edom, Ammon, and Moab, and 'the tribes of the desert.' The men of these nations are circumcised, but they don't worship me. And it's the same with you people of Judah. Your bodies are circumcised, but your hearts are unchanged.

The LORD Talks about Idols

10 ^{*1} The LORD said:

Listen to me,
you people of Israel.

² Don't follow the customs
of those nations
who become frightened
when they see something strange
happen in the sky.

³ Their religion is worthless!
They chop down a tree,

carve the wood into an idol,
⁴ cover it with silver and gold,
and then nail it down
so it won't fall over.

⁵ An idol is no better
than a scarecrow.

It can't speak,
and it has to be carried,
because it can't walk.

Why worship an idol
that can't help or harm you?

Jeremiah Praises the LORD

⁶ Our LORD, great and powerful,
you alone are God.

⁷ You are King of the nations.
Everyone should worship you.
No human anywhere on earth
is wiser than you.

⁸ Idols are worthless,

and anyone who worships them
is a fool!

⁹ Idols are made by humans.
A carver shapes the wood.
A metalworker hammers out
a covering of gold from Uphaz
or of silver from Tarshish.
Then the idol is dressed
in blue and purple clothes.

¹⁰ You, LORD, are the only true
and living God.

You will rule for all time.
When you are angry
the earth shakes,
and nations are destroyed.

¹¹ You told me to say
that idols did not create
the heavens and the earth,
and that you, the LORD,
will destroy every idol.

¹² With your wisdom and power
you created the earth
and spread out the heavens.

¹³ The waters in the heavens roar
at your command.
You make clouds appear –
you send the winds
from your storehouse
and make lightning flash
in the rain.

¹⁴ People who make idols
are so stupid!
They will be disappointed,
because their false gods
are not alive.

¹⁵ Idols are merely a joke,
and when the time is right,
they will be destroyed.

¹⁶ But you, Israel's God,
created all things,
and you chose Israel
to be your very own.
Your name is the LORD
All-Powerful.

Judah Will Be Thrown from Its Land

¹⁷ I said to the people of Judah,
'Gather your things;
you are surrounded.'

- 18 The LORD said these troubles will lead to your capture, and he will throw you from this land
"like a rock from a sling."¹⁸
- 19 The people answered,
"We are wounded and doomed to die.
Why did we say we could stand the pain?"
- 20 Our homes are destroyed; our children are dead.
No one is left to help us find shelter."²⁰
- 21 But I told them,
"Our leaders were stupid failures, because they refused to listen to the LORD.
And so we've been scattered like sheep."
- 22 "Sounds of destruction rumble from the north like distant thunder.
Soon our towns will be ruins where jackals live."²²

Jeremiah Prays

- 23 I know, LORD, that we humans are not in control of our own lives.
- 24 Correct me, as I deserve, but not in your anger, or I will be dead.
- 25 Our enemies refuse to admit that you are God or to worship you.
They have wiped out our people and left our nation lying in ruins.
So get angry and sweep them away!

Judah Has Broken the LORD's Agreement

- 1**¹⁻³ The LORD God told me to say to the people of Judah and Jerusalem:
I, the LORD, am warning you that I will put a curse on anyone who doesn't keep the agreement I made with Israel. So pay attention to what it says. ⁴ My commands haven't changed since I brought your ancestors out of Egypt, a

nation that seemed like a blazing furnace where iron ore is melted. I told your ancestors that if they obeyed my commands, I would be their God, and they would be my people. ⁵ Then I did what I had promised and gave them this wonderful land, where you now live.
"Yes, LORD," I replied, "that's true."

⁶ Then the LORD told me to say to everyone on the streets of Jerusalem and in the towns of Judah:

Pay attention to the commands in my agreement with you. ⁷ Ever since I brought your ancestors out of Egypt, I have been telling your people to obey me. But you and your ancestors ⁸ have always been stubborn. You have refused to listen, and instead you have done whatever your sinful hearts have desired.

You have not kept the agreement we made, so I will make you suffer every curse that goes with it.

⁹ The LORD said to me:

Jeremiah, the people of Judah and Jerusalem are plotting against me. ¹⁰ They have sinned in the same way their ancestors did, by turning from me and worshipping other gods. The northern kingdom of Israel broke the agreement I made with your ancestors, and now the southern kingdom of Judah has done the same.

¹¹ Here is what I've decided to do. I will bring suffering on the people of Judah and Jerusalem, and no one will escape. They will beg me to help, but I won't listen to their prayers. ¹²⁻¹³ Then they will offer sacrifices to their other gods and ask them for help. After all, the people of Judah have more gods than towns, and more altars for Baal than there are streets in Jerusalem. But those gods won't be able to rescue the people of Judah from disaster.

¹⁴ Jeremiah, don't pray for these people or beg me to rescue them. If you do, I won't listen, and I certainly won't listen if they pray!

¹⁵ Then the LORD told me to say to the people of Judah:

You are my chosen people, but you have no right to be here in my temple, doing such terrible things.

The sacrifices you offer me won't protect you from disaster, so stop celebrating.¹

¹⁶ Once you were like an olive tree covered with fruit.

But soon I will send a noisy mob
to break off your branches
and set you on fire.

17 I am the LORD All-Powerful. You people of Judah were like a tree that I had planted, but you have made me angry by offering sacrifices to Baal, just as the northern kingdom did. And now I'm going to pull you up by the roots.

The Plot To Kill Jeremiah

*18 Some people plotted to kill me.

And like a lamb
being led to the butcher,
I knew nothing
about their plans.

19 But then the LORD told me
that they had planned
to chop me down like a tree—
fruit and all—
so that no one would ever
remember me again.

20 I prayed, "LORD All-Powerful,
you always do what is right,
and you know every thought.
So I trust you to help me
and to take revenge."

21 Then the LORD said:

Jeremiah, some men from Anathoth say they will kill you, if you keep on speaking for me. 22 But I will punish them. Their young men will die in battle, and their children will starve to death. 23 And when I am finished, no one from their families will be left alive.

Jeremiah Complains to the LORD

12 Whenever I complain
to you, LORD,
you are always fair.
But now I have questions
about your justice.
Why is life easy for sinners?
Why are they successful?

2 You plant them like trees;
you let them prosper
and produce fruit.
Yet even when they praise you,
they don't mean it.

3 But you know, LORD,
how faithful I've always been,
even in my thoughts.

So drag my enemies away
and butcher them like sheep!

4 How long will the ground be dry
and the pasturelands parched?
The birds and animals
are dead and gone.
And all of this happened because
the people are so sinful.
They even brag, "God can't see
the sins we commit."▷

The LORD Answers Jeremiah

5 Jeremiah, if you get tired
in a race against people,
how can you possibly run
against horses?
If you fall in open fields,
what will happen in the forest
along the Jordan River?

6 Even your own family
has turned against you.
They act friendly,
but don't trust them.
They're out to get you,
and so is everyone else.

The LORD Is Furious with His People

7 I loved my people and chose them
as my very own.
But now I will reject them
and hand them over
to their enemies.
8 My people have turned against me
and roar at me like lions.
That's why I hate them.

9 My people are like a hawk
surrounded and attacked
by other hawks.▷
Tell the wild animals
to come and eat their fill.

10 My beautiful land is ruined
like a field or a vineyard
trampled by shepherds
and stripped bare
by their flocks.

11 Every field I see lies barren,
and no one cares.

12 A destroying army
marches along desert roads
and attacks everywhere.

They are my deadly sword;
no one is safe from them.

- 13 My people, you planted wheat,
but because I was furious,
I let only weeds grow.
You wore yourselves out
for nothing!

The LORD Will Have Pity on Other Nations

14 The LORD said:

I gave this land to my people Israel, but enemies around it have attacked and robbed it. So I will uproot them from their own countries just as I will uproot Judah from its land. 15 But later, I will have pity on these nations and bring them back to their own lands. 16 They once taught my people to worship Baal. But if they admit I am the only true God, and if they let my people teach them how to worship me, these nations will also become my people. 17 However, if they don't listen to me, I will uproot them from their lands and completely destroy them. I, the LORD, have spoken.

Jeremiah's Linen Shorts

13 The LORD told me, "Go and buy a pair of linen shorts. Wear them for a while, but don't wash them." 2 So I bought a pair of shorts and put them on.

3 Then the LORD said, 4 "Take off the shorts. Go to Parah[>] and hide the shorts in a crack between some large rocks." 5 And that's what I did.

6 Some time later the LORD said, "Go back and get the shorts." 7 I went back and dug the shorts out of their hiding place, but the cloth had rotted, and the shorts were ruined.

8 Then the LORD said:

9 Jeremiah, I will use Babylonia to [>] destroy the pride of the people of Judah and Jerusalem. 10 The people of Judah are evil and stubborn. So instead of listening to me, they do whatever they want and even worship other gods. When I am finished with these people, they will be good for nothing, just like this pair of shorts. 11 These shorts were tight around your waist, and that's how tightly I held onto the kingdoms of Israel and Judah. I wanted them to be my people. I wanted to make them famous, so that other nations would praise and honor me, but they refused to obey me.

Wine Jars

The LORD said:

12 Jeremiah, tell the people of Judah, "The LORD God of Israel orders you to fill your wine jars with wine."

They will answer, "Of course we fill our wine jars with wine! Why are you telling us something we already know?"

13 Then say to them:

I am the LORD, and what I'm going to do will make everyone in Judah and Jerusalem appear to be full of wine. And the worst ones will be the kings of David's family and the priests and the prophets. 14 Then I will smash them against each other like jars. I will have no pity on the young or the old, and they will all be destroyed. I, the LORD, have spoken.

The People of Judah Will Be Taken Away

15 People of Judah,
don't be too proud to listen
to what the LORD has said.

16 You hope for light,
but God is sending darkness.
Evening shadows already deepen
in the hills.

So return to God
and confess your sins to him
before you trip and fall.

17 If you are too proud to listen,
I will weep alone.
Tears will stream from my eyes
when the LORD's people
are taken away as prisoners.

18 The LORD told me to tell you
that your king and his mother
must surrender their thrones
'and remove their crowns.'

19 The cities in the Southern Desert
are surrounded;
no one can get in or out.
Everyone in Judah
will be taken away.

20 Jerusalem, you were so proud
of ruling the people of Judah.
But where are they now?

Look north, and you will see
your enemies approaching.

21 'You once trusted them to help,
but now I'll let them rule you.'
What do you say about that?

You will be in pain
like a woman giving birth.

- 22 Do you know why
your clothes were torn off
and you were abused?
It was because
of your terrible sins.
- 23 Can you ever change
and do what's right?
Can people change the color
of their skin,
or can a leopard
remove its spots?
If so, then maybe you can change
and learn to do right.
- 24 I will scatter you,
just as the desert wind
blows husks from grain
tossed in the air.
- 25 I won't change my mind.
I, the LORD, have spoken.
- You rejected me
and worshiped false gods.
- *26 You were married to me,
but you were unfaithful.
You even became a prostitute
by worshiping disgusting gods
on hilltops and in fields.
- 27 So I'll rip off your clothes
and leave you naked and ashamed
for everyone to see.
You are doomed!
Will you ever be worthy
to worship me again?

The Land Dries Up

14 When there had been no rain for a long time,
the LORD told me to say to the people:

- 2 Judah and Jerusalem weep
as the land dries up.
- 3 Rulers send their servants
to the storage pits for water.
But there's none to be found;
they return in despair
with their jars still empty.
- 4 There has been no rain,
and farmers feel sick
as they watch 'cracks appear
in the dry ground.'

- 5 A deer gives birth in a field,
then abandons her newborn fawn
and leaves in search of grass.
- 6 Wild donkeys go blind
from starvation.
So they stand on barren hilltops
and sniff the air,[▷]
hoping to smell green grass.

The LORD's People Pray

- 7 Our terrible sins may demand
that we be punished.
But if you rescue us, LORD,
everyone will see
how great you are.
- 8 You're our only hope;
you alone can save us now.
You help us one day,
but you're gone the next.
- 9 Did this disaster
take you by surprise?
Are you a warrior
with your hands tied?
You have chosen us,
and your temple is here.
Don't abandon us!

The LORD's Answer

- 10 My people,
you love to wander away;
you don't even try
to stay close to me.
So now I will reject you
and punish you for your sins.
I, the LORD, have spoken.

Lying Prophets

11 The LORD said, "Jeremiah, don't ask me to help these people. 12 They may even go without eating and offer sacrifices to please me and to give thanks. But when they cry out for my help, I won't listen, and I won't accept their sacrifices. Instead, I'll send war, starvation, and disease to wipe them out."

13 I replied, "The other prophets keep telling everyone that you won't send starvation or war, and that you're going to give us peace."

14 The LORD answered:

They claim to speak for me, but they're lying! I didn't even speak to them, much less choose them to be my prophets. Their messages come from worthless dreams, useless fortunetelling, and their own imaginations.

¹⁵ Those lying prophets say there will be peace and plenty of food. But I say that those same prophets will die from war and hunger.

¹⁶ And everyone who listens to them will be killed, just as they deserve. Their dead bodies will be thrown out into the streets of Jerusalem, because their families will also be dead, and no one will be left to bury them.

¹⁷ Jeremiah, go and tell the people how you feel about all this.
So I told them:

"Tears will flood my eyes
both day and night,
because my nation suffers
from a deadly wound.

¹⁸ In the fields I see the bodies
of those killed in battle.
And in the towns I see crowds
dying of hunger.
But the prophets and priests
'go about their business,
without understanding
what has happened."

Jeremiah Prays to the LORD

¹⁹ Have you rejected Judah, LORD?
Do you hate Jerusalem?

Why did you strike down Judah
with a fatal wound?
We had hoped for peace
and a time of healing,
but all we got was terror.

²⁰ We and our ancestors are guilty
of rebelling against you.

²¹ If you save us, it will show
how great you are.
Don't let our enemies
disgrace your temple,
your beautiful throne.
Don't forget that you promised
to rescue us.

²² Idols can't send rain,
and showers don't fall
by themselves.
Only you control the rain,
so we put our trust in you,
the LORD our God.

The People of Judah Will Die

15 The LORD said to me:
Even if Moses and Samuel were here, pray-
ing with you, I wouldn't change my mind.

So send the people of Judah away. ² And when they ask where they are going, tell them that I, the LORD, have said:

Some of you are going to die
of horrible diseases.

Others are going to die in war
or from starvation.

The rest will be led away
to a foreign country.

³ I will punish you
in four different ways:
You will be killed in war
and your bodies dragged off
by dogs,
your flesh will be eaten by birds,
and your bones will be chewed on
by wild animals.

⁴ This punishment will happen
because of the horrible things
your King Manasseh[>] did.
And you will be disgusting
to all nations on earth.

⁵ People of Jerusalem,
who will feel sorry for you?
Will anyone bother
to ask if you are well?

⁶ My people, you abandoned me
and walked away.
I am tired of showing mercy;
that's why I'll destroy you

⁷ by scattering you like straw
blown by the wind.

I will punish you with sorrow
and death,
because you refuse
to change your ways.

⁸ There will be more widows
in Judah
than grains of sand on a beach.

A surprise attack at noon!
And the mothers in Jerusalem
mourn for their children.

⁹ A mother is in deep despair
and struggles for breath.
Her daylight has turned
to darkness—
she has suffered the loss
of her seven sons.

I will kill anyone who survives.
I, the LORD, have spoken.

Jeremiah Complains

¹⁰ I wish I had never been born!
I'm always in trouble
with everyone in Judah.
I never lend or borrow money,
but everyone curses me
just the same.

¹¹ Then the LORD replied,
"I promise to protect you,
and when disaster comes,
even your enemies
will beg you for help."^a

The Enemy Cannot Be Defeated

The LORD told me to say:

¹² People of Judah,
just as you can't break iron
mixed with bronze,
you can't defeat the enemies
that will attack
from the north.

¹³ I will give them
everything you own,
because you have sinned
everywhere in your country.

¹⁴ My anger is a fire
that cannot be put out,^b
so I will make you slaves
of your enemies
in a foreign land.^b

Jeremiah Complains Again

¹⁵ You can see how I suffer
insult after insult,
all because of you, LORD.
Don't be so patient
with my enemies;
take revenge on them
before they kill me.

¹⁶ When you spoke to me,
I was glad to obey,
because I belong to you,
the LORD All-Powerful.

¹⁷ I don't go to parties
and have a good time.
Instead, I keep to myself,
because you have filled me
with your anger.

¹⁸ I am badly injured
and in constant pain.

Are you going to disappoint me,
like a stream that goes dry
in the heat of summer?

The LORD Replies

¹⁹ Then the LORD told me:
Stop talking like a fool!
If you turn back to me
and speak my message,
I will let you be my prophet
once again.
I hope the people of Judah
will accept what you say.
But you can ignore their threats,
^{*20} because I am making you strong,
like a bronze wall.
They are evil and violent,
but when they attack,
²¹ I will be there to rescue you.
I, the LORD, have spoken.

Jeremiah Must Live His Message

16 The LORD said to me:
² Jeremiah, don't get married and have children—Judah is no place to raise a family.
³ I'll tell you what's going to happen to children and their parents here. ⁴ They will die of horrible diseases and of war and starvation. No one will give them a funeral or bury them, and their bodies will be food for the birds and wild animals. And what's left will lie on the ground like manure.

⁵ When someone dies, don't visit the family or show any sorrow. I will no longer love or bless or have any pity on the people of Judah. ⁶ Rich and poor alike will die and be left unburied. No one will mourn and show their sorrow by cutting themselves or shaving their heads. ⁷ No one will bring food and wine to help comfort those who are mourning the death of their father or mother.

⁸ Don't even set foot in a house where there is eating and drinking and celebrating. ⁹ Warn the people of Judah that I, the LORD All-Powerful, will put an end to all their parties and wedding celebrations. ¹⁰ They will ask, "Why has the LORD our God threatened us with so many disasters? Have we done something wrong or sinned against him?"

¹¹ Then tell them I have said:

People of Judah, your ancestors turned away from me; they rejected my laws and teachings and started worshiping other gods. ¹² And you have done even worse! You are stubborn, and instead of obeying me, you do whatever evil

comes to your mind. ¹³ So I will throw you into a land that you and your ancestors know nothing about, a place where you will have to worship other gods both day and night. And I won't feel the least bit sorry for you.

¹⁴ A time will come when you will again worship me. But you will no longer call me the Living God who rescued Israel from Egypt. ¹⁵ Instead, you will call me the Living God who rescued you from that country in the north and from the other countries where I had forced you to go.

Someday I will bring you back to this land that I gave your ancestors. ¹⁶ But for now, I am sending enemies who will catch you like fish and hunt you down like wild animals in the hills and the caves.

¹⁷ I can see everything you are doing, even if you try to hide your sins from me. ¹⁸ I will punish you double for your sins, because you have made my own land disgusting. You have filled it with lifeless idols that remind me of dead bodies.

The LORD Gives Strength

I prayed to the LORD:

¹⁹ Our LORD, you are the one who gives me strength and protects me like a fortress when I am in trouble. People will come to you from distant nations and say, "Our ancestors worshiped false and useless gods, ²⁰ worthless idols made by human hands."

²¹ Then the LORD replied, "That's why I will teach them about my power, and they will know that I am the true God."

The LORD Will Punish Judah

The LORD said:

17 People of Judah, your sins cannot be erased. They are written on your hearts like words chiseled in stone or carved on the corners of your altars.

^{*2} "One generation after another has set up pagan altars and worshiped the goddess Asherah everywhere in your country— on hills and mountains, and under large trees.

³ So I'll take everything you own, including your altars, and give it all to your enemies."

⁴ "You will lose" the land that I gave you, and I will make you slaves in a foreign country, because you have made my anger blaze up like a fire that won't stop burning.

Trust the LORD

⁵ I, the LORD, have put a curse on those who turn from me and trust in human strength.

⁶ They will dry up like a bush in salty desert soil, where nothing can grow.

⁷ But I will bless those who trust me.

⁸ They will be like trees growing beside a stream— trees with roots that reach down to the water, and with leaves that are always green. They bear fruit every year and are never worried by a lack of rain.

⁹ You people of Judah are so deceitful that you even fool yourselves, and you can't change.

¹⁰ But I know your deeds and your thoughts, and I will make sure you get what you deserve.

¹¹ You cheated others, but everything you gained will fly away, like birds hatched from stolen eggs. Then you will discover what fools you are.

Jeremiah Prays to the LORD

¹² Our LORD, your temple
is a glorious throne
that has stood on a mountain
from the beginning.

¹³ You are a spring of water
giving Israel life and hope.
But if the people ‘reject
what you have told me,
they will be swept away
like words written in dust.’¹

¹⁴ You, LORD, are the one I praise.
So heal me and rescue me!
Then I will be completely well
and perfectly safe.

¹⁵ The people of Judah say to me,
‘Jeremiah, you claimed to tell us
what the LORD has said.
So why hasn’t it come true?’

¹⁶ Our LORD, ‘you chose me
to care for your people,
and that’s what I have done.
You know everything I have said,
and I have never once
asked you to punish them.’¹

¹⁷ I trust you for protection
in times of trouble,
so don’t frighten me.

¹⁸ Keep me from failure
and disgrace,
but make my enemies fail
and be disgraced.
Send destruction to make
their worst fears come true.

Resting on the Sabbath

¹⁹⁻²⁰ The LORD said:

Jeremiah, stand at each city gate in Jerusalem, including the one the king uses, and speak to him and everyone else. Tell them I have said:

I am the LORD, so pay attention. ²¹⁻²⁴ If you value your lives, don’t do any work on the Sabbath. Don’t carry anything through the city gates or through the door of your house, or anywhere else. Keep the Sabbath day sacred!

I gave this command to your ancestors, but they were stubborn and refused to obey or to be corrected. But if you obey, ²⁵ then Judah and Jerusalem will always be ruled by kings from David’s family. The king and his officials will ride

through these gates on horses or in chariots, and the people of Judah and Jerusalem will be with them. There will always be people living in Jerusalem, ²⁶ and others will come here from the nearby villages, from the towns of Judah and Benjamin, from the hill country and the foothills to the west, and from the Southern Desert. They will bring sacrifices to please me and to give me thanks, as well as offerings of grain and incense.

²⁷ But if you keep on carrying things through the city gates on the Sabbath and keep treating it as any other day, I will set fire to these gates and burn down the whole city, including the fortresses.

Jeremiah Goes to the Pottery Shop

18 The LORD told me, ² ‘Go to the pottery shop, and when you get there, I will tell you what to say to the people.’

³ I went there and saw the potter making clay pots on his pottery wheel. ⁴ And whenever the clay would not take the shape he wanted, he would change his mind and form it into some other shape.

⁵ Then the LORD told me to say:

⁶ People of Israel, I, the LORD, have power over you, just as a potter has power over clay. ⁷ If I threaten to uproot and shatter an evil nation ⁸ and that nation turns from its evil, I will change my mind.

⁹ If I promise to make a nation strong, ¹⁰ but its people start disobeying me and doing evil, then I will change my mind and not help them at all.

¹¹ So listen to me, people of Judah and Jerusalem! I have decided to strike you with disaster, and I won’t change my mind unless you stop sinning and start living right.

¹² But I know you won’t listen. You might as well answer, ‘We don’t care what you say. We have made plans to sin, and we are going to be stubborn and do what we want!’

¹³ So I, the LORD, command you to ask the nations, and find out if they have ever heard of such a horrible sin as what you have done.

¹⁴ The snow
on Lebanon’s mountains
never melts away,
and the streams there
never run dry.¹

¹⁵ But you, my people,
have turned from me

to burn incense
to worthless idols.
You have left the ancient road
to follow an unknown path
where you stumble over idols.

¹⁶Your land will be ruined,
and every passerby
will look at it with horror
and make insulting remarks.

¹⁷When your enemies attack,
I will scatter you like dust
blown by an eastern wind.
Then, on that day of disaster,
I will turn my back on you.

The Plot against Jeremiah

¹⁸Some of the people said, "Let's get rid of Jeremiah! We will always have priests to teach us God's laws, as well as wise people to give us advice, and prophets to speak the LORD's messages. So, instead of listening to Jeremiah any longer, let's accuse him of a crime."

Jeremiah Prays about His Enemies

¹⁹Please, LORD, answer my prayer.
Make my enemies stop
accusing me of evil.

²⁰I tried to help them,
but they are paying me back
by digging a pit to trap me.
I even begged you
not to punish them.

²¹But now I am asking you
to let their children starve
or be killed in war.

Let women lose
their husbands and sons
to disease and violence.

²²These people have dug pits
and set traps for me, LORD.
Make them scream in fear
when you send enemy troops
to attack their homes.

²³You know they plan to kill me.
So get angry and punish them!
Don't ever forgive
their terrible crimes.

Jeremiah and the Clay Jar

¹⁹The LORD said:
Jeremiah, go to the pottery shop and buy a
clay jar. Then take along some of the city

officials and leading priests ²and go to Hinnom Valley, just outside Potsherd Gate. Tell the people that I have said:

³I am the LORD All-Powerful, the God of Israel, and you kings of Judah and you people of Jerusalem had better pay attention. I am going to bring so much trouble on this valley that everyone who hears about it will be shocked.

⁴⁻⁵The people of Judah stopped worshiping me and made this valley into a place of worship for Baal and other gods that have never helped them or their ancestors or their kings. And they have committed murder here, burning their young, innocent children as sacrifices to Baal. I have never even thought of telling you to do that.
⁶So watch out! Someday this place will no longer be called Topheth or Hinnom Valley. It will be called Slaughter Valley!

⁷You people of Judah and Jerusalem may have big plans, but here in this valley I'll ruin those plans. I'll let your enemies kill you, and I'll tell the birds and wild animals to eat your dead bodies. ⁸I will turn Jerusalem into a pile of rubble, and every passerby will be shocked and horrified and will make insulting remarks. ⁹And while your enemies are trying to break through your city walls to kill you, the food supply will run out. You will become so hungry that you will eat the flesh of your friends and even of your own children.

¹⁰Jeremiah, as soon as you have said this, smash the jar while the people are watching.

¹¹Then tell them that I have also said:

I am the LORD All-Powerful, and I warn you that I will shatter Judah and Jerusalem just like this jar that is broken beyond repair. You will bury your dead here in Topheth, but so many of you will die that there won't be enough room.

¹²⁻¹³I will make Jerusalem as unclean as Topheth, by filling the city with your dead bodies. I will do this because you and your kings have gone up to the roofs of your houses and burned incense to the stars in the sky, as though they were gods. And you have given sacrifices of wine to foreign gods.

Jeremiah Speaks in the Temple Courtyard

¹⁴I went to Topheth, where I told the people what the LORD had said. Then I went to the temple courtyard and shouted to the people, ¹⁵"Listen,

everyone! Some time ago, the LORD All-Powerful, the God of Israel, warned you that he would bring disaster on Jerusalem and all nearby villages. But you were stubborn and refused to listen. Now the LORD is going to bring the disaster he promised.”

Pashhur Arrests Jeremiah

20 Pashhur son of Immer was a priest and the chief of temple security. He heard what I had said,² and so he hit me.▷ Then he had me arrested and put in chains▷ at the Benjamin Gate in the LORD’s temple.▷³ The next day, when Pashhur let me go free, I told him that the LORD had said:

No longer will I call you Pashhur. Instead, I will call you Afraid-of-Everything.▷⁴ You will be afraid, and you will bring fear to your friends as well. You will see enemies kill them in battle. Then I will let the king of Babylonia take everyone in Judah prisoner, killing some and dragging the rest away to Babylonia.⁵ He will clean out the royal treasury and take everything else of value from Jerusalem.

⁶ Pashhur, you are guilty of telling lies and claiming they were messages from me. That’s why I will let the Babylonians take you, your family, and your friends as prisoners to Babylonia, where you will all die and be buried.

Jeremiah Complains to the LORD

⁷ You tricked me, LORD,
and I was really fooled.
You are stronger than I am,
and you have defeated me.
People never stop sneering
and insulting me.

⁸ You have let me announce
only destruction and death.
Your message has brought me
nothing but insults
and trouble.

⁹ Sometimes I tell myself
not to think about you, LORD,
or even mention your name.
But your message burns
in my heart and bones,
and I cannot keep silent.

¹⁰ I heard the crowds whisper,
“Everyone is afraid.
Now’s our chance
to accuse Jeremiah!”

All of my so-called friends
are just waiting
for me to make a mistake.
They say, “Maybe Jeremiah
can be tricked.
Then we can overpower him
and get even at last.”

¹¹ But you, LORD,
are a mighty soldier,
standing at my side.
Those troublemakers
will fall down and fail—
terribly embarrassed,
forever ashamed.

¹² LORD All-Powerful,
you test those who do right,
and you know every heart
and mind.
I have told you my complaints,
so let me watch you
take revenge on my enemies.
¹³ I sing praises to you, LORD.
You rescue the oppressed
from the wicked.

¹⁴ Put a curse on the day I was born!
Don’t bless my mother.

¹⁵ Put a curse on the man
who told my father, “Good news!
You have a son.”

¹⁶ May that man be like the towns
you destroyed without pity.
Let him hear shouts of alarm
in the morning
and battle cries at noon.

¹⁷ He deserves to die
for not killing me
before I was born.
Then my mother’s body
would have been my grave.

¹⁸ Why did I have to be born?
Was it just to suffer
and die in shame?

The LORD Will Fight against Jerusalem

21 King Zedekiah of Judah sent for Pashhur son of Malchiah and for a priest named Zephaniah son of Maseiah. Then he told them, “Talk with Jeremiah for me.”

So they came to me and said, ² “King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylonia has attacked Judah. Please

ask the LORD to work miracles for our people, as he has done in the past, so that Nebuchadnezzar will leave us alone.”

³⁻⁷ I told them that the LORD God of Israel had told me to say to King Zedekiah:

The Babylonians have surrounded Jerusalem and want to kill you and your people. You are asking me to save you, but you have made me furious. So I will stretch out my mighty arm and fight against you myself. Your army is using spears and swords to fight the Babylonians, but I will make your own weapons turn and attack you. I will send a horrible disease to kill many of the people and animals in Jerusalem, and there will be nothing left to eat. Finally, I will let King Nebuchadnezzar and his army fight their way to the center of Jerusalem and capture everyone who is left alive, including you and your officials. But Nebuchadnezzar won't be kind or show any mercy—he will have you killed! I, the LORD, have spoken.

⁸ Then I told them that the LORD had said:

People of Jerusalem, I, the LORD, give you the choice of life or death. ⁹ The Babylonian army has surrounded Jerusalem, so if you want to live, you must go out and surrender to them. But if you want to die because of hunger, disease, or war, then stay here in the city. ¹⁰ I have decided not to rescue Jerusalem. Instead, I am going to let the king of Babylonia burn it to the ground. I, the LORD, have spoken.

The LORD Warns the King of Judah

^{*11} Pay attention, you that belong to the royal family.

¹² Each new day, make sure that justice is done, and rescue those who are being robbed. Or else my anger will flame up like a fire that never goes out.

¹³ Jerusalem, from your mountaintop you look out over the valleys¹ and think you are safe.

But I, the LORD, am angry, ¹⁴ and I will punish you as you deserve. I'll set your palace[>] on fire, and everything around you will go up in smoke.

The LORD Will Punish the King of Judah

22 ¹⁻³ The LORD sent me to the palace of the king of Judah to speak to the king, his officials, and everyone else who was there. The LORD told me to say:

I am the LORD, so pay attention! You have been allowing people to cheat, rob, and take advantage of widows, orphans, and foreigners who live here. Innocent people have become victims of violence, and some of them have even been killed. But now I command you to do what is right and see that justice is done. Rescue everyone who has suffered from injustice.

⁴ If you obey me, the kings from David's family will continue to rule Judah from this palace. They and their officials will ride in and out on their horses or in their chariots. ⁵ But if you ignore me, I promise in my own name that this palace will lie in ruins. ⁶ Listen to what I think about it:

The palace of Judah's king is as glorious as Gilead or Lebanon's highest peaks.

But it will be as empty as a ghost-town

when I'm through with it.

⁷ I'll send troops to tear it apart, and its beautiful cedar beams will be used for firewood.

⁸ People from different nations will pass by and ask, "Why did the LORD do this to such a great city as Jerusalem?" ⁹ Others will answer, "It's because the people worshiped foreign gods and broke the agreement that the LORD their God had made with them."

King Jehoahaz

The LORD said:

¹⁰ King Josiah is dead, so don't cry for him.[>] Instead, cry for his son King Jehoahaz, dragged off to another country,[>] never to return.

¹¹⁻¹² Jehoahaz[>] became king of Judah after his father King Josiah died. But Jehoahaz was taken as a prisoner to a foreign country. Now I, the LORD, promise that he will die there without ever seeing his own land again.

King Jehoiakim

The LORD told me to say:

^{*13} King Jehoiakim, you are doomed!

- You built a palace
with large rooms upstairs.
- 14 You put in big windows
and used cedar paneling
and red paint.
But you were unfair
and forced the builders to work
without pay.
- *15 More cedar in your palace
doesn't make you a better king
than your father Josiah.
He always did right—
he gave justice to the poor
and was honest.
- 16 That's what it means
to truly know me.
So he lived a comfortable life
and always had enough
to eat and drink.
- 17 But all you think about
is how to cheat
or abuse or murder
some innocent victim.
- 18 Jehoiakim, no one will cry
at your funeral.
They won't turn to each other
and ask,
"Why did our great king
have to die?"
- 19 You will be given a burial
fit for a donkey;
your body will be dragged
outside the city gates
and tossed in the dirt.
I, the LORD, have spoken.

King Jehoiachin and the People of Jerusalem

The LORD told me to say:

- 20 People of Jerusalem,
the nations[>] you trusted
have been crushed.
Go to Lebanon and weep;
cry in the land of Bashan
and in Moab.
- 21 When times were good,
I warned you.
But you ignored me,
just as you have done
since Israel was young.
- 22 Now you will be disgraced
because of your sins.

- Your leaders will be swept away
by the wind,
and the nations you trusted
will be captured and dragged
to a foreign country.
- 23 Those who live in the palace
paneled with cedar[>]
will groan with pain
like women giving birth.

24 King Jehoiachin,[>] son of Jehoiakim, even if you
were the ring I wear as the sign of my royal power, I
would still pull you from my finger. 25 I would hand
you over to the enemy you fear, to King Nebu-
chadnezzar and his army, who want to kill you. 26 You
and your mother were born in Judah, but I will throw
both of you into a foreign country, where you will die,
27 longing to return home.

- 28 Jehoiachin, you are unwanted
like a broken clay pot.
So you and your children
will be thrown into a country
you know nothing about.
- 29 Land of Judah, I am the LORD.
Now listen to what I say!
- 30 Erase the names
of Jehoiachin's children
from the royal records.
He is a complete failure,
and so none of them
will ever be king.
I, the LORD, have spoken.

A Message of Hope

The LORD said:

23 You leaders of my people are like shep-
herds that kill and scatter the sheep. 2 You
were supposed to take care of my people,
but instead you chased them away. So now I'll
really take care of you, and believe me, you will
pay for your crimes!

3 I will bring the rest of my people home from
the lands where I have scattered them, and they will
grow into a mighty nation. 4 I promise to choose
leaders who will care for them like real shepherds.
All of my people will be there, and they will never
again be frightened.

- 5 Someday I will appoint
an honest king
from the family of David,

a king who will be wise
and rule with justice.

- ⁶ As long as he is king,
Israel will have peace,
and Judah will be safe.
The name of this king will be
"The LORD Gives Justice."

⁷ A time will come when you will again worship me. But you will no longer call me the Living God who rescued Israel from Egypt. ⁸ Instead, you will call me the Living God who rescued you from the land in the north and from all the other countries where I had forced you to go. And you will once again live in your own land.

Jeremiah Thinks about Unfaithful Prophets

- ⁹ When I think of the prophets,
I am shocked, and I tremble▷
like someone drunk,
because of the LORD
and his sacred words.
¹⁰ "Those unfaithful prophets
misuse their power
all over the country.
So God turned the pasturelands
into scorching deserts."¹

The LORD Will Punish Unfaithful Prophets

- ¹¹ The LORD told me to say:
You prophets and priests
think so little of me, the LORD,
that you even sin
in my own temple!
¹² Now I will punish you
with disaster,
and you will slip and fall
in the darkness.
I, the LORD, have spoken.
¹³ The prophets in Samaria
were disgusting to me,
because they preached
in the name of Baal
and led my people astray.
¹⁴ And you prophets in Jerusalem
are even worse.
You're unfaithful in marriage▷
and never tell the truth.▷

You even lead others to sin
instead of helping them
turn back to me.
You and the people of Jerusalem
are evil like Sodom
and Gomorrah.
¹⁵ You prophets in Jerusalem
have spread evil everywhere.
That's why I, the LORD, promise
to give you bitter poison
to eat and drink.

The LORD Gives a Warning

The LORD said:

- ¹⁶ Don't listen to the lies
of these false prophets,
you people of Judah!
The message they preach
is something they imagined;
it did not come from me,
the LORD All-Powerful.
¹⁷ These prophets go to people
who refuse to respect me
and who are stubborn
and do whatever they want.
The prophets tell them,
"The LORD has promised
everything will be fine."¹
¹⁸ But I, the LORD, tell you
that these prophets
have never attended a meeting
of my council in heaven
or heard me speak.
¹⁹ They are evil! So in my anger
I will strike them
like a violent storm.
²⁰ I won't calm down,
until I have finished
what I have decided to do.
Someday you will understand
exactly what I mean.
²¹ I did not send these prophets
or speak to them,
but they ran to find you
and to preach their message.
²² If they had been in a meeting
of my council in heaven,
they would have told
you people of Judah
to give up your sins
and come back to me.

23 I am everywhere—
both near and far,
24 in heaven and on earth.
There are no secret places
where you can hide from me.

25 These unfaithful prophets claim that I have given them a dream or a vision, and then they tell lies in my name. 26 But everything they say comes from their own twisted minds. How long can this go on? 27 They tell each other their dreams and try to get my people to reject me, just as their ancestors left me and worshiped Baal. 28 Their dreams and my truth are as different as straw and wheat. But when prophets speak for me, they must say only what I have told them. 29 My words are a powerful fire; they are a hammer that shatters rocks.

30-32 These unfaithful prophets claim I give them their dreams, but it isn't true. I didn't choose them to be my prophets, and yet they babble on and on, speaking in my name, while stealing words from each other. And when my people hear these liars, they are led astray instead of being helped. So I warn you that I am now the enemy of these prophets. I, the LORD, have spoken.

News and Nuisance

The LORD said to me:

33 Jeremiah, when a prophet or a priest or anyone else comes to you and asks, "Does the LORD have news for us?" tell them, "You people are a nuisance to the LORD, and he^g will get rid of you."

34 If any of you say, "Here is news from the LORD," I will punish you and your families, even if you are a prophet or a priest. 35 Instead, you must ask your friends and relatives, "What answer did the LORD give?" or "What has the LORD said?" 36 It seems that you each have your own news! So if you say, "Here is news from the LORD," you are twisting my words into a lie. Remember that I am your God, the LORD All-Powerful.

37 If you go to a prophet, it's all right to ask, "What answer did the LORD give to my question?" or "What has the LORD said?" 38 But if you disobey me and say, "Here is news from the LORD," 39 I will pick you up^g and throw you far away. And I will abandon this city of Jerusalem that I gave to your ancestors. 40 You will never be free from your shame and disgrace.

Jeremiah Has a Vision of Two Baskets of Figs

24 The LORD spoke to me in a vision after King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylonia had come to Judah and taken King Jehoiachin^g his officials, and all the skilled workers back to Babylonia. In this vision I saw two baskets of figs in front of the LORD's temple. 2 One basket was full of very good figs that ripened early, and the other was full of rotten figs that were not fit to eat.

3 "Jeremiah," the LORD asked, "what do you see?" "Figs," I said. "Some are very good, but the others are too rotten to eat."

4 Then the LORD told me to say:

5 People of Judah, the good figs stand for those of you I sent away as exiles to Babylonia, 6 where I am watching over them. Then someday I will bring them back to this land. I will plant them, instead of uprooting them, and I will build them up, rather than tearing them down. 7 I will give them a desire to know me and to be my people. They will want me to be their God, and they will turn back to me with all their heart.

8 The rotten figs stand for King Zedekiah of Judah, his officials, and all the others who were not taken away to Babylonia, whether they stayed here in Judah or went to live in Egypt. 9 I will punish them with a terrible disaster, and everyone on earth will tremble when they hear about it. I will force the people of Judah to go to foreign countries, where they will be cursed and insulted. 10 War and hunger and disease will strike them, until they finally disappear from the land that I gave them and their ancestors.

Seventy Years of Exile

25 1-2 In the fourth year that Jehoiakim was king of Judah, which was the first year that Nebuchadnezzar was king of Babylonia, the LORD told me to speak to the people of Judah and Jerusalem. So I told them:

3 For 23 years now, ever since the thirteenth year that Josiah^g was king, I have been telling you what the LORD has told me. But you have not listened.

4 The LORD has sent prophets to you time after time, but you refused to listen. 5 They told you that the LORD had said:

Change your ways! If you stop doing evil, I will let you stay forever in this land that I gave your ancestors. 6 I don't want to harm you. So don't

make me angry by worshiping idols and other gods.

⁷ But you refused to listen to my prophets. So I, the LORD, say that you have made me angry by worshiping idols, and you are the ones who were hurt by what you did. ⁸ You refused to listen to me, ⁹ and now I will let you be attacked by nations from the north, and especially by my servant, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylonia. You and other nearby nations will be destroyed and left in ruins forever. Everyone who sees what has happened will be shocked, but they will still make fun of you. ¹⁰ I will put an end to your parties and wedding celebrations; no one will grind grain or be here to light the lamps at night. ¹¹ This country will be as empty as a desert, because I will make all of you the slaves of the king of Babylonia for 70 years.

¹² When that time is up, I will punish the king of Babylonia and his people for everything they have done wrong, and I will turn that country into a wasteland forever. ¹³ My servant Jeremiah has told you what I said I will do to Babylonia and to the other nations, and he wrote it all down in this book. I will do everything I threatened. ¹⁴ I will pay back the Babylonians for every wrong they have done. Great kings from many other nations will conquer the Babylonians and force them to be slaves.

The Cup Full of God's Anger

¹⁵ The LORD God of Israel showed me a vision in which he said, "Jeremiah, here is a cup filled with the wine of my anger. Take it and make every nation drink some. ¹⁶ They will vomit and act crazy, because of the war this cup of anger will bring to them."

¹⁷ I took the cup from the LORD's hand, and I went to the kings of the nations and made each of them drink some. ¹⁸ I started with Jerusalem and the towns of Judah, and the king and his officials were removed from power in disgrace. Everyone still makes insulting jokes about them and uses their names as curse words. ¹⁹ The second place I went was Egypt, where everyone had to drink from the cup, including the king and his officials, the other government workers, the rest of the Egyptians, ²⁰ and all the foreigners who lived in the country.

Next I went to the king of Uz, and then to the four kings of Philistia, who ruled from Ashkelon, Gaza, Ekron, and what was left of Ashdod. ²¹ Then I went to the kings of Edom, Moab, Ammon, ²² and

to the kings of Tyre, Sidon, and their colonies across the sea. ²³⁻²⁴ After this, I went to the kings of Dedan, Tema, Buz, 'the tribes of the Arabian Desert,' ²⁵ Zimri, Elam, Media, ²⁶ and the countries in the north, both near and far.

I went to all the countries on earth, one after another, and finally to Babylonia.^{1>}

²⁷ The LORD had said to tell each king, "The LORD All-Powerful, the God of Israel, commands you to drink from this cup that is full of the wine of his anger. It will make you so drunk that you will vomit. And when the LORD sends war against the nations, you will be completely defeated."

²⁸ The LORD told me that if any of them refused to drink from the cup, I must tell them that he had said, "I, the LORD All-Powerful, command you to drink. ²⁹ Starting with my own city of Jerusalem, everyone on earth will suffer from war. So there is no way I will let you escape unharmed."

³⁰ The LORD told me to say:

From my sacred temple
I will roar like thunder,
while I trample my people
and everyone else
as though they were grapes.

³¹ My voice will be heard
everywhere on earth,
accusing nations of their crimes
and sentencing the guilty
to death.

Disaster Is Coming

³² The LORD All-Powerful says:

You can see disaster spreading
from far across the earth,
from nation to nation
like a horrible storm.

³³ When it strikes, I will kill so many people that their bodies will cover the ground like manure. No one will be left to bury them or to mourn.

The Leaders of Judah Will Be Punished

³⁴ The LORD's people are his flock,
and you leaders
were the shepherds.
But now it's your turn
to be butchered like sheep.
'You'll shatter like fine pottery
dropped on the floor.'

- So roll on the ground,
crying and mourning.
35 You have nowhere to run,
nowhere to hide.
- *36 Listen to the cries
of the shepherds,
37 as the LORD's burning anger
turns> peaceful meadows
into barren deserts.
38 The LORD has abandoned
his people>
like a lion leaving its den.

Jeremiah's Message in the Temple

26 Soon after Jehoiakim became king of Judah, the LORD said:

2 Jeremiah, I have a message for everyone who comes from the towns of Judah to worship in my temple. Go to the temple courtyard and speak every word that I tell you. 3 Maybe the people will listen this time. And if they stop doing wrong, I will change my mind and not punish them for their sins. 4 Tell them that I have said:

You have refused to listen to me and to obey my laws and teachings. 5 Again and again I have sent my servants the prophets to preach to you, but you ignored them as well. Now I am warning you that if you don't start obeying me at once, 6 I will destroy this temple, just as I destroyed the town of Shiloh. Then everyone on earth will use the name "Jerusalem" as a curse word.

Jeremiah on Trial

7 The prophets, the priests, and everyone else in the temple heard what I said, 8-9 and as soon as I finished, they all crowded around me and started shouting, "Why did you preach that the LORD will destroy this temple, just as he destroyed Shiloh? Why did you say that Jerusalem will be empty and lie in ruins? You ought to be put to death for saying such things in the LORD's name!" Then they had me arrested.

10 The royal officers heard what had happened, and they came from the palace to the new gate of the temple to be the judges at my trial. 11 While they listened, the priests and the prophets said to the crowd, "All of you have heard Jeremiah prophesy that Jerusalem will be destroyed. He deserves the death penalty."

12-13 Then I told the judges and everyone else:

The LORD himself sent me to tell you about the terrible things he will do to you, to Jerusalem, and to the temple. But if you change your ways and start obeying the LORD, he will change his mind.

14 You must decide what to do with me. Just do whatever you think is right. 15 But if you put me to death, you and everyone else in Jerusalem will be guilty of murdering an innocent man, because everything I preached came from the LORD.

16 The judges and the other people told the priests and prophets, "Since Jeremiah only told us what the LORD our God had said, we don't think he deserves to die."

17 Then some of the leaders from other towns stepped forward. They told the crowd that 18 years ago when Hezekiah was king of Judah, a prophet named Micah from the town of Moresheth had said:

"I, the LORD All-Powerful, say
Jerusalem will be plowed under
and left in ruins.
Thorns will cover the mountain
where the temple
now stands."

19 Then the leaders continued:

No one put Micah to death for saying that. Instead, King Hezekiah prayed to the LORD with fear and trembling and asked him to have mercy. Then the LORD decided not to destroy Jerusalem, even though he had already said he would.

People of Judah, if Jeremiah is killed, we will bring a terrible disaster on ourselves.

20-24 After these leaders finished speaking, an important man named Ahikam son of Shaphan spoke up for me as well. And so, I wasn't handed over to the crowd to be killed.

Uriah the Prophet

While Jehoiakim was still king of Judah, a man named Uriah son of Shemaiah left his hometown of Kiriath-Jearim and came to Jerusalem. Uriah was one of the LORD's prophets, and he was saying the same things about Judah and Jerusalem that I had been saying. And when Jehoiakim and his officials and military officers heard what Uriah said, they tried to arrest him, but he escaped to Egypt. So Jehoiakim sent Elnathan son of Achbor and some

other men after Uriah, and they brought him back. Then Jehoiakim had Uriah killed and his body dumped in a common burial pit.

Slaves of Nebuchadnezzar

27¹⁻² Not long after Zedekiah became king of Judah,[▷] the LORD told me:

Jeremiah, make a wooden yoke with leather straps, and place it on your neck. ³ Then send a message to the kings of Edom, Moab, Ammon, Tyre, and Sidon. Some officials from these countries are in Jerusalem, meeting with Zedekiah. ⁴ So have them tell their kings that I have said:

I am the All-Powerful LORD God of Israel, ⁵ and with my power I created the earth, its people, and all animals. I decide who will rule the earth, ⁶⁻⁷ and I have chosen my servant King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylonia to rule all nations, including yours. I will even let him rule the wild animals. All nations will be slaves of Nebuchadnezzar, his son, and his grandson. Then many nations will join together, and their kings will be powerful enough to make slaves of the Babylonians.

⁸ This yoke stands for the power of King Nebuchadnezzar, and I will destroy any nation that refuses to obey him. Nebuchadnezzar will attack, and many will die in battle or from hunger and disease. ⁹ You might have people in your kingdom who claim they can tell the future by magic or by talking with the dead or by dreams or messages from a god. But don't pay attention if any of them tell you not to obey Nebuchadnezzar. ¹⁰ If you listen to such lies, I will have you dragged far from your country and killed. ¹¹ But if you and your nation are willing to obey Nebuchadnezzar, I will let you stay in your country, and your people will continue to live and work on their farms.

¹² After I had spoken to the officials from the nearby kingdoms, I went to King Zedekiah and told him the same thing. Then I said:

Zedekiah, if you and the people of Judah want to stay alive, you must obey Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians. ¹³ But if you refuse, then you and your people will die from war, hunger, and disease, just as the LORD has warned. ¹⁴ Your prophets have told you that you don't need to obey Nebuchadnezzar, but don't listen to their lies. ¹⁵ Those prophets claim to be speaking for the LORD, but he didn't

send them. They are lying! If you do what they say, he will have both you and them dragged off to another country and killed. The LORD has spoken.

¹⁶ When I finished talking to the king, I went to the priests and told them that the LORD had said:

Don't listen to the prophets when they say that very soon the Babylonians will return the things they took from my temple. Those prophets are lying! ¹⁷ If you choose to obey the king of Babylonia, you will live. But if you listen to those prophets, this whole city will be nothing but a pile of rubble.

¹⁸ If I really had spoken to those prophets, they would know what I am going to do. Then they would be begging me not to let everything else be taken from the temple and the king's palace and the rest of Jerusalem. ¹⁹⁻²¹ After all, when Nebuchadnezzar took King Jehoiachin[▷] to Babylonia as a prisoner, he didn't take everything of value from Jerusalem. He left the bronze pillars, the huge bronze bowl called the Sea, and the movable bronze stands in the temple, and he left a lot of other valuable things in the palace and in the rest of Jerusalem.

But now I, the LORD All-Powerful, the God of Israel, say that all these things ²² will be taken to Babylonia, where they will remain until I decide to bring them back to Jerusalem. I, the LORD, have spoken.

Jeremiah Accuses Hananiah of Being a False Prophet

28¹ Later that same year, in the fifth month of the fourth year that Zedekiah was king,¹ the prophet Hananiah son of Azzur from Gibeon came up to me in the temple. And while the priests and others in the temple were listening, ² he told me that the LORD had said:

I am the LORD All-Powerful, the God of Israel, and I will smash the yoke that Nebuchadnezzar put on the necks of the nations to make them his slaves. ³ And within two years, I will bring back to Jerusalem everything that he took from my temple and carried off to Babylonia. ⁴ King Jehoiachin[▷] and the other people who were taken from Judah to Babylonia will be allowed to come back here as well. All this will happen because I will smash the power of the king of Babylonia!

⁵ The priests and the others were still standing there, so I said:

⁶ Hananiah, I hope the LORD will do exactly what you said. I hope he does bring back everything the Babylonians took from the temple, and that our people who were taken to Babylonia will be allowed to return home. ⁷ But let me remind you and everyone else ⁸ that long before we were born, prophets were saying powerful kingdoms would be struck by war, disaster, and disease. ⁹ Now you are saying we will have peace. We will just have to wait and see if that is really what the LORD has said.

¹⁰ Hananiah grabbed the wooden yoke from my neck and smashed it. ¹¹ Then he said, "The LORD says this is the way he will smash the power Nebuchadnezzar has over the nations, and it will happen in less than two years."

I left the temple, ¹² and a little while later, the LORD told me ¹³⁻¹⁴ to go back and say to Hananiah:

I am the LORD All-Powerful, the God of Israel. You smashed a wooden yoke, but I will replace it with one made of iron. I will put iron yokes on all the nations, and they will have to do what King Nebuchadnezzar commands. I will even let him rule the wild animals.

¹⁵⁻¹⁶ Hananiah, I have never sent you to speak for me. And yet you have talked my people into believing your lies and rebelling against me. So now I will send you—I'll send you right off the face of the earth! You will die before this year is over.

¹⁷ Two months later, Hananiah died.

Jeremiah's Letter to the People of Judah in Babylonia

29 ¹⁻² I had been left in Jerusalem when King Nebuchadnezzar took many of the people of Jerusalem and Judah to Babylonia as prisoners, including King Jehoiachin,[>] his mother, his officials, and the metal workers and others in Jerusalem who were skilled in making things. So I wrote a letter to the prophets, the priests, the leaders, and the rest of our people in Babylonia. ³ I gave the letter to Elash and Gemariah,[>] two men that King Zedekiah of Judah was sending to Babylon to talk with Nebuchadnezzar. In the letter, I wrote ⁴ that the LORD All-Powerful, the God of Israel, had said:

I had you taken from Jerusalem to Babylonia. Now I tell you ⁵ to settle there and build houses. Plant gardens and eat what you grow in them. ⁶ Get married and have children, then help your sons find wives and help your daugh-

ters find husbands, so they can have children as well. I want your numbers to grow, not to get smaller.

⁷ Pray for peace in Babylonia and work hard to make it prosperous. The more successful that nation is, the better off you will be.

⁸⁻⁹ Some of your people there in Babylonia are fortunetellers, and you have asked them to tell you what will happen in the future. But they will only lead you astray. And don't let the prophets fool you, either. They speak in my name, but they are liars. I have not spoken to them.

¹⁰ After Babylonia has been the strongest nation for 70 years, I will be kind and bring you back to Jerusalem, just as I have promised. ¹¹ I will bless you with a future filled with hope—a future of success, not of suffering. ¹² You will turn back to me and ask for help, and I will answer your prayers. ¹³ You will worship me with all your heart, and I will be with you ¹⁴ and accept your worship. Then I will gather you from all the nations where I scattered you, and you will return to Jerusalem.

¹⁵ You feel secure, because you think I have sent prophets to speak for me in Babylonia.

¹⁶⁻¹⁹ But I have been sending prophets to the people of Judah for a long time, and the king from David's family and the people who are left in Jerusalem and Judah still don't obey me. So I, the LORD All-Powerful, will keep attacking them with war and hunger and disease, until they are as useless as rotten figs. I will force them to leave the land, and all nations will be disgusted and shocked at what happens to them. The nations will sneer and make fun of them and use the names "Judah" and "Jerusalem" as curse words.

And you have not obeyed me, even though ²⁰ I had you taken from Jerusalem to Babylonia. But you had better listen to me now. ²¹⁻²³ You think Ahab son of Kolaiah and Zedekiah son of Maaseiah are prophets because they claim to speak for me. But they are lying! I haven't told them anything. They are also committing other horrible sins in your community, such as sleeping with the wives of their friends. So I will hand them over to King Nebuchadnezzar, who will put them to death while the rest of you watch. And in the future, when you want to put a curse on someone, you will say, "I pray that the LORD will kill you in the same way the king of Babylonia burned Zedekiah and Ahab to death!"

A Message for Shemaiah

24-25 The LORD All-Powerful, the God of Israel, told me what would happen to Shemaiah,[>] who was one of our people in Babylonia. After my letter reached Babylonia, Shemaiah wrote letters to the people of Jerusalem, including the priest Zephaniah son of Maaseiah, and the other priests. The letter to Zephaniah said:

26 After the death of Jehoiada the priest, the LORD chose you to be the priest in charge of the temple security force. You know that anyone who acts crazy and pretends to be a prophet should be arrested and put in chains[>] and iron collars. 27 Jeremiah from the town of Anathoth is pretending to be a prophet there in Jerusalem, so why haven't you punished him? 28 He even wrote a letter to the people here in Babylonia, saying we would be here a long time. He told us to build homes and to plant gardens and grow our own food.

29 When Zephaniah received Shemaiah's letter, he read it to me. 30 Then the LORD told me what to write in a second letter[>] to the people of Judah who had been taken to Babylonia. In this letter, I wrote that the LORD had said:

I, the LORD, have not chosen Shemaiah to be one of my prophets, and he has misled you by telling lies in my name. 32 He has even talked you into disobeying me. So I will punish Shemaiah. He and his descendants won't live to see the good things I will do for my people. I, the LORD, have spoken.

The LORD Will Rescue Israel and Judah

30 1-2 The LORD God of Israel said, "Jeremiah, get a scroll and write down everything I have told you. 3 Someday I will let my people from both Israel and Judah return to the land I gave their ancestors."

4-5 Then the LORD told me to say to Israel and Judah:

I, the LORD, hear screams
of terror,

and there is no peace.

6 Can men give birth?

Then why do I see them
looking so pale
and clutching their stomachs
like women in labor?

7 My people, soon you will suffer
worse than ever before,
but I will save you.

8 Now you are slaves
of other nations,
but I will break the chains
and smash the yokes
that keep you in slavery.
9 Then you will be my servants,
and I will choose a king for you
from the family of David.

*10 Israel, you belong to me,
so don't be afraid.

You deserved to be punished;
that's why I scattered you
in distant nations.

But I am with you,
and someday I will destroy
those nations.

11 Then I will bring you
and your descendants
back to your land,
where I will protect you
and give you peace.

Then your fears will be gone.
I, the LORD, have spoken.

The LORD Will Heal Israel and Judah

12 The LORD said:

My people, you are wounded
and near death.

13 You are accused of a crime
with no one to defend you,
and you are covered with sores
that no medicine can cure.

*14 Your friends have forgotten you;
they don't care anymore.

Even I have acted like an enemy.
And because your sins
are horrible and countless,
I will be cruel
as I punish you.

15 So don't bother to cry out
for relief from your pain.

16 But if your enemies try to rob
or destroy you,
I will rob and destroy them,
and they will be led as captives
to foreign lands.

17 No one wants you as a friend
or cares what happens to you.
But I will heal your injuries,
and you will get well.

The LORD Will Rescue Israel and Judah

¹⁸The LORD said:

Israel, I will be kind to you
and let you come home.
Jerusalem now lies in ruins,
but you will rebuild it,
complete with a new palace.▷

¹⁹Other nations will respect
and honor you.

Your homes will be filled
with children,
and you will celebrate,
singing praises to me.

²⁰It will be just like old times.
Your nation will worship me,
and I will punish anyone
who abuses you.

²¹One of your own people
will become your ruler.

And when I invite him
to come near me
at the place of worship,
he will do so.
No one would dare to come near
without being invited.

²²You will be my people,
and I will be your God.
I, the LORD, have spoken.

²³I am furious!
And like a violent storm
I will strike those
who do wrong.

²⁴I won't calm down
until I have finished
what I have decided to do.
Someday, you will understand
what I mean.

Israel Will Return to God

31 The LORD said:

Israel, I promise
that someday all your tribes
will again be my people,
and I will be your God.

²'In the desert I was kind
to those who escaped death.
I gave them peace,
and when the time is right,
I'll do the same for you.'
I, the LORD, have spoken.

The LORD Will Rebuild Israel

³Some time ago, the LORD appeared to me▷
and told me to say:

Israel, I will always love you;
that's why I've been so patient
and kind.

⁴You are precious to me,
and so I will rebuild
your nation.

Once again you will dance for joy
and play your tambourines.

⁵You will plant vineyards
on the hills of Samaria
and enjoy the grapes.

⁶Someday those who guard
the hill country of Ephraim
will shout, "Let's go to Zion
and worship the LORD our God."

Israel Will Return to Its Own Land

⁷The LORD says:

Celebrate and sing for Israel,
the greatest of nations.

Offer praises and shout,
"Come and rescue
your people, LORD!
Save what's left of Israel."

⁸I, the LORD, will bring
my people back from Babylonia▷
and everywhere else on earth.
The blind and the lame
will be there.

Expectant mothers
and women about to give birth
will come and be part
of that great crowd.

⁹They will weep and pray
as I bring them home.

I will lead them
to streams of water.
They will walk on a level▷ road
and not stumble.

I am a father to Israel,▷
my favorite children.

¹⁰Listen to me, you nations
nearby or across the sea.
I scattered the people of Israel,
but I will gather them again.
I will protect them like a shepherd
guarding a flock;

- 11 I will rescue them from enemies
who could overpower them.
- 12 My people will come
to Mount Zion
and celebrate;
their faces will glow
because of my blessings.
I'll give them grain, grapes,
and olive oil,
as well as sheep and cattle.
Israel will be prosperous
and grow like a garden
with plenty of water.
- 13 Young women and young men,
together with the elderly,
will celebrate and dance,
because I will comfort them
and turn their sorrow
into happiness.
- 14 I will bless my people
with more food
than they need,
and the priests will enjoy
the choice cuts of meat.
I, the LORD, have spoken.

The LORD Offers Hope

- 15 In Ramah[>] a voice is heard,
crying and weeping loudly.
Rachel mourns for her children
and refuses to be comforted,
because they are dead.
^{*16} But I, the LORD, say
to dry your tears.
Someday your children
will come home
from the enemy's land.
Then all you have done for them
will be greatly rewarded.
- 17 So don't lose hope.
I, the LORD, have spoken.
- 18 The people of Israel[>] moan
and say to me,
"We were like wild bulls,
but you, LORD, broke us,
and we learned to obey.
You are our God—
please let us come home.
- 19 When we were young,
we strayed and sinned,
but then we realized
what we had done.

We are ashamed and disgraced
and want to return to you."

- 20 People of Israel,
you are my own dear children.
Don't I love you best of all?
Though I often make threats,
I want you to be near me,
so I will have mercy on you.
I, the LORD, have spoken.
- 21 With rock piles and signposts,
mark the way home,
my dear people.
It is the same road
by which you left.
- 22 Will you ever decide
to be faithful?
"I will make sure that someday
things will be different,
as different as a woman
protecting a man."

The LORD Will Bring Judah Home

²³ The LORD All-Powerful, the God of Israel, said:
I promise to set the people of Judah free and to
lead them back to their hometowns. And when I do,
they will once again say,

"We pray that the LORD
will bless his home,
the sacred hill in Jerusalem
where his temple stands."

²⁴ The people will live in Jerusalem and in the
towns of Judah. Some will be farmers, and others
will be shepherds. ²⁵ Those who feel tired and worn
out will find new life and energy, ²⁶ and when they
sleep, they will wake up refreshed.¹

²⁷ Someday, Israel and Judah will be my field
where my people and their livestock will grow.
²⁸ In the past, I took care to uproot them, to tear
them down, and to destroy them. But when that
day comes, I will take care to plant them and help
them grow. ²⁹ No longer will anyone go around
saying,

"Sour grapes eaten by parents
leave a sour taste in the mouths
of their children."

³⁰ When that day comes, only those who eat sour
grapes will get the sour taste, and only those who
sin will be put to death.

The New Agreement with Israel and Judah

³¹ The LORD said:

The time will surely come when I will make a new agreement with the people of Israel and Judah. ³² It will be different from the agreement I made with their ancestors when I led them out of Egypt. Although I was their God, they broke that agreement.

³³ Here is the new agreement that I, the LORD, will make with the people of Israel:

I will write my laws
on their hearts and minds.
I will be their God,
and they will be my people.

³⁴ "No longer will they have to teach one another to obey me. I, the LORD, promise that all of them will obey me, ordinary people and rulers alike. I will forgive their sins and forget the evil things they have done."

³⁵ I am the LORD All-Powerful.
I command the sun
to give light each day,
the moon and stars
to shine at night,
and ocean waves to roar.

³⁶ I will never forget
to give those commands,
and I will never let Israel
stop being a nation.
I, the LORD, have spoken.

³⁷ Can you measure the heavens?
Can you explore
the depths of the earth?
That's how hard it would be
for me to reject Israel forever,
even though they have sinned.
I, the LORD, have spoken.

Jerusalem Will Be Rebuilt

³⁸ The LORD said:

Someday, Jerusalem will truly belong to me. It will be rebuilt with a boundary line running from Hananel Tower to Corner Gate. ³⁹ From there, the boundary will go in a straight line to Gareb Hill, then turn toward Goah. ⁴⁰ Even that disgusting Hinnom Valley[>] will be sacred to me, and so will the eastern slopes that go down from Horse Gate into Kidron Valley. Jerusalem will never again be destroyed.

Jeremiah Buys a Field

32 The LORD spoke to me in the tenth year that Zedekiah was king of Judah, which was the eighteenth year that Nebuchadnezzar was king of Babylonia. ² At that time, the Babylonian army had surrounded Jerusalem, and I was in the prison at the courtyard of the palace guards. ³ Zedekiah had ordered me to be held there because I told everyone that the LORD had said:

I am the LORD, and I am about to let the king of Babylonia conquer Jerusalem. ⁴ King Zedekiah will be captured and taken to King Nebuchadnezzar, who will speak with him face to face. ⁵ Then Zedekiah will be led away to Babylonia, where he will stay until I am finished with him. So, if you people of Judah fight against the Babylonians, you will lose. I, the LORD, have spoken.

⁶ Later, when I was in prison, the LORD said:

⁷ Jeremiah, your cousin Hanamel, the son of your uncle Shallum, will visit you. He must sell his field near the town of Anathoth, and because you are his nearest relative, you have the right and the responsibility to buy it and keep it in the family.

⁸ Hanamel came, just as the LORD had promised. And he said, "Please buy my field near Anathoth in the territory of the Benjamin tribe. You have the right to buy it, and if you do, it will stay in our family."

The LORD had told me to buy it ⁹ from Hanamel, and so I did. The price was 17 pieces of silver, and I weighed out the full amount on a scale. ¹⁰⁻¹¹ I had two copies of the bill of sale written out, each containing all the details of our agreement. Some witnesses and I signed the official copy, which was folded and tied, before being sealed shut with hot wax. Then I gave Hanamel the silver. ¹² And while he, the witnesses, and all the other Jews sitting in the courtyard were still watching, I gave both copies to Baruch son of Neriah.▷

¹³⁻¹⁴ I told Baruch that the LORD had said:

Take both copies of this bill of sale, one sealed shut and the other open, and put them in a clay jar so they will last a long time. ¹⁵ I am the LORD All-Powerful, the God of Israel, and I promise you that people will once again buy and sell houses, farms, and vineyards in this country.

Jeremiah Questions the LORD

¹⁶ Then I prayed:

¹⁷ LORD God, you stretched out your mighty arm and made the sky and the earth. You can do

anything. ¹⁸You show kindness for a thousand generations,[▷] but you also punish people for the sins of their parents. You are the LORD All-Powerful.

¹⁹With great wisdom you make plans, and with your great power you do all the mighty things you planned. Nothing we do is hidden from your eyes, and you reward or punish us as we deserve.

²⁰You are famous because you worked miracles in Egypt, and you are still working them in Israel and in the rest of the world as well. ²¹You terrified the Egyptians with your miracles, and you reached out your mighty arm and rescued your people Israel from Egypt. ²²Then you gave Israel this land rich with milk and honey, just as you had promised our ancestors.

²³But when our ancestors took over the land, they did not obey you. And now you have punished Israel with disaster. ²⁴Jerusalem is under attack, and we suffer from hunger and disease. The Babylonians have already built dirt ramps up to the city walls, and you can see that Jerusalem will be captured just as you said.

²⁵So why did you tell me to get some witnesses and buy a field with my silver, when Jerusalem is about to be captured by the Babylonians?

The LORD Explains about the Field

²⁶The LORD explained:

²⁷Jeremiah, I am the LORD God. I rule the world, and I can do anything!

²⁸It is true that I am going to let King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylonia capture Jerusalem. ²⁹The Babylonian army is already attacking, and they will capture the city and set it on fire. The people of Jerusalem have made me angry by going up to the flat roofs of their houses and burning incense to Baal and offering wine sacrifices to other gods. Now these houses will be burned to the ground!

³⁰⁻³³The kings and the officials, the priests and the prophets, and everyone else in Israel and Judah have turned from me and made me angry by worshipping idols. Again and again I have tried to teach my people to obey me, but they refuse to be corrected.

I am going to get rid of Jerusalem, because its people have done nothing but evil. ³⁴They have set up disgusting idols in my temple, and now it isn't a fit place to worship me. ³⁵And they led Judah into sin by building places to worship Baal in Hinnom Valley, where they also sacrificed their sons and daughters to the god Molech. I have never even thought of telling them to commit such disgusting sins.

³⁶Jeremiah, what you said is true. The people of Jerusalem are suffering from hunger and disease, and so the king of Babylonia will be able to capture Jerusalem.

³⁷I am angry at the people of Jerusalem, and I will scatter them in foreign countries. But someday I will bring them back here and let them live in safety. ³⁸They will be my people, and I will be their God. ³⁹⁻⁴¹I will make their thoughts and desires pure. Then they will realize that, for their own good and the good of their children, they must worship only me. They will even be afraid to turn away from me. I will make an agreement with them that will never end, and I won't ever stop doing good things for them. With all my heart I promise that they will be planted in this land once again. ⁴²Even though I have brought disaster on the people, I will someday do all these good things for them.

⁴³Jeremiah, when you bought the field, you showed that fields will someday be bought and sold again. You say that this land has been conquered by the Babylonians and has become a desert, emptied of people and animals. ⁴⁴But someday, people will again spend their silver to buy fields everywhere—in the territory of Benjamin, the region around Jerusalem and the towns of Judah, and in the hill country, the foothills to the west, and the Southern Desert. Buyers and sellers and witnesses will sign and seal the bills of sale for the fields. It will happen, because I will give this land back to my people. I, the LORD, have spoken.

The LORD Promises To Give the Land Back to His People

33 ¹⁻²I was still being held prisoner in the courtyard of the palace guards when the LORD told me:

I am the LORD, and I created the whole world.[▷] ³Ask me, and I will tell you things that you don't know and can't find out.

⁴⁻⁵Many of the houses in Jerusalem and some of the buildings at the royal palace 'have been torn down to be used in repairing the walls to keep out the Babylonian attackers.' Now there are empty spaces where the buildings once stood. But I am furious, and these spaces will be filled with the bodies of the people I kill. The people of Jerusalem will cry out to me for help, but they are evil, and I will ignore their prayers.

⁶Then someday, I will heal this place and my people as well, and 'let them enjoy unending peace.' ⁷I will give this land to Israel and Judah

once again, and I will make them as strong as they were before. ⁸They sinned and rebelled against me, but I will forgive them and take away their guilt. ⁹When that happens, all nations on earth will see the good things I have done for Jerusalem, and how I have given it complete peace. The nations will celebrate and praise and honor me, but they will also tremble with fear.

¹⁰Jeremiah, you say that this land is a desert without people or animals, and for now, you are right. The towns of Judah and the streets of Jerusalem are deserted, and people and animals are nowhere to be seen. But someday you will hear ¹¹happy voices and the sounds of parties and wedding celebrations. And when people come to my temple to offer sacrifices to thank me, you will hear them say:

“We praise you,
LORD All-Powerful!
You are good to us,
and your love never fails.”

The land will once again be productive. ¹²⁻¹³Now it is empty, without people or animals. But when that time comes, shepherds will take care of their flocks in pastures near every town in the hill country, in the foothills to the west, in the Southern Desert, in the land of the Benjamin tribe, and around Jerusalem and the towns of Judah.

I, the LORD, have spoken.

The LORD's Wonderful Promise

¹⁴The LORD said:

I made a wonderful promise to Israel and Judah, and the days are coming when I will keep it.

¹⁵I promise that the time will come
when I will appoint a king
from the family of David,
a king who will be honest
and rule with justice.

¹⁶In those days,
Judah will be safe;
Jerusalem will have peace
and will be named,
“The LORD Gives Justice.”

¹⁷The king of Israel will be one of David's descendants, ¹⁸and there will always be priests from the Levi tribe serving at my altar and offering sacrifices to please me and to give thanks.

¹⁹Then the LORD told me:

²⁰I, the LORD, have an agreement with day and night, so they always come at the right time. You

can't break the agreement I made with them, ²¹and you can't break the agreements I have made with David's family and with the priests from the Levi tribe who serve at my altar. A descendant of David will always rule as king of Israel, ²²and there will be more descendants of David and of the priests from the Levi tribe than stars in the sky or grains of sand on the beach.

²³The LORD also said:

²⁴You've heard foreigners insult my people by saying, “The LORD chose Israel and Judah, but now he has rejected them, and they are no longer a nation.”

²⁵Jeremiah, I will never break my agreement with the day and the night or let the sky and the earth stop obeying my commands. ²⁶In the same way, I will never reject the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob or break my promise that they will always have a descendant of David as their king. I will be kind to my people Israel, and they will be successful again.

Jeremiah Warns Zedekiah

34 King Nebuchadnezzar had a large army made up of people from every kingdom in his empire. He and his army were attacking Jerusalem and all the nearby towns, when the LORD told me ²to say to King Zedekiah:

I am the LORD, and I am going to let Nebuchadnezzar capture this city and burn it down. ³You will be taken prisoner and brought to Nebuchadnezzar, and he will speak with you face to face. Then you will be led away to Babylonia.

⁴Zedekiah, I promise that you won't die in battle. ⁵You will die a peaceful death. People will mourn when you die, and they will light bonfires in your honor, just as they did for your ancestors, the kings who ruled before you.

⁶I went to Zedekiah and told him what the LORD had said. ⁷Meanwhile, the king of Babylonia was trying to break through the walls of Lachish, Azekah, and Jerusalem, the only three towns of Judah that had not been captured.

The People Break a Promise

⁸⁻¹⁰King Zedekiah, his officials, and everyone else in Jerusalem made an agreement to free all Hebrew men and women who were slaves. No Jew would keep another as a slave. And so, all the Jewish slaves were given their freedom.

11 But those slave owners changed their minds and forced their former slaves back into slavery.

12 That's when the LORD told me to say to the people:

13 I am the LORD God of Israel, and I made an agreement with your ancestors when I brought them out of Egypt, where they had been slaves.

14 As part of this agreement, you must let a Hebrew slave go free after six years of service.

Your ancestors did not obey me, 15-16 but you decided to obey me and do the right thing by setting your Hebrew slaves completely free. You even went to my temple, and in my name you made an agreement to set them free. But you have abused my name, because you broke your agreement and forced your former slaves back into slavery.

17 You have disobeyed me by not giving your slaves their freedom. So I will give you freedom—the freedom to die in battle or from disease or hunger. I will make you disgusting to all other nations on earth.

18 You asked me to be a witness when you made the agreement to set your slaves free. And as part of the ceremony you cut a calf into two parts, then walked between the parts. But you people of Jerusalem have broken that agreement as well as my agreement with Israel. So I will do to you what you did to that calf. 19-20 I will let your enemies take all of you prisoner, including the leaders of Judah and Jerusalem, the royal officials, the priests, and everyone else who walked between the two parts of the calf. These enemies will kill you and leave your bodies lying on the ground as food for birds and wild animals.

21-22 These enemies are King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylonia and his army. They have stopped attacking Jerusalem, but they want to kill King Zedekiah and his high officials. So I will command them to return and attack again. This time they will conquer the city and burn it down, and they will capture Zedekiah and his officials. I will also let them destroy the towns of Judah, so that no one can live there any longer.

Learn a Lesson from the Rechabites

35 When Jehoiakim was king of Judah, the LORD told me, 2 "Go to the Rechabite clan and invite them to meet you in one of the side rooms of the temple. When they arrive, offer them a drink of wine."

3 So I went to Jaazaniah,[>] the leader of the clan, and I invited him and all the men of his clan. 4 I brought them into the temple courtyard and took them upstairs to a room belonging to the prophets who were followers of Hanan son of Igdaliah. It was next to a room belonging to some of the officials, and that room was over the one belonging to Maaseiah, a priest who was one of the high officials in the temple.[>]

5 I set out some large bowls full of wine together with some cups, and then I said to the Rechabites, "Have some wine!"

6 But they answered:

No! The ancestor of our clan, Jonadab son of Rechab, made a rule that we must obey. He said, "Don't ever drink wine 7 or build houses or plant crops and vineyards. Instead, you must always live in tents and move from place to place. If you obey this command, you will live a long time."

8-10 Our clan has always obeyed Jonadab's command. To this very day, we and our wives and sons and daughters don't drink wine or build houses or plant vineyards or crops. And we have lived in tents, 11 except now we have to live inside Jerusalem because Nebuchadnezzar has taken over the countryside with his army from Babylonia and Syria.

12-13 Then the LORD told me to say to the people of Judah and Jerusalem:

I, the LORD All-Powerful, the God of Israel, want you to learn a lesson 14 from the Rechabite clan. Their ancestor Jonadab told his descendants never to drink wine, and to this very day they have obeyed him. But I have spoken to you over and over, and you haven't obeyed me! 15 You refused to listen to my prophets, who kept telling you, "Stop doing evil and worshiping other gods! Start obeying the LORD, and he will let you live in this land he gave your ancestors."

16 The Rechabites have obeyed the command of their ancestor Jonadab, but you have not obeyed me, 17 your God. I am the LORD All-Powerful, and I warned you about the terrible things that would happen to you if you did not listen to me. You have ignored me, so now disaster will strike you. I, the LORD, have spoken.

The LORD Makes a Promise to the Rechabites

18 Then the LORD told me to say to the Rechabite clan:

I am the LORD All-Powerful, the God of Israel. You have obeyed your ancestor Jonadab, ¹⁹so I promise that your clan will be my servants and will never die out.

King Jehoiakim Burns Jeremiah's First Scroll

36 During the fourth year that Jehoiakim son of Josiah was king of Judah, the LORD said to me, "Jeremiah, ²since the time Josiah was king, I have been speaking to you about Israel, Judah, and the other nations. Now, get a scroll and write down everything I have told you, ³then read it to the people of Judah. Maybe they will stop sinning when they hear what terrible things I plan for them. And if they turn to me, I will forgive them."

⁴I sent for Baruch son of Neriah and asked him to help me. I repeated everything the LORD had told me, and Baruch wrote it all down on a scroll. ⁵Then I said,

Baruch, the officials refuse to let me go into the LORD's temple, ⁶so you must go instead. Wait for the next holy day when the people of Judah come to the temple to pray and to go without eating. Then take this scroll to the temple and read it aloud. ⁷The LORD is furious, and if the people hear how he is going to punish them, maybe they will ask to be forgiven.

⁸⁻¹⁰In the ninth month of the fifth year that Jehoiakim was king, the leaders set a day when everyone who lived in Jerusalem or who was visiting here had to pray and go without eating. So Baruch took the scroll to the upper courtyard of the temple. He went over to the side of the courtyard and stood in a covered area near New Gate, where he read the scroll aloud.

This covered area belonged to Gemariah, > one of the king's highest officials. ¹¹Gemariah's son Micaiah was there and heard Baruch read what the LORD had said. ¹²When Baruch finished reading, Micaiah went down to the palace. His father Gemariah was in the officials' room, meeting with the rest of the king's officials, including Elishama, Delaiah, Elnathan, and Zedekiah. ¹³Micaiah told them what he had heard Baruch reading to the people. ¹⁴Then the officials sent Jehudi and Shelemiah > to tell Baruch, "Bring us that scroll."

When Baruch arrived with the scroll, ¹⁵the officials said, "Please sit down and read it to us," which he did. ¹⁶After they heard what was written on the scroll, they were worried and said to each other, "The king needs to hear this!" Turning to Baruch,

they asked, ¹⁷"Did someone tell you what to write on this scroll?"

¹⁸"Yes, Jeremiah did," Baruch replied. "I wrote down just what he told me."

¹⁹The officials said, "You and Jeremiah must go into hiding, and don't tell anyone where you are."

²⁰⁻²²The officials put the scroll in Elishama's room and went to see the king, who was in one of the rooms where he lived and worked during the winter. It was the ninth month of the year, so there was a fire burning in the fireplace, and the king was sitting nearby. After the officials told the king about the scroll, he sent Jehudi to get it. Then Jehudi started reading the scroll to the king and his officials. ²³⁻²⁵But every time Jehudi finished reading three or four columns, the king would tell him to cut them off with his penknife and throw them in the fire. Elnathan, Delaiah, and Gemariah begged the king not to burn the scroll, but he ignored them, and soon there was nothing left of it.

The king and his servants listened to what was written on the scroll, but they were not afraid, and they did not tear their clothes in sorrow.

²⁶The king told his son Jerahmeel to take Seraiah and Shelemiah > and to go arrest Baruch and me. But the LORD kept them from finding us.

Jeremiah's Second Scroll

²⁷I had told Baruch what to write on that first scroll, but King Jehoiakim had burned it. So the LORD told me ²⁸to get another scroll and write down everything that had been on the first one. ²⁹Then he told me to say to King Jehoiakim:

Not only did you burn Jeremiah's scroll, you had the nerve to ask why he had written that the king of Babylonia would attack and ruin the land, killing all the people and even the animals. ³⁰So I, the LORD, promise that you will be killed and your body thrown out on the ground. The sun will beat down on it during the day, and the frost will settle on it at night. And none of your descendants will ever be king of Judah. ³¹You, your children, and your servants are evil, and I will punish all of you. I warned you and the people of Judah and Jerusalem that I would bring disaster, but none of you have listened. So now you are doomed!

³²After the LORD finished speaking to me, I got another scroll and gave it to Baruch. Then I told him what to write, so this second scroll would contain even more than was on the scroll Jehoiakim had burned.

King Zedekiah Asks Jeremiah To Pray

37 King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylonia had removed Jehoiachin[>] son of Jehoiakim from being the king of Judah and had made Josiah's son Zedekiah king instead. ² But Zedekiah, his officials, and everyone else in Judah ignored everything the LORD had told me.

³⁻⁵ Later, the Babylonian army attacked Jerusalem, but they left after learning that the Egyptian army was headed in this direction.

One day, Zedekiah sent Jehucal and the priest Zephaniah[>] to talk with me. At that time, I was free to go wherever I wanted, because I had not yet been put in prison. Jehucal and Zephaniah said, "Jeremiah, please pray to the LORD our God for us."

⁶⁻⁷ Then the LORD told me to send them back to Zedekiah with this message:

Zedekiah, you wanted Jeremiah to ask me, the LORD God of Israel, what is going to happen. So I will tell you. The king of Egypt and his army came to your rescue, but soon they will go back to Egypt. ⁸ Then the Babylonians will return and attack Jerusalem, and this time they will capture the city and set it on fire. ⁹ Don't fool yourselves into thinking that the Babylonians will leave as they did before. ¹⁰ Even if you could defeat their entire army, their wounded survivors would still be able to leave their tents and set Jerusalem on fire.

Jeremiah Is Put in Prison

¹¹ The Babylonian army had left because the Egyptian army was on its way to help us. ¹² So I decided to leave Jerusalem and go to the territory of the Benjamin tribe to claim my share of my family's land. ¹³ I was leaving Jerusalem through Benjamin Gate, when I was stopped by Irijah,[>] the officer in charge of the soldiers at the gate. He said, "Jeremiah, you're under arrest for trying to join the Babylonians."

¹⁴ "I'm not trying to join them!" I answered. But Irijah wouldn't listen, and he took me to the king's officials. ¹⁵⁻¹⁶ They were angry and ordered the soldiers to beat me. Then I was taken to the house that belonged to Jonathan, one of the king's officials. It had been turned into a prison, and I was kept in a basement room.

After I had spent a long time there, ¹⁷ King Zedekiah secretly had me brought to his palace, where he asked, "Is there any message for us from the LORD?"

"Yes, there is, Your Majesty," I replied. "The LORD is going to let the king of Babylonia capture you."

¹⁸ Then I continued, "Your Majesty, why have you put me in prison? Have I committed a crime against you or your officials or the nation? ¹⁹ Have you locked up the prophets who lied to you and said that the king of Babylonia would never attack Jerusalem? ²⁰ Please, don't send me back to that prison at Jonathan's house. If you do, I will die."

²¹ King Zedekiah had me taken to the prison cells in the courtyard of the palace guards. He told the soldiers to give me a loaf of bread from one of the bakeries every day until the city ran out of grain.

Jeremiah Is Held Prisoner in a Dry Well

38 One day, Shephatiah, Gedaliah, Jehucal,[>] and Pashhur[>] heard me tell the people of Judah ²⁻³ that the LORD had said, "If you stay here in Jerusalem, you will die in battle or from disease or hunger, and the Babylonian army will capture the city anyway. But if you surrender to the Babylonians, they will let you live."

⁴ So the four of them went to the king and said, "You should put Jeremiah to death, because he is making the soldiers and everyone else lose hope. He isn't trying to help our people; he's trying to harm them."

⁵ Zedekiah replied, "Do what you want with him. I can't stop you."

⁶ Then they took me back to the courtyard of the palace guards and let me down with ropes into the well that belonged to Malchiah, the king's son. There was no water in the well, and I sank down in the mud.

⁷⁻⁸ Ebedmelech from Ethiopia[>] was an official at the palace, and he heard what they had done to me. So he went to speak with King Zedekiah, who was holding court at Benjamin Gate. ⁹ Ebedmelech said, "Your Majesty, Jeremiah is a prophet, and those men were wrong to throw him into a well. And when Jerusalem runs out of food, Jeremiah will starve to death down there."

¹⁰ Zedekiah answered, "Take ³⁰[>] of my soldiers and pull Jeremiah out before he dies."

¹¹ Ebedmelech and the soldiers went to the palace and got some rags from the room under the treasury. He used ropes to lower them into the well. ¹² Then he said, "Put these rags under your arms so the ropes won't hurt you." After I did, ¹³ the men pulled me out. And from then on, I was kept in the courtyard of the palace guards.

King Zedekiah Questions Jeremiah

¹⁴ King Zedekiah had me brought to 'his private entrance' to the temple, and he said, "I'm going to ask you something, and I want to know the truth."

¹⁵ "Why?" I replied. "You won't listen, and you might even have me killed!"

¹⁶ He said, "I swear in the name of the living LORD our Creator that I won't have you killed. No one else can hear what we say, and I won't let anyone kill you."

¹⁷ Then I told him that the LORD had said: "Zedekiah, I am the LORD God All-Powerful, the God of Israel. I promise that if you surrender to King Nebuchadnezzar's officers, you and your family won't be killed, and Jerusalem won't be burned down. ¹⁸ But if you don't surrender, I will let the Babylonian army capture Jerusalem and burn it down, and you will be taken prisoner."

¹⁹ Zedekiah answered, "I can't surrender to the Babylonians. I'm too afraid of the Jews that have already joined them. The Babylonians might hand me over to those Jews, and they would torture me."

²⁰ I said, "If you will just obey the LORD, the Babylonians won't hand you over to those Jews. You will be allowed to live, and all will go well for you. ²¹ But the LORD has shown me that if you refuse to obey, ²² then the women of your palace will be taken prisoner by Nebuchadnezzar's officials. And those women will say to you:

Friends you trusted led you astray.
Now you're trapped in mud,
and those friends you trusted
have all turned away.

²³ The Babylonian army will take your wives and children captive, you will be taken as a prisoner to the King of Babylonia, and Jerusalem will be burned down."

²⁴ Zedekiah said, "Jeremiah, if you tell anyone what we have talked about, you might lose your life. ²⁵ And I'm sure that if my officials hear about our meeting, they will ask you what we said to each other. They might even threaten to kill you if you don't tell them. ²⁶ So if they question you, tell them you were begging me not to send you back to the prison at Jonathan's house, because going back there would kill you."

²⁷ The officials did come and question me about my meeting with the king, and I told them exactly what he had ordered me to say. They never spoke

to me about the meeting again, since no one had heard us talking.

²⁸ I was held in the courtyard of the palace guards until the day Jerusalem was captured.

Jerusalem Is Captured by the Babylonians

39 ¹⁻³ In the tenth month of the ninth year that Zedekiah was king of Judah, King Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonian army began their attack on Jerusalem. They kept the city surrounded for a year and a half. Then, on the ninth day of the fourth month of the eleventh year that Zedekiah was king, they broke through the city walls.

After Jerusalem was captured, Nebuchadnezzar's highest officials,[>] including Nebo Sarsechim and 'Nergal Sharezer from Simmagir,' took their places at Middle Gate to show they were in control of the city.

⁴ When King Zedekiah and his troops saw that Jerusalem had been captured, they tried to escape from the city that same night. They went to the king's garden, where they slipped through the gate between the two city walls and headed toward the Jordan River valley. ⁵ But the Babylonian troops caught up with them near Jericho. They arrested Zedekiah and took him to the town of Riblah in the land of Hamath, where Nebuchadnezzar put him on trial, then found him guilty ⁶ and gave orders for him to be punished. Zedekiah's sons were killed there in front of him, and so were the leaders of Judah's ruling families. ⁷ His eyes were poked out, and he was put in chains, so he could be dragged off to Babylonia.

⁸ Meanwhile, the Babylonian army had burned the houses in Jerusalem, including[>] the royal palace, and they had broken down the city walls. ⁹ Nebuzaradan, the Babylonian officer in charge of the guards, led away everyone from the city as prisoners, even those who had deserted to Nebuchadnezzar. ¹⁰ Only the poorest people who owned no land were left behind in Judah, and Nebuzaradan gave them fields and vineyards.

¹¹ Nebuchadnezzar had given the following orders to Nebuzaradan: ¹² "Find Jeremiah and keep him safe. Take good care of him and do whatever he asks."

¹³ Nebuzaradan, Nebushazban, Nergal Sharezer, and the other officers of King Nebuchadnezzar ¹⁴ sent some of their troops to bring me from the courtyard of the royal palace guards. They put me in the care of Gedaliah son of Ahikam[>] and

told him to take me to my home. And so I was allowed to stay with the people who remained in Judah.

The LORD Promises To Protect Ebedmelech

¹⁵ While I was a prisoner in the courtyard of the palace guard, the LORD told me to say ¹⁶ to Ebedmelech from Ethiopia: >

I am the LORD All-Powerful, the God of Israel. I warned everyone that I would bring disaster, not prosperity, to this city. Now very soon I will do what I said, and you will see it happen. ¹⁷⁻¹⁸ But because you trusted me, I will protect you from the officials of Judah, and when Judah is struck by disaster, I will rescue you and keep you alive. I, the LORD, have spoken.

Jeremiah Is Set Free

40 I was led away in chains along with the people of Judah and Jerusalem who were being taken to Babylonia. Nebuzaradan was the officer in charge of the guard, and while we were stopped at Ramah, the LORD caused him to set me free. ² Nebuzaradan said:

Jeremiah, the LORD your God warned your people that he would bring disaster on this land. ³ But they continued to rebel against him, and now he has punished them just as he threatened.

⁴ Today I am taking the chains off your wrists and setting you free! If you want to, you can come with me to Babylonia, and I will see that you are taken care of. Or if you decide to stay here, you can go wherever you wish. ⁵ King Nebuchadnezzar has chosen Gedaliah to rule Judah. You can live near Gedaliah, and he will provide for you, or you can live anywhere else you want.

Nebuzaradan gave me a supply of food, then let me leave. ⁶ I decided to stay with the people of Judah, and I went to live near Gedaliah in Mizpah.

The Harvest Is Brought In

⁷⁻⁸ Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, together with Johanan and Jonathan, the two sons of Kareah, had been officers in Judah's army. And so had Seraiah the son of Tanhumeth, the sons of Ephai the Netophathite, and Jezaniah from Maacah. They and their troops had been stationed outside Jerusalem and had not been captured. They heard that Gedaliah had been chosen to rule Judah, and that the poorest men, women, and children had not

been taken away to Babylonia. So they went to Mizpah and met with their new ruler.

⁹ Gedaliah told them, "There's no need to be afraid of the Babylonians. Everything will be fine, if we live peacefully and obey King Nebuchadnezzar. ¹⁰ I will stay here at Mizpah and meet with the Babylonian officials on each of their visits. But you must go back to your towns and bring in the harvest, then store the wine, olive oil, and dried fruit."

¹¹⁻¹² Earlier, when the Babylonians had invaded Judah, many of the Jews escaped to Moab, Ammon, Edom, and several other countries. But these Jews heard that the king of Babylonia had appointed Gedaliah as ruler of Judah, and that only a few people were left there. So the Jews in these other countries came back to Judah and helped with the grape and fruit harvest, which was especially large that year.

Gedaliah Is Murdered

¹³ One day, Johanan got together with some of the other men who had been army officers, and they came to Mizpah and met with Gedaliah. ¹⁴ They said, "Gedaliah, we came to warn you that King Baalis of Ammon hired Ishmael to murder you!"

Gedaliah refused to believe them, ¹⁵ so Johanan went to Gedaliah privately and said, "Let me kill Ishmael. No one will find out who did it. There are only a few people left in Judah, but they are depending on you. And if you are murdered, they will be scattered or killed."

¹⁶ Gedaliah answered, "Don't kill Ishmael! What you've said about him can't be true."

41 But in the seventh month, Ishmael > came to Mizpah with ten of his soldiers. He had been one of the king's officials and was a member of the royal family. Ishmael and his men were invited to eat with Gedaliah. ² During the meal, Ishmael and his soldiers killed Gedaliah, the man chosen as ruler of Judah by the king of Babylonia. ³ Then they killed the Jews who were with Gedaliah, and they also killed the Babylonian soldiers who were there.

⁴ The next day, the murders had still not been discovered, ⁵ when 80 men came down the road toward Mizpah from the towns of Shechem, Shiloh, and Samaria. They were on their way to the temple to offer gifts of grain and incense to the LORD. They had shaved off their beards, torn their clothes, and cut themselves, because they were mourning.

⁶ Ishmael went out the town gate to meet them. He pretended to be weeping, and he asked them to

come into Mizpah to meet with Gedaliah, the ruler of Judah. ⁷ But after they were inside the town, Ishmael ordered his soldiers to kill them and throw their bodies into a well. ⁸ He let ten of the men live, because they offered to give him supplies of wheat, barley, olive oil, and honey they had hidden in a field. ⁹ The well that he filled with bodies had been dug by King Asa of Judah to store rainwater, because he was afraid that King Baasha of Israel might surround Mizpah and keep the people from getting to their water supply.

¹⁰ Nebuzaradan, King Nebuchadnezzar's officer in charge of the guard, had left King Zedekiah's daughters and many other people at Mizpah, and he had put Gedaliah in charge of them. But now Ishmael took them all prisoner and led them toward Ammon, on the other side of the Jordan River.

¹¹ Johanan and the other army officers heard what Ishmael had done. ¹² So they and their troops chased Ishmael and caught up with him at the large pit at Gibeon. ¹³ When Ishmael's prisoners saw Johanan and the officers, they were happy ¹⁴ and turned around and ran toward Johanan. ¹⁵ But Ishmael and eight of his men escaped and went to Ammon.

Johanan Decides To Take the People to Egypt

¹⁶ Johanan and the officers had rescued the women, children, and royal officials that Ishmael had taken prisoner after killing Gedaliah. Johanan led the people from Gibeon ¹⁷⁻¹⁸ toward Egypt. They wanted to go there, because they were afraid of what the Babylonians would do when they found out that Ishmael had killed Gedaliah, the ruler appointed by King Nebuchadnezzar.

The People Ask Jeremiah To Pray for Them

On the way to Egypt, we stopped at the town of Geruth Chimham near Bethlehem.

42 Johanan, Jezaniah,[>] the other army officers, and everyone else in the group, came to me ² and said, "Please pray to the LORD your God for us. Judah used to have many people, but as you can see, only a few of us are left. ³ Ask the LORD to tell us where he wants us to go and what he wants us to do."

⁴ "All right," I answered, "I will pray to the LORD your God, and I will tell you everything he says."

⁵ They answered, "The LORD himself will be our witness that we promise to do whatever he says,

even if it isn't what we want to do. We will obey the LORD so that all will go well for us."

⁷ Ten days later, the LORD gave me an answer for ⁸ Johanan, the officers, and the other people. So I called them together ⁹ and told them that the LORD God of Israel had said:

You asked Jeremiah to pray and find out what you should do. ¹⁰ I am sorry that I had to punish you, and so I now tell you to stay here in Judah, where I will plant you and build you up, instead of tearing you down and uprooting you. ¹¹ Don't be afraid of the King of Babylonia. I will protect you from him, ¹² and I will even force him to have mercy on you and give back your farms.

¹³ But you might keep on saying, "We won't stay here in Judah, and we won't obey the LORD our God. ¹⁴ We are going to Egypt, where there is plenty of food and no danger of war."

¹⁵ People of Judah, you survived when the Babylonian army attacked. Now you are planning to move to Egypt, and if you do go, this is what will happen. ¹⁶⁻¹⁷ You are afraid of war, starvation, and disease here in Judah, but they will follow you to Egypt and kill you there. None of you will survive the disasters I will send.

¹⁸ I, the LORD, was angry with the people of Jerusalem and punished them. And if you go to Egypt, I will be angry and punish you the same way. You will never again see your homeland. People will be horrified at what I do to you, and they will use the name of your city as a curse word.

Jeremiah Gives a Warning

¹⁹ I told the people:

You escaped the disaster that struck Judah, but now the LORD warns you to stay away from Egypt. ²⁰ You asked me to pray and find out what the LORD our God wants you to do, and you promised to obey him. But that was a terrible mistake, ²¹ because now that I have given you the LORD's answer, you refuse to obey him. ²² And so, you will die in Egypt from war, hunger, and disease.

The People Go to Egypt

43 I told the people everything the LORD had told me. ² But Azariah, Johanan[>] and some other arrogant men said to me, "You're lying! The LORD didn't tell you to say that we shouldn't go to Egypt. ³ Baruch son of Neriah

must have told you to say that. He wants the Babylonians to capture us, so they can take us away to Babylonia or even kill us."

⁴Johanan, the other army officers, and everyone else refused to stay in Judah in spite of the LORD's command. ⁵So Johanan and the officers led us away toward Egypt. The group that left Judah included those who had been scattered in other countries and who had then come back to live in Judah. ⁶Baruch and I and others in the group had been staying with Gedaliah, because Nebuzaradan, the Babylonian officer in charge of the guard, had ordered him to take care of the king's daughters and quite a few men, women, and children.

⁷The people disobeyed the LORD and went to Egypt. The group had settled in Tahpanhes, ⁸when the LORD told me:

⁹Jeremiah, carry some large stones to the entrance of the government building in Tahpanhes. Bury the stones 'underneath the brick pavement' and be sure the Jews are watching.

¹⁰Then tell them that I, the LORD All-Powerful, the God of Israel, have sent for my servant, Nebuchadnezzar of Babylonia. I will bring him here and have him set up his throne and his royal tent over these stones that I told you to bury. ¹¹He will attack Egypt and kill many of its people; others will die of disease or be dragged away as prisoners. ¹²⁻¹³I will let him set Egypt's temples on fire, and he will either burn or carry off their idols. He will destroy the sacred monuments at the temple of the sun-god. Then Nebuchadnezzar will pick the land clean, just like a shepherd picking the lice off his clothes. And he will return safely home.

The LORD Will Destroy the People of Judah

44 The LORD told me to speak with the Jews who were living in the towns of Migdol, Tahpanhes, and Memphis in northern Egypt, and also to those living in southern Egypt. He told me to tell them:

²I am the LORD All-Powerful, the God of Israel. You saw how I destroyed Jerusalem and the towns of Judah. They lie empty and in ruins today, ³because the people of Judah made me angry by worshiping gods that had never helped them or their ancestors.

⁴Time after time I sent my servants the prophets to tell the people of Judah how much I hated their disgusting sins. The prophets

warned them to stop sinning, ⁵but they refused to listen and would not stop worshiping other gods. ⁶Finally, my anger struck like a raging flood, and today Jerusalem and the towns of Judah are nothing but empty ruins.

⁷Why do you now insist on heading for another disaster? A disaster that will destroy not only you, but also your children and babies. ⁸You have made me angry by worshiping idols and burning incense to other gods after you came here to Egypt. You will die such a disgusting death, that other nations will use the name of Judah as a curse word. ⁹When you were living in Jerusalem and Judah, you followed the example of your ancestors in doing evil things, just like your kings and queens. ¹⁰Even now, your pride keeps you from respecting me and obeying the laws and teachings I gave you and your ancestors.

¹¹I, the LORD All-Powerful, have decided to wipe you out with disasters. ¹²There were only a few of you left in Judah, and you decided to go to Egypt. But you will die such horrible deaths in war or from starvation, that people of other countries will use the name of Judah as a curse word. ¹³I punished Jerusalem with war, hunger, and disease, and that's how I will punish you. ¹⁴None of you will survive. You may hope to return to Judah someday, but only a very few of you will escape death and be able to go back.

The People Refuse To Worship the LORD

¹⁵A large number of Jews from both northern and southern Egypt listened to me as I told them what the LORD had said. Most of the men in the crowd knew that their wives often burned incense to other gods. So they and their wives shouted:

¹⁶Jeremiah, what do we care if you speak in the LORD's name? We refuse to listen! ¹⁷We have promised to worship the goddess Astarte, the Queen of Heaven, and that is exactly what we are going to do. We will burn incense and offer sacrifices of wine to her, just as we, our ancestors, our kings, and our leaders did when we lived in Jerusalem and the other towns of Judah. We had plenty of food back then. We were well off, and nothing bad ever happened to us. ¹⁸But since the time we stopped burning incense and offering wine sacrifices to her, we have been dying from war and hunger.

¹⁹Then the women said, "When we lived in Judah, we worshiped the Queen of Heaven and offered

sacrifices of wine and special loaves of bread shaped like her. Our husbands knew what we were doing, and they approved of it.”

²⁰ Then I told the crowd:

²¹ Don't you think the LORD knew that you and your ancestors, your leaders and kings, and the rest of the people were burning incense to other gods in Jerusalem and everywhere else in Judah? ²² And when he could no longer put up with your disgusting sins, he placed a curse on your land and turned it into a desert, as it is today. ²³ This disaster happened because you worshiped other gods and rebelled against the LORD by refusing to obey him or follow his laws and teachings.

²⁴⁻²⁵ Then I told the men and their wives, that the LORD All-Powerful, the God of Israel, had said:

Here in Egypt you still keep your promises to burn incense and offer sacrifices of wine to the so-called Queen of Heaven. ²⁶ Keep these promises! But let me tell you what will happen. As surely as I am the LORD God, I swear that I will never again accept any promises you make in my name. ²⁷ Instead of watching over you, I will watch for chances to harm you. Some of you will die in war, and others will starve to death. ²⁸ Only a few will escape and return to Judah. Then everyone who went to live in Egypt will know that when I say something will happen, it will—no matter what you say.

²⁹ And here is how you will know that I will keep my threats to punish you in Egypt. ³⁰ I will hand over King Hophra of Egypt to those who want to kill him, just as I handed Zedekiah over to Nebuchadnezzar, who wanted to kill him.

The LORD Will Not Let Baruch Be Killed

45 In the fourth year that Jehoiakim was king of Judah, Baruch wrote down everything I had told him. ² Then later, the LORD God of Israel told me to say to Baruch:

³ You are moaning and blaming me, the LORD, for your troubles and sorrow, and for being so tired that you can't even rest. ⁴ But all over the earth I am tearing down what I built and pulling up what I planted. ⁵ I am bringing disaster everywhere, so don't even think about making any big plans for yourself. However, I promise that wherever you go, I will at least protect you from death. I, the LORD, have spoken.

The LORD Speaks about the Nations

46 The LORD often told me what to say about the different nations of the world.

What the LORD Says about Egypt

² In the fourth year that Jehoiakim was king of Judah, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylonia defeated King Neco of Egypt in a battle at the city of Carchemish near the Euphrates River. And here is what the LORD told me to say about the Egyptian army:

³ It's time to go into battle!
So grab your shields,
⁴ saddle your horses,
and polish your spears.
Put on your helmets and armor,
then take your positions.

⁵ I can see the battle now—
you are defeated
and running away,
never once looking back.
Terror is all around.

⁶ You are strong and run fast,
but you can't escape.
You fall in battle
near the Euphrates River.

⁷ What nation is this,
that rises like the Nile River
overflowing its banks?

⁸ It is Egypt, rising with a roar
like a raging river
and saying,
“I'll flood the earth,
destroying cities, and killing
everyone in them.”

⁹ Go ahead, Egypt.
Tell your chariots and cavalry
to attack and fight hard.
Order your troops to march out,
with Ethiopians[>] and Libyans
carrying shields,
and the Lydians armed with bows
and arrows.

¹⁰ But the LORD All-Powerful
will win this battle
and take revenge
on his enemies.
His sword will eat them

and drink their blood
until it is full.
They will be killed in the north
near the Euphrates River,
as a sacrifice to the LORD.

- 11 Egypt, no medicine can heal you,
not even the soothing lotion
from Gilead.
12 All nations have heard you weep;
you are disgraced,
and they know it.
Your troops fall to the ground,
stumbling over each other.

A Warning for Egypt

¹³⁻¹⁴ When King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylonia was on his way to attack Egypt, the LORD sent me with a warning for every Egyptian town, but especially for Migdol, Memphis, and Tahpanhes. He said to tell them:

- Prepare to defend yourselves!
Everywhere in your nation,
people are dying in war.
15 I have struck down
your mighty god Apis
and chased him away.¹
16 Your soldiers stumble
over each other
and say, "Get up!
The enemy will kill us,
unless we can escape
to our own land."
17 Give the king of Egypt
this new name,
"Talks-Big-Does-Nothing."
18 Egypt, I am the true king,
the LORD All-Powerful,
and as surely as I live,
those enemies who attack
will tower over you
like Mount Tabor among the hills
or Mount Carmel by the sea.
19 You will be led away captive,
so pack a few things
to bring with you.
Your capital, Memphis,
will lie empty and in ruins.
20 An enemy from the north
will attack you, beautiful Egypt,
like a fly biting a cow.

- 21 The foreign soldiers you hired
will turn and run.
But they are doomed,
like well-fed calves
being led to the butcher.

- ^{*22} The enemy army will go forward
like a swarm of locusts.
Your troops will feel helpless,
like a snake in a forest
23 when men with axes
start chopping down trees.
It can only hiss
and try to escape.
24 Your people will be disgraced
and captured by the enemy
from the north.

²⁵ I am the LORD All-Powerful, the God of Israel. Soon I will punish the god Amon of Thebes and the other Egyptian gods, the Egyptian kings, the people of Egypt, and everyone who trusts in the Egyptian power. ²⁶ I will hand them over to King Nebuchadnezzar and his army. But I also promise that Egypt will someday have people living here again, just as it had before. I, the LORD, have spoken.

The LORD Will Bring Israel Home

The LORD said:

- 27 Israel, don't be afraid.
Someday I will bring you home
from foreign lands.
You and your descendants
will live in peace and safety,
with nothing to fear.
28 So don't be afraid,
even though now
you deserve to be punished
and have been scattered
among other nations.
But when I destroy them,
I will protect you.
I, the LORD, have spoken.

What the LORD Says about the Philistines

47 Before the king of Egypt attacked the town of Gaza, the LORD told me to say to the Philistines:

- 2 I, the LORD, tell you
that your land will be flooded
with an army from the north.

- It will destroy your towns
and sweep you away,
moaning and screaming.
- 3 When you hear the thunder
of horses and chariots,
your courage will vanish,
and parents will abandon
their own children.
- 4 You refugees from Crete,▷
your time has now come,
and I will destroy you.
None of you will be left
to help the cities
of Tyre and Sidon.
- *5 The Anakim who survive▷
in Gaza and Ashkelon
will mourn for you
by shaving their heads
and sitting in silence.
- 6 You ask how long will I continue
to attack you with my sword,
then you tell me to put it away
and leave you alone.
- 7 But how can my sword rest,
when I have commanded it
to attack Ashkelon
and the seacoast?

What the LORD Says about Moab

48 The LORD All-Powerful, the God of Israel,
told me to say to the nation of Moab:

- The town of Nebo is doomed;
Kiriathaim will be captured
and disgraced,
and even its fortress
will be left in ruins.
- 2 No one honors you, Moab.
In Heshbon, enemies make plans
to end your life.
My sword will leave only silence
in your town named "Quiet."▷
- 3 The people of Horonaim
will cry for help,
as their town is attacked
and destroyed.
- 4 Moab will be shattered!
Your children will sob
- 5 and cry on their way up
to the town of Luhith;
on the road to Horonaim
they will tell of disasters.
- 6 Run for your lives!
Head into the desert
like a wild donkey.▷
- 7 You thought you could be saved
by your power and wealth,
but you will be captured
along with your god Chemosh,
his priests, and officials.
- 8 Not one of your towns
will escape destruction.
- I have told your enemies,
"Wipe out the valley
and the flatlands of Moab.
- 9 'Spread salt on the ground
to kill the crops.'
Leave its towns in ruins,
with no one living there.
- 10 I want you to kill the Moabites,
and if you let them escape,
I will put a curse on you."
- 11 Moab, you are like wine
left to settle undisturbed,
never poured from jar to jar.
And so, your nation continues
to prosper and improve.▷
- 12 But now, I will send enemies
to pour out the wine
and smash the jars!
- 13 Then you will be ashamed,
because your god Chemosh
cannot save you,
just as Bethel could not help
the Israelites.
- 14 You claim that your soldiers
are strong and brave.
- 15 But I am the LORD,
the all-powerful King,
and I promise that enemies
will overpower your towns.
Even your best warriors
will die in the battle.
- 16 It won't be long now—
disaster will hit Moab!
- 17 I will order the nearby nations
to mourn for you and say,
'Isn't it sad? Moab ruled others,
but now its glorious power
has been shattered.'
- 18 People in the town of Dibon,

- you will be honored no more,
so have a seat in the dust.
Your walls will be torn down
when the enemies attack.
- 19 You people of Aroer,
go wait beside the road,
and when refugees run by,
ask them, "What happened?"
- 20 They will answer,
"Moab has been defeated!
Weep with us in shame.
Tell everyone at the Arnon River
that Moab is destroyed."
- *21 I will punish every town
that belongs to Moab,
but especially Holon,
Jahzah, Mephaath,
22 Dibon, Nebo,
Beth-Diblathaim, 23 Kiriathaim,
Beth-Gamul, Beth-Meon,
24 Kerioth, and Bozrah.
- 25 My decision is final—
your army will be crushed,
and your power broken.
- 26 People of Moab, you claim
to be stronger than I am.
Now I will tell other nations
to make you drunk
and to laugh while you collapse
in your own vomit.
- 27 You made fun of my people
and treated them like criminals
caught in the act.
- 28 Now you must leave your towns
and live like doves
in the shelter of cliffs
and canyons.
- 29 I know about your pride,
and how you strut and boast.
- 30 But I also know bragging
will never save you.
- 31 So I will cry and mourn
for Moab
and its town of Kir-Heres.
- 32 People of Sibmah,
you were like a vineyard
heavy with grapes,
and with branches 'reaching
north to the town of Jazer
and west to the Dead Sea.¹
- But you have been destroyed,
and so I will weep for you,
as the people of Jazer weep
for the vineyards.
- 33 Harvest celebrations are gone
from the orchards and farms
of Moab.
There are no happy shouts
from people making wine.
- 34 Weeping from Heshbon
can be heard as far
as Elealeh and Jahaz;
cries from Zoar are heard
in Horonaim
and Eglath-Sheleshiah.
And Nimrim Creek has run dry.
- 35 I will get rid of anyone
who burns incense
to the gods of Moab
or offers sacrifices
at their shrines.
I, the LORD, have spoken.
- 36 In my heart I moan for Moab,
like a funeral song
played on a flute.
I mourn for the people
of the town of Kir-Heres,
because their wealth is gone.
- *37 The people of Moab
mourn on the rooftops
and in the streets.
Men cut off their beards,
people shave their heads;
they make cuts on their hands
and wear sackcloth.
- 38 And it's all because I, the LORD,
have shattered Moab like a jar
that no one wants.
- 39 Moab lies broken!
Listen to its people cry
as they turn away in shame.
Other nations are horrified
at what happened,
but still they laugh.
- 40 Moab, an enemy swoops down
like an eagle spreading its wings
over your land.
- 41 Your cities² and fortresses
will be captured,

- and your warriors
'gripped by fear.'
- 42 You are finished as a nation,
because you dared oppose me,
the LORD.
- 43 Terror, pits, and traps
are waiting for you.
- 44 If you are terrified and run,
you will fall into a pit;
and if you crawl out of the pit,
you'll get caught in a trap.
The time has come
for you to be punished.
- 45 Near the city of Heshbon,
where Sihon once ruled,
tired refugees stand in shadows
cast by the flames
of their burning city.
Soon, the towns on other hilltops,
where those warlike people live,
will also go up in smoke.
- 46 People of Moab, you worshiped
Chemosh, your god,
but now you are done for,
and your children are prisoners
in a foreign country.
- 47 Yet someday, I will bring
your people back home.
I, the LORD, have spoken.

What the LORD Says about Ammon

49 The LORD has this to say about the nation
of Ammon:

- The people of Israel
have plenty of children
to inherit their lands.
So why have you worshipers
of the god Milcom
taken over towns and land
belonging to the Gad tribe?
- 2 Someday I will send an army
to attack you in Rabbah,
your capital city.
It will be left in ruins,
and the surrounding villages
will lie in ashes.
You took some of Israel's land,
but on that day
Israel will take yours!
- 3 Cry, people of Heshbon;

your town will become
a pile of rubble.>
'You will turn here and there,
but your path will be blocked.'

- Put on sackcloth and mourn,
you citizens of Rabbah,
because the idol you worship>
will be taken
to a foreign country,
along with its priests
and temple officials.
- 4 You rebellious Ammonites
trust your wealth and ask,
'Who could attack us?'
But I warn you not to boast
'when your strength is fading.'
- 5 I, the LORD All-Powerful,
will send neighboring nations
to strike you with terror.
You will be scattered,
with no one to care
for your refugees.
- 6 Yet someday, I will bring
your people back home.
I, the LORD, have spoken.

What the LORD Says about Edom

7-8 The LORD All-Powerful says about Edom:

- Wisdom and common sense
have vanished from Teman.
I will send disaster to punish
you descendants of Esau,
so 'anyone from Dedan
had better turn around
and run back home.'
- 9 People who harvest grapes
leave some for the poor.
Thieves who break in at night
take only what they want.
- 10 But I will take everything
that belongs to you,
people of Edom,
and I will uncover every place
where you try to hide.
Then you will die,
and so will your children,
relatives, and neighbors.
- 11 But I can be trusted
to care for your orphans
and widows.

¹² Even those nations that don't deserve to be punished will have to drink from the cup of my anger. So how can you possibly hope to escape? ¹³ I, the LORD, swear in my own name that your city of Bozrah and all your towns will suffer a horrible fate. They will lie in ruins forever, and people will use the name "Bozrah" as a curse word.

¹⁴ I have sent a messenger
to command the nations
to prepare for war
against you people of Edom.

¹⁵ Your nation will be small,
yet hated by other nations.

¹⁶ 'Pride tricks you into thinking
that other nations
look at you with fear.'
You live along the cliffs
and high in the mountains
like the eagles,
but I am the LORD,
and I will bring you down.

¹⁷ People passing by your country
will be shocked and horrified
to see a disaster

¹⁸ as bad as the destruction
of Sodom and Gomorrah
and towns nearby.
The towns of Edom will be empty.

¹⁹ I will attack you
like a lion from the forest,
attacking sheep in a meadow
along the Jordan.
In a moment the flock runs,
and the land is empty.
Who will I choose to attack you?
I will do it myself!
No one can force me to fight
or chase me away.

²⁰ Listen to my plans for you,
people of Edom.▷
Your children will be dragged off
and your country destroyed.

²¹ The sounds of your destruction
will reach the Red Sea▷
and cause the earth to shake.

²² An enemy will swoop down
to attack you,
like an eagle spreading its wings
and circling over Bozrah.
Your warriors 'will be gripped
by fear.'

What the LORD Says about Damascus

²³ The LORD says about Damascus:

The towns of Hamath and Arpad
have heard your bad news.
They have lost hope,
and 'worries roll over them
like ocean waves.'

²⁴ You people of Damascus
have lost your courage,
and in panic you turn to run,
'gripped by fear and pain.'

²⁵ 'I once was pleased
with your famous city.
But now I warn you, 'Escape
while you still can!''

²⁶ Soon, even your best soldiers
will lie dead in your streets.
I, the LORD All-Powerful,
have spoken.

²⁷ I will set fire to your city walls
and burn down the fortresses
King Benhadad built.

Nebuchadnezzar and the People of the Desert

²⁸ Here is what the LORD says about the Kedar tribe and the desert villages▷ that were conquered by King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylonia:

Listen, you people of Kedar
and the other tribes
of the eastern desert.

I have told Nebuchadnezzar
to attack and destroy you.

²⁹ His fearsome army
will surround you,
taking your tents and possessions,
your sheep and camels.

³⁰ Run and hide,
you people of the desert
who live in villages!▷
Nebuchadnezzar has big plans
for you.

³¹ You have no city walls
and no neighbors to help,
yet you think you're safe—
so I told him to attack.

³² Then your camels
and large herds
will be yours no longer.

'People of the Arabian Desert,'
disaster will strike you
from every side,
and you will be scattered
everywhere on earth.

- ³³ Only jackals will live
where your villages[▷] once stood.
I, the LORD, have spoken.

What the LORD Says about Elam

³⁴⁻³⁵ Not long after Zedekiah became king of Judah, the LORD told me to say:

People of Elam,
I, the LORD All-Powerful,
will kill the archers
who make your army strong.

- ³⁶ Enemies will attack
from all directions,
and you will be led captive
to every nation on earth.

- ³⁷ Their armies will crush
and kill you,
and you will face the disaster
that my anger brings.

- ³⁸ Your king and his officials
will die, and I will rule
in their place.
I, the LORD, have spoken.

- ³⁹ But I promise that someday
I will bring your people
back to their land.

Babylon Will Be Captured

50 ¹ The LORD told me to say:

- Announce what will happen
and don't leave anything out.
² Raise the signal flags;
shout so all nations can hear—
Babylon will be captured!

Marduk,[▷] Babylon's god,
will be ashamed and terrified,
and his idols broken.

- ³ The attack on the Babylonians
will come from the north;
they and their animals will run,
leaving the land empty.

Israel and Judah Will Return to Their Land

⁴ The LORD said:

People of Israel and Judah,

when these things happen
you will weep, and together
you will return to your land
and worship me,
the LORD your God.

- ⁵ You will ask the way to Zion
and then come and join with me
in making an agreement
you won't break or forget.

- ⁶ My people, you are lost sheep
abandoned by their shepherds
in the mountains.
You don't even remember
your resting place.

- ⁷ I am your true pastureland,
the one who gave hope
to your ancestors.
But you abandoned me,
so when your enemies found you,
they felt no guilt
as they gobbled you down.

- ⁸ Escape from Babylonia,
my people.
Get out of that country!
Don't wait for anyone else.

- ⁹ In the north I am bringing
great nations together.
They will attack Babylon
and capture it.
The arrows they shoot
are like the best soldiers,[▷]
always finding their target.
¹⁰ Babylonia will be conquered,
and its enemies will carry off
everything they want.

Babylon Will Be Disgraced

The LORD said:

- ¹¹ People of Babylonia,
you were glad
to rob my people.
You had a good time,
making more noise
than horses
and jumping around
like calves threshing grain.[▷]

- ¹² The city of Babylon
was like a mother to you.
But it will be disgraced
and become nothing
but a barren desert.

13 My anger will destroy Babylon,
and no one will live there.
Everyone who passes by
will be shocked to see
what has happened.

14 Babylon has rebelled against me.
Archers, take your places.
Shoot all your arrows at Babylon.

15 Attack from every side!

Babylon surrenders!
The enemy tears down
its walls and towers.
I am taking my revenge
by doing to Babylon what it did
to other cities.

16 There is no one in Babylonia
to plant or harvest crops.
Even foreigners who lived there
have left for their homelands,
afraid of the enemy armies.

17 Israel is a flock of sheep
scattered by hungry lions.
The king of Assyria
first gobbled Israel down.
Then Nebuchadnezzar,
king of Babylonia,
crunched on Israel's bones.

18 I, the LORD All-Powerful,
the God of Israel,
punished the king of Assyria,
and I will also punish
the king of Babylonia.

19 But I will bring Israel
back to its own land.
The people will be like sheep
eating their fill
on Mount Carmel
and in Bashan,
in the hill country of Ephraim
and in Gilead.

20 I will rescue a few people
from Israel and Judah.
I will forgive them so completely
that their sin and guilt
will disappear,
never to be found.

I have told
the enemies of Babylonia,
"Attack the people of Merathaim
and Pekod.
Kill them all!
Destroy their possessions!"

22 Sounds of war
and the noise of destruction
can be heard.

23 Babylonia was a hammer
pounding every country,
but now it lies broken.
What a shock to the nations
of the world!

24 Babylonia challenged me,
the LORD God All-Powerful,
but that nation doesn't know
it is caught in a trap
that I set.

25 I've brought out my weapons,
and with them I will put a curse
on Babylonia.

26 Come from far away,
you enemies of Babylonia!
Pile up the grain
from its storehouses,
and destroy it completely,
along with everything else.

27 Kill the soldiers of Babylonia,
because the time has come
for them to be punished.

28 The Babylonian army
destroyed my temple,
but soon I will take revenge.
Then refugees from Babylon
will tell about it in Zion.

29 Attack Babylon, enemy archers;
set up camp around the city,
and don't let anyone escape.
It challenged me, the holy God,
so do to it
what it did to other cities.

Proud Babylon Will Fall

30 People of Babylon,
I, the LORD, promise
that even your best soldiers
will lie dead in the streets.

31 Babylon, you should be named,
"The Proud One."

The LORD's Commands to the Enemies of Babylonia

²¹ The LORD said:

- But the time has come when I,
the LORD All-Powerful,
will punish you.
- 32 You are proud,
but you will stumble and fall,
and no one will help you up.
I will set your villages on fire,
and everything around you
will go up in flames.
- 33 You Babylonians were cruel
to Israel and Judah.
You took them captive, and now
you refuse to let them go.
- 34 But I, the LORD All-Powerful,
will rescue and protect them.
I will bring peace to their land
and trouble to yours.
- 35 I have declared war on you,
your officials, and advisors.
- 36 This war will prove
that your prophets
are liars and fools.
And it will frighten
your warriors.
- 37 Then your chariot horses
and the foreigners in your army
will refuse to go into battle,
and the enemy will carry away
everything you treasure.
- 38 Your rivers and canals
will dry up.
- All of this will happen,
because your land
is full of idols,
and they have made fools
of you.
- 39 Never again will people live
in your land—
only desert animals, jackals,
and undean birds.
- 40 I destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah
and the nearby towns,
and I will destroy Babylon
just as completely.
No one will live there again.

Babylonia Is Invaded

The LORD said:

- 41 Far to the north,
a nation and its allies
have been awakened.

- They are powerful
and ready for war.
- 42 Bows and arrows and swords
are in their hands.
The soldiers are cruel
and show no pity.
The hoofbeats of their horses
echo like ocean waves
crashing against the shore.
The army has lined up for battle
and is coming to attack you,
people of Babylonia!
- 43 Ever since your king heard
about this army,
he has been weak with fear;
he twists and turns in pain
like a woman giving birth.
- 44 Babylonia, I will attack you
like a lion from the forest,
attacking sheep in a meadow
along the Jordan.
In a moment the flock runs,
and the land is empty.
Who will I choose to attack you?
I will do it myself!
No one can force me to fight
or chase me away.
- 45 Listen to my plans for you,
people of Babylonia.
Your children will be dragged off,
and your country destroyed.
- 46 The sounds of your destruction
will be heard among the nations,
and the earth will shake.

Babylon Will Be Destroyed

- 51 I, the LORD, am sending
a wind[▷] to destroy
the people of Babylonia[▷]
and Babylon, its capital.
- 2 Foreign soldiers will come
from every direction,
and when the disaster is over,
Babylonia will be empty
and worthless.
- 3 I will tell these soldiers,
"Attack quickly,
before the Babylonians
can string their bows
or put on their armor.▷"

- Kill their best soldiers
and destroy their army!"
- 4 Their troops will fall wounded
in the streets of Babylon.
- 5 Everyone in Israel and Judah
is guilty.
But I, the LORD All-Powerful,
their holy God,
have not abandoned them.
- 6 Get out of Babylon!
Run for your lives!
If you stay, you will be killed
when I take revenge on the city
and punish it for its sins.
- 7 Babylon was my golden cup,
filled with the wine
of my anger.
The nations of the world
got drunk on this wine
and went insane.
- 8 But suddenly, Babylon will fall
and be destroyed.
- I, the LORD, told the foreigners▷
who lived there,
"Weep for the city!
Get medicine for its wounds;
maybe they will heal."
- 9 The foreigners answered,
"We have already tried
to treat Babylon's wounds,
but they would not heal.
Come on, let's all go home
to our own countries.
Nothing is left in Babylonia;
everything is destroyed."
- 10 The people of Israel said,
"Tell everyone in Zion!
The LORD has taken revenge
for what Babylon did to us."

The LORD Wants Babylon Destroyed

- 11 I, the LORD,
want Babylon destroyed,
because its army
destroyed my temple.
So, you kings of Media,
sharpen your arrows
and pick up your shields.

- 12 Raise the signal flag
and attack the city walls.
Post more guards.
Have soldiers watch the city
and set up ambushes.
I have made plans
to destroy Babylon,
and nothing will stop me.
- 13 People of Babylon, you live
along the Euphrates River
and are surrounded by canals.
You are rich,
but now the time has come
'for you to die.'
- 14 I, the LORD All-Powerful,
swear by my own life
that enemy soldiers
will fill your streets
like a swarm of locusts.
They will shout
and celebrate their victory.

A Hymn of Praise

- 15 God used his wisdom and power
to create the earth
and spread out the heavens.
- 16 The waters in the heavens roar
at his command.
He makes clouds appear;
he sends the wind
from his storehouse
and makes lightning flash
in the rain.
- 17 People who make idols
are stupid!
They will be disappointed,
because their false gods
cannot breathe.
- 18 Idols are merely a joke,
and when the time is right,
they will be destroyed.
- 19 But the LORD, Israel's God,
is all-powerful.
He created everything,
and he chose Israel
to be his very own.

God's Hammer

The LORD said:

- 20 Babylonia, you were my hammer;
I used you to pound nations
and break kingdoms,

- 21 to shatter cavalry and chariots,
 22 as well as men and women,
 young and old,
 23 shepherds and their flocks,
 farmers and their oxen,
 and governors and leaders.
- 24 But now, my people will watch,
 while I repay you
 for what you did to Zion.
- 25 You destroyed the nations
 and seem strong as a mountain,
 but I am your enemy.
 I might even grab you
 and roll you off a cliff.
 When I am finished,
 you'll only be a pile
 of scorched bricks.
- 26 Your stone blocks won't be reused
 for cornerstones
 or foundations,
 and I promise that forever
 you will be a desert.
 I, the LORD, have spoken.

The Nations Will Attack Babylon

The LORD said:

- 27 Signal the nations
 to get ready to attack.
 Raise a flag and blow a trumpet.
 Send for the armies of Ararat,
 Minni, and Ashkenaz.
 Choose a commander;
 let the cavalry attack
 like a swarm of locusts.
- 28 Tell the kings and governors,
 the leaders and the people
 of the kingdoms of the Medes
 to prepare for war!
- 29 The earth twists and turns
 in torment,
 because I have decided
 to make Babylonia a desert
 where no one can live,
 and I won't change my mind.
- 30 The Babylonian soldiers
 have lost their strength
 and courage.▷
 They stay in their fortresses,
 unable to fight,

- while the enemy breaks through
 the city gates,
 then sets their homes on fire.
- 31 One messenger after another
 announces to the king,
 "Babylon has been captured!"
- 32 The enemy now controls
 the river crossings!
 The marshes are on fire!
 Your army has panicked!"
- 33 I am the LORD All-Powerful,
 the God of Israel,
 and I make this promise—
 "Soon Babylon will be leveled
 and packed down
 like a threshing place
 at harvest time."

Babylonia Will Pay!

- 34 The people of Jerusalem say,
 "King Nebuchadnezzar
 made us panic.
 That monster stuffed himself
 with us and our treasures,
 leaving us empty—
 he gobbled down
 what he wanted
 and spit out the rest.
- 35 The people of Babylonia
 'harmed some of us'
 and killed others.
 Now, LORD, make them pay!"

The LORD Will Take Revenge on Babylon

- 36 My people, I am on your side,
 and I will take revenge
 on Babylon.
 I will cut off its water supply,
 and its stream will dry up.
- 37 Babylon will be a pile of rubble
 where only jackals live.
 People will laugh,
 but they will be afraid
 to walk among the ruins.
- 38 The Babylonians roar and growl
 like young lions.
- 39 And since they are hungry,
 I will give them a banquet.
 They will celebrate, get drunk,
 then fall asleep,
 never to wake up!

- 40 I will lead them away to die,
like sheep, lambs, and goats
being led to the butcher.
- 41 All nations now praise Babylon,▷
but when it is captured,
those same nations
will be horrified.
- 42 Babylon's enemies will rise
like ocean waves
and flood the city.
- 43 Horrible destruction will strike
the nearby towns.
The land will become
a barren desert,
where no one can live
or even travel.
- 44 I will punish Marduk,▷
the god of Babylon,
and make him vomit up
everything he gobbled down.
Then nations will no longer
bring him gifts,
and Babylon's walls will crumble.

The LORD Offers Hope to His People

- 45 Get out of Babylon, my people,
and run for your lives,
before I strike the city
in my anger!
- 46 Don't be afraid or lose hope,
though year after year
there are rumors
of leaders fighting for control
in the city of Babylon.
- 47 The time will come
when I will punish
Babylon's false gods.
Everyone there will die,
and the whole nation
will be disgraced,
- 48 when an army attacks
from the north
and brings destruction.
Then the earth and the heavens
and everything in them
will celebrate.
- 49 Babylon must be overthrown,
because it slaughtered
the people of Israel
and of many other nations.
- 50 My people, you escaped death
when Jerusalem fell.

Now you live far from home,
but you should trust me
and think about Jerusalem.
Leave Babylon! Don't stay!

- 51 You feel ashamed and disgraced,
because foreigners have entered
my sacred temple.
- 52 Soon I will send a war
to punish Babylon's idols
and leave its wounded people
moaning everywhere.
- 53 Although Babylon's walls
reach to the sky,
the army I send
will destroy that city.
I, the LORD, have spoken.

Babylon Will Be Destroyed

The LORD said:

- 54 Listen to the cries for help
coming from Babylon.
Everywhere in the country
the sounds of destruction
can be heard.
- 55 The shouts of the enemy,
like crashing ocean waves,
will drown out Babylon's cries
as I level the city.
- 56 An enemy will attack
and destroy Babylon.
Its soldiers will be captured
and their weapons broken,
because I am a God
who takes revenge against nations
for what they do.
- 57 I, the LORD All-Powerful,
the true King, promise
that the officials and advisors,
the governors and leaders
and the soldiers of Babylon
will get drunk, fall asleep,
and never wake up.
- 58 The thick walls of that city
will be torn down,
and its huge gates burned.
Everything that nation
worked so hard to gain
will go up in smoke.

Jeremiah Gives Seraiah a Scroll

59 During Zedekiah's fourth year as king of Judah, he went to Babylon. And Baruch's brother

Seraiah[▷] went along as the officer in charge of arranging for places to stay overnight.[▷]

⁶⁰ Before they left, I wrote on a scroll all the terrible things that would happen to Babylon. ⁶¹ I gave the scroll to Seraiah and said:

When you get to Babel, read this scroll aloud, ⁶² then pray, "Our LORD, you promised to destroy this place and make it into a desert where no people or animals will ever live."

⁶³ When you finish praying, tie the scroll to a rock and throw it in the Euphrates River. Then say, ⁶⁴ "This is how Babylon will sink when the LORD destroys it. Everyone in the city will die, and it won't have the strength to rise again."

The End of Jeremiah's Writing

Jeremiah's writing ends here.

Jerusalem Is Captured

52 Zedekiah was 21 years old when he was appointed king of Judah, and he ruled from Jerusalem for eleven years. His mother Hamutal was the daughter of Jeremiah from the town of Libnah. ² Zedekiah disobeyed the LORD, just as Jehoiakim had done, ³ and it was Zedekiah who finally rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar.

The people of Judah and Jerusalem had made the LORD so angry that he finally turned his back on them. That's why horrible things were happening.

⁴ In Zedekiah's ninth year as king, on the tenth day of the tenth month, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylonia led his entire army to attack Jerusalem. The troops set up camp outside the city and built ramps up to the city walls.

⁵⁻⁶ After a year and a half, all the food in Jerusalem was gone. Then on the ninth day of the fourth month, ⁷ the Babylonian troops broke through the city wall. That same night, Zedekiah and his soldiers tried to escape through the gate near the royal garden, even though they knew the enemy had the city surrounded. They headed toward the Jordan River valley, ⁸ but the Babylonian troops caught up with them near Jericho. The Babylonians arrested Zedekiah, but his soldiers scattered in every direction. ⁹ Zedekiah was taken to Riblah in the land of Hamath, where Nebuchadnezzar put him on trial and found him guilty. ¹⁰ Zedekiah's sons and the officials of Judah were killed while he watched, ¹¹ then his eyes were poked out. He was put in

chains, then dragged off to Babylon and kept in prison until he died.

¹² Jerusalem was captured during Nebuchadnezzar's nineteenth year as king of Babylonia.

About a month later,[▷] Nebuchadnezzar's officer in charge of the guards arrived in Jerusalem. His name was Nebuzaradan, ¹³ and he burned down the LORD's temple, the king's palace, and every important building in the city, as well as all the houses. ¹⁴ Then he ordered the Babylonian soldiers to break down the walls around Jerusalem. ¹⁵ He led away the people left in the city, including everyone who had become loyal to Nebuchadnezzar, the rest of the skilled workers, and even some of the poor people of Judah. ¹⁶ Only the very poorest were left behind to work the vineyards and the fields.

¹⁷⁻²⁰ Nebuzaradan ordered his soldiers to go to the temple and take everything made of gold or silver, including bowls, fire pans, sprinkling bowls, pans, lampstands, dishes for incense, and the cups for wine offerings. The Babylonian soldiers took all the bronze things used for worship at the temple, including the pans for hot ashes, and the shovels, lamp snuffers, sprinkling bowls, and dishes for incense. The soldiers also took everything else made of bronze, including the two columns that stood in front of the temple, the large bowl called the Sea, the twelve bulls that held it up, and the movable stands.[▷] The soldiers broke these things into pieces so they could take them to Babylonia. There was so much bronze that it could not be weighed. ²¹ For example, the columns were about 8 meters high and 5 meters around. They were hollow, but the bronze was about 75 millimeters thick. ²² Each column had a bronze cap over 2 meters high that was decorated with bronze designs. Some of these designs were like chains and others were like pomegranates. ²³ There were 96 pomegranates 'evenly spaced' around each column, and a total of 100 pomegranates were located above the chains.

²⁴ Next, Nebuzaradan arrested Seraiah the chief priest, Zephaniah his assistant, and three temple officials. ²⁵ Then he arrested one of the army commanders, seven of King Zedekiah's personal advisors, and the officer in charge of gathering the troops for battle. He also found 60 more soldiers who were still in Jerusalem. ²⁶⁻²⁷ Nebuzaradan led them to Riblah in the land of Hamath, where Nebuchadnezzar had them killed.

The people of Judah no longer lived in their own country.

People of Judah Taken Prisoner

²⁸⁻³⁰ Here is a list of the number of the people of Judah that Nebuchadnezzar took to Babylonia as prisoners:

- In his seventh year as king, he took 3,023 people.
- In his eighteenth year as king, he took 832 from Jerusalem.
- In his twenty-third year as king, his officer Nebuzaradan took 745 people.

So, Nebuchadnezzar took a total of 4,600 people from Judah to Babylonia.

Notes

*An asterisk preceding a verse number in a poetic passage of this book indicates that the contents of two or more verses have been joined together and rearranged beginning with the verse so marked.

Phrases enclosed in half square superscript brackets ([^]) are those that are difficult to translate from the original Hebrew with great certainty. Consequently, the English rendering given should be understood as only one possible way of translating such texts.

- ▷ **2.18** *trusted ... Assyria*: Hebrew "went to Egypt and drank from the Shihor River, and you went to Assyria and drank from the Euphrates River."
- ▷ **2.23** *Baal*: The Hebrew text has "the Baals."
- ▷ **2.23** *Hinnom Valley*: Hebrew "the valley."
- ▷ **2.37** *in great sadness*: Or "as prisoners."
- ▷ **3.24** *that shameful god Baal*: The Hebrew text has "The Shame."
- ▷ **4.5** *Judah*: Hebrew "Judah and Jerusalem."
- ▷ **4.11,12** *a welcome breeze*: Hebrew "a wind to blow away the husks."
- ▷ **5.31** *give ... god*: Or "tell lies."
- ▷ **5.31** *don't ... me*: Or "don't care what I want."
- ▷ **7.1-3** *temple*: The Hebrew text has "house of the LORD."
- ▷ **7.1-3** *let you ... own country*: Or "live here with you."
- ▷ **9.14** *Baal*: The Hebrew text has "the Baals."
- ▷ **9.15** *poison to eat and drink*: Or "bitter disappointment to eat, and tears to drink."
- ▷ **9.17** *women ... weep at funerals*: Or "the women who weep for Baal."
- ▷ **12.4** *God can't see the sins we commit*: Or "Jeremiah won't live to see what happens to us."
- ▷ **12.9** *My people ... other hawks*: Or "My land has become a hyena's den with vultures circling above."
- ▷ **13.4** *Parah*: Or "the Euphrates River."

Jehoiachin Is Set Free

³¹ Jehoiachin was a prisoner in Babylon for 37 years. Then Evil Merodach became king of Babylonia, and in the first year of his rule, on the twenty-fifth day of the twelfth month, he let Jehoiachin out of prison. ³² Evil Merodach was kind to Jehoiachin and honored him more than any of the other kings held prisoner there. ³³ Jehoiachin was allowed to wear regular clothes instead of a prison uniform, and he even ate at the king's table every day. ³⁴ As long as Jehoiachin lived, he was paid a daily allowance to buy whatever he needed.

- ▷ **13.9** *I will use Babylonia to*: Or "that's how I'm going to."
- ▷ **14.6** *sniff the air*: The Hebrew text has "sniff the air, like jackals."
- ▷ **15.4** *Manasseh*: Hebrew "Manasseh son of Hezekiah."
- ▷ **15.14** *that cannot be put out*: Some Hebrew manuscripts; most Hebrew manuscripts "against you."
- ▷ **15.14** *I will make ... land*: Many Hebrew manuscripts; most Hebrew manuscripts "I will make your enemies go through to a land you don't know about."
- ▷ **20.2** *hit me*: Or "beat me up" or "had me beaten up."
- ▷ **20.2** *in chains*: Or "in the stocks" or "in a prison cell."
- ▷ **20.2** *the Benjamin Gate in the LORD's temple*: The Hebrew text has "the upper Benjamin Gate in the temple."
- ▷ **20.3** *Afraid-of-Everything*: Hebrew "Magor-Missabib."
- ▷ **21.14** *your palace*: The Hebrew text has "the forest."
- ▷ **22.10** *King Josiah ... him*: The Hebrew text has "don't cry for the dead one."
- ▷ **22.10** *his son King Jehoahaz ... country*: The Hebrew text has "the one who was dragged off to another country."

- ▷ **22.11,12 Jehoahaz:** The Hebrew text has "Shallum."
- ▷ **22.20 nations:** Or "gods."
- ▷ **22.23 who live in the palace paneled with cedar:** The Hebrew text has "who live in Lebanon and who nest among the cedars."
- ▷ **22.24 Jehoiachin:** The Hebrew text has "Coniah."
- ▷ **23.9 tremble:** Or "become weak."
- ▷ **23.14 in marriage:** Or "to me."
- ▷ **23.14 never tell the truth:** Or "worship other gods."
- ▷ **23.33 You people are a nuisance to the LORD, and he:** Two ancient translations; Hebrew "Does the LORD have news for us? He."
- ▷ **23.39 pick you up:** A few Hebrew manuscripts and three ancient translations; most Hebrew manuscripts "forget you completely."
- ▷ **24.1 Jehoiachin:** The Hebrew text has "Jeconiah."
- ▷ **25.3 Josiah:** Hebrew "Josiah son of Amon."
- ▷ **25.26 Babylonia:** The Hebrew text has "Sheshach."
- ▷ **25.37 anger turns:** Or "anger and enemy armies turn."
- ▷ **25.38 The LORD has ... people:** Or "And his people leave their homes."
- ▷ **27.1,2 Not long after Zedekiah became king of Judah:** A few manuscripts and one ancient translation; most Hebrew manuscripts "Not long after Jehoiaquim became king of Judah"; most manuscripts of another ancient translation do not have these words.
- ▷ **27.19-21; 28.4; 29.1,2 Jehoiachin:** Hebrew "Jeconiah."
- ▷ **29.3 Elash and Gemariah:** Hebrew "Elash son of Shaphan and Gemariah son of Hilkiah."
- ▷ **29.24,25 Shemaiah:** Hebrew "Shemaiah, who came from the town of Nehelam."
- ▷ **29.26 in chains:** Or "in the stocks" or "in a prison cell."
- ▷ **30.18 Jerusalem ... palace:** Or "Your towns lie in ruins, but you will rebuild them, and your homes will be where they were before."
- ▷ **31.3 Some time ... me:** Or "The LORD appeared to me from far away."
- ▷ **31.8 Babylonia:** The Hebrew text has "that country in the north."
- ▷ **31.9 level:** Or "straight."
- ▷ **31.9 Israel:** The Hebrew text also has "Ephraim."
- ▷ **31.15 In Ramah:** Or "In the hills."
- ▷ **31.18 Israel:** Hebrew "Ephraim"
- ▷ **31.40 that disgusting Hinnom Valley:** The Hebrew text has "the whole valley of the dead bodies and of the fatty ashes."
- ▷ **32.12 Baruch son of Neriah:** Hebrew "Baruch son of Neriah and grandson of Mahseiah."
- ▷ **32.18 for a thousand generations:** Or "to thousands of people."
- ▷ **33.1,2 the whole world:** One ancient translation; Hebrew "it."
- ▷ **35.3 Jaazaniah:** The Hebrew text has "Jaazaniah son of Jeremiah son of Habazziniah."
- ▷ **35.4 Maaseiah ... temple:** Hebrew "Maaseiah son of Shallum, the keeper of the temple door."
- ▷ **36.8-10 Gemariah:** Hebrew "Gemariah son of Shaphan."
- ▷ **36.14 Jehudi and Shelemiah:** Hebrew "Jehudi son of Nethaniah and Shelemiah son of Cushi."
- ▷ **36.26 Seraiah and Shelemiah:** Hebrew "Seraiah son of Azriel and Shelemiah son of Abdeel."
- ▷ **37.1 Jehoiachin:** Hebrew "Coniah."
- ▷ **37.3-5 Jehucal and the priest Zephaniah:** Hebrew "Jehucal son of Shelemiah, and the priest Zephaniah son of Maaseiah."
- ▷ **37.13 Irijah:** Hebrew "Irijah son of Shelemiah and grandson of Hananiah."
- ▷ **38.1 Jehucal:** The Hebrew text has "Jucal."
- ▷ **38.1 Shephatiah, Gedaliah, Jehucal, and Pashhur:** Hebrew "Shephatiah son of Mattan, Gedaliah son of Pashhur, Jucal son of Shelemiah, and Pashhur son of Malchiah."
- ▷ **38.7,8 Ethiopia:** The Hebrew text has "Cush."
- ▷ **38.10 Take 30:** Most Hebrew manuscripts; one Hebrew manuscript "Take three."
- ▷ **39.1-3 highest officials:** The Hebrew text gives Nergal Sharezer's title as "the Rabmag," and Nebo Sarsechim's title as "the Rabsaris," but the exact meaning of the titles and the duties of these offices are not known.
- ▷ **39.8 the houses in Jerusalem, including:** Or "the temple and."
- ▷ **39.14 son of Ahikam:** Hebrew "son of Ahikam and grandson of Shaphan."
- ▷ **39.16 Ethiopia:** The Hebrew text has "Cush."
- ▷ **41.1 Ishmael:** Hebrew "Ishmael son of Nethaniah and grandson of Elishama."
- ▷ **42.1 Jezaniah:** Hebrew "Jezaniah son of Hoshaiah"; one ancient translation "Azariah son of Hoshaiah."
- ▷ **43.2 Azariah, Johanan:** Hebrew "Azariah son of Hoshaiah, Johanan son of Kareah."

- ▷ **43.12,13** *at the temple of the sun-god*: Or "in the city of Heliopolis."
- ▷ **44.17** *the goddess Astarte, the Queen of Heaven*: The Hebrew text has "the queen of heaven."
- ▷ **46.9** *Ethiopians*: The Hebrew text has "Cushites."
- ▷ **47.4** *Crete*: Hebrew "Caphtor."
- ▷ **47.5** *Anakim who survive*: One ancient translation; Hebrew "people in the valley who survive."
- ▷ **48.2** *silence ... Quiet*: In Hebrew the name of the town was "Madmen," which sounds like the word for "silence."
- ▷ **48.6** *like a wild donkey*: One ancient translation; Hebrew "like (the town of) Aroer."
- ▷ **48.11** *continues ... improve*: Or "remains as evil as ever."
- ▷ **48.41** *Your cities*: Or "Kerioth."
- ▷ **49.3** *your town will become a pile of rubble*: Or "because the town of Ai has been destroyed."
- ▷ **49.3** *the idol you worship*: Hebrew "Milcom."
- ▷ **49.20** *Edom*: The Hebrew text also uses the name "Teman."
- ▷ **49.21** *Red Sea*: Hebrew *yam suph*, "Sea of Reeds."
- ▷ **49.28; 49.30; 49.33** *(desert) villages*: The Hebrew text has "kingdoms of Hazor."
- ▷ **50.2** *Marduk*: The Hebrew text has "Bel" and "Marduk."
- ▷ **50.9** *the best soldiers*: Some Hebrew manuscripts and two ancient translations; most Hebrew manuscripts "soldiers that kill children."
- ▷ **50.11** *threshing grain*: Hebrew; two ancient translations "in a pasture."
- ▷ **51.1** *wind*: Or "spirit."
- ▷ **51.1** *Babylonia*: The Hebrew text has "Leb-Qamai."
- ▷ **51.3** *I will tell ... armor*: Or "Attack quickly! String your bows and put on your armor."
- ▷ **51.8** *the foreigners*: Or "my people."
- ▷ **51.30** *have lost their strength and courage*: Hebrew "have lost their strength and have become like women."
- ▷ **51.41** *Babylon*: The Hebrew text has "Sheshach."
- ▷ **51.44** *Marduk*: Hebrew "Bel."
- ▷ **51.59** *Baruch's brother Seraiah*: Hebrew "Seraiah son of Neriah and grandson of Mahseiah."
- ▷ **51.59** *arranging for places to stay overnight*: Hebrew and one ancient translation; two ancient translations, "the tax money."
- ▷ **52.12** *About a month later*: Hebrew "On the seventh day of the fifth month."
- ▷ **52.17-20** *the large bowl called the Sea, the twelve bulls that held it up, and the movable stands*: One ancient translation; Hebrew "the large bowl called the Sea, and the twelve bulls under the movable stands."