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Jeremiah

Chapter 1

¹This is the message of Jeremiah son of Hilkiah, who wrote this. He was a priest, from the town of Anathoth in the area where the tribe of Benjamin lives. ²Yahweh started to give him these messages when Josiah had been ruling Judah for almost thirteen years. ³Yahweh continued to give him messages when Josiah's son Jehoiakim was the king, and he continued to do that until Zedekiah had been the king of Judah for almost eleven years. It was in the fifth month of that year that the people of Jerusalem were exiled to Babylonia.

⁴One day Yahweh gave me this message,

⁵"I knew you before I finished forming you in your mother's womb.

I set you apart for my honor before you were born,

and I appointed you to be my prophet for all the nations."

⁶I replied, "O, Yahweh my God, do you not see that I am not qualified to speak for you? I am very young!"

⁷Yahweh replied, "Do not say that you are too young, because you must go to everyone to whom I will send you, and you must tell them everything that I tell you to say. ⁸And you must not be afraid of the people to whom you will speak, because I will protect you from being harmed by them. This will surely happen because I, Yahweh, have said it!"

⁹Then it was as though Yahweh touched my mouth and said, "Listen to me! I have put my message into your mouth. ¹⁰Today I am appointing you to warn nations and kingdoms. You will tell them that I will completely destroy and get rid of some of them and that I will establish others and cause them to be prosperous."

¹¹Then Yahweh showed something to me, and said, "Jeremiah, what do you see?"

I replied, "I see a branch from an almond tree."

¹²Yahweh said, "That is correct. And because the word for 'almond' resembles the word for 'watching', it means that I am watching what will happen, and I will make certain that what I have said to you about destroying nations will happen."

¹³Then Yahweh spoke to me again and said, "What do you see now?"

I replied, "I see a pot full of boiling water. It is in the north, tipping toward me."

¹⁴Yahweh replied, "Yes! It means that from the north great trouble will spread over this land, like boiling water pouring from a pot.

¹⁵Listen to what I say:

I am summoning the armies of the kingdoms that are north of Judah to come to Jerusalem.

Their kings will set up their thrones at the gates of this city to indicate that they are now the kings of Judah.

Their armies will attack and break down the walls of this city, and they will do the same thing to all the other towns in Judah.

¹⁶I will punish my people because of all the evil things that they have done;

they have abandoned me and they offer offerings of worship to false gods.

They worship idols that they have made with their own hands!

¹⁷So, get up and put on your clothes to get ready for action! Then go to the people of Judah and tell them everything that I tell you to say. Do not be afraid of them, because if you are afraid of them, I will punish you as an example right in front of them! ¹⁸But listen! I will cause you to be strong, like a city that has strong walls around it. You will be as strong as an iron pillar or a bronze wall. Even the royal officials, the priests, and the general populace will not be able to defeat you. ¹⁹They will oppose you, but they will not be able to defeat you, because I will be with you and will protect you. That will surely happen because I, Yahweh, have said it!"

Chapter 2

¹Yahweh gave me another message ²to proclaim to everyone in Jerusalem. He said that I should tell them this, "I, Yahweh, remember in your favor that you followed me and trusted in our covenant long ago.

You tried to please me like a bride tries to please her husband;

You loved me,

and you followed me through the desert.

³At that time you Israelites were set apart to me;

you belonged to me like the first part of the harvests belong to me.

I promised to punish all those who harmed you, my people,

and send disasters on them.

This is the way it will always be since I, Yahweh, said that it would happen."

⁴Listen to what Yahweh says, descendants of Jacob, all you people of Israel. You must listen to what Yahweh says.

⁵He says,

"What sin did I commit that caused your ancestors to turn far away from me?

They worshiped worthless idols,

and they themselves became worthless.

⁶They should have said,

'We need Yahweh. He is the one who brought us safely out of Egypt

and led us through a desert plain where there were a lot of pits.

We need Yahweh. He is the one who led us

where there was no water and where it was very dangerous,

through a land where no one lives or even travels.'

⁷But when I, Yahweh, brought you into a very fertile land,

in order that you could enjoy all the fruit and other good things that you would harvest,

you caused the land that I promised to give to you to be unfit for me
and to become disgusting to me.

⁸Your priests also did not ask
if I was still with them.

Those who teach God's laws are not faithful to me themselves!

And your leaders have rebelled against me.

Your prophets gave you messages from their god Baal,
and they worship worthless idols.

⁹So I, Yahweh, will accuse you in court.

In future years, I will also bring your children and your grandchildren to trial!

That will happen because I, Yahweh, have said that it will happen.

¹⁰If you go west to the island of Cyprus,

or if you go east to Kedar land,

and if you ask people in those places,

they will tell you that no people from their countries have ever done the wicked things that you people have done!

¹¹No people of any nation have ever abandoned their gods that they thought were glorious

and started to worship gods that are not really gods,

but you people have abandoned me, your glorious God,

and are worshiping gods that are useless.

¹²It is as though everything in the sky is dismayed about what you have done;

it is as though they tremble and are very horrified. I, Yahweh, see and declare this to you.

¹³You, my people, have done two evil things:

you have rejected me, the one who is like a fountain where you can obtain fresh water,

and you are worshiping gods that are like pits in the ground

that are cracked and which are not able to hold any water.

¹⁴You Israelite people, you were certainly not slaves when you were born;

so why were you captured by your enemies?

¹⁵Your enemies roared like lions,

and they destroyed your land.

Now your towns have been burned,

and no one lives in them.

16Soldiers from Memphis and Tahpenes, cities in Egypt, have defeated you
and shaved your heads to show that you are their slaves.

17But it is because you abandoned me, Yahweh your God,
that these disasters have happened to you, since I had been leading you to safety.

18So why are you trying to make an alliance with the rulers of Egypt who live near the Shihor?
Why are you trying to make an alliance with the rulers of Assyria who live near the Euphrates River?

19It is because you have been very wicked that I will punish you.

It is because you have turned away from me that I will condemn you.

When I do that, you will realize that bitter and evil things will happen to you because you have forsaken me,
Yahweh, your God,

and you no longer have an awesome respect for me.

That will certainly happen because I, the Lord, Yahweh, commander of the angel armies in heaven, have said it.

20Long ago, you stopped obeying me and you would not allow me to lead you.

You refused to worship me, even though I saved you from being slaves.

Instead, you worship idols that are under trees on the top of every hill.

You love and worship those idols instead of me just like an unfaithful man loves a prostitute instead of his wife.

21It is as though you were the best grapevine that I could plant,
and I planted you so you would grow from the very best seed.

So how could you change yourself from the best grapevine into becoming like a vine that is disgusting and rotten?

22Your guilt from your sins is like very bad stains on a cloth,
and you cannot get rid of those stains even by using very strong soap.

This is true because I, Yahweh, have said it.

23You say that you have not sinned.

You claim to be acceptable to God

and that you have not worshiped the images of Baal.

But think about the disgusting things that you do very eagerly in Hinnom Valley outside Jerusalem.

You are like desperate female camels running here and there to find male camels to mate with.

24You are like wild female donkeys that live in the desert.

They sniff the air to find where the male donkeys are,

and there is no one who can restrain their lust.

The male donkeys that want to mate with them only wear themselves out chasing after them;
because at mating time they find them easily.

25You constantly run here and there to find idols to worship, with the result that your sandals are worn out, and your throats have become dry.

I told you to stop doing that but you said that you could not stop, and you said that you loved those foreign gods and had to worship them!

26A robber is disgraced when he is caught.

And all of you, including your kings and priests and prophets, are similarly disgraced.

27You call a piece of wood that is carved to become a sacred idol, your 'father,' and you call a stone that you have set up, your 'mother.'

You have rejected me but when you experience troubles, you call for me to rescue you!

28Why do you not shout to the gods that you made?

Why do you not plead with them to rescue you when you experience disasters?

For you have as many gods as you have cities and towns in Judah!

29You complain that it was wrong for me not to have rescued you, but you have all rebelled against me, Yahweh, the one who is speaking to you right now.

30I punished some of you, but you did not learn anything from my doing that.

Instead you have killed many of the prophets that I sent to you, like fierce lions kill other animals.

31You people of Israel, pay attention to what I say.

I have certainly never abandoned you in a desert;

I have never left you in a very dark land.

So, why do you, my people, say that you are free from my control and that you will not return to worship me anymore?

32A young woman would certainly never forget to wear her jewelry, and a bride would never forget to wear her wedding dress,

but you my people have forgotten me for many years.

33You know how to easily find gods from other countries whom you can love.

You can find them more easily than a prostitute can find men to sleep with. You could teach her about infidelity!

³⁴You also have the blood of poor people on your clothes; the very people you have murdered; people who were innocent! You did not catch them robbing you!

³⁵Yet you say, 'I have done nothing wrong!

I am sure that Yahweh will not be angry with me for much longer.'

But I will punish you severely

for claiming that you have not sinned.

³⁶Previously you requested the army of Assyria to help you, but they were not able to help you.

Now you have requested the army of Egypt to help you, but they will not be able to help you, either.

³⁷They will capture you, and you will be their prisoners, very ashamed with your hands on your heads.

That will happen because Yahweh has rejected those nations that you are relying on, and they will not be able to help you at all."

Chapter 3

¹"People know that if a man divorces his wife and then she marries another man, her first husband certainly must not take her back again to be his wife again. She would be ceremonially unclean and she has broken the law of Yahweh.

This nation is like this woman.

But you have more idols than prostitutes have men whom they have slept with!

So, why should I accept you if you return to me? it is Yahweh who says this.

²"Look up at the barren hilltops.

On every hilltop you have given yourselves to the idols in the way a prostitute gives herself to her lovers.

You sat along the roadsides like an Arab nomad who is always waiting in the desert for someone to come; but you are waiting to have sex with those who pass by.

Your unfaithfulness is the worship of idols,

and your prostitution is just like your idol worship.

The whole land is made unacceptable to Yahweh,

and your worship of idols is your prostitution and your wickedness is what made you unclean.

³That is why I have not sent you any rain at the times of the year when you needed it.

But you are like prostitutes

who are not at all ashamed for what they have done.

⁴Now each of you says to me, 'You are my father!

You have loved me ever since I was young!

⁵So surely you will not be angry with me forever!

You promised you would not obey me, and you did what you said!

And you sinned over and over again!

But you will not quit sinning!"

⁶One day when Josiah was the king of Judah, Yahweh said to me, "Have you seen what the people of Israel have done? They have turned away from me, like a woman who has abandoned her husband and sleeps with other men. They have gone up on every hilltop and under every shady tree and worshiped idols there. ⁷I thought that they would return to me, but they did not. And their brothers, the people of Judah, were watching all of this. ⁸So I sent the people of Israel away to other countries, as a man writes a note saying that he is divorcing his wife and then sends her away because she has committed adultery. But I realized that, just as the people of Israel, the people of Judah were not at all afraid of me. Instead, they acted just as the people of Israel had done. They also turned away from me and began worshiping idols, just as women who leave their husbands and go to other men. ⁹They did not care that worshiping idols offended me, so they have made the entire land unacceptable to me by worshiping idols of wood and stone. ¹⁰The people of Judah have pretended to return to me, but they have not been sincere. This is true because I, Yahweh, have said it."

¹¹Then Yahweh said to me, "Jeremiah, the people of Israel have turned away from me, but what the people of Judah have done is worse. ¹²So go and tell this to the people of Israel,

'Yahweh says this to you Israelite people who have turned away from him:

I am merciful.

I will not continue to be angry with you forever.

So return to me.

¹³But you must admit that you are guilty,

and that you have rebelled against me, Yahweh, your God,

that you have worshiped idols under big trees everywhere,

and you have not obeyed me.

You have turned away from me.

¹⁴But you belong to me,

so come back to me, my children!

If you do, I will take you, one from each city and two from each clan,

and bring you back to Jerusalem.

15If you do that, I will appoint for you leaders with whom I am pleased who will guide you well because they will know and understand what pleases me.

16And when you become very numerous in your land, you will not need to talk about the Sacred Chest that contained the Ten Commandments. You will not think about it, and you will not want to make a new one.'

17At that time people will say that my throne is in Jerusalem. People from all nations will come there to worship me, and they will no longer stubbornly do the evil things that they desire in their inner beings.

18At that time you people of Israel and Judah will return from being exiled in lands to the north. You will return to the land that I gave to your ancestors to belong to them forever.

19You people of Israel, I wanted to accept you to be my children. I wanted to give you this delightful land. It is a land more desirable than the land of any other nation! I wanted you to call me your father, and I wanted you to never stop honoring me.

20But you have abandoned me like women who have abandoned their husbands." That is what Yahweh said, and I told it to the people of Israel.

21Then God said, "People will hear a noise on the barren hilltops. It will be the noise made by people weeping and pleading for God to be merciful to them. They will be admitting that they have forgotten Yahweh their God, and that they turned away from behaving as God wanted them to.

22You Israelite people, come back to me! If you do that, I will cause you to never turn away from me again." The people will reply, "We are returning to you, because you are Yahweh, our God.

23When we worshiped idols on the mountains, we did not get any help. Even though we shouted very loudly in our worship, every promise we believed turned out to be lies and only lies. We now know that trusting in Yahweh our God is the only way Israel will be rescued!

24From the time when we were young, the shameful god Baal has taken away from us everything that our ancestors worked hard to acquire.

He has taken away their flocks of sheep and herds of cattle, their sons and their daughters.

²⁵So, now we should lie down feeling very ashamed,
because we and our ancestors have sinned against Yahweh our God,
and we have never obeyed him.”

Chapter 4

¹Yahweh says, “You Israelite people, if you come back to anyone, it should be to me.

If you get rid of those detestable idols,
if you do not go away from me again,

²and if you declare, ‘Just as surely as Yahweh lives,’
when you take your oaths,
and if you are truthful, just, and righteous,
then the people in the other nations of the world
will ask me to bless them as I have blessed you,
and they will all come and honor me.”

³This is what Yahweh says to the people of Jerusalem and the other cities in Judah,
“Cause your inner beings to be ready to receive my messages
like farmers plow up hard ground in order that they can plant seed in it.
Just as farmers do not waste good seed by sowing seeds among thorny plants,
I do not want to waste my time telling you messages that you are not ready to receive.

⁴Show that your inner beings and your minds are devoted to me.
If you do not do that, my being angry with you
because of all the sins that you have committed
will be like a fire that will be impossible to extinguish.

⁵Declare this to all the people in Jerusalem and the rest of Judea;
blow the trumpets everywhere in the land to warn the people.
Tell them that they should flee to
the cities that have high walls around them.

⁶Shout to the people of Jerusalem
and run away now. Do not delay,
because I am about to bring a terrible disaster upon you

that will come from the north.

⁷An army that has destroyed many nations will attack you
like a lion that comes out of its den to attack other animals.

The soldiers of that army
are already marching toward your land.

They will destroy your cities and leave them without any people still living in them.

⁸So, put on rough clothes
and weep and beat your breasts
to show that you are very sorry for what you have done,
because Yahweh is still very angry with us.

⁹Yahweh declares that at the time when Yahweh punishes you, the king of Judah and all his officials will be very
afraid.

The priests and the prophets will be terrified.”

¹⁰Then I replied, “Yahweh my God, you completely deceived the people by telling them that there would be peace
in Jerusalem, but now our enemies are ready to slaughter us with their swords!”

¹¹When that happens, Yahweh will say to the people of Jerusalem,
“A huge army will come to attack you.

They will not be like a gentle breeze that separates the wheat from the chaff.

They will be like a very hot wind that blows in from the desert.

¹²They will be like a strong blast that I will send.

Now I am declaring that I will punish you.”

¹³And the people in Jerusalem will say, “Our enemies are about to rush down on us; their chariots are like
whirlwinds.

Their horses are faster than eagles.

It will be terrible for us!

¹⁴You people of Jerusalem cleanse your inner beings,
in order that Yahweh will rescue you.

How long will you continue to think about doing evil deeds?

¹⁵From the city of Dan in the far north to the hills of Ephraim a few miles north of Jerusalem messengers are
proclaiming that disasters are coming.”

¹⁶So I said this to the people in other nations,
and also announced it in Jerusalem,

“Yahweh says that an army is coming to Jerusalem from far away;

they will shout a battle cry against the cities of Judah.

¹⁷They will set up tents around Jerusalem like people set up temporary shelters around a field at harvest time.
That will happen because the people of Judah have rebelled against me.

¹⁸You will be punished very severely;
it will be as though a sword has stabbed your hearts.
But you are causing those things to happen to you
because of the evil things that you have done.”

¹⁹Then I said to myself, “I am extremely anguished;
the pain in my inner being is very severe.
My heart beats wildly!
But I cannot remain silent
because I have heard our enemies blowing their trumpets
to announce that the battle against Judah will start immediately!

²⁰Disasters will occur one after another
until the whole land is ruined.
Suddenly all our tents will be destroyed;
even the curtains inside the tents will be ripped apart.

²¹How long will this battle continue?
How long will I continue to see the enemy battle flags
and hear the sound of their trumpets being blown?

²²Yahweh says: My people are very foolish!
They do not have a relationship with me.
They are like stupid children
who do not understand anything.
They very cleverly do what is wrong,
but they do not know how to do what is good.

²³God gave me a vision in which I saw
that the earth was barren and without form.
I looked at the sky,
and there was no light there.

²⁴I looked at the mountains and hills,

and they shook and moved from side to side.

²⁵I looked and saw that all there were no more people
and all the birds had flown away.

²⁶I looked and saw that the fields that previously were fertile had become a desert.
The cities were all ruined;
they had all been destroyed by Yahweh because he was extremely angry.”

²⁷This is what Yahweh is saying,
“the entire land of Judah will be ruined,
but I will not destroy it completely.

²⁸I will do to my people what I said that I would do,
and I will not change my mind.
So when that happens, it will be as though the earth will mourn
and the sky will become very dark.

²⁹When the people hear the sound of the enemy cavalry and archers marching,
they will be terrified as they flee from their cities.
Some of them will find places to hide in the bushes,
and others will run toward the quarries to escape being killed by their enemies.
All the cities in Judah will be abandoned;
not one person will remain in them.

³⁰So you who will surely be destroyed,
what will you do then?
Even though you have worn beautiful clothes and jewelry
and paint around your eyes,
those things will not help you,
because the people in other countries that you think love you really despise you,
and they will try to kill you.

³¹It is as though I already hear the people in Jerusalem crying very loudly,
as a woman cries when she is giving birth to her first child;
she gasps for breath and pleads for someone to help her,
and she shouts, ‘Something terrible is happening to me; they are about to murder me!’”

Chapter 5

¹Yahweh said to the people of Jerusalem, "Go up and down every street.

Search in the marketplaces to find people who do what is fair,
who try to be faithful to me.

If you find even one person like that,

I will forgive the people of Jerusalem and not destroy their city.

²But when the people there swear an official oath by Yahweh's life,
they are lying."

³So I prayed, "Yahweh, you are certainly searching for people who are faithful to you.

You punished your people, but they did not pay any attention.

You crushed them, but they ignored what you were telling them to do.

They were extremely stubborn
and refused to return to you."

⁴Then I thought, "We cannot expect these people to act righteously, because they are poor;
they do not have any sense.

They do not know the way Yahweh wants them to conduct their lives;

they do not know what God requires them to do.

⁵So, I will go and talk to their leaders,
because they surely know how God wants them to conduct their lives."

But they also have stopped obeying Yahweh,
and they will not allow him to lead them.

⁶Because of that, lions will come out of the forests and kill them;
wolves from the desert will attack them;
leopards that lurk outside their cities will maul anyone who walks outside the cities.

Those things will happen because the people have sinned very much against God
and have turned away from him very frequently.

⁷Yahweh says, "I cannot forgive these people;
even their children have abandoned me.

When they solemnly declare something, they ask their gods to show that what they say is true.

I gave my people everything that they needed,

but they often went to the high places on the hills, where they worshiped their idols and committed adultery there.

⁸Just like well fed male horses neigh, wanting to mate with female horses,
each of the men desires to sleep with his neighbor's wife.

⁹Should I not punish them for this?

I will certainly get revenge on this nation whose people behave like that!

¹⁰The people of Judah and Israel are like a vineyard.

Go along the rows in their vineyards

and get rid of most of the people,

but do not kill all of them.

These people do not belong to me,

so get rid of them,

like a gardener lops off branches from a vine.

¹¹The people of Israel and Judah have turned away from me completely.

¹²They have lied about me and said,

'He cannot do anything to help us!

He will not punish us!

He will not send disasters on us!

We will not experience wars or famines!

¹³What God's prophets say is nothing but wind!

They do not have messages from God!

And because they have not believed me, all of these things will happen to them!"

¹⁴So, this is what Yahweh, the commander of the armies of angels in heaven, has said to me,

"Because my people are saying those things,

I will give you a message to tell them that will be like a fire,

and these people will be like wood that the fire will burn up completely!

¹⁵Listen to Yahweh's declaration, you people of Israel:

I will bring the army of a distant nation to attack you.

It is a very powerful nation that has existed for a long time.

They speak a language that you do not know,

and which you will not be able to understand.

¹⁶Their soldiers are all very strong,

and the arrows from their quivers will send many Judean men to their graves.

¹⁷They will eat the food that you have harvested from your fields,
even though it should be your own children who eat your bread.

They will kill your flocks of sheep and herds of cattle.

They will eat your grapes and your figs.

They will also destroy your cities that have high walls around them
and kill the people with their swords.

¹⁸But even when those things happen, I will not get rid of all of you.

¹⁹And when the people ask, 'Why is Yahweh doing this to us?'

you will tell them, 'You rejected him and worshiped foreign gods in your own land,
so now you will become slaves of foreigners in a land that is not your land.'

²⁰Yahweh instructed me to proclaim this message to the people of Israel and Judah,

²¹'Listen to this, you people who so are foolish, and you who have no understanding!

You have eyes, but you cannot see.

Yes, you have ears, but you cannot hear anything.

²²Why do you not have any awesome respect for me?

You should tremble when you are in my presence!

I, Yahweh, am the one who put a barrier along the shores

so that the waters of the ocean cannot cross it and flood the land.

The waves roll and roar, but they cannot go past that barrier.

²³But you people are not like the waves that obey me.

You people are very stubborn and rebellious,

and have constantly turned away from me.

²⁴You do not say to yourselves,

'Let us have an awesome respect for Yahweh our God,

the one who sends us rain at the times that we need it,

the one who causes the grain to become ripe at the harvest season.'

²⁵It is because of the wrong things that you have done, that those good things have not happened.

It is because of the sins that you have committed that you have been prevented from receiving those blessings.

²⁶Among my people are wicked people who hide along the roads to ambush people

like men who hunt birds put nets to catch them.

²⁷Like a hunter has a cage full of birds that he has captured,

their homes are full of things that they have gotten by deceiving others
so now they are very rich and powerful.

²⁸They are big and fat

because they eat rich food, and there is no limit to the evil deeds that they have done.

In court, they do not help ordinary people get judges to decide fairly for them, and they do not try to defend orphans.

They do not even want to listen to them in court.

²⁹So I will certainly punish them for doing those things.

I, Yahweh, declare that I will certainly get revenge on their nation.

³⁰Very appalling things are happening in this country:

³¹Prophets speak only lies

and priests rule by their own authority,

yet you people like that!

But when you start to experience disasters, what will you do?

Chapter 6

¹You people in Jerusalem who are from the tribe of Benjamin,

flee from this city!

Blow the trumpets in the city of Tekoa south of Jerusalem!

Send up a smoke signal in the city of Beth Hakerem

to warn the people of the coming danger!

A powerful army will come against you from the north,

and they will cause great destruction.

²Jerusalem is like a beautiful woman,

but it will soon be destroyed.

³Enemy kings, the shepherds of foreign people groups, will come with their armies and set up their tents around the city,

and each king will choose a part of the city for his soldiers to destroy as shepherds divide their pastures for their flocks of sheep.

⁴The kings will tell their troops,

'Make the sacrifices necessary to get ready for battle.

We should attack them before noontime,

but even if we arrive there late in the afternoon,

⁵We will attack them at night
and tear down their fortresses.”

⁶Yahweh, the commander of the armies of angels in heaven, says this,
“I will command those soldiers to cut down the trees outside Jerusalem
and to build ramps up to the top of the city walls!
This city must be punished
because everyone there continually oppresses others.

⁷Its people keep doing wicked deeds,
just as a well keeps producing water.
The noise from people doing violent and destructive actions is heard everywhere.
I continually see people who are suffering and wounded.

⁸Listen to what I am warning you, you people of Jerusalem,
because if you do not listen, I will reject you
and cause your land to become desolate,
a land where no one lives.”

⁹Yahweh, the commander of the angel armies, says this,
“Your enemies will cause your country to become as desolate as a vineyard from which all the grapes have been
completely stripped from the vines.
Their soldiers will seize the possessions of those who remain in Israel after the others have been exiled
like farmers go to the vines again to pick any grapes that were left.

¹⁰Who can I, Jeremiah, speak to? Who would listen to me, even if I spoke to them?
The ears of the Israelite people are unable to hear what I have to tell them.
See! the message Yahweh gave me to tell them is offensive to them.
When they hear the message of Yahweh, they hate what I tell them!”

¹¹After hearing this I became very angry,
as Yahweh is angry, and I could not hold myself back any longer.
So Yahweh said to me,
“Tell the children in the streets and the young men who gather together.
Tell the men and their wives;
tell the very old people, also.

¹²Tell the men that I will give their houses to their enemies,
and I will give their property and their wives to them, also,

when I punish the people who live in this land!

¹³Everyone is trying to get money by tricking others,
from the the least important people to the most important people.

Even my prophets and priests, they all lie to get what they want.

¹⁴They act as though the sins of my people are like small wounds that they can easily treat.

They tell the people that everything will go well with them, but that is not true; things will not go well with them.

¹⁵They should be ashamed about the disgusting things that they do, but they are not ashamed at all. They do not even know how to blush.

So, they also will be among those who will be killed. They will be destroyed when I punish them.”

¹⁶This is also what Yahweh said to the Israelite people,

“Stand at the crossroads and look at the people who pass by.

Ask them what was the good behavior that their ancestors had long ago.

And when they tell you, behave that way.

If you do that, you will find rest for yourselves.

But you said that you did not want to do that!

¹⁷I sent my prophets who were like watchmen.

They told you to listen carefully when the trumpets blow to warn you that your enemies are approaching,
but you did not want to listen.

¹⁸Therefore, you people in the other nations, listen to this:

Pay attention to what is going to happen to the Israelite people.

¹⁹Listen, all of you!

I am going to cause disasters to happen to the Israelite people.

That is what will happen to them because they have refused to listen to what I told them.

They have refused to obey my laws.

²⁰You Israelite people, when you burn frankincense that came from Sheba
and when you offer to me sweet-smelling anointing oil that came from far away,

I will not be pleased with your sacrifices.

I will not accept the sacrifices that are completely burned on the altar;

I am not pleased with any of your sacrifices.

²¹Therefore, I will put obstacles on the roads on which my people will travel.

Men and their sons and people’s neighbors and friends will stumble over those obstacles and fall down;
everyone will die.”

²²Yahweh also says this,

“You will see a huge army marching toward you from the north.
An army of a great nation very far away is preparing to attack you.

²³They have bows and arrows and spears;
they are very cruel, and do not act mercifully to anyone.
As they ride along on their horses,
the horses’ feet sound like the roaring of the ocean waves;
they are riding in battle formation
to attack you people of Jerusalem.”

²⁴The people of Jerusalem say to each other,
“We have heard reports about the enemy;
so we are very frightened, with the result that we are weak.
We are very afraid, and worried,
like women who are about to give birth to babies.

²⁵So, do not go out into the fields! Do not go on the roads,
because the enemy soldiers have swords and they are everywhere;
they are coming from all directions, and we are extremely afraid.”

²⁶So I, Jeremiah, say to you,
“My dear people, put on rough clothes and sit in ashes
to show how much you are grieving.
Mourn loudly and cry very much,
as a mother would cry when her only son has died.
For your enemies are very near,
and they are going to destroy everything.”

²⁷Then Yahweh said to me,
“Jeremiah, I have caused you to become like someone who heats metal very hot to completely burn the impurities.
You will examine my people’s behavior.

²⁸You will find out that they are very stubborn rebels:
they are always slandering others.
Their inner beings are as hard as bronze or iron;
they all continually deceive others.

²⁹A metalworker causes the bellows to blow very hard to make the fire very hot to completely burn up the impurities.

But just as a fire does not cause all the waste material to run off,
it is impossible to separate the people from their wicked deeds.

³⁰I, Yahweh, have rejected them;

I say that they are like worthless silver.”

Chapter 7

¹Yahweh gave me another message. He said to me, ²“Go to the entrance of my house and give this message to the people: You people of Judah, who worship here, listen to this message from Yahweh. ³This is what Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, says to you: ‘If you improve your ways and start doing what is right, I will allow you to remain living in your land. ⁴But some people are repeatedly saying to you, ‘The temple of Yahweh is here, so we will be safe; he will not allow us and the temple to be destroyed.’ But do not pay attention to what they say, because they are deceiving you. ⁵I will act mercifully to you only if you change your behavior and stop doing evil things, and if you start to act fairly toward others, ⁶and if you stop oppressing foreigners who live in your country, and orphans and widows, and if you stop murdering people and worshiping foreign gods. ⁷If you do what I have told you, I will allow you to stay in this land that I promised to your ancestors long ago that it would belong to them and their descendants forever.

⁸People are repeatedly telling you, ‘The temple is here, so we are safe,’ and you are trusting that what they are saying is true. But those people are deceiving you; what they say is worthless. ⁹You think that you can steal things, murder people, commit adultery, tell lies in court, and worship Baal and all those other gods that you did not know about previously. ¹⁰Then you think you can come here and stand in front of this temple, which is my temple, and say ‘Nothing bad will happen to us!’, while you continue to do all those disgusting things. ¹¹Perhaps you do not know that you have made this temple, which is my temple, to become like a cave where thieves hide. But I, Yahweh, am telling you that I have seen all these things!

¹²Long ago I put my sacred tent in the district of Shiloh, to be a place where people would worship me. Think about how I destroyed it because my people, the Israelite people, did many wicked things there. ¹³And while you were continually doing those wicked things, I told you about it many times, but you refused to listen. I called out to you, but you refused to answer me. ¹⁴Therefore, just as I destroyed Shiloh, I will now destroy this temple that was built for people to worship me, this temple that you trust in, in this place that I gave to you and your ancestors. ¹⁵And I will expel you from this land and send you to other countries far away from me, just as I did to your relatives, the people of Israel.”

¹⁶Yahweh said to me, “Jeremiah, do not pray for these people any longer. Do not call out on their behalf or plead for me to help them, because I will not pay any attention to you. ¹⁷Do you see the wicked things that they are doing in the streets of Jerusalem and in the other towns in Judah? ¹⁸The children gather firewood and their fathers make fires on the altars to burn sacrifices. The women knead dough to make cakes to offer to their goddess Asherah who is called the Queen of Heaven. And on their altars they pour out offerings of wine to their other idols. All of those things cause me to become extremely angry! ¹⁹But I am not the one whom they are hurting; they are really hurting themselves by doing these things for which they should be very ashamed!” ²⁰So Yahweh the Lord says this: “Because I am extremely angry with what happens at this place, I will punish these people severely; my being very angry will be like a fire that will not be extinguished, and I will destroy the people, their animals, their fruit trees, and their crops.”

²¹Therefore, this is what Yahweh, commander of the armies of angels, the God of Israel, says: “Take away your offerings that you bring to burn completely on your altars and your other sacrifices; do not give them to me; eat

them yourselves! ²²When I led your ancestors out of Egypt, it was not offerings to be completely burned on the altar or other sacrifices that I wanted from them. ²³What I told them was, 'Obey me; if you do that, I will be your God and you will be my people. If you do the things that I want you to do, everything will go well for you.' ²⁴But your ancestors would not pay any attention to me. They continued to do the evil things that they wanted to do, everything that in their stubborn inner beings they desired to do. Instead of coming closer to me, they went further away from me. ²⁵From the day that your ancestors left Egypt until now, I have continued to send my prophets to you repeatedly. ²⁶But you, my people, have not listened to me or paid attention to what I said; you have been stubborn, and you have done more sinful things than your ancestors did."

²⁷Then Yahweh said to me, "When you tell all this to my people, they will not listen to you. When you call to them, they will not answer. ²⁸Say to them, 'You people of Judah have not obeyed Yahweh, your God; you have not accepted it when he tried to correct you. No one among you is truthful; you do not say anything that is true; you speak only lies.'

²⁹So, tell them to cut off their hair to show that they are mourning; tell them to go up into the barren hills and sing a sad funeral song,

Because I have completely rejected this generation of people who have made me angry." ³⁰Yahweh says this: "The people of Judah have done many things that I say are evil. They have set up their disgusting idols in my temple, causing it to become an unacceptable place to worship me. ³¹They have built altars at Topheth in Hinnom Valley outside Jerusalem, and they sacrifice their sons and daughters on those altars. I never commanded them to do that; it was not even in my thoughts! ³²So they should beware! There will be a time when that place will no longer be called Topheth or the Hinnom Valley; instead, it will be called the Valley of Slaughter. There will be a huge number of people who will be buried there, with the result that there will be no space to bury more bodies. ³³The corpses of my people that are not buried and are left on the ground will be eaten by vultures and wild animals, and there will be no one to shoo them away. ³⁴There will be no one singing and laughing anymore in the streets of Jerusalem; there will be no more joyful voices of bridegrooms and brides in Judah, because the land will be completely destroyed."

Chapter 8

¹Yahweh says, "After your enemies have destroyed you, then they will break open the graves of your kings and other officials who lived in Judah, and the graves of your priests and prophets and other people who lived there. ²They will take out their bones from their graves and dishonor them by scattering them on the ground under the sun and the moon and the stars—those are the gods which my people loved and served and worshiped. No one will gather up their bones and bury them again; they will remain scattered on the ground like dung. ³And all the people of this wicked nation who are still alive and whom I have exiled to other countries will say, 'We would prefer to die than to continue to stay alive here in these countries.' That will be true because I, Yahweh, have said it."

⁴Yahweh said to me, "Jeremiah, tell the people that this is what I, Yahweh, am saying to them: 'When people fall down, they get up again, do they not?

When people are going along a road and find out that they are walking on the wrong road, they go back and find the correct road, do they not?

⁵Yes, they do, so why do these people of Judah continue trusting in those idols that have deceived them?

They continue turning away from me and betray my covenant, even though I have warned them of what will happen.

⁶I have listened carefully to what they say, but they do not say what they should say. Not one of them is sorry for having sinned.

No one says, "I have done wicked things." They are sinning and doing what they want to;

Charging into sinful behavior with the excitement of a horse that is running into a battle.

⁷Even the stork knows when the seasons change,
and the dove, the swallow, and the crane understanding the time of their migration!

But my people do not know what I, Yahweh, require them to do.

⁸Your men who teach you the laws that Moses wrote have been saying false things about those laws.
So, why do they continue saying, "We are very wise because we have the laws of Yahweh"?

⁹Those teachers, who think that they are wise, will be ashamed and dismayed when they are taken to other countries by their enemies

Because they sinned by rejecting what I told them. Truly, they were not very wise to do that!

¹⁰So, I will give their wives to other men; I will give their fields to the enemy soldiers who conquer them.

All the people, including those who are least important and those who are most important, they all are trying to get money by tricking others

Even my prophets and priests, they all lie to get what they want.

¹¹They act as though the sins of my people are like small wounds that they can easily treat.

They tell the people that everything will go well with them, but that is not true; things will not go well with them.

¹²They should be ashamed when they do disgusting things, but they do not even know how to show on their faces that they are ashamed about their sins.

So, they also will be among those who will be killed. They will be destroyed when I punish them.

¹³I will allow their enemies to take away the figs and grapes that the people would have harvested from their fields. Their fruit trees will all wither.

They will not receive all the blessings that I prepared for them. This will certainly happen because I, Yahweh, have said it."

¹⁴Then the people will say, "Why should we wait here in these small towns? We should go to the cities that have high walls around them, but even if we do that we will be killed there,

Because Yahweh our God has decided that we must be destroyed; it is as though he has given us a cup of poison to drink, because we sinned against him.

¹⁵We hoped that things would go well for us, but things have not gone well.

We hoped that we would recover and be strong again, but only things that terrify us are happening to us.

¹⁶People far north in the Israelite city of Dan can already hear the snorting of the horses of those who are preparing to attack us. It is as though the entire land is shaking as their army approaches;

they are coming to destroy our land and everything in it, the people and the cities."

¹⁷Yahweh says, "I will send those enemy soldiers to Judah, and they will be like poisonous snakes among you.

No one will be able to stop them from attacking you; they will attack you like snakes do, and kill you."

¹⁸My grief for the people of Judah has overwhelmed any sense of happiness. I am very sad in my inner being.

¹⁹Throughout our land, the people ask, "Has Yahweh abandoned Jerusalem?"

Is he, our city's king, no longer there?" Yahweh replies, "If they want me to be in Jerusalem, why do the people worship idols and foreign gods?"

²⁰The people say, "The harvest season is finished, the summer has ended, but Yahweh still has not rescued us from our enemies."

²¹I cry because my people have been crushed. I mourn, and I am completely dismayed.

²²I ask, "Surely there is medicinal balm in the region of Gilead! Surely there are doctors there!"

But my people have been badly wounded in their spirits, and nothing can heal them.

Chapter 9

¹"I wish that my head could produce as many tears as water from a spring, and that my eyes were like a fountain of tears,

since I cry night and day for all of my people who have been killed by their enemies.

²I wish that I could leave my people and forget them, and go and live in a shack in the desert,

because they have not remained faithful to Yahweh; they are a mob of people who deceive others.

³They use their tongues to tell lies just as people shoot arrows with bows.

They are powerful, but not because they are faithful, but they go about doing wicked things. "They do not know me," Yahweh says.

⁴Do not trust your neighbors and even your brothers! They all are as deceitful as Jacob was.

They slander each other and tell lies about each other.

⁵They deceive their friends and never tell the truth.

They lie continually and, because of that, they have become skilled liars; they do one oppressive deed after another until they grow tired from sinning so much.

⁶Jeremiah, everyone living around you is a deceiver. Not one of them will admit that I am God.

⁷Therefore I, Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, say this:

Listen carefully to what I say: I will test my people, like a metalworker puts metal in a hot fire to completely burn out the impure bits.

Because of all the evil things that my people have done, there is absolutely nothing else that I can do.

⁸What they say injures people like poisoned arrows do.

They say to their neighbors, 'I hope things will go well for you,' while they are planning to kill them.

⁹Should I not punish them for doing that?

Yes, I should certainly get revenge on the people of a nation that does things like that!"

¹⁰So, I will weep and wail for the people who live in the mountains and in the pastures,

because those areas will be desolate, and no one will live there.

There will be no cattle there to call to each other,

and all the birds and wild animals will have fled to other places.

¹¹Yahweh also says, "I will cause Jerusalem to become a heap of ruins, and only jackals will live there.

I will destroy the towns of Judah, with the result that they will be completely deserted; no people will live there."

¹²I said, "Only people who are very wise can understand these things.

Only those who have been taught by Yahweh can explain these things to others.

The wise people are the only ones who can explain why the land will be completely ruined with the result that everyone will be afraid to travel through it."

¹³Yahweh replied, "These things will happen because my people have rejected my laws which I gave to them; they have not obeyed me or my instructions. ¹⁴Instead, they have stubbornly done the things that they wanted in their inner beings to do. They have worshiped the idols that represent the god Baal, which is what their ancestors did.

¹⁵So now listen to what I, Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, the God of the Israelites, say: What I will do will be like giving these people bitter things to eat and poison to drink: ¹⁶I will scatter them to many nations which neither they nor their ancestors have known anything about; I will enable their enemies to strike them with swords until I have destroyed them."

¹⁷This is what Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, says:

"Think about what is happening,

then summon those women who mourn when someone has died.

¹⁸Tell them to come quickly and start to wail,

with the result that tears will stream down from your eyes.

¹⁹Listen to the people of Jerusalem calling out, saying,

'We have been ruined!

We have experienced a terrible disaster!

Now we are very ashamed,

because our houses have been destroyed by our enemies, and we are being forced to leave our land.'

²⁰You women, listen to what Yahweh says.

Pay attention to his words.

Teach your daughters to wail.

Teach each other how to sing funeral songs.

²¹You must learn to sing funeral songs because people will be dying in your houses and in palaces.

There will be no more children playing in the streets,

there will be no more young men gathering in the city squares.

²²There will be corpses scattered across the fields like dung;
their dead bodies will lie there like grain that has been cut by reapers,
and there will be no one still alive to bury them.

²³Yahweh says this:

“Wise men should not boast about their being wise,
strong men should not boast about their being strong;
and rich people should not boast about their being rich.

²⁴Instead, those who want to boast should boast about their knowing me
and about understanding that I am Yahweh,
that I am kind and just and righteous,
that I faithfully love people,
and that I am delighted with people who act that way.

²⁵⁻²⁶There will be a time when I will punish all those people who have changed their bodies by circumcising them but who have not changed their inner beings: The Egyptian, the Moab, of Edom, and of the Ammon people groups, all those who live close to desert areas far from Judah. I will even punish the people of Israel because they are only circumcised on the outside, and physically, and not on the inside, in their inner self.” ²⁶

Chapter 10

¹You people of Israel, listen to what Yahweh says:

²“Do not act like the people of other nations act, and do not be terrified by strange things that you see in the sky, even though they cause the people of other nations to be terrified.

³The customs of the people of other nations are worthless. For example, they cut down a tree in the forest. Then a skilled worker cuts a section of it and uses his chisel to carve an idol from that section.

⁴Then people decorate the idol with silver and gold.

Then they fasten it securely with nails in order that it will not topple over.

⁵Then the idol stands there like a scarecrow in a field of cucumbers.

It cannot speak,

and people must carry it,

because it cannot walk.

Do not be afraid of idols,

because they cannot harm anyone,

and they cannot do anything good to help anyone.”

⁶Yahweh, there is no one like you.

You are great, and you are very powerful.

⁷You are the king of all the nations!

Everyone should revere you,

because that is what you deserve.

Among all the wise people on the earth

and in all the kingdoms where they live,

there is no one like you.

⁸Those people who think that they are very wise are stupid and foolish.

The idols that they worship are only made of wood!

Those idols certainly cannot teach them anything.

⁹People hammer silver from Tarshish and gold from Uphaz into sheets,

and then they give those sheets of silver and gold to skilled workers to cover the idols.

Then they put on those idols expensive purple robes

that are made by skilled workers.

¹⁰But Yahweh is the only true God;

he is the all-powerful God,

the king who rules forever.

When he is angry, all the earth shakes;

and the people of the nations cannot endure what he does when he is angry with them.

¹¹You Israelite people, tell this to those people: “Those idols did not make the sky and the earth, and they will disappear from the earth.”

¹²But Yahweh made the earth by his power;

he made firm ground to stand on by his wisdom

and stretched out the sky by his understanding.

¹³When he speaks loudly, there is thunder in the sky;

he causes clouds to form over every part of the earth.

He sends lightning with the rain

and releases the winds from his storehouses.

¹⁴People are as senseless as animals and know nothing of what God desires!

those who make idols are always disappointed

because their idols do nothing for them.

The images that they make are not real gods;
they are lifeless.

15Idols are worthless; they are just objects that make a mockery of the true God;
there will be a time when they all will be destroyed.

16But the God whom we Israelites worship is not like those idols;
he is the one who created everything that exists;
we, the tribe of Israel, belong to him;
he is the commander of the angel armies.

17Yahweh says this to the people of Jerusalem:
“The army of your enemies surrounds your city,
so gather up your possessions and prepare to leave the city.

18I will soon throw you out of this land
and cause you to experience great troubles,
with the result that you will begin to think of me again.”

19The people replied, “It is as though we have been badly wounded,
and we are very grieved;
It is as though we have a very serious illness,
and we must endure the pain.

20It is as though our great tent is destroyed;
the ropes that held it up have been cut;
our children have gone away from us and will not return;
there are no people left to rebuild our great tent.

21Our leaders have become just like animals;
they no longer ask Yahweh to guide them,
so they will no longer prosper,
and all those over whom they rule will be scattered.

22Listen! Our enemies’ armies in the north are making a very great noise
as they march toward us.
The towns in Judah will be destroyed,
and they will become a place where jackals live.”

²³Yahweh, I know that no person controls what will happen to him;
no one is able to direct the events that he will experience.

²⁴So correct us, but do it gently.

Do not correct us when you are angry,
because we would die if you did that.

²⁵Punish all the nations whose people do not acknowledge that you are God;
punish all the nations whose people do not worship you,
because they are completely destroying us people of Israel
and they are causing our land to soon be only a desert.

Chapter 11

¹This is another message that Yahweh told me: ²"Listen to the agreement that I made with the ancestors of the people of Jerusalem and the other cities in Judah. Then tell that agreement to them again. ³Then tell them that I, Yahweh, the God whom the Israelite people worship, said that I will curse everyone who does not obey what was written in that agreement that I made with them. ⁴It is the same agreement that I made with their ancestors when I brought them out of Egypt. What happened to them in Egypt was terrible; it was as though they were living in a hot furnace. When I brought them out of Egypt, I told them to obey me, and to do everything that I had commanded them to do. I also told them that if they obeyed me, they would be my people and I would be their God. ⁵Now tell these people that if they obey me, I will do what I promised to do for their ancestors. I will enable them to continue living in this very fertile land in which they now live."

I replied, "Yahweh, I trust you that what you have said will happen."

⁶Then Yahweh said to me, "Go into the streets of Jerusalem and to the other cities in Judah. Proclaim my message to the people. Tell them to listen to the agreement that I made with their ancestors and to obey it. ⁷When I brought their ancestors out of Egypt, I solemnly pleaded with them many times to obey me, and I am still pleading with them now. ⁸But they did not obey me or even pay any attention to me. Everyone continued to be stubborn and to do the evil things that they wanted to do. I commanded them to do what was written in the agreement, but they refused. So I punished them in all the ways that I promised that I would."

⁹Then Yahweh said to me, "The people of Jerusalem and the other cities in Judah are rebelling against me. ¹⁰Their ancestors refused to do what I told them to do, and now these people have returned to committing the sins that their ancestors committed. They are worshiping other gods. The people of Israel disobeyed the agreement that I made with their ancestors, and now the people of Judah have done the same thing. ¹¹So now I, Yahweh, am warning them that I will cause disasters to come to them, and they will not escape. And when they call out for me to help them, I will not pay attention. ¹²When that happens, the people in Jerusalem and other cities in Judah will offer sacrifices and burn incense to their gods and ask for their help, but those gods will not be able to save them when those disasters come to them. ¹³There are now as many gods in Judah as there are towns in Judah; the people of Jerusalem have erected as many altars to burn incense to those gods as there are streets in Jerusalem.

¹⁴Jeremiah, do not pray for these people, and do not plead with me to rescue them. If you plead with me, I will not pay attention; and if they call out to me for help when they are in distress, I will not listen to them."

¹⁵Then Yahweh said,

"The people of Judah whom I love certainly no longer have a right to come to my temple,

because they continually do many evil things.

They think that continually making sacrifices of meat to me certainly will protect them from disasters, with the result that they will be able to rejoice.

¹⁶I previously said that they were like an olive tree full of green leaves

with a lot of good olives on it,

but now I will send their enemies to attack them furiously;

it is as though I will break off their branches, and their city will be destroyed by fire. ¹⁷It is as though the people of Judah and Israel were a beautiful olive tree that I, Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, planted,

but now, by burning incense to their god Baal, they have caused me to become very angry.

So now I have decided to destroy them."

¹⁸Yahweh revealed to me that my enemies were planning to kill me. ¹⁹Before he did that, I was like a lamb that was being led away to be slaughtered; I did not know what they were planning to do. I did not know that they were saying, "Let us get rid of this tree and its fruit," so I did not know that they intended to kill me, in order that no one would remember me.

²⁰Then I prayed, "Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, you judge people justly,

and you examine everything that we are thinking.

Allow me to watch you getting revenge on the people who want to kill me,

because I trust that you will do for me what is right."

²¹It was the men of my own town, Anathoth, who wanted to kill me, and they told me that they would kill me if I did not stop prophesying what Yahweh told me to say. ²²So Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, said about them, "I will punish them. Their young men will be killed in wars, and their children will die because they have no food. ²³I have set a time when I will bring disasters to the people of Anathoth, and when that happens, none of them will remain alive."

Chapter 12

¹Yahweh, whenever I tell you that I am unhappy about what is happening to me,

you always act justly.

So now allow me to ask about one more thing that I do not understand:

Why are wicked people often very prosperous?

Why do things go very well for dishonest people?

²You allow them to prosper

like trees that grow tall and bear a lot of fruit.

They always say good things about you,

but in their inner beings, they are really far from you.

³But Yahweh, you know me very well.

You see what I do and you are able to know what I am thinking.

Set them apart like we separate the sheep out of the herd so
that on the day of slaughter they will be butchered.

⁴This land is becoming very dry and even the grass is withering.

Even the wild animals and the birds have all died
because the people who live in this land are very wicked.

All this has happened because the people have said,
"Yahweh does not know what has happened to us!"

⁵Then to show me that I needed to be prepared to endure even greater difficulties, Yahweh said to me,

"It is as though you have become exhausted from racing against men;

so how will you be able to race against horses?

If you only prepare to run on open ground,

what will happen to you when you are running through the thick foliage near the Jordan River?

⁶Already your brothers and other members of your own family oppose you.

They plot against you and they say bad things about you.

So even if they say nice things about you,
do not trust them!

⁷I have abandoned my Israelite people,

the people whom I chose to belong to me.

I have allowed their enemies to conquer the people whom I love.

⁸My people have become to me like a lion in the forest.

It is as though they roar at me like a lion,
so now I hate them.

⁹My chosen people have become like speckled birds

that are surrounded by vultures waiting to eat their flesh.

Tell all the wild animals to come

and eat the flesh until they are full.

¹⁰Many rulers from other countries have come with their armies and devastated my people
whom I care for like a farmer takes care of his vineyard.

They have caused my beautiful land to become a barren desert where no one lives.

¹¹They have caused it to become completely empty;

So now it is as though I am mourning the death of a loved one.

The whole land is desolate,
and no one worries about it.

¹²The soldiers of our enemies have marched across all the barren hilltops.

But I, Yahweh, am using those armies to punish your land from one end to the other,
and no one will escape.

¹³It is as though my people planted wheat,
but now they are harvesting thorns.

They have become very tired because of much hard work,
but they have gained nothing from all that work.

They will be very disappointed because their harvests will be very small,
and that will happen because I, Yahweh, am extremely angry with them."

¹⁴This is also what Yahweh said to me: "I will punish the evil nearby nations that have been trying to take away the land that I gave to my Israelite people. I will force them to leave their own lands. But I will throw the people of Judah out of their lands, also. ¹⁵But later I will act mercifully toward those nations again, and I will bring them back to their own lands again. Each clan will come back to its own land. ¹⁶And if the people of the other nations whose armies have invaded Israel learn the religious customs of my people, and if they learn that I am listening when they solemnly promise that they will do something, like they taught my people to believe that their god Baal was listening when they made solemn promises, I will cause them to become prosperous, and they also will be my people. ¹⁷But I will expel any nation whose people refuse to obey me, and I will destroy that nation and its people. That will surely happen because I, Yahweh, have said it."

Chapter 13

¹One day Yahweh said to me, "Go and buy a linen waistcloth. Put it on, but do not wash it." ²So I bought a very nice waistcloth, which is what Yahweh told me to do, and I put it on.

³Then later Yahweh gave me another message. ⁴He said, "Go to the Euphrates River and hide your waistcloth in a crevice in the rocks." ⁵So I went to the river and did what Yahweh told me to do.

⁶A long time later, Yahweh said to me, "Go back to the river and get the waistcloth that I told you to hide there." ⁷So I went to the Euphrates River and dug out the waistcloth from the crevice in which I had hidden it. But it was ruined, and useless.

⁸Then Yahweh gave me this message: ⁹"What happened to your waistcloth shows that I will destroy the things that the people of Jerusalem and other places in Judah are very proud of. ¹⁰Those wicked people refuse to pay attention to what I say. They stubbornly do just what they desire to do; they worship other gods. Therefore, they will become completely useless, like your waistcloth. ¹¹Just like a waistcloth clings closely to a man's waist, I wanted the people of Israel and Judah to cling closely to me. I wanted them to be my people, people who would praise me and honor me. But they would not pay attention to me.

¹²So, tell this to them: 'Yahweh, the God whom you Israelite people worship, says that every leather wineskin should be filled with wine.' And when you tell that to them, they will reply, 'Of course we know that all wineskins should be filled with wine!' ¹³And then you must tell them, 'No, that is not what Yahweh means. What he said

means that he will cause this land to be filled with people who are drunk. That will include all of you—the king who sits on the throne that King David previously sat on, the priests and the prophets, and even the common people of Jerusalem. ¹⁴He is saying, 'I will cause a drunken brawl among you. Even parents will brawl with their children. I will not pity you or act mercifully toward you at all; pitying you will not prevent me from getting rid of you.'"

¹⁵You people of Judah, pay very careful attention.

Do not be proud, because Yahweh has spoken to you.

¹⁶It is as though he is ready to bring darkness on you

and to cause you to stumble and fall as you walk on the hills when it is becoming dark.

So praise Yahweh your God before that happens.

If you do not do that, you will look for light,

but all you will see is darkness and gloom.

¹⁷And if you still refuse to heed what he says,

what will happen to you because of your being proud will cause me to cry when I am alone.

My eyes will be filled with tears

because you, Yahweh's people,

whom he takes care of like a shepherd takes care of his flock,

will all be captured by your enemies and taken to other countries.

¹⁸You people of Judah, say to the king and to his mother,

"Come down from sitting on your thrones

and humbly sit in the dirt,

because your enemies will soon snatch from your heads your glorious crowns."

¹⁹The towns in the southern Judean wilderness will be surrounded by your enemies,

and no one will be able to get through their lines to rescue the people in those towns.

You people of Judah will be captured and taken away;

you will all be exiled.

²⁰You leaders of Jerusalem, open your eyes and look:

the enemy armies are ready to march down from the north.

When that happens, what will happen to the people of Judah who are like a beautiful flock of sheep,

people that he gave to you to take care of?

²¹What will you say when Yahweh appoints people from other countries to rule over you,

people who you mistakenly thought were your friends?

You will suffer very much pain,

like a woman who is about to give birth to a baby.

²²You will ask yourselves, "Why is this happening to us?"

I will reply that it is because of your many sins.

That is why soldiers of the invading armies will lift up the skirts of your women and rape them.

²³A man from Ethiopia certainly cannot change the color of his black skin,
and a leopard certainly cannot change its spots.

Similarly, you cannot start doing what is good,
because you have always done what is evil.

²⁴Yahweh says, "I will scatter you like chaff
that is blown away by the wind from the desert.

²⁵That is what is certainly going to happen to you,
the things that I have determined will happen to you,
because you have forgotten me,
and you are trusting in false gods.

²⁶It is as though I myself will pull your skirts up over your faces
and cause you to be very ashamed because everyone will be able to see your private parts.

²⁷I have seen that you act like men who are eager to commit adultery;
you are like male horses that whinny when they desire to mate with a female horse.

I have seen that you worship disgusting idols in the fields and on the hills.

You people of Jerusalem, terrible things will happen to you because you will not be obedient and live a good life!
How long will it be until you are acceptable to me again?"

Chapter 14

¹After there had been no rain in Judah for a long time, Yahweh gave Jeremiah this message:

²The people in Judah are very distressed;
people are sitting on the ground and mourning;
in all of Jerusalem people are crying loudly.

³The rich people send their servants to wells to get water,
but all the wells are dry.

The servants return with empty pitchers;
they cover their heads

because they are ashamed and humiliated.

⁴The ground is extremely dry and cracked open

because there has been no rain.

The farmers are ashamed that they cannot raise a crop,
so they also cover their heads.

⁵Even the doe abandons her newborn babies,

because there is no grass in the fields for them to eat.

⁶The wild donkeys stand on the barren hills,

panting like thirsty jackals.

They become blind

because there is no grass to eat.

⁷The people say, "Yahweh, if we have turned away from you and sinned many times,
we now know that we are being punished because of our sins!

Please help us

in order that everyone can see that you are very great and keep your promises.

⁸You are the one whom we Israelites confidently expect to do good things for us
when we have many troubles.

So, why do you not help us?

You act as though you are a stranger in our land,
like you are someone who is staying here for only one night.

⁹Are you also surprised about the terrible things that are happening to us?

Why do you act like you are unable to save anyone, even though you are a strong warrior?

Yahweh, you are here among us,

and others know that we are your people,

so do not abandon us!"

¹⁰And this is what Yahweh says to those people:

"You love to wander away from me;

you run from one idol to another.

Therefore, now I will no longer accept you,

and I will punish you for your sins."

¹¹Then Yahweh said to me, "Do not pray for these people anymore. ¹²When they fast, I will not pay any attention. When they bring to me their offerings of animals to be completely burned on the altar and their offerings of flour, I will not accept them. Instead, I will get rid of them by wars, by famines, and by diseases."

¹³Then I replied to him, "Yahweh my God, their prophets are telling the people that they will not experience wars or famines. They are telling the people that you will surely allow us to have peace in our land for many years."

¹⁴Yahweh replied to me, "Those prophets say that they are speaking what I tell them to say, but they are telling lies. I did not send them, so what they are saying is false. They say that they have received visions from me, and that they are telling things that I have revealed to them, but that is not true. They are saying foolish things that they have only thought of themselves. ¹⁵So this is what I say about those prophets who are predicting what will happen, saying that I told them those things: They are saying that we Israelites will not die from wars or famines, but I did not send those prophets. And they themselves will die from wars or from famines. ¹⁶And the people to whom they are predicting these things, they and their wives and their sons and their daughters, will also die from wars or from famines. Their corpses will be thrown into the streets of Jerusalem, and there will not be anyone to bury them. I will punish them like they deserve to be punished.

¹⁷So, Jeremiah, tell this to them about yourself:

'Day and night my eyes are full of tears.

I cannot stop crying.

I cry for my people,

who are very precious to me, as if they were my daughters.

I cry for them because they have been severely wounded;

and they will not recover or heal from this severe wound.

¹⁸If I go out into the fields,

I see corpses of people who have been slaughtered by our enemies.

If I walk along the streets of the city,

I see corpses of people who died from hunger.

The prophets and the priests travel through the land, preaching to people,

but they do not know what they are doing.'"

¹⁹Then I prayed this:

"Yahweh, have you completely rejected the people of Judah?

Do you really despise the people of Jerusalem?

Why have you wounded us very badly,

with the result that we will never be healed?

We hoped that we would have peace,

but there was no peace.

We hoped that there would be a time when we would be healed,

but all that we received were things that terrified us.

²⁰Yahweh, we admit that we are wicked people,
and that our ancestors also did many wicked things.
We have all sinned against you.

²¹But Yahweh, in order that we may honor you,
do not despise us.
Do not dishonor the city where your glorious throne is.
Please do not forget us,
and do not break your agreement with us.

²²Those idols that have been brought from other nations certainly cannot bring rain to us,
and the sky certainly cannot cause rain to fall.
Yahweh our God, you are the only one who can do things like that.
So we will confidently expect you to help us."

Chapter 15

¹Then Yahweh said this to me: "Even if Moses and Samuel could come back from their graves and stand in front of me and plead with me for these Israelite people, I would not act mercifully toward these people. I would tell you to send them away from me. Cause them to leave me! ²And if they ask you, 'Where shall we go?', tell them, 'This is what Yahweh says:

The ones that I say must die, will die:

The ones that I say must die in wars, will die in wars.

The ones that I say must die from hunger, will die from hunger.

The ones that I say must be captured and taken to other countries, will be captured and taken to other countries.

³I will send four things that will get rid of them: I will send enemy soldiers using swords to kill them. I will send wild dogs to drag away their corpses. I will send vultures to eat their corpses. And I will send other wild animals to eat what remains of their corpses. ⁴Because of the wicked things that King Manasseh did in Jerusalem, I will cause people in all the kingdoms of the earth to be horrified concerning what will happen in Judah to my people.

⁵You people of Jerusalem, no one will feel sorry for you.

No one will weep for you.

No one will wish that you would not be hurt.

⁶You people have abandoned me;

you have continued to walk away from me.

So, I will lift up my fist to smash you;

I am tired of acting mercifully toward.

⁷At the gates of your cities, I will scatter you like a farmer scatters the chaff from his grain by winnowing it.

You, my people, have refused to turn away from your evil behavior.

So, I will get rid of you,

and I will even cause your children to be killed.

⁸I will cause there to be more widows in Judah
than there are grains of sand on the seashore.

I will bring on you an enemy army
that will destroy your young men and cause their mothers to weep.

I will cause you to suddenly experience great suffering and become very terrified.

⁹A woman who has seven children will become faint and gasp for breath;
it will be as though her daylight will become darkness,
because most of her children will be dead,
and she will be disgraced and humiliated.

And her children who are still alive, I will enable your enemies to kill them.

That will surely happen because I, Yahweh, have said it.”

¹⁰I said to my mother, “I am very sad;
I wish that you had not given birth to me;
everyone in this land opposes me and quarrels with me.

I have not made anyone angry by lending or borrow money and then quarreling about it,
but everyone curses me anyway.”

¹¹But Yahweh replied to me,
“Jeremiah, I will take care of you.

And at times when you have the most troubles,
I will come on your behalf and protect you from your enemy.

¹²People of Judah, you know how strong iron is when it is mixed with bronze,
it is very hard and good for weapons.

That iron mixed with bronze metal is just like the strength of your enemies when they attack Judah from the north,
no one will be able to stop them.

¹³I will give all the valuable possessions of your people to their enemies,
without them paying for it.

Your people will lose everything valuable
because of all the sins that they have committed throughout the country.

14I will tell their enemies to force them to become their prisoners,
to take them to other lands that they have not experienced,
and force them to become their slaves.

That will happen because I am extremely angry with your people;
my anger is like a burning fire.”

15Then I said, “Yahweh, you know what is happening to me.

Please come and help me.

Punish those who are persecuting me.

Please do not continue to be patient with them

and do not allow me to die now.

It is for your sake that I am suffering.

16Yahweh my God, you are the commander of the angel armies;

when you spoke to me,

I was delighted with your message; it caused me to be joyful,

and I eagerly accepted what you said

because I belong to you.

17When the people were carousing together,

I never joined them;

I sat alone, because you are the one who controls what I do.

I was very angry with those people because of their sins.

18So, why do you allow me to continue to suffer?

It seems that my wounds cannot be healed.

Sometimes you help me, sometimes you do not help me.

It seems that you are as undependable as a brook that has water in it only during certain seasons;

you are like a spring that has dried up.”

19Then Yahweh replied to me saying this:

“If you begin again to trust in me,

I will restore you,

in order that you can continue to serve me.

If you proclaim good messages and not worthless ones,

you will continue to be the one who speaks what I tell you to say.

You must cause the people to pay attention to what you say;
you must not pay attention to what they say.

²⁰They will fight against you,
but I will protect you, like people are protected from their enemies by a bronze wall.
They will not defeat you,
because I will be with you,
and I will protect and rescue you.

²¹Truly, I will keep you safe from those wicked people,
I will rescue you when you are seized by cruel people.
That will happen because I, Yahweh, have said it.”

Chapter 16

¹Yahweh gave me another message. He said to me, ²“Do not get married and have children in this land, ³because this is what I, Yahweh, say about the children who are born in this city, and about their mothers and fathers: ⁴Many of them will die from terrible diseases. And no one will mourn for them. No one will even bury their corpses; the corpses will lie on the ground, scattered like manure. Others will die in wars or from hunger, and then their corpses will become food for vultures and wild animals.”

⁵This is also what Yahweh said to me: “Do not go to funerals to mourn or to show those whose relatives have died that you feel sorry for them, because I have stopped protecting them, and I have caused that things will not go well for them. I have stopped faithfully loving them and acting mercifully toward them. ⁶Very many people will die in this land, including those who are important and those who are not important. And no one will mourn for them, or even bury their corpses. No one will cut himself or shave his head to show that he is very sad. ⁷No one will bring food to comfort those who are mourning, not even if it is their father or their mother who is mourning. No one will give them a cup of wine to cheer them up.

⁸And do not go into the houses where people are feasting. Do not eat or drink anything with them. ⁹I want you to do this because this is what I, Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, say: ‘While you are still alive and seeing it happen, I will cause there to be no more singing and laughing in this land. There will be no more joyful voices of bridegrooms and brides.’

¹⁰When you tell these things to the people, they will ask, ‘Why has Yahweh declared that these terrible things will happen to us? What have we done for which we deserve to be punished like this? What sin have we committed against Yahweh our God?’

¹¹Then this is what you must tell them that I am replying to them: ‘It is because your ancestors turned away from me, Yahweh. They worshiped other gods and served them. They abandoned me and did not obey my commands.

¹²But you who are living now have done more wicked things than your ancestors did! Each of you stubbornly does the evil things that he desires and refuses to pay attention to what I say. ¹³So, I will throw you out of this land, and I will send you to a land that you and your ancestors have never known about. There you will worship other gods day and night. And I will not act mercifully toward you.’

¹⁴But there will be a time when people who are solemnly promising to do something will no longer say, ‘I will do this, just as surely as Yahweh lives—the one who brought the Israelite people here from Egypt.’ ¹⁵Instead, they will say ‘I will do this, just as surely as Yahweh lives—the one who brought us Israelite people back to our own land,

from the lands to the north and from all the other lands to which he had exiled us.' They will be able to say that because some day I will bring your descendants back to this land that I gave to your ancestors.

¹⁶But now I am summoning your enemies who will seize them like fishermen catch fish. I am summoning those who will search for them on every mountain and hill, and in every cave, like hunters search for animals to kill. ¹⁷I am watching them carefully. I see every sin that they commit. They will not be able to hide from me. ¹⁸Because of all the wicked things that they have done, I will punish them twice as much as I would punish other people. I will do that because they have caused my own land to become unacceptable to me because of their worshiping lifeless statues of detestable gods, and also because they have filled my land with the other evil things that they have done."

¹⁹Then I prayed, saying, "Yahweh, you are the one who strengthens me and protects me; you are the one to whom I go when I have troubles.

Some day people from nations all over the world will come to you and say,

'Our ancestors left us only something that was false; they worshiped idols that are completely worthless.

²⁰No one can make their own gods; the gods that they make are only idols; they are not real gods."

²¹Then Yahweh said, "Now I will show my power to the people of Judah; I will show them that I am truly very powerful.

Then, finally, they will know that I, Yahweh, am the true God."

Chapter 17

¹Yahweh said, "It is as though a list of the sins committed by the people of Judah is engraved with an iron chisel, or engraved using the fine point of a very hard stone, on their inner beings and on the altars where they worship their idols.

²Even their children remember when they went to the altars, and they went up to the poles that represent the goddess Asherah, and there they worshiped underneath all the big trees and on all the high hills.

³I will give my mountain as plunder, along with all your wealth and all your treasures, because of your idolatry and your worship on the hills. They will take your possessions away because you sinned against Yahweh throughout your land.

⁴The wonderful land that I gave to you will no longer belong to you. I will tell your enemies to take you to a land that you do not know about, and you will become their slaves.

I will do that because I am extremely angry with you;
my being angry is like a fire that will burn forever.”

⁵This is also what Yahweh says:

“Those who trust in human beings to help them are cursed,
those who rely on their own strength
and turn away from me with their inner beings.

⁶They are like dry bushes in the desert,
they are people who will not experience any good things.

Those people will live in the barren desert
in a salty area, where no one can safely abide.

⁷But Yahweh is pleased with those who trust in him,
and who confidently expect him to take care of them.

⁸Those people are like fruit trees that have been planted along a riverbank,
trees that have roots that go down into the wet ground beside the water.
They are trees whose leaves remain green when it becomes hot,
trees that continue to bear fruit when there are many months in which there is no rain.

⁹Human minds are extremely corrupt,
and we cannot change that.

It is also completely impossible for anyone to understand that.

¹⁰But I, Yahweh, search what is in everyone’s inner being,
and I examine what they are thinking.

I will give all people reward or punishment,
what they deserve for what they have done.”

¹¹I know some people who become rich by doing things that are unjust.

They are like birds that hatch eggs that they did not lay.

So, when those people have lived only half of the years that they expect to live, they will disappear.

Then other people will realize that those people have been foolish.

¹²Yahweh, your temple is like a glorious throne
that has been on a high hill since it was built.

¹³You are the one whom we Israelite people confidently expect to bless us,
and all those who turn away from you will be disgraced and feel what it is like to be separated from you,

because they have abandoned you, who are like a fountain where people obtain fresh water.

¹⁴Yahweh, please heal me, because if you heal me, I will truly be healed.

If you rescue me, I will truly be safe, because you are the only one whom I praise.

¹⁵People often ridicule me and say,

“You tell us messages that you say came from Yahweh,

but why have the things that you predicted not happened?”

¹⁶Yahweh, you appointed me to take care of your people like a shepherd takes care of his sheep; I have not abandoned that work,

and you know that I have not previously wanted this time of disaster to come to people who ridicule me.

And you know everything that I have said to your people.

¹⁷Do not cause me to be terrified!

When disasters come, you are the one to whom I will go to be safe.

¹⁸So now, cause those who persecute me to be ashamed and dismayed,

but do not do things to me that will cause me to be ashamed and dismayed.

Cause them to be terrified!

Do to them many things that will completely destroy them!

¹⁹This is what Yahweh said to me: “Go to the city gates in Jerusalem. First go to the gate where the kings of Judah go in and out of the city, and then go to each of the other gates. ²⁰Say to the people at each gate, ‘You kings of Judah and everyone else who is living in Jerusalem and all you other people of Judah who enter these gates, listen to this message from Yahweh! ²¹He says, “Listen to this warning carefully if you want to live! Stop doing work on Sabbath days! Stop carrying loads through these gates on those days! ²²Do not carry loads out of your houses or do any other work on Sabbath days! Instead, cause Sabbath days to be holy. I commanded your ancestors to do that, ²³but they did not listen to me or obey me. When I did things to correct them, they stubbornly refused to pay attention to what I said or to accept it. ²⁴But I say that if you obey me, and if you do not carry loads through these gates on Sabbath days or do any other work on Sabbath days, and if you dedicate the Sabbath days to me, ²⁵kings of Judah and their officials will continue to go in and out of these gates. There will always be someone who is a descendant of King David ruling here in Jerusalem. Kings and their officials will go in and out of these gates, riding in chariots and on horses, and there will be people living in this city forever. ²⁶And people will come to Jerusalem bringing offerings to be completely burned on the altar and other offerings. They will bring to the temple grain offerings and incense and offerings to thank me. People will bring these offerings from the towns in Judah and the villages near Jerusalem and from the land where the tribe of Benjamin lives and from the western foothills and from the southern Judean wilderness. ²⁷But if you do not pay attention to what I say, and if you refuse to dedicate the Sabbath days to me, and if you continue to carry loads through these gates into the city on Sabbath days, I will burn these gates completely. The fire will spread to the palaces, and no one will be able to put out that fire.’”

Chapter 18

¹Yahweh gave another message to me. He said, ²“Go to the shop of the man who makes clay pots. I will give you a message there.” ³So I went to that shop, and I saw the man who makes pots. He was working at the wheel that he

uses to form pots. ⁴But when he finished making one jar, it was not as good as he hoped it to be. So, he took the clay and formed it into another jar, shaping it as he desired to.

⁵Then Yahweh gave me this message: ⁶“Perhaps the people of Israel think that I cannot do to them like this man who makes pots has done. But what they think is wrong. I can control what happens to them like this man controls what he does with the clay in his hands. ⁷There may be a time when I proclaim that I will get rid of a nation or kingdom, like someone pulls up a plant with its roots, and smash it, and destroy it. ⁸But if the people of that nation repent of doing evil things, I will not send to them the disasters that I planned to send. ⁹And there may be a time when I proclaim that I will establish a nation or kingdom and cause it to be strong. ¹⁰But if the people of that nation start to do evil things and refuse to obey me, then I will not bless them as I said that I would do.

¹¹Therefore, Jeremiah, go and warn all the people in Jerusalem and in other places in Judah. Say to them, ‘This is what Yahweh says: I am planning a disaster that I will send to you. So, each of you should turn from your evil behavior and start doing what is right, in order that good things will come to you instead!’

¹²But the people will say back to you, ‘It is useless for you to say these things to us. We will continue to be stubborn and behave as wickedly as we want to.’”

¹³So this is what Yahweh said in response:

“Ask the people who live in other nations if they have ever heard of such a thing.

My Israelite people, who have been pure like virgins, have done a terrible thing!

¹⁴The snow certainly never completely disappears from the rocky slopes of the mountains in Lebanon.

The cold streams that flow down from those distant mountains never cease flowing.

¹⁵But my people are not as reliable as those streams:

They have abandoned me.

They burn incense to honor worthless idols.

It is as though they have stumbled as they walked along well known and reliable roads

and now, instead, they are walking on dirt paths.

¹⁶Therefore, their land will become desolate,

and people who see it will hiss to ridicule it from now on.

All the people who pass by will be appalled;

they will shake their heads to show that they are shocked.

¹⁷I will scatter the people when their enemies attack them

like dust is scattered by an east wind.

And when they experience all these disasters,

I will turn my back on them and refuse to help them.”

¹⁸Then the people said, “Come, we should plan to attack Jeremiah. We have many priests who teach us God’s laws, wise men who give us good advice, and prophets who tell us what will happen. We do not need Jeremiah! So we should slander him and not pay attention to anything that he says.”

¹⁹Then I prayed, “Yahweh, please listen to me!

And listen to what my enemies are saying about me.

²⁰I am doing things that are good,

so it is disgusting that they are paying me back by doing evil things to me.

It is as though they have dug a pit for me to fall into and die.

Do not forget that one time I stood in front of you and pleaded for you to help them,

and I tried to prevent you from punishing them, even though you were very angry with them.

²¹So now, allow their children to die from hunger!

Or cause them to be killed by their enemies' swords!

Cause their wives to become widows, whose children are all dead!

Cause their husbands to be killed in battles!

²²Cause people to scream in their homes

when enemy soldiers suddenly come into their houses!

Cause all these things to happen to them because they want to kill me.

It is as though they have dug a pit for me to fall into,

and they have hidden traps along my path.

²³Yahweh, you know all the things that they are planning to do to kill me.

Do not forgive them for their crimes

or blot out the record of their sins.

Cause them to be destroyed;

punish them because of your being angry with them!"

Chapter 19

¹This is another message that Yahweh gave to me: "Go and buy a clay jar from a man who makes them. Then take with you some of the elders of the people and leaders of the priests. ²Go out of the city past the Broken Pottery Gate, to the place overlooking the dump for broken pottery in the Hinnom Valley. Then give them a message. ³Say to them, 'This message is for you kings of Judah and other people of Jerusalem. Listen to what Yahweh is saying! The God of Israel, Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, says that he will bring a terrible disaster on Jerusalem. Those who hear about it will be stunned. ⁴That will happen because you Israelite people have stopped worshiping me, and have caused this place to be a place where you worship foreign gods. You burn sacrifices to gods that neither you nor your ancestors nor even the kings of Judah ever heard about. And you have filled this place with the blood of innocent people whom you have killed. ⁵You have built houses on the top of many hills to honor your god Baal, and at those places you have killed your own children and offered them to be sacrifices to Baal. I never commanded you to do that, I never spoke about doing that, and never even considered allowing that! ⁶So, beware, because I, Yahweh, say that there will be a time when this garbage dump will no longer be called Topheth or Hinnom Valley; it will be called Slaughter Valley. ⁷In this place I will ruin the plans of you people who live in Jerusalem and in other places in Judah. I will allow your enemies who want to kill you to kill many of you with their swords. Then I will allow your corpses to remain on the ground to be food for vultures and wild animals. ⁸I will

completely destroy Jerusalem and cause it to become a heap of ruins that people will despise. All the people who pass by will be appalled, and they will be shocked when they see that the city has been destroyed. ⁹I will enable your enemies who want to kill you to surround the city for a long time. Then the food will be all gone, and you people will be extremely hungry, with the result that you people in the city will eat the flesh of your own children and your neighbors' children.'

¹⁰Jeremiah, after you tell that to them, while the people who are with you are watching, smash the jar that you brought. ¹¹Then say to them, 'This is what Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, says: Just like this jar has been smashed and cannot be repaired, I will smash this city of Jerusalem and other places in Judah. You will bury some of your corpses here in this dump, until there is no more space to bury any more corpses. ¹²That is what I will do to this city and to you people who live here. I will make you unfit to worship me, and this city will be like you, just as Topheth is. ¹³The houses in Jerusalem and the palaces of the kings of Judah will be unfit, like this place will be. All the houses where you burned incense on the rooftops to honor the stars that you worshiped, and where you poured out wine to be an offering to your gods, will become unfit for anyone who worships me to live in.'"

¹⁴Then I returned from the garbage dump where Yahweh had sent me to tell them that message, and I stood in the courtyard of Yahweh's temple and said this to all the people who were there: ¹⁵"This is what Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, says: 'I will bring a disaster to this city and to the villages around it like I promised, because you people have stubbornly refused to pay attention to what I said to you.'"

Chapter 20

¹Pashhur son of Immer, was a priest who supervised the temple guards. He heard these things that I had prophesied. ²So he arrested me. Then he commanded guards to whip me and fasten my feet in stocks at the Benjamin Gate of Yahweh's temple. ³The next day, when Pashhur released me, I said to him, "Pashhur, Yahweh is giving you a new name. From now on, your name will be 'Surrounded by Terror,' ⁴because Yahweh says this to you: 'I will cause you and your loved ones to be terrified. You will watch them being killed by your enemies' swords. I will enable the army of the king of Babylon to capture the people of Judah. Those soldiers will take some of the people to Babylon, and they will kill others with their swords. ⁵And I will enable their soldiers to take away other things in Jerusalem: all your wealth and the produce of your hard work. They will take to Babylon all the very valuable things that belonged to your kings. ⁶And as for you, Pashhur, they will take you and all your family to Babylon. You and your family and all your friends who have prophesied things that are lies will die there and be buried there.'"

⁷One day I said this to Yahweh:

"Yahweh, when you chose me to be a prophet, you deceived me so that I would agree to do this work.

You forced me to become a prophet.

But now everyone ridicules me.

They make fun of me all the day.

⁸When I tell people your messages, I shout saying,

'Yahweh is going to cause you to experience violence and destruction!'

So because I tell them those messages from you,

they insult me and scoff at me all the day.

⁹But if I would say, 'I will never mention Yahweh or say anything about him, '

it would be as though your message would burn in my inner being like a fire;

it would be like a fire in my bones.

Sometimes I try to remain silent and not proclaim your messages,
but I am not able to do that.

¹⁰I hear many people whispering about me,
saying 'He is the man who proclaims that there will be things that cause us to be terrified everywhere.
We must tell the authorities what he is saying! We must denounce him!'
Even my best friends are waiting for me to say something that is wrong.
They are saying, 'Perhaps we can cause him to say something wrong,
and if he does, we will be able to defeat him.'

¹¹But you, Yahweh, are helping me like a strong warrior,
so it is as though he will cause those who persecute me to stumble, and they will not defeat me.
They will be completely disgraced because of being unable to gain any advantage over me;
and other people will never forget that they were disgraced.

¹²Yahweh, commander of the angel armies,
you examine all those who are righteous;
you know all that is in their inner beings and what they think.
Allow me to see you getting revenge on those who want to harm me,
because I came to you to petition for what is right."

¹³Sing to Yahweh!

Praise Yahweh!
He rescues poor and needy people,
from those who are wicked.

¹⁴But I hope that the day that I was born will be cursed.
I do not want anyone to celebrate that day when my mother gave birth to me.

¹⁵And as for that man who brought to my father the news,
and caused him to be very happy, by saying
"Your wife has given birth to a son for you,"
I hope that he also will be cursed.

¹⁶Allow him to be destroyed like the cities that Yahweh destroyed long ago,
without acting mercifully toward them.
Cause that man to hear the people wailing in the morning,

and to hear the enemy soldiers shout their battle cries at noon.

¹⁷I want that to happen to him because he did not kill me when I was born.

I wish that I had died in my mother's womb,

and that my mother's body would have been like my grave.

¹⁸I have continually experienced much trouble and sorrow,

and I am disgraced now when I am about to die;

why was it necessary for me to be born?

Chapter 21

¹Yahweh gave me another message when King Zedekiah of Judah sent a man named Pashhur son of Malkijah, and a priest named Zephaniah son of Maaseiah, to talk to me. They pleaded with me, saying, ²"The army of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon is attacking Judah. Please speak to Yahweh for us. Ask him if he will help us. Perhaps he will force Nebuchadnezzar's army to leave by performing a miracle for us, like the miracles he performed previously."

³I replied to them, "Go back to King Zedekiah. Tell him, ⁴This is what Yahweh, the God whom we Israelites worship, says: "I will cause your weapons to be useless in fighting against the king of Babylon and his army that is outside the walls of Jerusalem, attacking. I will enable them to enter into the center of this city. ⁵I myself will fight against your army with my very great power, because I am very angry with you. ⁶I will send a very terrible plague on the people of this city, and on their domestic animals, and many of them will die." ⁷And Yahweh says there are many people in this city who want to kill you. So, he will enable the army of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon and other people in this city to capture you, King Zedekiah, and your officials, and all the other people who do not die from the plague. His army will slaughter your soldiers; they will not act mercifully toward you or pity you at all."

⁸And tell this to all the people: 'Yahweh says that you must decide whether you want to die or to remain alive.

⁹Everyone who remains in Jerusalem will die. They will be killed in battles or die from being hungry or from diseases. But those who surrender to the army of Babylon that is surrounding your city will remain alive. They will escape dying. ¹⁰This will happen because I, Yahweh, have decided to cause this city to experience disasters, not to experience something good. The army of the king of Babylon will capture this city and will destroy it completely by fire."

¹¹Yahweh also told me to say this to the family of the king of Judah: "Listen to this message from Yahweh! ¹²This is what he says to you descendants of King David:

'Every day, make fair decisions for the people whom you judge.

Help those who have been robbed.

Rescue them from robbers and abusers.

If you do not do that,

I will be angry and punish you with a fire that will be impossible to extinguish,

because of all the sins that you have committed.

¹³I will fight against you people of Jerusalem,

you who live on top of a rocky hill above the valley.

I will fight against you people who boast, saying,

“No one can attack us and break through our defenses.”

¹⁴I will punish you for your wicked deeds like you deserve to be punished;

It will be as though I will light a fire in your forests

that will burn up everything around you.”

Chapter 22

¹This is another message that Yahweh gave to me: “Go down to the palace of the king of Judah and say this to him:

²You are the king of Judah. You are the ruler, like King David was. You and your officials and your people must

listen ³to what Yahweh says: “Act fairly and justly. Do what is right. Help those who have been robbed. Rescue

people from those who oppress them. Stop doing evil deeds. Do not mistreat those who have come here from

other countries, and do not mistreat orphans and widows. Stop murdering here in Jerusalem. ⁴If you obey these

commands carefully, there will always be some descendant of King David who will be ruling here in Jerusalem. The

king and his officials and other people will ride through the gates of the city in chariots and on horses. ⁵But if you

refuse to pay attention to these commands, I, Yahweh, solemnly declare, that this palace will become a pile of

rubble.””

⁶And this is what Yahweh says about the house of the king of Judah:

“I like this palace, like I like the forests in the region of Gilead

and the mountains in Lebanon.

But I will cause this palace to become a desert,

a place that no one lives in.

⁷I will select troops who will destroy this palace;

each soldier will use his own tools to wreck the building.

They will cut into pieces the beautiful big cedar beams

and throw them into a fire.”

⁸People from many nations will walk past the ruins of this city and say to each other, “Why did Yahweh destroy this

city that was very great?” ⁹And other people will reply, “He did it because his people stopped obeying the agreement that they had made with Yahweh their God. Instead, they worshiped other gods.”

¹⁰Yahweh also says, “Do not mourn for King Josiah;

do not cry because he has died.

Instead, mourn for King Jehoahaz, his son,

because he will be captured and taken to another country,

and he will never return to see his own country, Judah, again.”

¹¹Jehoahaz became king after his father, King Josiah, died, but Jehoahaz was captured and taken to Babylonia. And

this is what Yahweh says about him: “He also will never return to Judah. ¹²He will die in that country where they have taken him as a captive and will never see his own country again.”

¹³And Yahweh said to me, "Terrible things will happen to King Jehoahaz's brother, King Jehoiakim. He unjustly forced men to build his palace.

The rooms on the upper level were built by men who were forced unjustly to do that work; he forced his neighbors to work for nothing; he did not pay them anything.

¹⁴He said, 'I will force my workers to build a huge beautiful palace with very large rooms and many windows. They will cover the walls with fragrant cedar panels and paint them bright red.'

¹⁵But it is certainly not having a beautiful cedar palace that causes a king to be great! Jehoiakim's father, Josiah, also had plenty of things to eat and drink. But Josiah always did things that are right and just, and that is why God blessed him.

¹⁶Josiah acted justly and helped poor and needy people, so things went well for him.

Yahweh says, "That is the way a person should behave who knows me.

¹⁷But Jehoiakim, you are greedy and desire only to obtain things by acting dishonestly. You murder innocent people, you oppress poor people, and you treat people cruelly and violently."

¹⁸Therefore, this is what Yahweh says about Jehoiakim son of King Josiah:

"When he dies, people will not mourn for him.

They will not say to each other, 'It is very sad; we are so sorry!'

The people whom he ruled will not mourn for him, saying,

'We are sad that our king is dead; we are so sorry that the wonderful things that happened while he was king are ended.'

¹⁹When he dies, people will do to his corpse what they do to a dead donkey; his corpse will be dragged out of Jerusalem and dumped outside the gates!

²⁰You people of Judah, go to the mountains in Lebanon and weep, shout in the mountains of the Bashan region, call out in mourning in the mountains of Moab, because all your friends in those areas have been destroyed.

²¹When you were prosperous, I warned you,
but you replied, 'We will not pay attention to what you say.'
You have been acting like that since you were young;
you have never obeyed me.

²²So, now I will punish all your leaders;
it will be as though they have been blown away by the wind.
They will be captured by your enemies and taken to another country.
When that happens, you will truly be ashamed and disgraced
because of all the wicked things that you have done.

²³Now, your king enjoys living in the cedar rooms in his palace,
but soon he will be punished,
and then he will groan
like a woman who is giving birth to a baby."

²⁴Yahweh says this: "Jehoiachin son of King Jehoiakim of Judah, as surely as I am alive, I will punish you. Even if you were the ring on my finger that shows that I am the king, I would pull you off. ²⁵You are afraid of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon and his huge army, because they are wanting to kill you. I will enable them to capture you. ²⁶I will expel you and your mother from this land, and you will be taken to another country. Neither of you were born there, but you will both die there. ²⁷You will never return to this land that you will very much desire to return to."

²⁸Someone said, "Jehoiachin will be like a broken pot
that is despised and which no one wants.
He and his children will be exiled to a foreign land.

²⁹I want the people in this land to listen carefully to this message from Yahweh.

³⁰This is what Yahweh says:

"In the record about the kings of Judah, write down that it will be as though this man Jehoiachin had no children,
and that he has not been successful during his life,
because none of his children will ever become king
to rule over the people of Judah."

Chapter 23

¹Yahweh declares, "Terrible things will happen to the leaders of my people—those who are like shepherds of the people who are like my sheep—because they have scattered my people and sent them away, and have not taken care of them. ²So, this is what I, Yahweh, the God whom the Israelite people worship, say to those leaders: 'Instead of taking care of my people and leading them to places where they are safe like a shepherd does for his sheep, you have scattered them. So I will punish you for the evil things that you have done. ³But later I will gather those who

are still alive, from the countries where I have forced them to go. I will bring them back to their own country, where they will have many children, and their number will increase. ⁴Then I will appoint other leaders for my people, leaders who will take care of them. And my people will never be afraid of anything again, and none of them will be like a lost sheep that has been driven off by its shepherd.”

⁵Yahweh also says,

“Some day I will appoint for you a righteous man
who will be a descendant of King David.

As king, he will do what is just and right for all the people in the nation.

⁶At that time, he will save all the Israelite people from their enemies,
and they will be safe.

And his name will be

“Yahweh, the one who does what is right for us.”

⁷Yahweh also says that at that time, people who are solemnly promising to do something will no longer say, “I will do it as surely as Yahweh lives, who rescued the Israelite people from Egypt.” ⁸Instead, they will say, “I will do it as surely as Yahweh lives, who brought us Israelite people back to our own land, from the land to the northeast and from all the other countries to which he had exiled us.” And they will live in their own land again.

⁹I am very sad in my deepest emotions because of the sacred message that Yahweh has spoken about what will happen to the false prophets;

it is as though all my bones shake.

I stagger like a man who is drunk

after drinking a lot of wine,

¹⁰The land is full of people who commit adultery;

and Yahweh has cursed the land.

Even the pastures in the desert are all dried up,

because the people do what is evil,

and the false prophets use their power to do things that are not just.

¹¹Yahweh says, “Even the priests and the prophets are ungodly;

they do wicked things even in his temple.

¹²Therefore, it will be as though the paths that they walk on are slippery.

It will be as though they are being chased in the darkness,

and there they will fall down,

because I will cause them to experience disasters

at the time that I will punish them.

That will surely happen because I, Yahweh, have said it.”

¹³Previously I saw that the prophets in Samaria were doing something that was wrong; they were prophesying, saying that Baal gave them the messages that they were proclaiming, and they were deceiving my people.

¹⁴And now I have seen the prophets in Jerusalem doing terrible things.

They commit adultery
and habitually tell lies.

They encourage evil people to continue to do evil things,
with the result that the people do not stop sinning.

Those prophets are as wicked as the people in Sodom and Gomorrah were.

¹⁵So, this is what Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, says about those false prophets:

"I will give those prophets bitter things to eat
and poison to drink,
because it is because of them that this land is filled with people who do wicked deeds."

¹⁶This is what Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, says:

"Do not pay any attention to what those false prophets say to you,
because they are just fooling you.

They tell you about visions that they have only thought in their own minds,
not about visions that I have given them.

¹⁷They habitually say to those who hate me,

'Yahweh says that you will have peace.'

And they say to those who stubbornly do what they want to do,

'Nothing bad will happen to you because of your doing those things.'

¹⁸But none of them has ever been in a council meeting in heaven

in order to listen to a message from me.

None of them has paid attention to anything that Yahweh has said.

¹⁹So, Yahweh will punish them; it will be like a great storm;

it will come down like a whirlwind, swirling around the heads of those wicked people.

²⁰Yahweh will not stop being angry

until he has completely accomplished all that he has planned.

In the future, you will understand all of this clearly."

²¹Yahweh also says, "I have not appointed those prophets,

but they run around telling people their messages.

I did not speak to them,

but they continue to prophesy.

²²If they had been in my council meetings,

they would have been able to speak messages from me,

and they would have caused people to turn away from committing evil deeds. "

²³Yahweh also says, "Am I a God who is only nearby?

No, I am a God who is far away, also.

²⁴So, no one can hide in some secret place

with the result that I cannot see him.

I am everywhere, in heaven and on the earth!

That is what I, Yahweh, say!

²⁵I have heard those prophets prophesy lies, saying that they are telling people messages from me. They say, 'Listen to me tell you the dream I received from God last night! I really had this dream!' ²⁶How long will they continue to do this? How long will those lying prophets continue to prophesy things that come only from their own minds? ²⁷They think that because of the dreams that they tell to each other, people will forget me, like their ancestors forgot about me when they started to worship Baal. ²⁸Allow those false prophets to tell people their dreams, but those who have messages that really come from me should proclaim those messages faithfully. I, Yahweh, say that like straw and grain are certainly very different, my messages and the message from those false prophets are certainly very different. ²⁹It is as though my messages burn like a fire and is like a hammer that smashes rocks into pieces when it affects someone's heart.

³⁰Therefore, I, Yahweh say, I oppose all those prophets who steal messages from each other and claim that those messages came from me. ³¹I oppose those prophets who speak their own messages but claim that those messages came from me. ³²I oppose those prophets who falsely say that I told them something in a vision, but they are only telling lies that cause my people to sin. I did not send those prophets. I did not even appoint them to be prophets. And they have no messages that will benefit my people at all. That is what I, Yahweh, declare."

³³Yahweh said to me, "If one of those prophets or priests or one of the other people asks you, 'What problem has Yahweh told you about now?', you must reply, 'He has not given me anything to say to you! Instead, Yahweh says that he will abandon you!' ³⁴And if any prophet or priest or anyone else falsely says, 'I have a prophecy from Yahweh,' I will punish that person and his family. ³⁵What you should continually ask each other is, 'When you spoke to Yahweh, what did he reply? What is he saying to us?' ³⁶But instead you are only concerned with your own ideas and with twisting the true message from the true God, Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, whom we worship. ³⁷This is what you should ask each prophet: 'What did Yahweh reply when you talked to him? What is he saying to us?' ³⁸If he replies, 'What I told you is a prophecy from Yahweh' then let him know I will punish him, because I told my true prophets not to give any messages to this people right now.

³⁹So I, Yahweh, will get rid of you false prophets. I will expel you from my presence. And I will get rid of this city that I gave to you and to your ancestors.

⁴⁰I will cause people to make fun of you forever. People will never forget that you were disgraced."

Chapter 24

¹The army of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon captured Jehoiachin, the son of Jehoiakim, the king of Judah, and his officials, and all his skilled workers and took them to Babylon. After that happened, Yahweh gave me a vision. In the vision I saw two baskets of figs that had been placed in front of the temple. ²One basket was full of good figs, like the kind that ripen first. The other basket was filled with figs that were bad, with the result that they could not be eaten.

³Then Yahweh said to me, "Jeremiah, what do you see?"

I replied, "I see some figs. Some are very good ones, but some are very bad, with the result that no one would eat them."

⁴Then Yahweh gave me this message: ⁵"This is what I, Yahweh, the God whom the Israelite people say that they worship, say: The good figs represent the people of Judah whom I exiled to Babylonia. I sent them there for their own good. ⁶and I will not exile them again, instead I will bring them back to this land and let them build up houses and cities again. They will be like plants that grow and prosper and are never cut down. ⁷I will enable them to desire to know in their inner beings that I am Yahweh. They will be my people, and I will be their God, because they will return to me sincerely.

⁸But I, Yahweh, also say, the bad figs represent Zedekiah, the king of Judah, and his officials, and all the other people who remain in Jerusalem, and those who have gone to Egypt. I will do to them like people do to rotten figs. ⁹I will cause them to experience calamities, with the result that people in every nation on the earth will be horrified, and will hate them because they are evil people. Wherever I scatter them, people will make fun of them, and say that they are disgraced, and ridicule them, and curse them. ¹⁰And I will cause them to experience wars and famines and diseases, until they have disappeared from Israel, this land which I gave to them and to their ancestors."

Chapter 25

¹After Jehoiakim had been ruling Judah for almost four years, Yahweh gave me this message for all the people of Judah. It was during the year that King Nebuchadnezzar started to rule in Babylon. ²Jeremiah spoke this message to all the people in Jerusalem and other places in Judah: ³"Yahweh has been giving me messages for twenty-three years. He started giving me messages when Josiah son of Amon, had been ruling Judah for almost thirteen years. And I have faithfully told you those messages, but you have not paid any attention to them.

⁴Many times Yahweh has sent to you the prophets who served him, but you have not listened to them or paid any attention to what they said. ⁵Each time their message was this: 'Turn from all your evil behavior, from all the evil things that you have continually been doing. If you do that, you will be able to stay in this land that Yahweh gave to you and to your ancestors, to belong to you forever. ⁶Do not cause Yahweh to become angry by serving and worshiping idols that you have made with your hands. If you do not cause him to be angry, he will not punish you.'

⁷And Yahweh says, 'But you would not pay attention to the messages that I gave to those prophets. You caused me to become extremely angry by your worshiping idols that you had made with your own hands. That resulted in my punishing you.

⁸So now, I, Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, say that because you have not paid attention to what I said, ⁹I will gather all the armies of the nations that will come from the northeast. I have appointed King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon to lead them. I have appointed him to do my work for me. I will bring those armies to attack this land, all the people living in it, and even nearby countries. I will completely destroy them, and cause them to be places that people are horrified about, and that people will ridicule, places that will be ruined forever. ¹⁰I will cause happy singing and laughing to cease in your land. There will no longer be brides and bridegrooms talking joyfully. There will not be the sound of people grinding grain with millstones. There will be no lamps lit in your houses. ¹¹All of this

land will become a desert where no one will live. And the people of Israel and of the nearby countries will be exiled to Babylonia and work for the kings of Babylon for seventy years.

¹²Then, after they have been in Babylonia for seventy years, I will punish the king of Babylonia and his people for the sins that they have committed. I will cause Babylonia to become a wasteland forever. ¹³I will cause them to experience all the terrible things that Jeremiah has written about—all the punishments that he predicted will happen to all those nations. ¹⁴The leaders of many nations will cause the people of Babylonia to become their slaves, like the people of Babylonia caused my people to become slaves. I will punish them like they deserve for having caused my people to suffer.”

¹⁵Then Yahweh, the God of Israel, gave me a vision. In the vision he was holding a cup of wine. He said, “Take from me this cup that is full of wine that represents punishment. I will cause all the leaders of the nations to which I will send you to drink some of the wine in this cup. ¹⁶When they drink the wine, they will stagger and act like crazy people, because they will realize that I will massacre many of their people with swords.”

¹⁷So, in the vision, I took that cup full of wine from Yahweh, and I took it to all the nations to which he sent me, and caused the leaders of those nations to drink some of that wine. ¹⁸I went to Jerusalem and the other towns in Judah, and the king and the other officials drank some of the wine from that cup. And, starting from that day, they all eventually were removed from having authority, and became people whom others ridiculed, who were despised, and cursed. ¹⁹In the vision Egypt had to drink some of the wine, including the king and his officials and many of his people, ²⁰and foreigners who were living there. In the vision the land of Uz and the cities and kings of Ashkelon, Gaza, Ekron, and Ashdod had to drink some of the wine. ²¹Then the vision about the kings of Edom, Moab, and Ammon began. ²²Then there were more visions about the kings of the cities of Tyre and Sidon across the Mediterranean Sea, about the kings who had to drink some of the wine. ²³In the vision the religious leaders of the cities of Dedan, Tema, and Buz, which were cities in Arabia and other distant places, they had to drink some of the wine. ²⁴In the vision other places in Arabia and the kings of tribes in the desert ²⁵and the kings of the Zimri, Elam, and Media people groups, ²⁶and kings in countries to the north that are near to Israel and to countries that are far from Israel, one after the other—all the kingdoms in the world had to drink, and finally the king of Babylon had to drink some of the wine.

²⁷Then in the vision Yahweh said to me, “Tell them that this is what Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, the God of Israel, says: ‘Drink from this cup some of the wine that represents the punishment that I will give you. Drink a lot of it and become drunk and vomit. You will fall down and not get up again, because I will cause you to be killed in wars that I will send to you. ²⁸If any of those to whom you give this wine refuse to drink it, tell them that Yahweh, commander of the angel armies says that they must drink it. ²⁹I am starting to bring disaster to my own people. They will not be exempt from punishment, for I am sending wars to all the nations on the earth. That will surely happen because I, Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, have said it.’

³⁰Now tell them all those things that I have said, and also say this to them:

‘Yahweh will shout to them from the highest places like a lion roars!

He will call out with a shout from the holy place where he lives!

He will roar like a lion against his people because of their sins!

Like those who shout so loudly when they are treading the grapes,

he will shout so that everyone who lives on the earth can hear him!

³¹Even people in very remote places around the earth will hear him shouting,

because he will say why he will judge and punish all the nations.

He will cause the wicked people to be slaughtered with swords.

That will surely happen because Yahweh has said it.'

³²Then tell them that this is what Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, says:

'Listen to this!

Disasters will happen to one nation after another.

Punishment from me will arise like a great storm

from the most distant places on the earth.

³³When that happens, the corpses of those whom I have caused to be slaughtered will fill the earth from the east to the west.

And no one will mourn for them, and no one will gather their corpses to bury them. They will be scattered on the ground like manure.

³⁴You evil leaders, they call out for someone to help them!

You who were the leaders of my people, fell down and and they rolled in the dust.

Now is time for you to be slaughtered!

You will fall down and be shattered like a fragile vase shatters when it falls to the ground.

³⁵Those who should have taken care of my people will not find any place to hide;

there will be no place for the leaders of my people to find safety.

³⁶You are the ones who take care of my people now crying out for help, and those who were the leaders of my people they cry and beg for help—

while I, Yahweh, am destroying your nation.

³⁷Your peaceful meadows will become a wasteland

because Yahweh will severely punish it.

³⁸Yahweh will leave his dwelling like a lion leaves its den to attack other animals,

and he will cause your land to become desolate.

He is very angry with you and will make your enemies angry at you."

Chapter 26

¹Soon after Jehoiakim son of Josiah, became the king of Judah, Yahweh gave me this message: ²"This is what I, Yahweh, am telling you: Stand in the courtyard in front of my temple, and speak to all the people from the various towns in Judah who come there to worship me. Tell them everything that I tell you; do not leave out anything. ³If you do tell them everything, perhaps they will pay attention, and each one of them will turn away from his evil behavior. Then I will change my mind, and not bring on them the disaster that I was planning to bring on them because of the evil things that they have done. ⁴⁻⁵Say to them, 'This is what Yahweh says: I sent to you the prophets who serve me, to tell you what you should do. I sent them to you many times, but you have not paid attention to what they said. If you will not pay attention to what I say and do not obey the message that I have given to you, and if you do not pay attention to what the prophets say, ⁵⁶I will destroy this temple like I destroyed Shiloh, the place where the sacred tent was put. And I will cause Jerusalem to be a place whose name people in every nation on the earth will say when they curse someone.'"

⁷Jeremiah did what Yahweh told him to do. The priests, the false prophets, and many other people listened to him as he told them that message outside the temple. ⁸But as soon as Jeremiah finished telling them everything that Yahweh had commanded him to say, they all seized him and said, "You must be executed! ⁹Why are you prophesying that this temple will be destroyed like Shiloh was destroyed? Why are you saying that this city will be destroyed, and that no one will live here anymore? All the people surrounded Jeremiah as he stood in front of the temple.

¹⁰When the officials of Judah heard about all this that was happening, they rushed from the palace and sat down at the gate of the temple named The New Gate, to judge Jeremiah's case. ¹¹The priests and the prophets told the officials and the other people who were there, "This man should be executed, because he has prophesied that this city will be destroyed, and you yourselves have heard him say that!"

¹²Then Jeremiah replied to the officials and the other people. He said to them, "Yahweh sent me to prophesy all the things that you heard me say about what will happen to this temple and this city. ¹³But if you change your behavior and stop sinning, and start to obey Yahweh our God, he will change his mind, and not send to you the disasters that he said that he would send. ¹⁴As for me, I am not able to free myself from your grasp. So you can do to me whatever you want to do. ¹⁵But you need to know that if you kill me, you will be killing a man who is innocent. And you and everyone else in this city will be guilty, because the truth is that it was Yahweh who sent me to speak every word that you have heard me say."

¹⁶Then the officials and the other people said to the priests and the false prophets, "This man does not deserve to be executed, because he has spoken to us the message that Yahweh gave him!"

¹⁷Then some of the elders stood up and spoke to all the people who were gathered there. ¹⁸They said, "Remember what Micah, the prophet from Moresheth, prophesied during the years that Hezekiah was the king of Judah. He told the people of Judah this:

'This is what Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, says:

Some day Mount Zion will be plowed like fields are plowed;

Jerusalem will become a heap of ruins.

There will be a large clump of trees on top of the hill where the temple is now.' ¹⁹But did Hezekiah or anyone else in Judah kill Micah for saying that? No! Instead, Hezekiah revered Yahweh, and pleaded that he would act mercifully toward them. So, Yahweh changed his mind about sending to them the terrible disaster that he said he would send. And now if we kill Jeremiah, we are going to bring even worse disaster on ourselves!"

²⁰At that time, Uriah son of Shemaiah from the city of Kiriath Jearim was also prophesying from Yahweh. He was predicting that the city and the rest of the land would experience the same disasters that Jeremiah was predicting.

²¹When King Jehoiakim and his army officers and officials heard what Uriah was saying, the king sent someone to kill Uriah. But Uriah heard about it, and became very afraid, and he escaped to Egypt. ²²Then King Jehoiakim sent Elnathan son of Acbor along with several other men to Egypt. ²³They captured Uriah and took him back to Jerusalem to King Jehoiakim. The king then commanded a soldier to kill Uriah with a sword. Then they buried his corpse in a place where poor people are buried. ²⁴However, Ahikam son of Shaphan defended me, and persuaded the officials not to allow the mob to murder Jeremiah.

Chapter 27

¹Soon after Zedekiah son of Josiah became the king of Judah, Yahweh gave a message to me. ²This is what he said to me: "Make a yoke and bonds, then fasten them around your own neck. ³Then send them to the kings of Edom, Moab, Ammon, Tyre, and Sidon, and give them to the ambassadors from those countries who have come to Jerusalem to talk to King Zedekiah. ⁴Tell them to give this message to their kings: This is what Yahweh, commander

of the angel armies, whom Israel worships, says: ⁵With my very great power I created the earth and the people and the animals that are on the earth. And I can give those things to anyone whom I want to. ⁶And now I am going to enable King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, who does what I want him to do, to control your countries. I am going to enable him to rule everything, even the wild animals. ⁷The people of all the nations will work for him, and later for his son, and later for his grandson, until the time for them to rule is finished. Then the armies of many great kings from many nations will conquer Babylon.'

⁸But now I tell you that you must do what the king of Babylon wants you to do, like an ox that has a yoke on its neck must do what its master wants it to do. I will punish any nation that refuses to do that. I will cause those people to experience war and famine and diseases, until the armies of Babylon have conquered that nation. ⁹So, do not pay attention to your false prophets and fortune tellers and people who predict what will happen by working magic or by talking with spirits of dead people. Those people say not to serve him because the king of Babylon will not conquer your country. ¹⁰Those people are all liars. If you believe what they say, it will result in your being exiled from your land. I will cause you to be taken from your land, and you will die far away. ¹¹But the people of any country who do what the king of Babylon wants them to do will remain in their own country and be able to plant their crops as they always have done. That will surely happen because I, Yahweh, have said it."

¹²After I gave that message to those ambassadors, I gave the same message to King Zedekiah of Judah. I said to him, "If you want to remain alive, do what the king of Babylon and his officials want you to do. ¹³It would be foolish for you not to do that, because the result would be that you and your people would die by your enemies' swords or by famine or diseases, which Yahweh will cause any nation to experience that refuses to allow the king of Babylon to rule them. ¹⁴Do not pay attention to those prophets who say to you, 'Do not obey the king of Babylon since he will not conquer your country.' They are liars. ¹⁵This is what Yahweh says: 'I have not appointed those prophets. They are saying that I gave them messages, but they are lying. So, if you believe them, I will expel you from this land. And you and all those prophets will die in Babylon!'"

¹⁶Then I spoke to the priests and the other people, and I said, "This is what Yahweh says: 'Do not believe your prophets who tell you that all the gold items that were taken from my temple by soldiers from Babylon will soon be returned from Babylon, because what they are prophesying is a lie. ¹⁷Do not pay attention to what they say. Surrender to the king of Babylon. If you do that, you will remain alive. If you do not do that, this entire city will be destroyed. ¹⁸If they are really prophets who speak messages from me, tell them to plead to me, Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, that the soldiers from Babylon will not be allowed to take away to Babylon the valuable items that still remain in the temple and in the king's palace and in the other palaces in Jerusalem. ¹⁹I say this because the huge pillars that are in front of the temple and the large tank that was called "The Sea" and the ten water carts and all the other items that are used for offering sacrifices are still in this city. ²⁰King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon left those things here when he exiled Jehoiachin, the son of Jehoiakim, the king of Judah, to Babylon, along with all the other leaders of Jerusalem and the leaders of other places in Judah. ²¹Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, says this about all those valuable things that are still outside the temple and in the palace of the king of Judah: ²²They will all be carried away to Babylon. And they will stay there until I say that they should be brought back to Jerusalem. Then they will be brought back here. That is what I, Yahweh, say."

Chapter 28

¹These things occurred when Zedekiah was beginning his rule as king of Judah. It happened on the fourth year and fifth month of his rule, that Azzur's son Hananiah, a prophet from the city of Gibeon, spoke to Jeremiah in the courtyard of the temple, while all the priests and other people were listening. He said, ²"This is what the Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, whom Israel worships, says: 'I will cause the king of Babylon to stop ruling you. ³Within two years, I will cause to be brought back to this temple all the valuable things that King Nebuchadnezzar's soldiers took from this temple and took to Babylon. ⁴And I will also bring back to this place Jehoiachin, who was the son of the Jehoiakim, the King of Judah, and all the other people who were captured and taken to Babylon. The king of Babylon has forced you to do what he wants, like someone puts a yoke on the neck of an ox to force it to do what he wants it to do. But I will cause that to end. That will happen because I, Yahweh, have said it.'"

⁵Jeremiah replied to Hananiah in front of all the priests and other people whom were standing outside the temple. ⁶He said, "I want that to be true! I desire that what you have predicted will happen just as you said! I hope that he will cause men from Babylon to bring back all the valuable things that were in this temple, and all the people who were taken to Babylon. ⁷But now listen to what I say to you while all these people are listening. ⁸Many years ago, those who were prophets before you and I became prophets spoke messages about many nations and great kingdoms. They predicted that wars and disasters and plagues would occur in those nations. ⁹So now you or any other prophet who predicts that things will go well for us must show that your message is correct. Only if what you predict actually happens will we know that you were truly appointed by Yahweh."

¹⁰Then Hananiah took the yoke off my neck and broke it. ¹¹Then he said this to all the people who were there: "This is what Yahweh says: 'Just like Hananiah has broken this yoke, within two years I will cause King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon to stop forcing the people to do what he wants, which has been like a heavy yoke on all their necks.'" After Hananiah said that, Jeremiah left the temple area.

¹²Soon after Hananiah had broken the yoke that was around the neck of Jeremiah, Yahweh gave this message to me: ¹³"Go and say this to Hananiah: 'Yahweh, Commander of the angel armies, whom Israel worships, says that you have broken a wooden yoke, but that he will replace it with an iron yoke. ¹⁴I have forced the people of all these nations to become slaves of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. That is like an iron yoke around their necks. I have put everything, even wild animals, under his control.'"

¹⁵Then Jeremiah went to Hananiah and said to him, "Hananiah, listen to this: Yahweh has not appointed you; instead, you have told lies to the people, and they have believed your lies. ¹⁶Therefore, this is what Yahweh says: 'You will soon die. Before the end of this year, you will die, because you have encouraged people to act against Yahweh.'"

¹⁷Hananiah died two months later.

Chapter 29

¹¹⁻²After King Jehoiachin, his mother, his palace officials, other officials in Judah and Jerusalem, and all the various kinds of craftsmen had been exiled to Babylon, Jeremiah wrote a letter to the elders, the priests, the prophets and all the other people who had been taken from Jerusalem to Babylon by soldiers of Nebuchadnezzar. ²³He gave the letter to Elasah son of Shaphan, and to Gemariah son of Hilkiah, when they were about to go to Babylon to be ambassadors from King Zedekiah to King Nebuchadnezzar. This is the letter that Jeremiah wrote, the message that Yahweh gave him.

⁴This is what Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, the God whom Israel worships, says to all you people who were captured here in Jerusalem and taken there to Babylon: ⁵"Build houses there, and plan to stay there because you will be there for many years. Plant gardens, and eat the food that is produced in the gardens. ⁶Get married and have children. Then when they grow up, choose wives for your sons, and husbands for your daughters, in order that they also may have children. In that way, the number of your people will increase, not decrease. ⁷Also, do things that will cause things to go well for the other people there in the city where I sent you. Pray that things will go well for the people in that city, because if things go well for them, things will go well for you, also."

⁸This is what Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, the God whom Israel worships, says: "There are false prophets and fortune tellers among you. Do not allow them to deceive you. Do not pay attention to them when they tell you their dreams, ⁹because they are telling you lies, saying that I have given them the messages that they are telling you. But, I have not appointed them."

¹⁰This is also what Yahweh says: "After you and your children have been in Babylon for seventy years, I will help you, and do for you the things that I promised, and I will enable you to return here to Jerusalem. ¹¹I, Yahweh, know what I have planned for you. I am planning to cause things to go well for you, not to cause you to experience disasters. I am planning to give you many things that you can confidently expect to receive in the future that your

people will survive to see. ¹²At that time, when you go to worship me and call out my name in prayer, I will listen to what you pray. ¹³If you earnestly desire for me to bless you, you will see that I will answer you. ¹⁴I will help you. I will cause you to no longer be slaves in Babylon. I will gather you from all the nations to which I have exiled you, and I will bring you back here to your own land, to the place from which you were taken.”

¹⁵Some of you say that Yahweh has appointed prophets for you there in Babylon. ¹⁶But this is what Yahweh says about the king who rules here in Jerusalem, and about all the other people who are still living here—your relatives who were not taken to Babylon with you. ¹⁷Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, says this: “I will cause them to experience wars and famines and diseases. I will cause them to become like bad figs that are very rotten, with the result that no one can eat them. ¹⁸I will not stop causing them to experience wars and famines and diseases. And I will scatter them all around the world. In every country where I force them to be taken, I will cause them to be people whom others curse and be horrified about and mock. ¹⁹That will happen because they have refused to pay attention to my messages, messages that I gave to the prophets whom I sent to them. And you who have been exiled to Babylon have not paid attention to them, either.” That is what Yahweh says.

²⁰Therefore, you people who have been exiled from Jerusalem to Babylon, listen to this message from Yahweh.

²¹This is what Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, the God whom Israel worships, says about Ahab son of Kolaiah, and about Zedekiah son of Maaseiah, who are telling lies to you, saying that they are giving messages from him: “They will be seized and taken to King Nebuchadnezzar, who will cause them to be executed while you are watching. ²²Because of what will happen to them, all you people who have been taken from Judah to Babylon will say this when they curse someone: ‘I hope that Yahweh will do to you the same thing that he did to Zedekiah and Ahab, whom the king of Babylon caused to be killed by being burned in a fire.’ ²³They have done terrible things to my Israelite people. They have committed adultery with their neighbors’ wives, and they have spoken lies, saying that they were messages from me. They have said things that I did not tell them to say, and I, Yahweh, have heard them say those things.”

²⁴Yahweh told me to send this message to Shemaiah, a man from Nehelam who was living in Babylon: ²⁵“This is what Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, the God whom Israel worships, says: “You wrote a letter that no one told you to write. You sent it to Zephaniah the priest, son of Maaseiah, and you sent copies to the other priests and all the other people here in Jerusalem. This is what you wrote to him:

²⁶Zephaniah, Yahweh has appointed you to be the priest instead of Jehoiada, to supervise those who work in the temple. Anyone who acts like a crazy man and who claims that he is a prophet, you should put his arms and legs and head into stocks. ²⁷So why have you not done anything to stop Jeremiah, the man from Anathoth, who pretends that he is a prophet among you? ²⁸He sent a letter to us who are here in Babylon, saying that we will be here for a long time. He said that therefore we should build houses and plan to stay here, and plant gardens, and eat the food that is produced in the gardens.”

²⁹But when Zephaniah the priest received the letter from you, he brought it to me and read it to me. ³⁰Then Yahweh gave me this message: ³¹“Send this message to all the people from Judah who are there in Babylon: Say that this is what Yahweh says about Shemaiah, the man from Nehelam: ‘I did not appoint him, but he has deceived you and caused you to believe the lies that he prophesied. ³²So, I will punish him and his family. He has incited you to rebel against me. Because of that, all of his descendants will soon die. I will do many good things for you, my people, but he and his descendants will not see those things, because they will be dead. That will surely happen because I, Yahweh, have said it!’”

Chapter 30

¹Yahweh gave Jeremiah another message. He said, ²“I, Yahweh, the God of Israel am telling you to write down everything that I have said to you. ³I want you to know that some day I will free my people, the people of Israel and Judah, from being slaves in Babylon. I will bring them back to this land that I gave to their ancestors, and this land will belong to them again. That will surely happen because I, Yahweh, have said it.”

⁴Yahweh gave to me another message concerning the people of Israel and Judah. ⁵This is what he said:
“I hear people screaming because they are terrified;
there is no peace in the land.
⁶But think about this:
Men certainly do not give birth to babies.
Therefore, why do strong men stand there,
with their faces very white,
with their hands pressed against their stomachs,
like women who are about to give birth to babies?
⁷Terrible things will soon happen;
That will be a terrible day!
There has never been such a time.
It will be a time when my Israelite people will experience great trouble,
but finally they will be saved from their sufferings.”
⁸Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, says this:
“At that time it will be as though I will sever the ropes that are around my people,
and I will free them from being slaves.
People in other countries will no longer enslave them.
⁹My people will again serve me, Yahweh, their God,
and they will serve a king who is a descendant of King David;
and I will appoint this king for them.
¹⁰So, you people of Israel who serve me,
do not be dismayed now,
because some day I will bring you back from distant places;
I will bring your descendants back home from the land where they had been exiled.
Then you Israelite people will again live peacefully and safely,
and there will not be any nation that will cause you to be terrified.
¹¹I, Yahweh, say that I will be with you and will rescue you;
I will completely destroy the nations to which I have scattered you.
But I will not completely destroy you.
I will punish you for your many sins, but I will punish you only as severely as you deserve:

I would be doing wrong if I did not to punish you at all.”

¹²Yahweh also says this:

“You have suffered very much;

it is as though you have a terrible wound that cannot be cured.

¹³There is no one to help you,

no one to put a bandage on your wound.

There is no medicine that will heal you.

¹⁴All your allies have deserted you

and they do not want to help you anymore.

It is true that I have punished you severely,

like your enemies would wound you,

because you have committed many sins

and you are very guilty.

¹⁵Because that is true, why do you protest about my punishing you,

as though I had caused a wound that could not be cured?

It was necessary for me to punish you,

because you had committed many sins

and you were very guilty.

¹⁶But some day all those who are trying to destroy you will be destroyed;

all your enemies will be exiled to other nations.

All those who have stolen things from you

will have their valuable possessions stolen,

and all those who attack you will be attacked.

¹⁷Everyone says that you are outcasts,

and that you live in Jerusalem, a city that no one cares about.”

But Yahweh says,

“I will heal your injuries

and cause you to be healthy again.”

¹⁸This is what Yahweh says:

“I will bring the people of Israel back from the lands to which they were taken

and enable them to possess their land and their houses again.

When that happens, Jerusalem will be rebuilt on top of its ruins,
and the king's palace will be rebuilt as a place of justice.

¹⁹People will again sing joyfully to thank me,
and I will cause there to be more people in Jerusalem, not fewer;
I will cause them to be honored, not despised.

²⁰Their children will prosper like they did before.
I will cause them to be a group of people who worship me,
and I will punish any nation that oppresses them.

²¹One of their own people will be their king,
and I will invite him to come close to me to worship me,
because no one would dare to come close to me
if I did not invite him.

²²You Israelite people will be my people,
and I will be your God."

²³Yahweh will punish your enemies;
it will be like a great storm;
it will come down like a whirlwind, swirling around the heads of wicked people.

²⁴He will not stop being angry
until he completely accomplishes all that he has planned.
In the future, you will understand all of this clearly.

Chapter 31

¹Yahweh says that at that time, he will be the God who is worshiped by all the clans in Israel, and they will be his people.

²This is what Yahweh says:
"Those people who remained alive and were not killed by their enemies' swords
were blessed by me even in the desert;
where they survived.

³Long ago I, Yahweh, said to your ancestors, the Israelite people,
'I have loved you and I will continue to love you forever.
By faithfully loving you I have brought you close to myself.'

⁴And now I tell you, my Israelite people who I will think of like a chaste woman, that I will cause you to be a nation again.

You will joyfully dance as you play your tambourines.

⁵Again you will plant your vineyards on the hills of Samaria, and you will eat the grapes that grow there.

⁶There will be a time when watchmen will call out from the hills of Samaria, 'Come, let us go up to Jerusalem to worship Yahweh, our God!'"

⁷And now Yahweh also says this:

"Sing joyfully about what I have done for the people of Israel!

Shout about your nation, the greatest nation!

Shout joyfully, praising me and saying,

'Yahweh, has rescued his people, the ones who were still alive!'

⁸Do that because I will bring them back from the northeast, from the most distant places on the earth. Among them will be blind people and lame people, women who are pregnant and women who are having labor pains.

They will be a huge group of people!

⁹They will be weeping as they return, and they will be praying to me.

I will guide them along streams of water, on level paths where they will not stumble.

I will do this because I am like a father to the Israelite people; it is as though Israel is my oldest son."

¹⁰People in the nations of the world, listen to this message from Yahweh.

Then proclaim it to people who live along the coasts far away.

Yahweh scattered his people, but he will gather them again and will take care of them like a shepherd takes care of his sheep.

¹¹Yahweh will buy his Israelite people back from those who conquered them because they were more powerful than his people.

¹²Yahweh's people will return to Jerusalem

and shout joyfully on the slopes of Zion Hill.

They will rejoice about the things that Yahweh has abundantly given to them—

grain and new wine and olive oil

and young sheep and cattle.

They themselves will be like a well-watered garden,

and they will no longer feel worn out.

¹³The young women will dance joyfully,

and all the men, young ones and old ones, will join with them.

I will cause them to rejoice instead of mourning;

I will comfort them and cause them to be happy instead of being sad.

¹⁴The priests will have plenty of things to eat and drink,

and all my people will be filled with the good things that I give them.

That will certainly happen because I, Yahweh, have said it!"

¹⁵Yahweh also says this:

"Women were weeping in Ramah, on the border between Israel and Judah;

they were mourning and crying very loudly.

The women who were the descendants of Ephraim and Manasseh, the two grandsons of Rachel the wife of Jacob, were weeping about their children,

and no one could comfort them

because their children were all dead.

¹⁶But now this is what Yahweh says:

'Do not cry anymore,

because I will reward you for the good things you have done for your children.

Your children will return from the land where their enemies have taken them.

¹⁷I, Yahweh, am telling you that there are things that you can confidently expect me to do for you in the future.

Your children will return to their own land.'

¹⁸I have heard the people of Israel grieving very much and saying to me,

'You punished us severely,

like calves are beaten by their owners to train them for pulling a plow.

So bring us back to obey you again,

because we are ready to return to you,

because you alone are Yahweh, our God.

¹⁹We turned away from you,
but we repented;
after you caused us to realize that we were guilty.

We beat our hands on our legs to show that we were very ashamed of the sins that we committed when we were young.'

²⁰But I, Yahweh, say this:

The Israelite people certainly are still my dear children.

It is often necessary for me to threaten to punish them,
but I still love them.

That is why I have not forgotten them,
and I will certainly act mercifully toward them.

²¹You Israelite people, set up road signs;
put up posts along the roads
to mark the road on which you walked when you were taken from Jerusalem.

My precious Israelite people,
come back to your towns here.

²²You people who have been like daughters who have forsaken their parents,
how long will you continue to wander away from me?

I, Yahweh, will cause something to happen on the earth that is new:

the women of Israel will be protecting their husbands as they travel back here!"

²³This is what Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, the God whom Israel worships, says: "When I bring them back from the countries to which they have been exiled, all the people from the towns in Judah will again say, 'I hope that Yahweh will bless this my home, the holy place where righteous people will live!' ²⁴The people of Judah who live in the towns, including the farmers and the shepherds, will all live together peacefully. ²⁵I will enable weary people to be refreshed with drinks of water, and enable people who are very exhausted to become strong again."

²⁶I, Jeremiah, woke up after dreaming all those things, and I looked around. I had slept very delightfully!

²⁷Then Yahweh said to me, "There will be a time when I will greatly increase the number of people and the number of livestock here in Israel and Judah. ²⁸Previously, I caused their enemies to remove the people from their land and to destroy their land and to bring many disasters to it. But in the future, I will enable them to build houses and to plant crops here in Israel again. That will surely happen because I, Yahweh, have said it. ²⁹Previously the people often said, 'The parents have eaten sour grapes, but it is the children's teeth that ache.' They meant that it was not fair for them to be punished for their ancestors' sins. But when I bring them back to their land, they will no longer say that.

³⁰But now all people will die because of the sins that they themselves have committed. It will be more like 'The person who eats sour grapes will have his own teeth aching.' ³¹I, Yahweh, say this: 'There will be a time when I will make a new agreement with the people of Israel and with the people of Judah. ³²This new agreement will not be

like the agreement that I made with their ancestors when I took them by their hands and led them out of Egypt. They disobeyed that agreement, even though I loved them like husbands love their wives.' ³³This is what I, Yahweh, say: 'This is the new agreement that I will make with the people of Israel some day: I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their inner beings. I will be their God, and they will be my people. ³⁴And it will not be necessary for them to teach their neighbors or their relatives and say, "You need to know Yahweh," because everyone, including both unimportant people and very important people, will already know me. And I will forgive them for having been very wicked, and I will never think again about the sins that they have committed."

³⁵Yahweh is the one who causes the sun to give light during the day,
and who causes the moon and the stars to give light during the night.

He stirs up the seas, with the result that waves roar.

His name is Yahweh, commander of the angel armies,

and this is what he says:

³⁶"I will not permanently reject my Israelite people
any more than I will get rid of the laws that control the universe.

³⁷And this is what I say:

'No one can measure the sky

and no one can find out what is supporting the earth.

Similarly, I cannot reject the descendants of Jacob

because of all the evil things that they have done.'

That is certain, because I, Yahweh, have said it!

³⁸I, Yahweh, also say that there will be a time when everything in Jerusalem will be rebuilt for me, from the tower of Hananel at the northeast corner, west to the gate named the Corner Gate. ³⁹Workers will stretch a measuring line over Gareb Hill all the way southwest to Goah. ⁴⁰And the whole area, including the place where corpses and ashes are thrown in the Kidron Valley, and all the fields to the east as far as the Horse Gate, will become set apart for me. And the city of Jerusalem will never again be captured or destroyed."

Chapter 32

¹After Zedekiah had been ruling Judah for almost ten years, Yahweh gave me another message, during the time that Nebuchadnezzar had been ruling Babylonia for almost eighteen years. ²His army had surrounded Jerusalem, and Jeremiah was in a prison area in the courtyard where the guards of the king's palace stayed. ³King Zedekiah had put me there. I continued to prophesy there about what would happen. I continued to say, "Yahweh says that he is about to allow the army of the king of Babylon to capture this city. ⁴And the soldiers of Babylonia will most definitely capture King Zedekiah and take him to the king of Babylon for a face to face encounter. ⁵Then his soldiers will take Zedekiah to Babylon, and he will remain there until I arrange for him to be punished. And if he tries to fight against the soldiers from Babylonia, he will not succeed." King Zedekiah asked Jeremiah why he continued to say that, but Yahweh had said this would be so.

⁶At that time, Yahweh gave Jeremiah another message. He said, ⁷"Your cousin Hanamel son of Shallum your uncle, will come to you. He will say to you, 'Buy my field at Anathoth, your hometown. Because you are my closest relative, it is written in our laws that you have the right to buy it before I ask if anyone else wants to buy it.'"

⁸And just as Yahweh had predicted, my cousin Hanamel came to see me in the courtyard of the palace. He said, "Please buy my field at Anathoth in the area where the descendants of Benjamin live. It is written in our laws that you have the right to buy it before I ask if anyone else wants to buy it." When he said that, I knew that the message that I had received was truly from Yahweh.

⁹So, I bought the field at Anathoth. I paid Hanamel almost two hundred grams of silver for it. ¹⁰I signed the paper on which it was written that I was buying it, while others were watching. Then I weighed the silver and gave it to him. ¹¹Then I took two copies of the paper. One was sealed and the other was not sealed. On both of them was written the price and conditions of the purchase. I took both copies ¹²and I gave them to Baruch son of Neraiah, and the grandson of Mahseiah. I did this while my cousin Hanamel, the other witnesses who had signed the paper, and other men of Judah who were there in the courtyard, were watching.

¹³Then, while they were all listening, I said to Baruch, ¹⁴"This is what Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, the God whom Israel worships, says: 'Take both copies of this paper and put them in a clay jar, to preserve them for a long time. ¹⁵Do that because this is what I, Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, the God whom Israel worships, say: Some day people will again own property in this land, and they will buy and sell houses and vineyards and fields.'"

¹⁶After I had given the papers to Baruch, I prayed to Yahweh, saying this: ¹⁷"Yahweh, you are my Lord! You made the sky and the earth by your very great power. Nothing is too difficult for you to do. ¹⁸You show thousands of people that you will always be faithful to your covenant with them, but people suffer the consequences of the sins that their parents have committed. You are the great and powerful God. You are Yahweh, commander of the angel armies. ¹⁹You make wise plans and you do mighty deeds. You see how all people behave, and you do to them what they deserve. ²⁰You performed many miracles in Egypt, and you continue to perform miracles here in Israel and everywhere else in the world. Because of that, you have become very famous. ²¹You brought our Israelite ancestors out of Egypt by performing many great miracles, using your very great power, causing our enemies to be terrified. ²²You gave to us Israelite people this land that you solemnly promised to give to our ancestors, a land that is very fertile. ²³Our ancestors came here and conquered this land and started to live in it, but they refused to obey you or to do what you commanded them to do. Because of that, you have caused them to experience all these disasters.

²⁴And now, the army of Babylonia has built ramps up against our city walls in order to attack our city. Because of our enemies' swords and because of famines and diseases, they will be able to conquer it easily. The things that you said would happen have now happened. ²⁵And it is evident that the Babylonian army will soon conquer this city. So now, I do not understand why you told me to buy this field with my silver, while others were watching. It seems that I have just been wasting my money by doing that!"

²⁶Then Yahweh gave me this message: ²⁷"I am Yahweh, the God who rules over every living thing in the world. There is absolutely nothing that is too difficult for me to do. ²⁸So, this is what I say: It is true that I will enable the Babylonian army and King Nebuchadnezzar to capture this city. ²⁹The soldiers of Babylonia who are now outside the walls around the city will enter and burn this city. They will burn down all the houses where people caused me to become angry by burning incense on the tops of their roofs to honor Baal and by pouring out offerings of wine to other gods.

³⁰The people of Israel and Judah have continually done only evil things from the time that they became a nation. They have caused me to become very angry by all their evil deeds. ³¹From the time that this city was built until now, the people of this city have done only things that caused me to be very angry. So now I will destroy it. ³²The people of Israel and Judah, including their kings, their officials, the priests, the false prophets, and all the other people in Jerusalem have committed many sins that have caused me to become angry. ³³My people have turned away from me and have refused to return to me. Even though I taught them things many times, they would not pay attention to what I taught them, and they would not obey me. ³⁴They have set up their detestable idols even in my own temple and defiled it. ³⁵They have built on the hilltops places to worship Baal in Ben Hinnom Valley outside Jerusalem, and there they sacrifice their sons and daughters to their god Molech. I never commanded them to do

such horrible deeds. I never even considered ordering such a terrible thing. And by doing it they have caused all the people of Judah to be guilty of having sinned.”

³⁶“But now I will say something more about this city. You people of Jerusalem have been saying, ‘The army of the king of Babylon will conquer it, either by their swords or because of famines or diseases.’ But this is what I, the God of Israel, say: ³⁷I will certainly bring my people back here again, from all the countries to which I will force them to go because I am extremely angry with them. I will bring them back to this city and allow them to live here safely.

³⁸They will be my people, and I will be their God. ³⁹I will give them one way of thinking and behaving, in order that they may revere me, for their good and for the good of their descendants. ⁴⁰I will make an agreement with them that will last forever: I will never stop doing good things for them, and they will always honor me; they will never stop worshiping me. ⁴¹I will be happy to do good things for them, and I will surely enable them to return to this land and remain here; I will do that with all my inner being and all my strength.’

⁴²And this is also what I, Yahweh, say: ‘I have caused them to experience all these disasters. Similarly, some day I will do for them all the good things that I have promised. ⁴³By buying land you, Jeremiah, have predicted that some day people will buy and sell fields in this land about which you people of Jerusalem now say, “The Babylonian soldiers have destroyed it. It is now desolate. It is a land where there are no longer any people or animals.” ⁴⁴But some day people will again buy and sell fields here. People will sign documents about buying those fields, and other people will witness them doing that. That will happen in the land where the descendants of Benjamin live and here in the villages near Jerusalem, in other towns in Judah, in the hill country and in the foothills to the west, and in the southern Judean wilderness. Some day I will cause them to prosper again. That will surely happen because I, Yahweh, have said it.’”

Chapter 33

¹While Jeremiah was still being guarded in the courtyard of the palace, Yahweh gave him this second message:

²“This is what I, the one who made the earth, who formed it and put it in its place, say to the people of Jerusalem: ‘My name is Yahweh. ³Call out to me, and then I will tell you great and wonderful things that you have not known before.’ ⁴This is what I, Yahweh, the God of Israel, say: ‘The men in this city have torn down some of their houses, and even parts of the king’s palace, to get materials to strengthen the walls around the city, in order that the soldiers of Babylonia would not be able to break through the walls after they climb up the ramps that they have built against the walls, and kill the inhabitants with their swords. ⁵You are expecting to fight against the army from Babylonia, but what will happen is that the houses of this city will be filled with the corpses of the men of this city whom I will allow to be killed because I am extremely angry with them. I have abandoned them because of all the wicked things that they have done.

⁶However, there will be a time when I will cause the people in this city to be healthy and strong again. I will enable them to be prosperous and have peace. ⁷I will bring the people of Judah and Israel back from the lands to which they were exiled. I will enable them to rebuild their towns. ⁸I will get rid of their guilt for all the sins that they have committed against me, and I will forgive them for their sin of rebelling against me. ⁹When that happens, all the nations of the world will rejoice, and they will praise me and honor me. They will hear about all the good things that I have done for this city and, because of that, they will revere me, and they will tremble because I have caused the people in this city to have peace and to prosper.’

¹⁰And this is also what I, Yahweh, say: ‘You people have said that this is a land where there are no longer any people or animals. But in the streets of Jerusalem that are now completely empty, and in the other towns in Judah,

¹¹some day people will again be happy and laugh. Brides and bridegrooms will again sing joyfully. And many other people will also sing joyfully as they bring their offerings to me to thank me for what I have done for them. They will sing this song:

“We thank you, Yahweh, commander of the angel armies,

because you are good to us.

You faithfully hold to your covenant with us forever.”

They will sing that because I will cause the people of this land to be as prosperous as they were before.’

¹²This land is now desolate. There are no people or animals living here. But I, Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, say this: ‘In this land there will again be pastures where shepherds will lead their sheep ¹³Shepherds will again count their sheep as the sheep walk by, outside the towns in the hill country, in the western foothills, in the southern Judean wilderness, in the land where the descendants of Benjamin live, around Jerusalem, and outside all the other towns in Judah.’ That will surely happen because I, Yahweh, have said it.

¹⁴Listen to this! I, Yahweh, say that there will be a time when I will do for the people of Israel and Judah all the good things that I promised to do for them.

¹⁵At that time I will appoint a righteous man who will be a descendant of King David.

Throughout the land, he will do what is just and right.

¹⁶At that time, the people of Judah will be rescued from their enemies, and the people of Jerusalem will be safe.

And people will say that the name of the city is ‘Yahweh is the one who does right for us.’ ¹⁷And this is also what I, Yahweh, say: ‘There will be descendants of King David ruling Israel forever. ¹⁸And there will always be priests who are descendants of Levi who stand in front of me and offer sacrifices that will be completely burned on the altar and who will burn food offerings and other sacrifices.’”

¹⁹Then Yahweh gave Jeremiah this message: ²⁰“This is what I, Yahweh, say: ‘You certainly cannot annul my promise to cause nighttime to follow daytime each day. ²¹Similarly, you cannot annul the promise that I made with King David, who served me well, that there will always be descendants of his who will rule Judah. The same is true for my agreement with the descendants of Levi who are priests who do work for me. ²²No one can count the stars in the sky, and no one can count the grains of sand at the seashore. Similarly, I will cause there to be a huge number of descendants of David and descendants of Levi who will work for me.’”

²³Yahweh gave another message to me. He said, ²⁴“Surely you know that some people are saying, ‘Yahweh chose two groups, the people of Judah and the people of Israel, and later abandoned them.’ The people who are saying this are despising my people; they are saying that Israel no longer deserves to be considered a nation. ²⁵But this is what I say: ‘I will not reject my people any quicker than I will change my laws that control the day and the night, the sky and the earth. ²⁶Similarly, I will never abandon the descendants of David or the other descendants of Jacob, and I will always allow descendants of David to rule the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. I will bring them back to their land, and I will act mercifully toward them.’”

Chapter 34

¹King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon came with the armies of all the kingdoms that he ruled, and they fought against Jerusalem and the other towns in Judah. At that time, Yahweh gave me this message: ²“Go to Zedekiah the King of Judah, and say to him, ‘This is what Yahweh, the God of Israel, says: “I am about to enable the army of the king of Babylon to capture this city, and they will burn it down. ³You will not escape from them; they will capture you and take you to the king of Babylon. You will meet him and speak with him face to face; then they will take you to Babylon.”’

⁴But King Zedekiah, listen to what Yahweh has promised: “You will not be killed in a battle; ⁵you will die peacefully. When you die, people will burn incense to honor you just as they did for your ancestors who were kings before you became king. They will mourn for you, calling out, ‘We are very sad that our king is dead!’ I, Yahweh, promise that will happen.””

⁶So I took that message to King Zedekiah. ⁷At that time the army of Babylonia had surrounded Jerusalem and Lachish and Azekah. Those three cities were the only three cities in Judah that had high walls around them that still had not been captured.

⁸King Zedekiah had decreed that the people must free their slaves. ⁹He decreed that the people must free their Hebrew slaves, both the men slaves and the women slaves. No one would be allowed to force a fellow Jew to continue to be his slave. ¹⁰The officials and the rest of the people had obeyed what the king decreed, ¹¹but later they changed their minds. They forced the men and women whom they had freed to become their slaves again.

¹²So Yahweh gave me this message to tell to them: ¹³"I, Yahweh, the God of Israel, made an agreement with your ancestors long ago, when I rescued them from being slaves in Egypt. ¹⁴I told them that they must free all their Hebrew slaves after the slaves had worked for them for six years. But your ancestors did not pay any attention to what I said. ¹⁵Recently, you obeyed my command and stopped doing what was wrong and did what was right. You made a solemn agreement at my temple that you would free your slaves, and then you freed them. ¹⁶But now you have disregarded what you solemnly promised, and you have shown contempt for what I said by taking back the women and men whom you had freed and said they could live wherever they wanted to. Now you have forced them to be your slaves again.

¹⁷Therefore, this is what I, Yahweh, say: 'Because you have not obeyed me by freeing your fellow Israelites, I will free you to be destroyed by the swords of your enemies and by famines and diseases. All the nations of the earth will be horrified because of what happens to you. ¹⁸¹⁸⁻¹⁹Because you have disregarded what I said in my agreement with you, I will do to you just what you did to the calves that you cut in half to show that you would surely do what you solemnly promised that you would do. I will enable your enemies to cut you into pieces, you officials of Judah and you officials of Jerusalem, and you officials in the palace, and you priests and all you common people. I will do that because you have ignored the fact that you had solemnly promised to free your slaves. ¹⁹²⁰I will enable your enemies to capture you, and they will kill you. And your bodies will be food for vultures and wild animals.

²¹I will enable the army of the king of Babylon to capture King Zedekiah and his officials. Although the king of Babylon and his army have left Jerusalem for a short time, ²²I will summon them back again. This time, they will fight against this city and capture it and burn it down. I will make sure that all the towns in Judah are destroyed, with the result that no one will live there anymore."

Chapter 35

¹Several years earlier, when Jehoiakim son of Josiah was the king of Judah, Yahweh gave me this message: ²"Go to the place where families of the Rekab clan live. Invite them to my temple. When they arrive, take them into one of the inside rooms and offer them some wine."

³So I went to see Jaazaniah and all his brothers and sons who represented the Rekab clan. Jaazaniah was a son of another man named Jeremiah and grandson of Habazziniah. ⁴I took them to the temple, and we went into the room where the sons of Igdaliah's son Hanan, who was a prophet, stayed. That room was next to the room that was used by the men who were in charge of the entrances to the temple. It was above the room that belonged to Maaseiah, who was the temple gatekeeper and the son of Shallum.

⁵I set jugs of wine and some cups in front of them and urged them to drink some, ⁶but they refused. They said, "We do not drink wine, because our ancestor Jonadab son of Rekab, commanded us, saying 'You and your descendants must never drink wine. ⁷And you must not build houses or plant vineyards or other crops. Instead, you must always live in tents. If you obey those commands, you all will live for many years in this land.' ⁸So we have obeyed him in all those matters. We have never drunk wine. Our wives and our sons and our daughters have also never drunk wine. ⁹We have not built houses or planted vineyards or other crops or worked in fields. ¹⁰We have lived in tents. We have obeyed all the commands that Jonadab, our ancestor, gave us. ¹¹But when the army of King

Nebuchadnezzar attacked this country, we said, 'We must go to Jerusalem to escape from the armies of Babylonia and Aram.' So, we came to Jerusalem and we are living here."

¹²Then Yahweh gave this message to me: ¹³"This is what I, Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, the God whom Israel worships, say: 'Go and tell this to the people in Jerusalem and in other places in Judah: "Why do you not listen to me or learn something about how to obey me? ¹⁴The Rekab clan still do not drink wine, because their ancestor Jonadab told them to not do that. In contrast, I have spoken to you many times, but you ignored me and refused to obey me. ¹⁵Many times I sent prophets to you. They told you, 'Turn away from your wicked behavior, and do things that you should do. Stop worshiping other gods, in order that you will be able to live peacefully in this land that I gave to you and your ancestors.' But you would not pay attention to what I said or obey me. ¹⁶The descendants of Jonadab have obeyed their ancestor, but you have refused to pay attention to what I told you.

¹⁷Therefore, this is what I, Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, the God whom Israel worships, say: 'You have refused to listen to me and you did not answer when I called you. Therefore, I will cause the people in Jerusalem and other places in Judah to experience all the disasters that I said that I would cause to happen.'"

¹⁸Then Jeremiah turned to the Rekab clan and said, "This is what Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, the God whom Israel worships, says: 'You have obeyed what your ancestor Jonadab told you. You have obeyed all his instructions. ¹⁹Therefore, this is what Yahweh says: "There will always be descendants of Jonadab who will do work for me.'"

Chapter 36

¹When Jehoiakim son of Josiah had been the king of Judah for almost four years, Yahweh gave this message to me: ²"Get a scroll, and write on it the messages that I have given to you regarding Israel, Judah, and the other nations. Write all of the messages, starting from the time that I gave you the first message, when Josiah was the king, up until now. ³When the people of Judah hear again about all the disasters that I plan to cause them to experience, perhaps each one of them will repent. If they do that, I will be able to forgive them for the wrong things that they have done."

⁴So Jeremiah summoned Baruch son of Neraiah. Then, as Jeremiah dictated to him all the messages that Yahweh had spoken to him, he wrote them on a scroll. ⁵Then Jeremiah said to him, "I am not allowed to leave here and go to the temple. ⁶So, you go to the temple on the next day when the people are fasting, and read to them the messages from Yahweh that you wrote while I dictated them to you. Read them aloud to all the people who are there, including the people of Judah who come there from their towns. ⁷Perhaps they will turn from their evil behavior and request Yahweh to act mercifully toward them. They must do that, because Yahweh is very angry with them and has threatened to punish them severely."

⁸Baruch did what Jeremiah told him to do. He went to the temple and read to the people all those messages from Yahweh. ⁹He did it on the ninth month, on a day when their leaders had proclaimed that all the people in Jerusalem, and the people who had come there from other towns in Judah, should fast to please Yahweh. This happened when Jehoiakim had been king for almost five years. ¹⁰Baruch read to all the people the messages that he had written on the scroll. He read them while he was in the temple, in the room where Gemariah stayed. He was the son of Shaphan, who had previously been the king's secretary. That room was close to the upper courtyard of the temple, near the entrance to the temple that is called the New Gate.

¹¹When Micaiah son of Gemariah, and grandson of Shaphan, heard these messages from Yahweh, ¹²he went down to the secretary's room in the palace, where all the king's officials were meeting. Elishama the king's secretary was there. Delaiah son of Shemaiah, Elnathan son of Acbor, Gemariah, Zedekiah son of Hananiah, and all the other officials of the king were also there. ¹³When Micaiah told them about the messages that Baruch had been reading to the people, ¹⁴the officials sent Jehudi son of Nethaniah, and grandson of Shelemiah and great-grandson of Cushi, to tell Baruch to come and read the messages to them, also. So Baruch took the scroll and went to them.

¹⁵They said to him, "Please sit down and read it to us." So Baruch did what they requested.

¹⁶After they had heard all the messages, they were afraid. They looked at each other and then they said, "We must tell these messages to the king!" ¹⁷Then they asked Baruch, "How did you get this scroll? Did Jeremiah dictate to you all the messages on this scroll?"

¹⁸Baruch replied, "Yes, Jeremiah dictated them to me, and I wrote them with ink on this scroll."

¹⁹Then the officials told Baruch, "You and Jeremiah must both hide. Do not tell anyone where you are!"

²⁰They put the scroll in the room of Elishama, the king's secretary. Then they went to the king, who was in the courtyard, and reported to him everything that Baruch had read to them.

²¹Then the king sent Jehudi to get the scroll. Jehudi brought it from Elishama's room and read it to the king, while all the king's officials were standing there. ²²It was in the cold season, and the king was in a part of the palace where he stayed when it was cold. He was sitting in front of a fire to keep warm. ²³Each time Jehudi finished reading three or four columns, the king cut off that section of the scroll with a knife and threw it into the fire. He did that, section by section, until the entire scroll was burned up. ²⁴Neither the king nor his officials showed that they were afraid that God would punish them. They did not tear their clothes to show that they were sorry for what they had done. ²⁵Elnathan, Delaiah, and Gemariah pleaded with the king not to burn the scroll, but he did not pay any attention. ²⁶Then the king commanded his son Jerahmeel, Seraiah son of Azriel, and Shelemiah son of Abdeel to arrest Baruch and me. But they were unable to do that because Yahweh had hidden us.

²⁷After the king had burned the scroll on which were written the messages that I had dictated to Baruch, Yahweh said this to me: ²⁸"Get another scroll, and tell Baruch to write everything again, the same messages that he had written on the scroll that King Jehoiakim burned. ²⁹Then go to the king and say to him, 'Yahweh says this: You burned the scroll because you did not like what was written on it, that the king of Babylon would surely come with his army and destroy this land and get rid of all the people and the animals. ³⁰Now this is what I, Yahweh, say about you, Jehoiakim: None of your descendants will rule this kingdom. Your corpse will be thrown out on the ground and not buried; it will be under the hot sun during the days and struck by frost during the nights. ³¹I will punish you and your family and your officials for their sins. And I will cause the people of Jerusalem and the people of the other towns in Judah to experience all the disasters that I promised, because you all would not pay attention to what I said!'"

³²So Jeremiah took another scroll, and again he dictated the messages to Baruch. He wrote everything that had been written on the other scroll, the one that King Jehoiakim had burned in the fire. But this time, Jeremiah added more messages.

Chapter 37

¹After Jehoiakim died, his son Jehoiachin became king for only three months, after which King Josiah's son Zedekiah became the king of Judah. Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, appointed him to be the new king. ²But King Zedekiah and his palace officials and the other people in the land paid no attention to the messages that Yahweh gave me.

³However, one day King Zedekiah sent Jehukal son of Shelemiah, and Zephaniah the priest, son of Maaseiah, to me. They requested me to pray to Yahweh our God for our nation.

⁴At that time Jeremiah had not yet been put in prison, so he could go and come wherever and whenever he wanted to, without being hindered.

⁵At that time, the army of Hophra, the king of Egypt, came to the southern border of Judah. When the army of Babylonia heard about that, they stopped surrounding Jerusalem and left there to fight against the army from Egypt.

⁶Then Yahweh gave this message to me: ⁷"I, Yahweh, the God of Israel, say this: The king of Judah has sent messengers to you to ask me what is going to happen. Tell the king that even though the army of the king of Egypt came to help him, they are about to return to Egypt. ⁸Then the army of Babylonia will return here, capture this city, and burn everything in it.

⁹So, this is what Jeremiah said to you Israelites: 'You should not deceive yourselves, thinking that the army from Babylonia has gone and will not return. That is not true. ¹⁰And even if your soldiers could destroy almost all of the soldiers from Babylonia who are attacking you, and allow only those who were wounded to remain alive in their tents, those men would come out of their tents and completely burn this city.'

¹¹When the army from Babylonia left Jerusalem because the army from Egypt was approaching, ¹²Jeremiah started to leave the city. He intended to go to the area where the descendants of Benjamin live, in order to take possession of my share of the property from my family. ¹³But as he was walking out the Benjamin Gate, the head guard seized Jeremiah and said, "You are deserting us and going to the soldiers from Babylonia!" The man who seized him was Irijah son of Shelemiah, and grandson of Hananiah.

¹⁴But Jeremiah protested and said, "That is not true! I was not intending to do that!" But Irijah would not pay attention to what Jeremiah said. He took Jeremiah to the king's officials. ¹⁵They were very angry with him. They commanded the guards to beat Jeremiah and then to put him in the house where Jonathan the king's secretary stayed. They had changed Jonathan's house to make it become a prison.

¹⁶They put Jeremiah in a dungeon in that prison, and he remained there for several days. ¹⁷Then King Zedekiah secretly sent a servant to him, who took Jeremiah to the palace. There the king asked him, "Do you have any messages from Yahweh?" Jeremiah replied, "Yes, the message is that you will be put into the hands of the king of Babylon."

¹⁸Then Jeremiah asked the king, "What crime have I committed against you or against your officials or against the Israelite people, with the result that you have commanded that I be put in a prison? ¹⁹Your prophets predicted that the army of the king of Babylon would not attack you or this land. Why were their messages not fulfilled? ²⁰Your majesty, I plead with you to listen to me. Do not send me back to the dungeon in the house of Jonathan your secretary, because if you do that, I will die there."

²¹So King Zedekiah commanded that Jeremiah not be sent back to the prison cell. Instead, he was allowed to be watched by the guards in the courtyard of the palace. The king also commanded that they should bring him a loaf of fresh bread every day, until there was no bread left in the city. So they put Jeremiah in that courtyard and he remained there.

Chapter 38

¹Four officials, Shephatiah son of Mattan, Gedaliah son of Pashhur, Jehukal son of Shelemiah, and Pashhur son of Malkijah, heard what Jeremiah had been telling all the people. ²He had been telling them that Yahweh was saying, "Everyone who stays in Jerusalem will die. They will be killed by their enemies' swords or from famines or from diseases. But those who surrender to the Babylonian army will remain alive. They will escape; they will not be killed. ³Yahweh also says that the army of the king of Babylon will certainly capture this city."

⁴So those officials went to the king and said, "This man Jeremiah should be executed! Because of what he is saying, he is discouraging our soldiers who remain in the city. He is also discouraging the people. He is not saying things that will help us; he is saying things that will defeat us."

⁵King Zedekiah said, "All right, do to him what you want to; I do not have the power to stop you."

⁶So those officials took Jeremiah from his cell and lowered him by ropes into a cistern in the courtyard. The cistern belonged to Malkijah, who was a son of the king. There was no water in the cistern, but there was a lot of mud, so he sank down deep into the mud.

⁷But Ebed-Melek, a palace official from Ethiopia, heard someone say that Jeremiah was in the well. At that time the king was deciding people's cases at the Benjamin Gate. ⁸Ebed-Melek went out of the palace and said to the king, ⁹"Your majesty, those men have done a very evil thing. They have put the prophet Jeremiah in a well. Almost all the food in the city is gone, so no one will be able to bring him any food, and as a result he will die from hunger!"

¹⁰So the king told Ebed-Melek, "Take thirty of my men with you, and pull Jeremiah out of the well, in order that he does not die!"

¹¹So Ebed-Melek took charge of those thirty men; they went into a room in the palace below the room where people had stored things. There they found some old rags and discarded clothing. They took those things and went to the well. They fastened them to a rope and lowered the rope to me. ¹²Then Ebed-Melek called down to me, "Put these rags underneath your armpits, to protect you from being injured by the ropes!" So Jeremiah did that. ¹³Then they pulled him out of the well. So he stayed in the courtyard where the palace guards were.

¹⁴One day King Zedekiah summoned Jeremiah, and he was brought to the king, who was waiting for him at the entrance of the temple. He said to Jeremiah, "I want to ask you something. I want you to answer me truthfully, and to not conceal anything."

¹⁵Jeremiah replied, "If I tell you the truth, you will command that I be executed. And if I give you good advice, you will not pay attention to what I say."

¹⁶But King Zedekiah secretly promised him, "Tell me the truth! And as surely as Yahweh lives, I will not cause you to be executed, and I will not put you into the hands of those who are wanting to kill you."

¹⁷So then Jeremiah said to Zedekiah, "This is what Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, the God whom Israel worships, says: 'If you surrender to the officers of the king of Babylon, you and your family will be spared, and this city will not be burned. ¹⁸But if you refuse to surrender to them, you will not escape. And the army from Babylonia will capture this city and completely burn it.'"

¹⁹The king replied, "But I am afraid to surrender to the soldiers from Babylon, because their officers may put me into the hands of the people of Judah who have already joined the soldiers from Babylonia, and those people from Judah will mistreat me."

²⁰Jeremiah replied, "If you obey Yahweh by doing what I tell you to do, they will not put you into the hands of our people. Things will go well for you, and you will remain alive. ²¹But if you refuse to surrender, I will tell you what Yahweh has revealed to me. ²²All the women who remain in your palace will be brought out and given to the officers of the king of Babylon. Then those women will say to you:

'You had friends whom you thought you could trust,

but they have deceived you and caused you to make a wrong decision.

Now it is as though you are stuck in mud,

and your friends have abandoned you.'

²³All of your wives and children in the city will be led out to the soldiers from Babylonia, and you also will not escape. The soldiers of the king of Babylon will seize you, and they will burn down this city."

²⁴Then Zedekiah said to Jeremiah, "Do not tell anyone what you told me; if you tell anyone, the king's officials may kill you. ²⁵If my officials find out that I talked to you, perhaps they will come to you and say, 'Tell us what you and the king were talking about. If you do not tell us, we will kill you.' ²⁶If that happens, just tell them that you pleaded with me not to send you back to the dungeon in Jonathan's house, because you were afraid that you would die if you were put there again."

²⁷And that is what happened. The king's officials came to Jeremiah and asked why the king had summoned him. But he told them what the king told him to tell them. So they did not ask Jeremiah any more questions, because no one had heard what the king and Jeremiah had said to each other.

²⁸So Jeremiah remained being guarded in the courtyard of the palace, until the day that the army of Babylonia captured Jerusalem.

Chapter 39

¹After King Zedekiah had been ruling Judah for almost nine years, King Nebuchadnezzar came in the tenth month of the year with his army, and they surrounded Jerusalem. ²One and a half years later, after Zedekiah had been ruling for almost eleven years, in the eleventh year and fourth month, soldiers from Babylonia broke through the city wall. Then they rushed in and captured the city. ³Then all the officers of the king of Babylon came in and sat down at the Middle Gate to decide what they would do to the city. They included Nergal-Sharezer, Samgar Nebo, Sarsekim who was one of the chief administrative officers, Nergal-Sharezer, the king's advisor, and many other officials.

⁴When King Zedekiah and all his soldiers realized that the army of Babylonia had broken into the city, they fled. They waited until it was dark. Then they went out of the city through the king's garden, through the gate that was between the two walls. Then they started running toward the plain along the Jordan.

⁵But the soldiers from Babylonia pursued the king, and they caught him on the plains near Jericho. They took him to the king of Babylon, who was at Riblah in the Hamath. There Nebuchadnezzar told his soldiers what they should do to punish Zedekiah. ⁶They forced Zedekiah to watch while they killed his sons and all the officials from Judah. ⁷Then they gouged out Zedekiah's eyes. They fastened him with bronze chains and took him to Babylon.

⁸Meanwhile, the Babylonian army burned the palace and all the other buildings in Jerusalem. And they tore down the city walls. ⁹Then Nebuzaradan, the captain of the king's bodyguards, forced to go to Babylon most of the other people who remained in the city and the Jews who had joined the soldiers of Babylonia. ¹⁰But he allowed some of the very poor people to remain in Judah, and he gave them vineyards and fields to take care of.

¹¹King Nebuchadnezzar had previously told the captain of the guard, Nebuzaradan to find Jeremiah. He said, ¹²"Make sure that no one harms him. Take care of him, and do for him whatever he requests you to do." ¹³So he and Nebushazban, who was one of their chief officers, and Nergal-Sharezer the king's advisor, and other officers of the king of Babylon ¹⁴sent some men to bring Jeremiah out of the courtyard outside of the palace. They took him to Gedaliah who was the son of Ahikam and grandson of Shaphan. Then Gedaliah took Jeremiah to his home, and he stayed in Judah among his own people who had been allowed to remain there.

¹⁵But while Jeremiah was still being guarded in the palace courtyard, Yahweh gave him this message: ¹⁶"Say this to Ebed-Melek, the official from Ethiopia: 'This is what Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, the God whom Israel worships, says: I will do to this city everything that I said that I would do. Everything I told you would be done, and you will see it with your own eyes. ¹⁷But I promise to rescue you from the people you are afraid of. This is what I, Yahweh, have promised to you! ¹⁸You trusted me, so I will save you. You will not be killed by our enemies' swords. You will live. That will surely happen, because I, Yahweh, have said it.'"

Chapter 40

¹The soldiers from Babylonia captured Jeremiah and many other people from Jerusalem and other places in Judah. They planned to take them to Babylon. So they fastened chains around their wrists and took them to Ramah, a town north of Jerusalem. While they were there, Jeremiah was released. This is how it happened: ²Nebuzaradan, the captain of the king's guards, found that Jeremiah was there. He summoned Jeremiah and said to him, "Yahweh

your God said that he would cause this land to experience a disaster. ³And now he has caused it to happen. He has done just what he said that he would do, because you people sinned against Yahweh and refused to obey him.

⁴But today I am going to take the chains off your wrists and release you. If you want to come with me to Babylon, that will be fine. I will take care of you. But if you do not want to come with me, do not come. Stay here. Look, the entire country is available; you can choose whatever part you want to go to. You can go wherever you think it is best." Then he took the chains off Jeremiah's wrists. ⁵He said, "If you decide to stay here, go to Gedaliah. The king of Babylon appointed him to be the governor of Judah. You will be allowed to stay here with the people that he is governing. But you can do whatever you want to."

Then Nebuzaradan gave Jeremiah some food and some money, and he allowed him to go.

⁶He returned to Gedaliah at Mizpah, and he stayed in Judah with the people who still remained in the land.

⁷The Israelite soldiers who had not surrendered to the army of Babylonia were roaming around in the countryside. Then their leaders heard someone say that the king of Babylon had appointed Gedaliah to be the governor of the very poor people who were still in Judah, who had not been taken to Babylon. ⁸So they went to talk to Gedaliah at Mizpah. Those who went included Ishmael son of Nethaniah, Johanan and Jonathan the sons of Kareah, Seraiah son of Tanhumeth, the sons of Ephai from Netophath, and Jezaniah from Maacah, and the soldiers who were with them. ⁹Gedaliah solemnly promised that the soldiers from Babylonia would not harm them. He said, "Do not be afraid to do things for them. Stay here in this land and do things for the king of Babylon. If you do that, things will go well for you. ¹⁰As for me, I will stay here at Mizpah to be your representative to the officials from Babylonia who come to talk with us. But you should return to your towns, and eat the things that are produced on your land. Harvest the grapes and the fruit that ripens in the summer and the olives, make wine and olive oil, and store it."

¹¹Then the Jews who had fled to Moab, Ammon, Edom, and other nearby countries heard people say that the king of Babylon had allowed a few people to remain in Judah, and that he had appointed Gedaliah to be their governor.

¹²So they began to return to Judah. They stopped at Mizpah to talk with Gedaliah. Then they went to various places in Judea, and they harvested a great amount of grapes and summer fruit.

¹³Some time later, Johanan and all the other leaders of the Israelite soldiers who had not surrendered to the army of Babylonia came to Gedaliah at Mizpah. ¹⁴They said to him, "Do you know that Baalis, the king of the people of Ammon, has sent Ishmael son of Nethaniah to assassinate you?" But Gedaliah did not believe what they said.

¹⁵Later Johanan talked with Gedaliah privately. He said, "Allow me to go and murder Ishmael secretly. It would not be good to allow him to come and murder you! If you are killed, what will happen to all the Jews who have returned to this area? They will be scattered, and the other people who remain in Judah will all be killed!"

¹⁶But Gedaliah said to Johanan, "No, I will not allow you to do that. I think that you are lying about Ishmael."

Chapter 41

¹Ishmael son of Nethaniah was a member of the king's family. He had been one of King Zedekiah's important officials. In the seventh month of that year, he went to Mizpah with ten other men to talk with Gedaliah. While they were eating together, ²Ishmael and the other ten men jumped up, and with their swords they killed Gedaliah—the man whom the king of Babylon had appointed to be their governor! ³Ishmael and the other men also killed all the Jews and the Babylonians who his soldiers found with Gedaliah at Mizpah.

⁴The next day, before anyone had found out that Gedaliah had been murdered, ⁵eighty men from Shechem, Shiloh, and Samaria came to worship at the temple of Yahweh in Mizpah. They had shaved off their beards and torn their clothes and cut themselves to show that they were mourning. And they had brought grain offerings and incense to burn on the altar. ⁶Ishmael son of Nethaniah went out of the city to meet them, weeping as he went. When he reached them, he said, "Come and see what has happened to Gedaliah!"

⁷But as soon as they had all entered the town, Ishmael and his men killed most of them and threw their corpses into a well. ⁸There were only ten of them whom they spared. They were not killed because they promised to Ishmael that if he allowed them to remain alive, they would bring him lots of wheat and barley and olive oil and honey that they had hidden. ⁹The well where Ishmael's men had thrown the corpses of the men whom they had murdered was the deep well that King Asa's men had dug in order that they would have water in the city if the army of King Baasha of Israel would surround the city. Ishmael's men filled that well with corpses.

¹⁰Then Ishmael and his men captured the king's daughters and some of the other people who had been left in Mizpah by the chief Babylonian guard Nebuzaradan so that Gedaliah would take care of them. Ishmael and his men took those people and started back toward the Ammon area.

¹¹But Johanan son of Kareah and all the other leaders of the Israelite soldiers who had not surrendered to the army of Babylonia heard about what Ishmael son of Nethaniah and his men had done. ¹²So they immediately went with all their men to stop them. They caught up with them at the large pool near the city of Gibeon. ¹³When all the people whom Ishmael and his men had captured saw Johanan and the soldiers who were with him, they shouted joyfully. ¹⁴So all those who had been captured in Mizpah escaped, and they started to help Johanan. ¹⁵But Ishmael son of Nethaniah and eight of his men escaped and fled to the Ammon area. ¹⁶Then Johanan son of Kareah and the men who were with him gathered together all the people whom they had rescued at Gibeon. They included soldiers and women and children and some of the king's palace officials. They were all people whom Ishmael and his men had captured after they had killed Gedaliah. ¹⁷They took them all to Geruth Kimham village near Bethlehem. And they all prepared to go to Egypt. ¹⁸They were worried about what the soldiers of Babylonia would do to them when they found out that Ishmael had killed Gedaliah, who had been appointed by the king of Babylonia to be their governor.

Chapter 42

¹Then Johanan son of Kereah and Jezaniah son of Hoshaiiah, and all the other leaders of the Israelite soldiers who had not surrendered to the army of Babylonia, and many other people, including those who were important and those who were not important, came to me. ²They said, "Please listen to our request and pray to Yahweh our God for all of us. Although we were previously a huge number of people, you can see that now we are only a small number of people who have survived. ³Pray that Yahweh our God will show us what we should do and where we should go."

⁴I replied, "Okay, I will pray to Yahweh our God, like you have requested, and I will tell you what he says. I will tell you everything."

⁵They replied to me, "We know that Yahweh our God will be a faithful witness against us if we refuse to do everything that he tells us to do. ⁶We are requesting you to ask Yahweh our God what we should do. When he replies, we will obey him, whether we like what he says or not. We will do that because we know that things will go well for us if we obey him."

⁷So I prayed to Yahweh, and ten days later he gave me his reply. ⁸So I summoned Johanan son of Kereah and all the other leaders of the and all the other people, including those who were important and those who were not important. ⁹I said to them, "You told me to tell Yahweh, the God of Israel what you were requesting. This is what he replied: ¹⁰You should stay here in this land. If you do that, I will cause your nation to be strong and not be weak. I will cause you to prosper and not be exiled again. I will stop the disasters that I made you experience. ¹¹But do not be afraid of the king of Babylon anymore, because I will be with you. I will rescue you from his power. ¹²I will be merciful to you by causing him to act kindly toward you. So as a result, he will allow you to stay here in your land.'

¹³But if you refuse to obey Yahweh our God, and if you say 'We will not stay here; ¹⁴instead, we will go to Egypt. There we will not experience any wars, we will not hear trumpets signaling our soldiers to prepare for battles, and we will not be hungry.' ¹⁵Listen now! you people who are left in Judah! Listen to what Yahweh, commander of the

angel armies, the God whom Israel worships, says to you: 'If you are determined to go to Egypt, and if you go and live there, ¹⁶you will experience those wars and famines that you are afraid of, and you will all die there. ¹⁷That is what will happen to all you who are determined to go to Egypt and live there. Some of you will be killed by the swords of your enemies, and others of you will die from famines and from diseases. None of you will escape the disasters that I will bring on you.'

¹⁸And Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, the God whom Israel worships, also says this: 'Because I was very angry, I severely punished all the people of Jerusalem. I will do the same things to you when you go to Egypt. The result will be that people will curse you. They will be horrified about what has happened to you. They will make fun of you, and you will never see this land again.'

¹⁹You little group of people of Judah who are still alive, listen to me: Yahweh has told you, 'Do not go to Egypt.' So do not forget what I have warned you today. ²⁰You made a life-and-death mistake when you requested me to pray to Yahweh our God and claimed to be willing to obey everything he said. ²¹So today I have told you exactly what he said, but I know that you will not obey Yahweh our God now, just as you have not obeyed him previously. ²²You want to go to Egypt and live there. So now, you can be sure of this: All of you will die there. Some of you will be killed by the swords of your enemies and others will die from famines or from diseases."

Chapter 43

¹So I finished telling to the people that message from Yahweh our God. ²But then Johanan son of Kareah and Azariah son of Hoshai and some other insolent men said to me, "You are lying! Yahweh our God has not told us that we should not go to Egypt! ³We think that Baruch son of Neriah has urged you to say this, in order that if we stay here, the soldiers from Babylonia will seize us and kill us or take us to Babylonia."

⁴So Johanan and the other leaders of the Judean soldiers and many of the other people who were there refused to obey Yahweh's command to stay in Judah. ⁵Johanan and all the other leaders gathered together all the people who had returned from the other countries to which they had been scattered. ⁶They included men, women, children, the king's daughters, and all those whom Nebuzaradan had left with Gedaliah, and they also took Baruch and me. ⁷They refused to obey Yahweh, and they took us all to Egypt, as far as the city of Tahpanhes.

⁸While we were at Tachpanches, Yahweh gave me another message. He said, ⁹"While the people of Judah are watching you, take some large rocks and bury them under the brick pavement at the entrance to the king's palace there at Tachpanches. ¹⁰Then say to the people of Judah, 'This is what Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, the God whom Israel worships, says: "I will summon Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, who does my work, to come with his army to Egypt. I will set up his throne over these stones that I told Jeremiah to bury. And Nebuchadnezzar will set up his tent there to show that he has become the king of Egypt. ¹¹When his army comes, they will attack Egypt. Then those will die who I have determined must die, those who I have determined must be captured will be captured, and those who I have determined must be killed by swords will be killed by swords. ¹²Nebuchadnezzar's soldiers will burn down the temples of the gods of Egypt and take away their idols as souvenirs. His troops will clean Egypt like a shepherd cleans lice from his cloak and leave without having been harmed. ¹³But before they leave, they will have torn down the pillars that are in the temple of their sun god and burned all of the temple of the false Egyptian gods.'"

Chapter 44

¹This is the message that Yahweh gave me concerning the Judeans who were living in northern Egypt—in Migdol, Tachpanches, and Memphis—and in the region of Pathros in southern Egypt: ²"This is what I, Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, the God whom Israel worships, say: You saw the disaster that I caused the people in Jerusalem and the other towns in Judah to experience. Those towns are now ruined and deserted. ³That happened because I was extremely angry with them on account of their being very wicked. They burned incense to other gods and

worshipped them. They were gods that you previously did not know about, and your ancestors also did not know about them. ⁴Many times I sent my prophets who served me, to say to them, 'Do not do those abominable things that I hate!' ⁵But my people would not pay any attention to what I said to them. They would not turn away from their wicked behavior, or stop burning incense to worship other gods. ⁶So I poured out the consequences of my great anger on them. My punishment fell on the streets of Jerusalem and on the other towns in Judah like a fire. It caused those towns to be ruined and deserted, and they are still like that.

⁷So now I, Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, the God whom Israel worships, ask you: Why are you causing yourselves to experience these disasters? Do you not realize that because of what you are doing, soon there will be no more men or women or children or infants left among you who have come here to Egypt from Judah? ⁸Why are you provoking me and causing me to be very angry by burning incense to the idols that you have made here in Egypt? If you continue doing this, you will destroy yourselves, and you will cause yourselves to be people whom all the nations on the earth will curse and despise. ⁹Have you forgotten how I punished your ancestors for the wicked things that they did, and how I punished the kings and queens of Judah for what they did, and you and your wives for the sins that you committed in the streets of Jerusalem and the other towns in Judah? ¹⁰Up until this day you have not humbled yourselves or revered me. You have not obeyed the laws and decrees that I gave to you and your ancestors.

¹¹Therefore, this is what I, Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, the God whom Israel worships, say: I am determined to cause all of you to experience disasters and to get rid of everyone in Judah. ¹²You people from Judah who have survived were determined to come and live here in Egypt. So I will get rid of all of you here in Egypt. Every one of you will die, including those who are important and those who are not important. Some of you will be killed by your enemies' swords, some will die from famines. You will become people whom others curse, be horrified about, and make fun of. ¹³I will punish you here in Egypt like I punished others in Jerusalem, some of whom were killed by their enemies' swords and some of whom died from famines or diseases. ¹⁴None of you people who came from Judah and now live in Egypt, none of you will be successful in any attempt to escape from Egypt, you will not grow in numbers while you live in Egypt, and you will not be able to return to Judah, even though you desire to return to Judah, you will not be able to go back there to live and make your homes. None of you will be able to return to Judah, except only a very small number of you who will be able able to escape from Egypt and to return Judah and live there."

¹⁵Then a large group of the people who had started to live in northern Egypt and southern Egypt, including all the men who knew that their wives had been burning incense to other gods, and all the women who were standing there, said this to me: ¹⁶"You are saying that Yahweh gave messages to you, but we will not pay any attention to your messages! ¹⁷We will certainly do everything that we said that we would do. We will burn incense to worship our goddess Asherah, the Queen of Heaven, and we will pour out offerings of wine to her, just like we and our ancestors and our kings and their officials have always done in the streets of Jerusalem and in the other towns in Judah. At that time, we had plenty of food, and we were prosperous and we did not have any troubles. ¹⁸But ever since we stopped burning incense to the Queen of Heaven and giving her offerings of wine, we have had many troubles, and some of our people have been killed by our enemies or died from hunger."

¹⁹And the women said, "Furthermore, we burned incense and poured out wine offerings to the Queen of Heaven, and we also made small cakes that resembled her idol, to offer to her, and we poured drinks to honor her. But our husbands certainly knew about and approved of what we were doing!"

²⁰Then I said to all the men and women who had answered me, ²¹"Do not think that Yahweh did not know that you and your ancestors and your kings and their officials and all the other people in Judah were burning incense to worship idols in the streets of Jerusalem and in the other towns in Judah! He knew about it! ²²It was because Yahweh could no longer endure your wicked actions and the detestable things that you were doing that he caused your land to be a place whose name people say when they curse someone, a land that is ruined and which has no one living in it. And your land is still like that. ²³It is because you burned incense to worship idols and committed other sins against Yahweh that you experienced all those disasters. It is because you have not obeyed him or obeyed his laws and decrees and commandments."

²⁴Then Jeremiah said to all of them, including the women, "All you people of Judah who are here in Egypt, listen to this message from Yahweh. ²⁵This is what Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, the God whom Israel worships, says to you men: 'You and your wives have said that you would continue to do what you promised, to burn incense and pour out wine to the goddess whom you call the Queen of Heaven. And you have proved by your actions that you intend to continue to do that. So go ahead and continue doing what you have promised to do for her.'

²⁶But now, all you people from Judah who are now living here in Egypt, listen to this message from Yahweh. He says, 'I have solemnly declared, using my great name, that soon none of you people from Judah who are here in Egypt will ever again use my name. There will be none of you who, when you solemnly promise to do something, will ever again say, "I will do it as surely as Yahweh lives."²⁷Because I will be watching over you, not to cause good things to happen to you but to cause things to happen that will harm you. Almost everyone from Judah who is now here in Egypt will be killed by their enemies' swords or die from famine until almost all of you have come to an end.

²⁸Only a very few of you will not die by the sword and will return to Judah. When that happens, all those who came to Egypt will find out whose words were true, theirs or mine.'

²⁹And Yahweh also says, 'I will do something that will prove to you that everything that I have said will happen, and that I will punish you here in this place. ³⁰I will cause Hophra, the king of Egypt, to be captured by his enemies who want to kill him, just like I caused King Zedekiah of Judah to be captured by the soldiers of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon.'"

Chapter 45

¹After Jehoiakim son of King Josiah had been ruling Judah for almost four years, Baruch son of Neriah wrote down all the messages that the prophet Jeremiah had dictated. Jeremiah gave a message and he said, ²"Baruch, Yahweh, the God of Israel, has a message for you. ³You have said, 'Terrible things are happening to me! I have endured much pain already. And now Yahweh is causing me to be very sad, in addition to my having pain. I am exhausted from my groaning, and I am unable to rest!'

⁴But Baruch, this is what Yahweh says: 'I will destroy this nation that I established. This nation is like a tree that I planted and that I will now pull up with its roots. I will do this everywhere in the world. ⁵So, should you desire that people do things to honor you in a special way? Do not desire that. It is true that I will cause all these people to experience a great disaster, but wherever you go, I will protect you, and you will not be killed.'"

Chapter 46

¹These are messages that Yahweh gave to the prophet Jeremiah about other nations.

²After Jehoiakim son of King Josiah, had been ruling Judah for almost four years, this message about Egypt was given to me by Yahweh. It was when the army of King Necho of Egypt was defeated by the army of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon at Carchemish by the Euphrates River.

This is what Yahweh said: "The officers of the army of Egypt are saying to their troops,

³Prepare your small and large shields

and march out to fight the battle!

⁴Put harnesses on your horses,

and get on their backs.

Get into your positions for the battle;

put on your helmets.

Sharpen your spears,
and put on your armor!

⁵But what do I see?

I see that the soldiers of Egypt will be terrified and will be fleeing.

Even the bravest of their soldiers will be running away,
without even looking backward!

I, Yahweh, say that their soldiers will be terrified on all sides!

⁶Even the fastest runners will try to run away,
but even the greatest of their warriors will not escape.

In the north, by the Euphrates River,
they will stumble and fall.

⁷What group is this that will be covering the land
like the water of the Nile River covers the land when it floods and its waves surge?

⁸The kingdom of Egypt rises and falls
like the Nile that surging with a flood of water,
and Egypt will boast that they will cover the earth
and will destroy cities and the people who live in them.

⁹You riders of horses, charge into the battle!
You drivers of chariots, drive furiously like a crazy person!

All you warriors from Ethiopia and Libya
who carry your shields,
you warriors from Lydia
who shoot arrows,
you come!

¹⁰But, you need to know that this is the day when I, Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, will get revenge on my enemies.

With my sword I will kill my enemies until I am satisfied;
my sword will be like a monster that drinks the blood of the animals it kills until it is no longer thirsty.

The enemy soldiers who will be killed in the north beside the Euphrates River
will be like a sacrifice to me, the Lord Yahweh, commander of the angel armies.

¹¹You innocent people of Egypt,

go up to the region of Gilead to obtain medicine;
but it will be useless to take all those medicines;
you will not be healed.

12People in the other nations hear how you were humiliated.

People all over the earth hear you wailing.

Your mighty warriors stumble over each other
and they all fall down together.”

13Then Yahweh gave to the prophet Jeremiah this message about King Nebuchadnezzar when he planned to attack Egypt with his army:

14“Shout this message throughout Egypt!

Proclaim it in the cities of Migdol, Memphis, and Tahpenes!

‘Get into your positions for the battle;

Prepare to defend yourselves,

because everyone around you will be killed.’

15Why do those whose strength you trust fall down?

They cannot stand up,

because Yahweh will knock them down.

16The soldiers from other countries will stumble and fall over each other,

and then they will say to each other,

“Let us get up and go back to our own people, to our own land.

Let us get away from the swords of our enemies!”

17There in Egypt they will say,

“The king of Egypt talks loudly,

but when our army had an opportunity to defeat our enemies, they failed.”

18I, the King, who is called Yahweh, commander of the angel armies,

say this:

‘As surely as I live, an army is coming to fight against the army of Egypt.

They will be extremely powerful,

as though they were as tall as Tabor Hill,

or as high as Mount Carmel, close to the Mediterranean Sea.

19All you people who live in Egypt,

pack your possessions and prepare to be exiled.

Memphis will be destroyed;
it will become a ruin, and no people will be living there.

²⁰Egypt is like a beautiful young cow,
but a powerful king from the northeast is surely coming to attack it
like a horsefly bites a cow.

²¹The mercenaries that Egypt has hired are like fat calves because of the Egyptians' money;
but they also will turn around and run away;
they will not stand there and fight,
because it will be a day when there will be a great disaster for Egypt,
a day when their people will be greatly punished.

²²The soldiers of Egypt will run away,
as silently as a snake slithers away.
The army of the enemy will advance;
they will march along carrying their axes
like men who cut down trees.

²³I, Yahweh, say that they will kill the soldiers of Egypt
as though they were cutting down a forest of trees,
because the enemy soldiers will be as numerous as a swarm of locusts.

²⁴The people of Egypt will be humiliated;
they will be conquered by people from the northeast.'

²⁵I, Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, the God whom Israel worships, say, 'I will punish Amon, the god whom the people of the city of Thebes worship, and all the other gods in Egypt. I will punish the king of Egypt and all those who trust in him. ²⁶I will cause them to be captured by those who want to kill them—Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, and his army officers. But many years later, people will live in Egypt again. That will surely happen because I, Yahweh, have said it.'

²⁷But you people of Israel who serve me,
do not be at all dismayed now,
because some day I will bring you back from distant places;
I will bring your descendants from the land to which they were exiled.
Then you Israelite people will again live peacefully and safely,
and there will not be any nation to cause you to be terrified.

²⁸I, Yahweh, say to you people of Israel who serve me,
'Do not be afraid,

because I will be with you.

I will completely destroy the nations among whom I have scattered you,
but I will not completely get rid of you.

I will punish you, but I will punish you only as severely as you deserve:
it would be wrong if I did not punish you at all.”

Chapter 47

¹Yahweh gave to the prophet Jeremiah a message about the people of Philistia. The message was given to him before the city of Gaza in Philistia was captured by the army of Egypt.

²This is what Yahweh said:

“An army will be coming from the northeast

that will cover the land like a flood.

They will destroy the land and everything in it;

they will destroy people and cities.

People will scream out for help;

and everyone in the land will wail in mourning.

³They will hear the sound of the hooves of the enemy horses,

and they will hear the rumble of the wheels of their enemies' chariots.

Men will run away;

they will not stop to help their own children but

will be completely weak and helpless.

⁴It will be the time for all the people of Philistia to be destroyed,

and the time to stop the remaining soldiers from being able to help the people living in the cities of Tyre and Sidon.

I, Yahweh, will destroy the people of Philistia,

those whose ancestors long ago came from Island of Crete.

⁵The people of Gaza will be humiliated;

they will shave off all the hair on their heads to indicate that they are ashamed.

The people of the city of Ashkelon will all be silent because they will be mourning.

All you people who live along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea who are still alive,

how long will you gash yourselves because you are mourning?”

⁶The people of Philistia say, “Yahweh, when will you tell our enemies to stop killing us with their swords?

Tell them to put them back into their sheaths and allow them to stay there!”

⁷But it would not be right for their swords to stay there,
because Yahweh has commanded their enemies to do something more;
Yahweh intends to tell them to attack all the people living in Ashkelon and in other cities along the coast.

Chapter 48

¹This is a message about Moab. Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, the God whom Israel worships, says,
“Terrible things will happen to the city of Nebo;
it will soon be ruined.

the city of Kiriathaim will be put to shame. It is taken!

The defended fortress will be ruined, and its people will become ashamed.

²No one will boast about Moab again;
the enemies of Moab will plan to destroy the capital city, Heshbon.
They will say, ‘Come, let us cause Moab to no longer be a nation.’
You also, You Madmen! you also will be silenced;
enemy armies will pursue you to kill you.

³Listen to the people of Horonaim screaming;
they will be wailing because their town was completely destroyed.

⁴All of Moab will be ruined;
even the little children will cry loudly.

⁵They will cry bitterly
as they climb up Luhith hill.
Others will wail on the road down to Horonaim.
They were so very sad because their town was completely destroyed.

⁶Someone will say to them, ‘Flee!
Hide in the desert!’

⁷But you trusted that because you were rich and powerful, you would be safe;
so you will be captured.
Your god Chemosh and all his priests and officials
will be taken away to distant lands.

⁸All the towns in Moab will be destroyed;
none of them will escape.

Towns in the valleys and on the plateau will all be destroyed,
because Yahweh has said that is what will happen.

⁹Someone should help all the people in Moab to run away,
so that their land will be empty,
so that no one will live in it any longer.”

¹⁰May Yahweh punish anyone who will not eagerly do what he desires;
may he curse anyone who refrains from using his sword to kill the people in Moab.

¹¹The people of Moab have always felt secure;
they have never been exiled.

They are like wine that has been left undisturbed in a container for many days to give it good flavor,
so now it smells good,
and it tastes good.

¹²But Yahweh says that there will be a time when he will send enemies to attack them;
they will get rid of the people of Moab like people pour out wine on the ground
and then smash the wine jar.

¹³Then the people of Moab will be ashamed of their god Chemosh that they had trusted in, because it did not help them,
like the Israelite people were ashamed because their gold statue of a calf was smashed at Bethel.

¹⁴The soldiers of Moab previously said, “We are warriors;
we have fought bravely in battles!”

¹⁵But now our king, who is called Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, says that the country of Moab and all the towns in it will be destroyed.

Their fine young men will all be slaughtered.

¹⁶Moab will very soon be destroyed.

They will soon experience disaster.

¹⁷You people who live in nations near Moab,
who know that it is very famous,
should mourn for Moab,
and say, “Its glorious power is completely ended.”

¹⁸You people of the city of Dibon, stop being proud because of being honored,
and sit in the dust where you will thirst for water,
because those who will destroy other places in Moab will attack your city

and destroy your fortifications.

¹⁹You people of the city of Aroer,
stand along the road and watch.

Shout to the men and women who will be fleeing from Moab,
“What has happened there?”

²⁰They will reply,
“Moab is ruined and we are disgraced!”

So weep and wail.

Proclaim to Amon that Moab has been destroyed.

²¹Yahweh is punishing the towns of Moab that are on the plateau:
Holon and Jahaz and Mephaath,

²²Dibon and Nebo and Beth Diblathaim,

²³Kiriathaim and Beth Gamul and Beth Meon,

²⁴Kerioth and Bozrah.

He is punishing cities that are near each other and towns that are far away from each other.

²⁵Yahweh says, “The power of Moab will be finished;
it is as though it will have a broken arm.

²⁶You people of Moab thought you were powerful enough to rebel against me, Yahweh;
so now I will cause you all to stagger like drunken people.
You people of Moab will wallow in your own vomit
and be ridiculed.

²⁷Did you not ridicule the people of Israel?
Did you think they were nothing but thieves,
so that you shook your head at them with scorn,
and despised them every time you spoke about them?

²⁸You people who live in Moab,
you should abandon your towns and go and live in caves.
Be like pigeons that make their nests in the entrances of caves.”

²⁹We have all heard that the people of Moab are very proud;
they are extremely proud and conceited.

³⁰But Yahweh says, “I know about that,

but it is useless for them to boast
because it will accomplish nothing.

31 So now I will wail for Moab;

I will cry about all its people.

I will moan for the men of the city of Kir Hareseth, the old capital of Moab.

32 You people of the city of Sibmah, you have many vineyards, and I will be sad when they are destroyed.

It is as though the branches of your vines extend across the Dead Sea to the city of Jazer, but the enemies of Moab will take your grapes and wine from you!

33 But no one will be joyful or happy in Moab now;

your fruit and grapes that ripen in the summer will soon be destroyed.

There will be no grape juice coming from the winepresses,

so there will be no wine.

People will not shout joyfully

as they tread on the grapes;

people will shout,

but they will not be shouting joyfully.

34 Instead, the sound of their wailing will rise from the city of Heshbon to the town of Elealeh and the village of Jahaz,

from the city of Zoar as far as the town of Horonaim Eglath Shelishiyah.

Even the water in the stream of Nimrim will be dried up.

35 I, Yahweh, say that I will get rid of the people who offer sacrifices on the hilltops,

those who burn incense to their gods.

36 I moan for the people of Moab and Kir Hareseth

like someone playing a funeral song on a flute,

because all their wealth will disappear.

37 The men will shave their heads and their beards to show that they are mourning.

They all will slash their hands and wear rough cloth around their waists.

38 In every home and in the town plazas in Moab there will be people who are mourning,

because I will have destroyed Moab

like someone smashes an old jar that no one wants anymore.

39 Moab will be completely shattered with terror!

And you will hear the people wailing loudly!

They will be disgraced.

Moab will become a nation that people ridicule.

The people in nearby countries will be horrified about what has happened there.

⁴⁰This is what I, Yahweh, say:

'Look! Their enemies will be swooping down over Moab

like an eagle swoops down to seize an animal.

⁴¹Its cities will be captured,

its fortresses will be seized.

Even their warriors will be afraid,

like a woman who is about to give birth.

⁴²Moab boasted against me, Yahweh,

so it will be destroyed.

⁴³I, Yahweh, say that you people of Moab will be terrified, and fall into pits and traps.

⁴⁴Those who are terrified and try to run away will fall into deep pits.

Whoever climbs out of a pit will be caught in a trap,

because I will punish them at the time that I have appointed.'

⁴⁵The people will flee as far as the city of Heshbon,

but they will not be able to go any further,

because a fire will burn in Heshbon,

which is the city where King Sihon lived long ago,

and it will burn up all the people in Moab

who noisily boasted very much.

⁴⁶You people of Moab, terrible things will happen to you!

You people who worship your god Chemosh, you will be destroyed.

Your sons and your daughters will be captured and taken away to other countries.

⁴⁷But some day, I will enable the people of Moab to return to their land again.

That will surely happen because I, Yahweh, have said it."

That is the end of what Jeremiah prophesied about Moab.

Chapter 49

¹This message is about the people who descended from Ammon. This is what Yahweh says:

"There are plenty of Israelite people left
to occupy the land of the tribe of Gad.

So, why are the people who worship the god Molech living in those towns?

²There will be a time when I will sound the battle cry
for their enemies to attack their capital city, Rabbah.

Then it will become a heap of ruins,
and all the nearby towns will be burned.

Then the people of Israel will again possess the land
that the people of Ammon took away from them.

³You people of the city of Heshbon, wail,
because the city of Ai will be destroyed.

You women in the city of Rabbah, weep;
put on rough clothing to show you are mourning;
run back and forth in confusion inside the city walls,

because your god Molech, along with its priests and officials, will be taken away in exile.

⁴Why do you brag about your valleys,
your valleys that are so fruitful, you faithless daughter?

You think that your wealth will bring you protection against your enemies
and so you dare to ask, "Who is there who can come against me?"

⁵But listen to this: I, Yahweh, commander of the angel armies,
will cause you to become terrified.

You will all be forced to flee to other countries from the enemies all around you,
and no one will be able to bring you together again.

⁶But some day I will enable the Ammonite people to return to their land.
That will surely happen, because I, Yahweh, have said it."

⁷This message is about the people of Edom. This is what Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, says:

"It seems that there are no longer any wise people in Teman district in Edom!

There are no people left who can give others good advice.

The people who were wise have disappeared.

⁸You people of the city of Dedan, in the south of Edom,
turn and flee and hide in deep caves,

because I am causing disaster to happen to all the people of Edom,
I will punish you!

⁹Those who harvest grapes
always leave some on the vines.

When thieves come at night,
they surely steal only as much as they want.

¹⁰But I will cause everything in Edom to be destroyed, and there will be nothing left,
and there will be no place for people to hide.

Many of the children, their relatives and their neighbors, will die,
and Edom will not exist anymore.

¹¹Leave behind the orphans because I will take care of them,
and the widows also will be able to depend on me to help them."

¹²And this is also what Yahweh says: "If those who do not deserve to suffer must suffer, you people of Edom must suffer much more! You will not escape being punished. ¹³I, Yahweh, have solemnly promised, using my own name, that your chief city Bozrah will become a place that people will be horrified about. It will be a heap of ruins. People will make fun of it and use its name when they curse people. All the nearby towns and villages will be ruined forever."

¹⁴I heard this message from Yahweh:

"I have sent an ambassador to many nations,
to tell them to gather together to attack Edom.

They must prepare for battle!"

¹⁵And Yahweh says to the people of Edom,

"I will cause your nation to become very unimportant among the other nations.
They will all despise your country.

¹⁶You have caused people of other nations to be terrified,
and you have been very proud,
but you have deceived yourselves.

You live in caves in the rock cliffs;
you think that you are safe there because you live high up there.
But even if you make your homes as high up as the eagles' nests,
I will cause you to come crashing down.

¹⁷Edom will become a place about which people are horrified;
people who pass by will be horrified and will gasp

when they see the destruction.

18Edom will be destroyed as completely as Sodom and Gomorrah and the nearby towns were destroyed long ago. As a result, no one—not a single person—will live there anymore.

19I will come to Edom suddenly as a lion comes out of the jungle and leaps on sheep that are eating in good pastures.

I will quickly chase the people of Edom from their land.

And then I will appoint for them a leader whom I will choose;

I can do that because there is no one like me who can object to what I do.

No ruler can oppose me.

20Listen to what I have planned to do to the people of Teman and the rest of Edom:

even the little children will be dragged away,

and I will completely get rid of the people who live there.

21When Edom is destroyed, the noise will be extremely great,

with the result that the earth will shake,

and the wailing of the people will be heard as far away as the Sea of Reeds.

22Look! The enemy troops will swoop down over Bozrah

like an eagle spreads its wings when it swoops down to seize an animal.

On that day, even the strongest warriors of Edom will be afraid

like a woman who is about to give birth.”

23This message is about Damascus. This is what Yahweh says:

“The people in the nearby cities of Hamath and Arpad will be ashamed,

because they have heard bad news about Damascus.

They are very anxious and restless,

like a sea in a big storm.

24The people of Damascus have become very weak,

and they all have panicked and run away in terror.

The people are anguished and in pain

like a woman experiences who is about to give birth.

25But even now the people of that famous city have not yet abandoned it. That was the city that gave me joy.

26Its young men will fall in the streets.

Its soldiers will all be killed in one day.

²⁷And I, Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, will start a fire to burn the walls that surround Damascus, and the palaces of King Ben Hadad will be burned down.”

²⁸This is a message about the Kedar people and the kingdom of Hazor that Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon is attacking. This is what Yahweh said:

“I will cause an army to advance to attack Kedar and destroy those people who live east of Judah.

²⁹Enemies will capture their tents and their flocks of sheep.

They will take away the curtains of their tents, their camels, and all of their other possessions.

Everywhere men will shout,

‘We are terrified because terrible things are happening all around us!’

³⁰So I, Yahweh, say, ‘Run away quickly!

You people who live in Hazor, go and hide in deep caves, because King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon wants to attack you with his army; he is planning to destroy you!’

³¹But I say to Nebuchadnezzar,

‘Go up and attack that nation whose people feel secure;

they do not have allies who will help them and do not have walls with gates that have bars in them.

³²Your troops will seize their camels and other livestock.

I will scatter in every direction those people who will be in great mourning.

I will bring disasters to them from every direction.

³³Hazor will become a place where jackals live,

and it will be deserted forever.

No one will live there again;

no people will settle there. ”

³⁴The prophet Jeremiah received this message from Yahweh when King Zedekiah was starting to rule Judah.

³⁵This is what Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, says:

“The men of Elam are famous archers;

that is how they have made their country very powerful.

But I will get rid of them.

³⁶I will bring their enemies from every direction

and they will scatter the people of Elam in all of those directions.

The people of Elam will be exiled to every nation on the earth.

³⁷Because I am very angry with the people of Elam,

I will enable their enemies to smash Elam;

I will cause the people of Elam to experience great disasters.

I will enable their enemies, who want to kill them, to pursue them and kill them with swords until I completely get rid of all of them.

³⁸I, Yahweh, will judge them there,

and then I will get rid of their king and his officials.

³⁹But some day, I will enable the people of Elam to return to their land.

That will surely happen because I, Yahweh, have said it.”

Chapter 50

¹Yahweh gave to Jeremiah the prophet a message about Babylon and the country of Babylonia.

²This is what Yahweh says:

“Proclaim a message among the nations;

do not withhold any of it;

raise up a signal flag

to announce that Babylon will be captured.

Its chief god Marduk, whose other name is Bel, will be completely disgraced,

and all the other statues and idols will be shattered.

³The army of a nation will come from the north to attack Babylon

and destroy the city very thoroughly,

with the result that no one will live there again.

Both people and animals will run away.”

⁴“But I, Yahweh, say that in the future, when that is about to happen,

the people of Israel and the people of Judah will join together.

They will be weeping

and wanting to worship me, their God.

⁵They will inquire about the road to Jerusalem,

and then they will start traveling toward it.

They will say to each other,

'We must return to Yahweh again!'

They will make an everlasting agreement with me that they will never forget.

⁶My people have been like lost sheep.

Their leaders have caused them to abandon me

like shepherds who have allowed their sheep to wander in the hills and mountains.

My people are like sheep

that do not know the path to return to the sheepfold.

⁷All their enemies who found them attacked them.

They said, 'We did not sin by attacking them,

because they sinned against Yahweh;

he is the one who provides what they need;

he is the one to whom they should have remained faithful;

he is the one whom their ancestors confidently expected to help them.'

⁸But now, I say to the leaders of my people, 'Depart from Babylon!

Leave the land of Babylonia!

Act like male goats that go in front of the rest of the flock;

lead my people back to their own land.

⁹Do that because I am going to gather an army of great nations to the north of Babylon.

They will join together to attack Babylon and will capture it.

Their arrows will be like skilled warriors

that always hit what they are aiming at.

¹⁰Babylonia will be conquered,

and those who conquer it will take away everything they want.

That will surely happen because I, Yahweh, have said it."

¹¹"You people of Babylon who plundered my chosen people,

now you are very happy.

You run around joyfully like a calf in a meadow,

and are happy like stallions are happy when they are neighing.

¹²But soon your people will be very disgraced as a result of being conquered.

Your country will be the most insignificant nation;

it will be a wilderness, a dry land and a desert plain.

¹³Because I, Yahweh, am angry with you people of Babylon,
I will cause your city to become completely deserted.

All who pass by will be horrified
and will gasp because of the destruction there.

¹⁴All you nations that surround Babylon,
prepare to attack it!
Tell your archers to shoot at their enemies;
shoot all of your arrows at them and do not hold back,
because the people of Babylon have sinned against me, Yahweh.

¹⁵Shout victorious war cries against Babylon from all sides of the city.
The soldiers of Babylon will surrender;
the towers and walls will be torn down.
It is I, Yahweh, who will be getting revenge on the people of Babylon,
and I will use you to get revenge.

Do to the people of Babylon what they have done to others!

¹⁶Take away from Babylon those who plant crops
and those who reap the harvests!
Because of the swords carried by those who will attack Babylon,
the people in Babylon who have come from other countries
should all run away; they should go back to their own countries."

¹⁷"The Israelite people are like sheep
that have been scattered by lions.
First the army of the king of Assyria defeated them.
Then the army of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon smashed them.

¹⁸So this is what I, Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, the God whom Israel worships, say:
'Now I will punish the king of Babylon and the people of his land,
like I punished the king of Assyria.

¹⁹And I will bring the people of Israel back to their own land
where they will eat the food that grows in the fields of the regions of Carmel and Bashan,
and the people in the hill areas of Ephraim and Gilead will have all they want to eat.

²⁰At that time, there will not be people in Israel and in Judah who are still guilty for having sinned,

because I will forgive the small group of people whom I enable to still be alive.”

²¹“So, I, Yahweh, say to the enemies of Babylonia, ‘Attack the people who live in the region of Merathaim and the people in the region of Pekod of Babylonia.

Pursue them to kill them, and completely get rid of every single one of them, as I have commanded you to do.

²²Shout your battle cries throughout the land; shout when you are causing great destruction.

²³The army of Babylon is like the most powerful hammer on the earth, but it will be completely shattered.

Babylon, one of the nations, will be a complete ruin.’

²⁴You people of Babylon, listen, because I have set a trap for you without your awareness; you will be caught in that trap, because you fought against me.

²⁵It is as though I have opened the place where I store my weapons, and I have brought out all the weapons to use against the people with whom I am angry.

I, Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, have a lot of work to do to punish the people of Babylonia.

²⁶So, you enemies of Babylonia, come from distant lands and attack it.

Break open the places where they store the grain, and pile up the rubble like heaps of grain.

Destroy everything completely; do not leave anything that is not destroyed.

²⁷Destroy all the young warriors who are as strong as bulls; take them to where you will slaughter them.

It will be terrible for them, because it will be time for them to be punished.

²⁸Listen to the people who have fled and escaped from Babylon while they tell in Jerusalem how I, Yahweh, have gotten revenge against those who destroyed my temple in Jerusalem.

²⁹Summon archers to come to attack Babylon;

surround the city

in order that no one will escape.

Do to the people of Babylon what they have done to others,
because they have defied me, the Holy One of the Israelite people.

30The young men of Babylon will fall in the streets;

all their soldiers will be killed in one day. This will happen because I, Yahweh, have declared it!

31I, Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, say this:

'You arrogant people,

it is now the time;

it is the day when I will punish you.

32Your land is full of proud people,

but you will stumble and fall,

and no one will lift you up again.

I will light a fire in the cities of Babylonia

that will burn up everything that is nearby.'

33I, Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, also say this:

'The people of Israel and Judah were oppressed;

those who captured them guarded them carefully and would not allow them to leave Babylon.

34But Yahweh is strong, and he will free them.

Yahweh is the Commander of the angel armies;

He will defend his people

and enable them to return to their land where they will have peace,

but the people of Babylonia will not have peace.

35He will send enemy soldiers carrying swords to strike the people of Babylonia;

they will strike the officials and wise men

and all the other people who live in Babylon.

36They will strike their false prophets with swords

and they will become foolish.

They will strike the strongest warriors of Babylonia,

and they will all be terrified.

37They will strike their horses and chariots

and the foreign mercenaries who are in the army of Babylonia,
and they will all become as weak as women.

They will seize all the valuable things there in Babylon
and take them away.

³⁸Yahweh will cause the streams to become dry.

He will do all those things because the entire land of Babylonia is filled with idols,
and those horrible idols have caused the people who worship them to become crazy.

³⁹Soon only jackals and other wild creatures will live there;

and it will be a place where ostriches live.

People will never live there again;

it will be uninhabited forever.

⁴⁰Yahweh God will destroy Babylon like he destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah and the nearby towns;
no one will ever live there again.

⁴¹Look! A great army will come from the north.

A great nation far away with many kings is preparing to attack you people of Babylon.

⁴²Their army has bows and arrows and spears;

they are very cruel, and do not act mercifully to anyone.

As they ride along on their horses,

the sound of the horses' hooves is like the roaring of the ocean waves;

they are riding in battle formation

to attack you, you people of Babylon.

⁴³The king of Babylon heard their report,

"The enemy is approaching."

So he was frightened and became weak.

Fear and anguish gripped him,

like a woman who is about to give birth to a baby."

⁴⁴I, Yahweh, will come to Babylon suddenly like a lion comes out of the jungle

and leaps on the sheep that are eating the good pastureland.

I will quickly chase the people of Babylonia from their land.

And then I will appoint for them a leader whom I will choose;

I will do that because there is no one like me who can say that what I have done is not right.

No ruler can oppose me.

⁴⁵Listen to what I have planned to do to the people of Babylon city and the rest of Babylonia: even the little children will be dragged away, and I will completely destroy the people who live there.

⁴⁶When Babylon is destroyed, the noise will be extremely loud, with the result that the earth will shake, and the wailing of the people will be heard by the people of other nations.”

Chapter 51

¹This is what Yahweh says:

“I will inspire an army to destroy Babylon like a powerful wind, and also to destroy the people of Babylonia in Leb Kamai.

²I will send a foreign army to come to get rid of Babylonia like a strong wind that blows away chaff.

They will attack from every direction on that day of disaster.

³I will tell them, ‘Do not allow the archers of Babylon to have time to put on their armor or draw their bows.

Do not spare the young men of Babylon.

Completely destroy their army.’

⁴Their soldiers will fall dead in Babylonia; they will die after being impaled by spears in the streets.

⁵I, Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, whom Israel worships, have not abandoned Israel and Judah. Even though their land was filled with people who sinned against me, the Holy God of Israel, I am still their God.

⁶You people of Israel and Judah, flee from Babylon!

Run to escape!

Do not stay there and be killed when the people of Babylon are punished!

It will be the time when Yahweh gets revenge;

He will do to them what they deserve.

⁷Babylon has been like a gold cup in Yahweh’s hand, a cup that is full of wine

that caused people all over the earth who drank some of it to become drunk.

It is as though the rulers of the nations drank the wine from Babylon,
and it caused them to become crazy.

⁸But suddenly Babylon will be conquered.

Weep for its people!

Give them medicine for their wounds;
perhaps they can be healed."

⁹We foreigners would have tried to heal them,

but now they cannot be healed.

So we will not try to help them; we will abandon them,

and return to our own lands,

because it is as though the punishment they are receiving reaches up to the clouds in the sky;

it is very great, with the result that no one can measure it.

¹⁰Yahweh has vindicated us;

so let us proclaim in Jerusalem everything that Yahweh our God has done for us.

¹¹You enemy soldiers, sharpen your arrows!

Fill up your quivers for battle,

because Yahweh has incited your kings of Media and Persia to march with their armies to Babylon and to destroy it.

That is how Yahweh will get revenge on those foreigners who entered his temple in Jerusalem and defiled it.

¹²Lift up a battle flag close to the walls of Babylon!

Reinforce the guards,

and tell the watchmen to stand in their positions!

Prepare an ambush,

because Yahweh is about to accomplish all that he has planned to do to the people of Babylon.

¹³Babylon is a city near the great Euphrates River,

a city in which there are many rich people,

but it is time for Babylon to be finished;

the time for the city to exist is ended.

¹⁴Yahweh, commander of the angel armies has solemnly promised, using his own name,

"Your cities will be filled with your enemies;

I will cause them to be like a swarm of locusts;

and they will shout triumphantly when they conquer your city.”

15Yahweh created the earth by his power;
he established it by his wisdom,
and he stretched out the sky by his understanding.

16When he speaks loudly, there is thunder in the sky;
he causes clouds to form in every part of the earth.
He sends lightning with the rain
and releases the winds from his storehouses.

17People are as senseless as a beast, and they know very little;
those who make idols are always disappointed,
because their idols do nothing for them.
The images that they make are not real gods;
they are lifeless.

18Idols are worthless; they deserve to be ridiculed;
there will be a time when they will all be destroyed.

19But the God of Israel is not like those idols;
he is the one who created everything that exists;
we, the tribe of Israel, belong to him;
his name is Yahweh, commander of the angel armies.

20Yahweh says about the army of Babylonia,
“You are like my weapons of war and my war club;
with your power I shatter nations
and destroy many kingdoms.

21With your power I shatter armies of other nations:
I destroy their horses and their riders, their chariots and their chariot drivers.

22With your power I shatter men and women,
old people and children,
young men and young women.

23With your power I shatter shepherds and their flocks of sheep,
farmers and their oxen,
governors and their officials.”

²⁴But, Yahweh also says,

“Soon I will repay you people in Babylon and in the rest of Babylonia for all the evil things that you have done in Jerusalem.

²⁵Babylonia is like a great mountain

from which bandits descend to plunder people all over the earth.

But I, Yahweh, am the enemy of you people of Babylonia.

I will raise my fist to strike you.

I will knock you down from the cliffs

and cause you to be only a huge pile of burned rubble.

²⁶Your city will be abandoned forever;

even the stones in your city will never again be used for buildings.

Your city will be completely destroyed.”

²⁷Tell the nations to lift up a battle flag!

Tell them to blow their trumpets of war!

Gather all their armies to fight against Babylon!

Prepare the nations to attack Babylon.

Summon the armies of the kingdoms north of Babylonia—from Ararat, Minni, and Ashkenaz.

Appoint a commander for them,

and bring a great number of horses;

there must be a huge number of horses; that huge number will resemble a swarm of locusts.

²⁸Prepare the armies of other nations,

armies that will be led by the kings of Media and Persia,

their governors and their officials.

²⁹When they attack Babylon, it will be as though the earth will shake and writhe in pain,

because those armies will accomplish everything that Yahweh has planned to do to Babylon.

Then the nations will destroy it completely,

with the result that no one will live there again.

³⁰When their enemies attack, the strongest warriors in Babylon will not fight.

They will remain in their barracks, without any strength.

They will be as timid as women.

The enemy soldiers will burn the buildings in the city

and break the bars of the city gates into pieces.

³¹Messengers will go quickly, one after another,
to tell the king that his city has been captured.

³²The places at which people can cross the river to escape from the city will be blocked.
The dry reeds in the marshes will be set on fire,
and the soldiers of Babylon will be terrified.

³³This is what Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, whom Israel worships, says;
“Babylon is like wheat on the ground where it is about to be threshed
by animals tramping on it.
Very soon their enemies will trample on the city of Babylon.”

³⁴The army of Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, has attacked and crushed us Israelites,
and we have no strength left.
It is as though they have swallowed us like a great monster
that filled its belly with all our tasty parts,
and then has spit out what it did not like.

³⁵So the people of Jerusalem say to Yahweh,
“Cause the people of Babylon to suffer
like they caused us to suffer!
Cause the people of Babylonia to be punished for killing our people!”

³⁶And this is what Yahweh replies to the people of Jerusalem:
“I will be like your lawyer to defend you,
and I will avenge you.
I will dry up the river in Babylon
and all the springs of water.

³⁷Babylon will become a heap of ruins,
a place where jackals live.
It will become a place that people are horrified about and will ridicule;
it will be a place where no one lives.

³⁸The people of Babylon will all roar like young lions;
they will growl like baby lions.

³⁹But while they are extremely hungry,

I will prepare a different kind of feast for them.

I will cause them to drink wine until they are very drunk,
with the result that they will fall asleep.

But they will never wake up from that sleep!

⁴⁰I will bring them down to a place where they will be slaughtered,
like someone who takes lambs or rams or goats to where they will be slaughtered for sacrifices.

⁴¹People all over the earth now honor Babylon;
they say that it is a great city.

But it will become a place about which people of all nations are horrified.

⁴²The enemies of Babylon will cover the city like huge waves of the sea.

⁴³The towns in Babylonia will be a horror, a dry and desert plain,
and it will be a land in which no one lives
and which no one walks through.

⁴⁴And I will punish Bel, the god that the people of Babylon worship,
and I will cause the people to give back what they have stolen.
People of other nations will no longer come to worship Bel.
And the walls of Babylon will collapse.”

⁴⁵Yahweh also says, “My people, come out of Babylon!
Flee to escape!

Run, because I, Yahweh, am extremely angry with the people of Babylon, and I will get rid of them!

⁴⁶Do not be discouraged or afraid
when you hear reports about what is happening in Babylon.
People will report rumors like that every year,
rumors about violent things being done in the land,
and rumors about leaders fighting against each other.

⁴⁷But it will soon be the time for me to get rid of the carved idols in Babylon.
People all over the land will be ashamed because of being defeated,
and the corpses of their soldiers will lie in the streets.

⁴⁸Then all the angels in heaven and all the people on the earth will rejoice,
because from the north will come armies that will destroy Babylon.

⁴⁹Like the soldiers of Babylon killed the people of Israel

and also killed others all over the world,
the people of Babylon must also be killed.

50You Israelite people who have not been killed, get out of Babylon!

Do not wait!

Even though you are in a land far away from Israel,
think about Yahweh, and think about Jerusalem!"

51The Israelite people say,

"We are ashamed.

We are completely disgraced,
because foreigners have entered Yahweh's temple and defiled it."

52Yahweh replies, "That is true, but there will soon be a time when I will destroy the carved idols in Babylon,
and throughout Babylonia there will be wounded people who will groan.

53Even if the walls around Babylon could extend up to the sky,

and if its walls were extremely strong,

I will send armies that will destroy the city.

That will surely happen because I, Yahweh, have said it."

54Listen to the people of Babylon shouting for help!

And listen to the sounds of things being destroyed all over Babylonia!

55Yahweh will be destroying Babylon.

He will cause the loud noises in the city to cease.

56Enemy troops will surge against the city like a great wave.

They will capture the city's mighty soldiers

and break their weapons.

That will happen because Yahweh is a God who punishes his enemies justly;

he will punish them as they deserve.

57Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, says,

"I will cause the city officials and wise men, the army captains and soldiers, to become drunk.

They will fall asleep,

but they will never wake up again!"

58Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, also says,

"The thick walls around Babylon will be flattened to the ground.

The city gates will be burned.

People from other countries will work hard to save the city,

but it will be in vain,

because everything that they have built will be destroyed by fire.”

⁵⁹Seraiah, son of Neraiah and grandson of Mahseiah, was an important servant of King Zedekiah. After Zedekiah had been ruling Judah for almost four years, the prophet Jeremiah gave him a message. This was when Seraiah was about to go to Babylon with the king. ⁶⁰Now Jeremiah had written on a scroll a list of all the disasters that he had written about, disasters that would soon happen to Babylon. ⁶¹Jeremiah said to Seraiah, “When you arrive in Babylon, read aloud everything that I have written on this scroll. ⁶²Then pray, ‘Yahweh, you said that you will thoroughly destroy Babylon, with the result that people and animals will no longer live there. You said that it will be desolate forever.’ ⁶³Then, when you have finished reading what is written on the scroll, tie it to a heavy stone and throw it into the Euphrates River. ⁶⁴Then say, ‘In the same way, Babylon and its people will disappear and never exist again, because of the disasters that Yahweh will bring to it.’”

This is the end of Jeremiah’s messages.

Chapter 52

¹Zedekiah was twenty-one years old when he became the king of Judah. He ruled in Jerusalem for eleven years. His mother was Hamutal, the daughter of a man named Jeremiah from Libnah. ²Zedekiah did many things that Yahweh says are evil, like his father Jehoiakim had done. ³The events described here happened because Yahweh was angry with the people of Jerusalem and of other places in Judah, and finally he exiled them and said that he did not want to have anything to do with them anymore.

Then Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon. ⁴So, on the tenth day of the tenth month, when Zedekiah had been ruling for almost nine years, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon led his entire army to attack Jerusalem. They surrounded the city and built dirt ramps up to the top of the city walls to enable them to attack the city. ⁵They continued to surround Jerusalem until Zedekiah had been ruling for almost eleven years.

⁶When Zedekiah had been ruling for almost eleven years, on the ninth day of the fourth month of that year, the famine in the city had become very severe, and there was no more food for the people to eat. ⁷Then the soldiers of Babylonia broke through a section of the city wall, and all the Israelite soldiers fled. But because the city was surrounded by soldiers from Babylonia, Zedekiah and the Israelite soldiers waited until it became dark. Then they left the city through the gate between the two walls behind the king’s garden. Then they ran toward the plain along the Jordan. ⁸But the soldiers of Babylonia pursued King Zedekiah, and they caught up with him on the plains near Jericho. He was alone because all his men had all deserted him and had scattered. ⁹The soldiers of Babylonia took him to the king of Babylon, who was at Riblah in the region of Hamath. There the king of Babylon told his soldiers what they should do to punish Zedekiah. ¹⁰They forced Zedekiah to watch while they killed his sons and all the officials from Judah. ¹¹Then they gouged out Zedekiah’s eyes. They fastened him with bronze chains and took him to Babylon. They put him in a prison, and he remained there until the day that he died.

¹²On the tenth day of the fifth month of that year, which was when King Nebuchadnezzar had been ruling for almost nineteen years, Nebuzaradan, who was the captain of the king’s bodyguards and one of the king’s officials, arrived in Jerusalem. ¹³He commanded his soldiers to burn down the temple of Yahweh, the king’s palace, and all the houses in Jerusalem. They also destroyed all the important buildings in the city. ¹⁴Then he supervised the soldiers from Babylonia while they tore down the walls on all sides of Jerusalem. ¹⁵Then Nebuzaradan forced to go to Babylon some of the poorest people, those Israelites who had said they would support the king of Babylon, the rest of the craftsmen, and other people who had remained in Jerusalem. ¹⁶But Nebuzaradan allowed some of the very poor people to remain in Judah to take care of the vineyards and fields.

¹⁷The soldiers from Babylonia broke into pieces the huge bronze pillars that were in front of the temple, and the large bronze water tank called "The Sea," and the ten bronze water carts, and they took all the bronze to Babylon.

¹⁸They also took away the basins for holding the ashes from the burned sacrifices, the shovels for cleaning out the ashes, the tools for snuffing out the wicks of the lamps, the basins for holding the blood of the sacrificed animals, the dishes for incense, and all the other bronze items that were used when they made sacrifices at the temple.

¹⁹Nebuzaradan also told his soldiers to take away the small bowls, the dishes for burning incense, the basins, pots, lampstands, bowls for incense, and the bowls used for pouring out the wine offerings. They took all the other items that were made of pure gold or silver.

²⁰The bronze from the two pillars, the large water tank called "The Sea" and the twelve statues of oxen that were beneath it, and the water carts, was more than they could weigh. Those things had been made for the temple during the time that Solomon was the king. ²¹Each of the pillars was 27 feet tall and 18 feet around. They were hollow, and each had sides that were 3 inches thick. ²²The bronze head on the top of each pillar was seven and one-half feet high and was decorated all around with a bronze network of figures that represented pomegranates. ²³There was a total of one hundred figures of pomegranates on the network at the top, 96 of which could be seen from the ground.

²⁴When Nebuzaradan returned to Babylon, he took with him as prisoners Seraiah the high priest, Zephaniah who was Seraiah's deputy, and the three men who guarded the entrances to the temple. ²⁵He found some other people who were hiding in the city. So from them he took a commander of the army of Judah, seven of the king's advisors, the army commander's chief secretary who was in charge of recruiting soldiers for the army, and sixty other soldiers. ²⁶Nebuzaradan took them all to the king of Babylon, who was still at Riblah. ²⁷There at Riblah in the Hamath region, the king of Babylon commanded that they all be executed.

Many of the people of Judah were forced to leave their own land. ²⁸The number of people who were captured and sent to Babylon at that time, when Nebuchadnezzar had been ruling for almost seven years, was 3,023. ²⁹Then, when he had been ruling for almost eighteen years, his soldiers took 832 more from Jerusalem to Babylonia.

³⁰When he had been ruling almost twenty-three years, he sent Nebuzaradan to Jerusalem again, and he brought back 745 more Israelites to Babylonia. That was a total of 4,600 Israelites who were taken to Babylonia.

³¹After King Jehoiachin of Judah had been in prison in Babylon for almost thirty-seven years, Awel-Marduk became the king of Babylon. He was kind to Jehoiachin and ordered that he be released from prison. That was on the twenty-fifth day of the twelfth month of the year that Awel-Marduk became king. ³²He always spoke kindly to Jehoiachin and gave him a position in which he was honored more than all the other kings who had been exiled to Babylon. ³³He supplied new clothes for Jehoiachin, to replace the clothes that he had been wearing in prison. He also allowed Jehoiachin to eat with him every day, all during the rest of his life. ³⁴Every day, the king of Babylon gave him some money to buy the things that he needed. That continued until the day that Jehoiachin died.

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