
ירמיהו • JEREMIAH

INTRODUCTION

The material of the *Book of Jeremiah* is not in chronological order. Instead, there are many signs that the book was compiled, over time, from smaller collections of oracles. One clue to smaller collections may be the first two scrolls of judgement oracles that Jeremiah is said to have dictated to Baruch (Ch. 36); the second scroll (36:32) could have formed the nucleus for the material now found in 2:1–20:18. Another small collection may have been the hopeful scroll (30:1–3), which in its original form probably contained much of what is now in Chs 30–32. However, the core of Baruch's memoirs (Chs 37–44), dealing with the last few months of Jeremiah's life, does appear to be in chronological order.

The Book of Jeremiah is noteworthy in that the *Masoretic Text* differs substantially from the Greek *Septuagint*, in both content and order. Thus, the *Septuagint* omits several passages (e.g. 33:14–26) and combines the oracles against the foreign nations into a single section following 25:14, though in a different order. In addition, there are many smaller differences from verse to verse. Remarkably, among the portions of the Hebrew text of Jeremiah found among the Qumran Scrolls are not only those that reflect the *Masoretic Text* but also those that reflect the tradition represented by the *Septuagint*. It is likely, then, that these two traditions represent the contrasting editorial work on the *Book of Jeremiah* that took place in Egypt (the *Septuagint* tradition) and in Palestine or Babylon (the traditional Hebrew text).

AUTHORSHIP AND DATES

Jeremiah was the son of Hilkiah, a priest of Anathoth (1:1); as such, he may have been a descendant of the priest Abiathar, who was banished by Solomon to Anathoth (1K 2:26–27). His ministry began in 627 BCE (1:2) or, by another interpretation, he was born in 627 BCE (1:5). He died sometime after 587 BCE, in Egypt.

The *canonical* book bearing his name consists of 4 parts: **1:** a collection of oracles against Judah and Jerusalem, which Jeremiah dictated to his aid Baruch: (1:4–20:18, from the time of Josiah and Jehoiakim; 21:1–25:14, from the time of Zedekiah); **2:** Baruch's memoirs (Chs 26–35 & 36–45); **3:** a group of oracles against the foreign nations (25:15–38; Chs 46–51), together with an introduction (1:1–3); **4:** an historical appendix (Ch. 52). Some other materials were added when the book was edited sometime after 500 BCE.

ירמיהו פרק א

JEREMIAH 1

א דְּבַרְי יִרְמְיָהוּ בֶן־חִלְקִיָּהוּ מִן־הַכֹּהֲנִים אֲשֶׁר
בְּעִנְתוֹת בְּאֶרֶץ בְּנֵימִן: ב אֲשֶׁר הָיָה דְבַר־יְהוָה אֵלָיו
בְּיָמָיו יֹאשִׁיָּהוּ בֶן־אָמוֹן מֶלֶךְ יְהוּדָה בְּשָׁלֹשׁ־עֶשְׂרֵה
שָׁנָה לְמָלְכוֹ: ג וַיְהִי בְּיָמָיו יְהוֹיָקִים בֶּן־יֹאשִׁיָּהוּ מֶלֶךְ
יְהוּדָה עַד־תֵּם עֲשֵׂתִי עֲשֵׂרָה שָׁנָה לְצַדְקִיָּהוּ בֶן־
יֹאשִׁיָּהוּ מֶלֶךְ יְהוּדָה עַד־גְּלוֹת יְרוּשָׁלַם בַּחֹדֶשׁ
הַחֲמִישִׁי: {פ}

ד וַיְהִי דְבַר־יְהוָה אֵלַי לֵאמֹר:

ה בְּטֶרֶם אֶצְרָךְ אֶצְרָךְ בַּבֶּטֶן יִדְעֵתִיךָ
וּבְטֶרֶם תֵּצֵא מִרְחֹם הַקֶּדֶשׁ תִּתִּיךָ
נִבִּיא לְגוֹיִם נְתַתִּיךָ:

ו וַאֲמַר אֵתָּה אֲדַנִּי יְהוָה הֲנָה לֹא־יִדְעֵתִי דְבַר כִּי־
נַעַר אָנֹכִי: {ס}

ז וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֵלַי
אֲל־תֹּאמַר נַעַר אָנֹכִי

¹ The words of Jeremiah son of Hilkiyah, one of the priests living at Anathoth in the territory of Benjamin. ² The word of Yahweh came to him in the days of Josiah son of Amon, king of Judah, in the thirteenth year of his reign. ³ It came also in the days of King Jehoiakim son of Josiah, of Judah, until the end of the eleventh year of King Zedekiah son of Josiah, of Judah, until the carrying away captive of Jerusalem, in the fifth month.

⁴ The word of Yahweh came to me, saying:

⁵ “Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you; before you came to birth, I consecrated you; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.”

⁶ I then said, “Ah, Lord Yahweh: see, I do not know how to speak I am only a boy!”

⁷ But Yahweh replied, “Do not say, “I am only a boy,”

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¹ ‘Anathoth’ (עִנְתוֹת) is modern Anata, a village about 6 Km northeast of Jerusalem. The name, ‘Jeremiah’, may mean ‘Yahweh exalts’.

² Vv. 2-3 refer to a period from about 608 BCE to July 587; they do not therefore apply to Chs 40-44.

³ An alternative system of reckoning puts the date here at August 586 BCE.

⁴ ‘The word of Yahweh’ is a characteristic expression of Jeremiah, emphasising that his message is God’s word.

⁵ The Kethib/Qere difference here would benefit from an explanation.

⁶ The particle הֲנָה (‘see’ – traditionally ‘behold’) often introduces a speech and calls attention to a specific word or the statement as a whole.

⁷ The particle כִּי (‘but’) is likely adversative here after a negative statement.

כִּי עַל־כָּל־אֲשֶׁר אֲשַׁלְּחֶךָ תֵּלֵךְ
 וְאֵת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר אֶצְוֶךָ תִּדְבֹר:
 אֶל־תִּירָא מִפְּנֵיהֶם ח
 כִּי־אֲתֶךָ אֲנִי לְהַצִּילֶךָ
 נְאֻם־יְהוָה:

but go to all to whom I send you
 and say whatever I command you.

8 Do not be afraid of confronting them,
 for I am with you to rescue you,
 says Yahweh.”

ט וַיִּשְׁלַח יְהוָה אֶת־יָדוֹ וַיַּגַּע עַל־פִּי וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֵלַי 9 Then Yahweh put out his hand and touched my mouth;
 and Yahweh said to me:

הִנֵּה נֹתַתִּי דְבָרִי בְּפִיֶּךָ:

“I will surely put my words into your mouth.

י רְאֵה הַפְּקֹדֶתֶיךָ הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה
 עַל־הַגּוֹיִם וְעַל־הַמַּמְלָכוֹת
 לְנִתּוֹשׁ וּלְנִתּוֹץ

10 Look, today I have set you
 over the nations and kingdoms,
 to uproot and knock down,
 to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant.”

וּלְהָאֲבִיד וּלְהָרוֹס לְבָנוֹת וּלְנִטּוֹעַ: {פ}

יא וַיְהִי דְבַר־יְהוָה אֵלַי לֵאמֹר מִה־אַתָּה רְאֵה 11 The word of Yahweh came to me, saying, “Jeremiah, what do you
 יְרֻמִּיהוּ וְאֹמַר מִקַּל שָׁקֵד אֲנִי רְאֵה: יב וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה
 אֵלַי הִיטַבְתָּ לְרְאוֹת כִּי־שָׁקֵד אֲנִי עַל־דְּבָרִי
 לַעֲשׂוֹת: {ס} יג וַיְהִי דְבַר־יְהוָה | אֵלַי שְׁנִית לֵאמֹר 12 Then Yahweh
 said, “You have seen well; for, I am watching over my word to perform
 it.” 13 A second time, the word of Yahweh came to me, saying,

8 In place of ‘rescue’, here following the MT & NJB, the NRSV has ‘deliver’ and NETB has ‘protect’.

9 The literal translation of ‘I will surely put’ is ‘Behold, I have put’ – an example of the ‘prophetic’ perfect.

10 The first 2 lines refer to God giving Jeremiah authority as a prophet to declare what he, Yahweh, will do; it does not mean that Jeremiah himself will do these things; the expression involves a figure of speech where the subject of a declaration is stated instead of the declaration about it (compare a similar use of the same figure in Gn 41:13).

11 The NJB has ‘the Watchful Tree’ in place of ‘an almond tree’; there is a play on the word ‘almond’ (שָׁקֵד) and the word for ‘watching’ (שָׁקֵד).

12 The word ‘for’ here translates the particle כִּי.

13 The literal translation of ‘its mouth tilting from the north’ is ‘its face from the face of the north’.

מָה אַתָּה רֹאֵה וְאָמַר סִיר נִפְוַח אֲנִי רֹאֵה וּפְנֵי
 מִפְּנֵי צְפוֹנָה: ^ד וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֵלַי
 מִצְפוֹן תִּפְתַּח הָרָעָה
 עַל כָּל־יֹשְׁבֵי הָאָרֶץ:
 כִּי הִנְנִי קֹרָא ^{טו}
 לְכָל־מְשַׁפְּחוֹת מַמְלָכוֹת צְפוֹנָה
 נְאֻם־יְהוָה
 וּבָאוּ וַנִּתְּנוּ אִישׁ כִּסְאוֹ פֶתַח |
 שַׁעְרֵי יְרוּשָׁלַם
 וְעַל כָּל־חוֹמֹתֶיהָ סָבִיב
 וְעַל כָּל־עָרֵי יְהוּדָה:
 וְדִבַּרְתִּי מִשְׁפָּטִי אוֹתָם ^{טז}
 עַל כָּל־רָעָתָם
 אֲשֶׁר עָזְבוּנִי
 וַיִּקְטְרוּ לֵאלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים
 וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲווּ לְמַעֲשֵׂי יָדֵיהֶם:
 וְאַתָּה תִּאָּזֵר מִתְּנִידָךְ ^{יז}
 וְקַמְתָּ וְדִבַּרְתָּ אֲלֵיהֶם
 אֵת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי אֹצֵנֶךָ

“What do you see?” I said, “I see a cooking pot on the boil, with its mouth tilting from the north.” ¹⁴ Then Yahweh said to me,

“From the north, disaster will come boiling over on all who live in the country.

¹⁵ For I am now summoning all the families of the kingdoms of the north, says Yahweh.

They will come, and each will set his throne in front of the gates of Jerusalem, all round, against its walls and against all the towns of Judah.

¹⁶ I shall pass sentence on them because of all their wickedness, since they have abandoned me, offering incense to other gods and worshipping what their own hands have made.

¹⁷ But you: gird up your loins! Stand up and tell them all I command you.

¹⁴ At the beginning of the 2nd line, NETB inserts the words ‘this means’, though there is nothing in the MT to support this.

¹⁵ The pronoun, ‘they’, in the 4th line refers back to the ‘kingdoms’ in the preceding sentence; however, kingdoms do not sit on thrones: their kings do. This is an example of a figure of speech called metonymy, where the kingdom is put for its king (for a similar use see 2Ch 12:8).

¹⁶ The idiom וְדִבַּרְתִּי מִשְׁפָּטִי אוֹתָם (‘I shall pass sentence on them’) is found 3 other times in Jeremiah (4:12, 39:5, 52:9).

¹⁷ The phrase, ‘gird up your loins’ means to prepare for action (cf. 2K 4:29, 9:1).

אֶל־תַּחַת מִפְּנֵיהֶם
 פְּנֹאֲחֶתֶךָ לִפְנֵיהֶם:
 וְאֲנִי הִנֵּה נֹתֵתִיךָ הַיּוֹם יח
 לְעִיר מְבֻצָּר וְלְעַמּוּד בְּרֹזֶל וְלַחֲמוֹת נְחֹשֶׁת
 עַל־כָּל־הָאָרֶץ
 לְמַלְכֵי יְהוּדָה לְשָׂרֵיהָ
 לְכֹהֲנֵיהָ וְלְעַם הָאָרֶץ:
 וְנִלְחָמוּ אֵלֶיךָ יט
 וְלֹא־יִוָּכְלוּ לָךְ
 כִּי־אֲתֶךָ אֲנִי נֹאֲמֵי הוֹה
 לְהַצִּילְךָ: {פ}

Have no fear of them
 and, in their presence, I will make you fearless.

- 18 For look, today I have made you into a fortified city, a pillar of iron, a wall of bronze to stand against the whole country: the kings of Judah, its princes, its priests and the people of the country.
- 19 They will fight against you but will not overcome you, for I am with you, says Yahweh, to rescue you.”

18 The verb form in the 1st line emphasises the certainty of a yet future act: God is promising to protect Jeremiah from any future attacks which may result from his faithfully carrying out his commission.

19 Vv. 17-19 expand on the thought of vv. 4-8.

ירמיהו פרק ב

א וַיְהִי דְבַר־יְהוָה אֵלַי לֵאמֹר: ב הֲלֹךְ וְקִרְאתָ בְּאָזְנֵי
יְרוּשָׁלַם לֵאמֹר כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה
זָכַרְתִּי לְךָ חֶסֶד נְעוּרַיִךְ
אֶהְבֶּת כְּלוּלְתֵיךְ
לְכַתֵּךְ אַחֲרַי בַּמִּדְבָּר
בְּאֶרֶץ לֹא זְרוּעָה:
ג קִדַּשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל לַיהוָה
רֵאשִׁית תְּבוּאָתָהּ
כָּל־אֹכְלֵיוּ יֵאשְׁמוּ
ד רָעָה תִּבָּא אֲלֵיהֶם נֶאֱסִי־הוּא: {פ}
ה שָׁמְעוּ דְבַר־יְהוָה בַּיּוֹם
וְכָל־מִשְׁפְּחוֹת בַּיּוֹם יִשְׂרָאֵל:
ז כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה
ח מִה־מָּצְאוּ אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם בִּי עוֹל
ט כִּי רָחֲקוּ מֵעָלַי
י וַיִּלְכוּ אַחֲרַי הַהֶבֶל וַיִּהְיוּ בָלוּ:

JEREMIAH 2

1 The word of Yahweh came to me, saying, 2 “Go and shout this in Jerusalem’s ears: “Thus says Yahweh:
“I remember your faithful love,
the affection of your bridal days,
when you followed me through the desert,
through a land unsown.
3 Israel was holy to Yahweh,
the first fruits of his harvest;
all who ate this incurred guilt,
disaster befell them, says Yahweh.”
4 Hear the word of Yahweh, House of Jacob
and all the families of the House of Israel.
5 Yahweh says this,
“What did your ancestors find wrong in me
for them to have deserted me so far
as to follow Futility and become futile themselves?

JEREMIAH 2

- 1 With the exception of a few passages, Chs 2–6 contain Jeremiah’s earliest preaching, before the reform under Josiah (621 BCE).
- 2 The word חֶסֶד, here translated as ‘faithful love’, stands for the intimacy between the Israelite nation and God, within the Covenant (Ho 2:21).
- 3 Many commentators see the 2nd line as having theological significance for the calling of the Gentiles; it is likely, however, that in this context the metaphor is intended to bring out the special relationship and inviolability that Israel had with God.
- 4 The NJB has ‘listen to’, in place of the (more forceful) ‘hear’, here following the NRSV.
- 5 ‘Futility’ here refers to idols, as in 10:15, 16:19 & 51:18; those who worship it become like it (cf. Ho 9:10).

וְלֹא אָמְרוּ אֵיךָ יְהוָה ^ו
 הַמַּעֲלֶה אֶתְנוּ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם
 הַמּוֹלִיךְ אֶתְנוּ בַּמִּדְבָּר
 בְּאֶרֶץ עֲרֵבָה וְשׁוּחָה
 בְּאֶרֶץ צִיָּה וְצִלְמוֹת
 בְּאֶרֶץ לֹא-עֹבֵר בָּהּ אִישׁ
 וְלֹא-יֹשֵׁב אָדָם שָׁם:
 וְאָבִיָּא אֶתְכֶם אֶל-אֶרֶץ הַכְּרָמַל ^ז
 לֵאכֹל פְּרִיָּה וְטוֹבָה
 וּתְבֹאוּ וְתִטְמְאוּ אֶת-אֶרְצִי
 וְנִחַלְתִּי שְׁמִתְּם לְתוֹעֵבָה:
 הַכֹּהֲנִים לֹא אָמְרוּ אֵיךָ יְהוָה ^ח
 וְתַפְשֵׁי הַתּוֹרָה לֹא יִדְעוּנִי
 וְהִרְעִים פָּשְׁעוּ בִּי
 וְהַנְּבִאִים נִבְּאוּ בַּבַּעַל
 וְאַחֲרָי לֹא-יִזְעֻלוּ הַלְכוּ:

6 They did not ask, “Where is Yahweh, who brought us out of Egypt and led us through the desert, in a land of plains and ravines, in a land of drought and deep darkness, in a land through which no one passes and where no human being lives?”

7 I brought you to a country of plenty, to enjoy its produce and good things; but, when you entered, you defiled my country and made my heritage loathsome.

8 The priests did not ask, “Where is Yahweh?” Those skilled in the Law did not know me, the shepherds, too, rebelled against me and the prophets prophesied by Baal and followed the Useless Ones.

⁶ The word here rendered ‘*deep darkness*’ (following the NRSV & NETB) is erroneously rendered ‘*shadow of death*’ in many English versions (the NJB has ‘*shadow dark as death*’); that translation uses faulty etymology: the word is merely another word for darkness, confined to poetic texts, where it is associated with the darkness of a prison (Ps 107:10, 14), a mine (Job 28:3), and a ravine (Ps 23:4); here, it is associated with the darkness of the wasteland and ravines of the Sinai desert.

⁷ ‘*Plenty*’ translates the word כְּרָמַל (the same as Mount Carmel). ‘*Defiled*’ here means that it was made ceremonially unclean (cf. Lv 18:19–30, Nb 35:34, Dt 21:23).

⁸ ‘*Those skilled in the Law*’ is likely a reference to the priests and Levites who were responsible for teaching the law (so 18:18, cf. Dt 33:10); according to Jer 8:8, it could also refer to the scribes who copied the law. The ‘*Useless Ones*’ are, as before, the idols, followed by even the responsible members of the nation, including the ‘*shepherds*’, the people’s political and religious leaders (the NRSV has ‘*rulers*’).

ט לְכֵן עַד אֲרִיב אֶתְכֶם
 נְאֻם־יְהוָה
 וְאֶת־בְּנֵי בְנֵיכֶם אֲרִיב:
 י כִּי עֲבְרוּ אֵי כַתְּיִים וּרְאוּ
 וְקִדְר שְׁלַחוּ וְהִתְבּוֹנְנוּ מְאֹד
 וּרְאוּ הֲיֵן הִיְתָה כְּזֹאת:
 יא הֲהִימִיר גּוֹי אֱלֹהִים
 וְהִמָּה לֹא אֱלֹהִים
 וְעַמִּי הִמִּיר כְּבוֹדוֹ
 בְּלוֹא יוֹעִיל:
 יב שָׁמוּ שָׁמַיִם עַל־זֹאת
 וְשָׁעְרוּ חֲרָבוּ מְאֹד
 נְאֻם־יְהוָה:
 יג כִּי־שָׁתִים רְעוֹת
 עָשָׂה עַמִּי
 אֶתִּי עֲזָבוּ מִקּוֹר | מַיִם חַיִּים

9 So, I must accuse you once more,
 says Yahweh,
 and I accuse your children's children:
 10 Cross to the isles of the Kittim and look,
 send to Kedar and carefully observe,
 see if anything like this has happened before!
 11 Does a nation change its gods,
 even though these are no gods at all?
 Yet, my people have exchanged their Glory
 for the Useless Ones!
 12 You heavens, stand aghast at this,
 horrified, utterly appalled,
 says Yahweh.
 13 For, my people have committed two crimes:
 they have abandoned me,
 the fountain of living water,

⁹ The language used here is that of the law court: a great king charging his subject with breach of covenant (cf. Is 1:2–20 & Mi 6:1–8).

¹⁰ The 'Kittim' are the inhabitants of Kition, in Cyprus (Gn 10:4, Nb 24:24); here, the name refers to the islanders of the western Mediterranean.

¹¹ 'Glory' refers to their God, Yahweh: 'their Glory' is a scribal correction for 'my Glory', which apparently was too offensive.

¹² In earlier literature, the heavens (and the earth) were called on to witness Israel's commitment to the covenant (Dt 30:12) and were called to serve as witnesses to Israel's fidelity or infidelity to it (Is 1:2, Mi 6:1).

¹³ It is difficult to decide whether the phrase 'living water' refers to fresh, running water (cf. Gn 26:19, Lv 14:5) or life-giving water, which the idiom 'fountain of life' as source of life and vitality often refers to (cf. Ps 36:9, Pr 13:14, 14:27); the contrast with cisterns, which collected and held rain water, suggests the former, but the reality underlying the metaphor contrasts God, the source of life, health, and vitality, with useless idols that cannot do anything.

לַחֲצֵב לָהֶם בְּאֵרוֹת
 בְּאֵרֹת נִשְׁבְּרִים אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יִכְלוּ הַמַּיִם:
 יד הָעֶבֶד יִשְׂרָאֵל
 אִם־יֵלֵד בֵּית הוּא
 מִדּוּעַ הִיָּה לְבוֹז:
 טו עָלְיוּ יִשְׂאֲגוּ כְּפָרִים
 נִתְּנוּ קוֹלָם
 וַיִּשְׁתּוּ אֶרְצוֹ לְשָׁמָּה
 עָרָיו נִצְתָה נִצְתָה מִבְּלֵי יֵשֵׁב:
 טז גַּם־בְּנֵי־נֹפֶן וְתַחֲפַנְחָס
 יִרְעוּךָ קִדְקֹד:
 יז הֲלוֹא־זֹאת תַּעֲשֶׂה־לָּךְ
 עַזְבֵּךָ אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ
 בְּעַת מוֹלֶכֶךָ בַּדֶּרֶךְ:
 יח וְעַתָּה מֵה־לָּךְ לְדֶרֶךְ מִצְרַיִם
 לְשָׁתוֹת מִי שְׁחֹר
 וּמֵה־לָּךְ לְדֶרֶךְ אַשּׁוּר
 לְשָׁתוֹת מִי נָהָר:

and dug cisterns for themselves,
 cracked cisterns that hold no water.

- 14 Is Israel a slave?
 Was he born into serfdom,
 for him to be preyed on like this?
- 15 Lions have roared at him;
 they have roared loudly.
 They have laid his land waste;
 his towns lie burnt and uninhabited.
- 16 The people of Noph and Tahpanhes
 have cracked your skulls!
- 17 Have you not brought this on yourself,
 by abandoning Yahweh your God,
 when he was guiding you on your way?
- 18 What is the good of going to Egypt now
 to drink the water of the Nile?
 What is the good of going to Assyria
 to drink the water of the River?

14 God reminds Israel of its (former) lofty status as Yahweh's bride and special possession.

15 The *Kethib/Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

16 The *Kethib/Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation. 'Have cracked' follows the *Peshitta*, which presupposes יִרְעוּךָ in place of the *MT's* יִרְעוּךָ ('have grazed on'), while the *NJB* has the conjectural 'have shaved'.

17 The literal translation of the 3rd line is, "at the time of leading you in the way."

18 The literal translation of 'Nile' is 'Shihor' (שְׁחֹר), a branch of the Nile; 'the River' is the Euphrates (the *NRSV* names it).

יט תִּסְרַף רָעֲתֶךָ
 וּמִשְׁבוֹתֶיךָ תִּזְכָּח
 וּדְעֵי וּרְאֵי כִי־רַע וּמָר
 עֲזָבְךָ אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ
 וְלֹא פָחַדְתִּי אֵלֶיךָ
 נְאֻם־אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת:
 כ כִּי מֵעוֹלָם שָׁבַרְתִּי עֲלֶיךָ
 גַּתְּקֹתִי מִוִּסְרוֹתֶיךָ
 וְתֹאמְרֵי לֹא אֶעֱבֹד
 כִּי עַל־כָּל־גְּבֻעָה גְּבַהָה
 וְתַחַת כָּל־עֵץ רֵעֵן
 אֶת צִעָה זָנָה:
 כא וְאַנְכִי נִטְעַתֶיךָ שׁוֹרֵק
 כְּלֵה זֶרַע אֲמַת
 וְאִיךָ נִהְפַּכְתָּ לִּי
 סוּרֵי הַגִּפְּזִים נִכְרִיָּה:
 כב כִּי אִם־תִּכְבֹּסִי בַּנֶּתֶר
 וְתִרְבִּי־לֶךָ בְּרִית

19 Your wickedness will punish you,
 and your infidelities will convict you,
 so give a thought and see how evil and bitter it is
 to abandon Yahweh your God:
 the fear of me is not in you,
 the Lord Yahweh Sabaoth declares.
 20 "It is long ago now since you broke your yoke,
 burst your bonds
 and said, "I will not serve!"
 Yet, on every high hill
 and under every green tree
 you have sprawled and played the whore.
 21 Yet, I had planted you, a red vine
 of completely sound stock.
 How then did you turn degenerate
 and become a wild vine?
 22 Though you scrub yourself with soda
 and use much soap,

19 For the 5th line, here following the MT & NRSV, the NJB reads, "and not to stand in awe of me."
 20 'I will not serve' follows the *Ketiv* (אעבוד); the *Qere* has 'I will not transgress' (אֶעֱבֹר): refusing to serve God, Israel becomes enslaved to idols. Prostitution is a metaphor for idolatry (see #Ho 1:2), no doubt linked here to sacred prostitution (cf. Dt 23:19).
 21 The translation of the last 2 lines (following the NRSV) is based on a re-division of the words סוּרֵי הַגִּפְּזִים into סוּרֵיָה גִפְּזִים, and the recognition of a *hapax legomenon*, סוּרֵיָה, meaning 'degenerate'.
 22 In place of 'soda', here following the NJB, the NRSV & NETB (the latter in a study note) have 'lye'.

נִכְתָּם עוֹנֵד לְפָנַי
 נֵאֵם אֲדַנִּי יְהוָה:
 כג אֵיךְ תֹּאמְרִי לֹא נִטְמַאתִי
 אַחֲרֵי הַבְּעָלִים לֹא הִלַּכְתִּי
 רְאֵי דַרְכְּךָ בְּגֵיא דְעֵי מָה עָשִׂית
 בְּכָרָה קִלָּה מְשֻׁרְכַת דְּרַכֶּיָּה:
 כד פִּרְהוּ לְלַמַּד מִדְּבָר
 בְּאוֹת נִפְשׁוּ נִפְשָׁה שְׂאֵפָה רוּחַ
 תִּיאַנְתָּה מִי יִשִּׁיבָנָה
 כָּל־מְבַקְשֶׁיהָ לֹא יִיעֲפוּ
 בְּחֻדְשָׁה יִמְצְאוּנָה:
 כה מִנְעֵי רֵגְלֶךָ מִיַּחַף
 וְגֹרֶנְךָ וְגִרְוֹנֶךָ מִצְמָאָה
 וְתֹאמְרִי נוֹאֵשׁ לֹא
 כִּי־אֶהְבֵּתִי זָרִים וְאַחֲרֵיהֶם אֵלֶיךָ:
 כו כְּבִשְׁתַּ גִּנְבַל כִּי יִמְצָא
 בֶּן הַבֵּישׁוּ בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל
 הֵמָּה מְלֻכֵיהֶם שְׂרֵיהֶם
 וְכֹהֲנֵיהֶם וְנְבִיאֵיהֶם:

the stain of your guilt is still before me,
declares the Lord Yahweh.

23 How dare you say, "I am not defiled,
I have not run after the Baals?"

Look at your behaviour in the Valley,
realise what you have done.

24 A wild she-donkey, at home in the desert,
snuffing the breeze on desire;
who can control here when she is on heat?
Males need not trouble to look for her,
they will find her in her month.

25 Beware! Your own foot will go unshod,
your own throat grow dry!

But you said, "It is no use! No!

For I love the Strangers and they are the ones I shall follow."

26 Like a thief ashamed at being caught,

so will the House of Israel be:

they, their kings, their officials,
their priests and their prophets,

23 The 'Valley' is probably that of Ben-Hinnom or Gehenna, where Topheth was (see 7:31 and #Lv 18:21), and where Baal and Molech were worshipped and child sacrifice was practised.

24 The *Kethib*/*Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

25 The *Kethib*/*Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

26 The *NJB* has 'chief men' in place of 'officials', here following the *NRSV* & *NETB*.

- כז אִמְרִים לַעֲץ אָבִי אֶתָּה
וְלֹאבָן אֶת יִלְדֹתַי יִלְדֹתָנוּ
כִּי־פָנּוּ אֵלַי עֵרָף
וְלֹא פָנִים
וּבֵעֵת רָעָתְךָ יִאמְרוּ
קוּמָה וְהוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ:
- כח וְאֵיִה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתָ לָּךְ
יִקוּמוּ אִם־יִוְשִׁיעוּךָ בְּעֵת רָעָתְךָ
כִּי מִסַּפַּר עָרֶיךָ
הֵיוּ אֱלֹהֶיךָ יְהוּדָה: {ס}
- כט לָמָּה תִרְיָבוּ אֵלַי
כָּלְכֶם פִּשְׁעֵתֶם בִּי
נֹאֲמִיָּהוָה:
- ל לְשׁוֹא הַבֵּיתִי אֶת־בְּנֵיכֶם
מוֹסֵר לֹא לִקְחוּ
אֲכָלָה חֲרָבְכֶם נְבִיאֵיכֶם
כְּאֲרִיָּה מִשְׁחִית:
- לא הִדּוּר אֶתֶם רְאוּ דְבַר־יְהוָה
הַמְדַבֵּר הֵיטִי לְיִשְׂרָאֵל
- 27 who say to a tree, “You are my father,”
and to a stone, “You gave birth to me.”
For they turn to me their backs,
never their faces;
yet, when trouble comes, they shout,
“Get up! Save us!”
- 28 Where are your gods you made for yourself?
Let them get up if they can save you when trouble comes!
For you have as many gods
as you have towns, Judah!
- 29 “Why make out a case against me?
You have all rebelled against me,
says Yahweh.
- 30 In vain, I have struck your children:
they have not accepted correction;
your sword has devoured your prophets
like a marauding lion.
- 31 Now, you of this generation listen to what Yahweh says:
Have I been a desert for Israel,

27 The *Kethib*/*Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

28 The *LXX* (καὶ κατ' ἀριθμὸν διόδων τῆς Ἱερουσαλήμ ἕτσον τῆ Βααλ) and *Vetus Latina* add, “and as many altars for Baal as Jerusalem has streets.”

29 This is still part God’s case against Israel: here, he denies their counter claims that they do not deserve to be punished.

30 Israel rejected God’s correction and leadership, even killing his prophets (1K 19:10, 2K 21:16).

31 In place of ‘free’ (as *NRSV*), the *NJB* has ‘our own masters’; there is debate about the meaning of this verb (רִדְנִי) because its usage is.

אִם אֶרֶץ מְאֻפְלִיָּה
 מִדּוּעַ אָמְרוּ עַמִּי
 רָדְנוּ לֹא־נִבּוֹא עוֹד אֵלֶיךָ:
 לַב הַתְּשֻׁכָּה בְּתוֹלָה עֲדִיָּה
 כְּלָה קִשְׁרִיָּה
 וְעַמִּי שָׁכַחוּנִי
 יָמִים אֵין מְסֻפָּר:
 לַג מֵה־תִּיטְבִי דְרָכֶךָ
 לְבַקֵּשׁ אֲהַבָּה
 לְכֵן גַּם אֶת־הַרְעוֹת
 לְמַדְתִּי לְמַדְתָּ אֶת־דְּרָכֶיךָ:
 לַד גַּם בְּכַנְפֶיךָ נִמְצְאוּ
 דָם נַפְשׁוֹת אֲבִיוֹנִים נְקִיִּים
 לֹא־בַמְּחַתֶּרֶת מְצַאתִים
 כִּי עַל־כָּל־אֵלֶּה:
 לַה וְתֹאמְרִי כִּי נְקִיתִי אֶךָ
 שֵׁב אִפּוֹ מִמֶּנִּי הַנִּגְלִי נִשְׁפֹּט אוֹתְךָ
 עַל־אֲמַרְךָ לֹא חָטָאתִי:

or a land of gloom?

Why do my people say,

“We are free, we will come to you no more?”

32 Does a girl forget her ornaments

or a bride her attire?

Yet, my people have forgotten me,

days beyond number.

33 How well you set your course

in pursuit of love!

So that even to wicked women

you have taught your ways.

34 The very skirts of your robe are stained

with the blood of the poor

and of innocent men you never caught breaking in!

Yet, in spite of all this,

35 you say, “I am innocent, let his anger turn from me!”

But watch out! I pass sentence on you

for saying, “I have not sinned.”

32 The NJB has ‘sash’ in place of ‘attire’, here following the NRSV & NETB.

33 The *Kethib*/*Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

34 The only permissible form of homicide was of a housebreaker caught in the act (Ex 22:1-2).

35 ‘But watch out’ (here following NETB) is an attempt to render the particle הַנִּגְלִי (often translated as ‘behold’) in a meaningful way in the present context.

לו מֵה־תִּזְלִי מְאֹד
 לְשִׁנוֹת אֶת־דְּרָכֶיךָ
 גַּם מִמִּצְרַיִם תִּבְשִׂי
 כַּאֲשֶׁר־בָּשַׂת מֵאֲשׁוּר:
 לו גַּם מֵאֵת זֶה תִּצְאִי
 וְיָדֶיךָ עַל־רֹאשְׁךָ
 כִּי־מָאֵס יְהוָה בְּמִבְטְחֶיךָ
 וְלֹא תִצְלִיחִי לָהֶם:

36 How frivolously you undertake
 a change of course!
 You will be disappointed by Egypt
 just as you were by Assyria.

37 You will have to leave there too
 with your hands on your head,
 for Yahweh has rejected those on whom you rely:
 you will come to no good with them."

36 'How frivolously' is deduced by minor changes of vowels (reading תִּזְלִי for תִּזְלִי), as in the LXX; as it stands, the MT reads, 'how much you go', which might, at a pinch, mean, 'Why have you gone so far before changing course?'

37 On the image of the 'your hands on your head' (in shame), see 2S 13:19.

ירמיהו פרק ג

א לֹא־מָר הֲזֵן יִשְׁלַח אִישׁ אֶת־אִשְׁתּוֹ
וְהִלְכָה מֵאִתּוֹ וְהִיתָה לְאִישׁ־אַחֵר
הֲיָשׁוּב אֵלֶיהָ עוֹד
הֲלוֹא חֲנוּף תִּחְנַף
הָאָרֶץ הַהִיא
וְאַתָּה זָנִית רַעִים רַבִּים
וְשׁוּב אֵלַי
נְאֻם־יְהוָה:
ב שְׂאֵי־עֵינֶיךָ עַל־שָׁפִלִים וּרְאֵי
אֵיפֹה לֹא שָׁגַלְתָּ שְׁכַבְתָּ
עַל־דַּרְכֵי־לֵהֵם יִשְׁבֹּת לָהֶם
כַּעֲרָבִי בַּמִּדְבָּר
וּתְחַנְפִי אֶרֶץ בְּזוֹנוֹתֶיךָ וּבְרַעְתֶּיךָ:
ג וַיִּמְנְעוּ רַבִּבִּים
וּמִלְקוֹשׁ לֹא הָיָה
וּמִצַּח אִשָּׁה זוֹנָה הָיָה לְךָ
מֵאַנַּת הַכֶּלֶם:
ד הֲלוֹא מֵעַתָּה קִרְאתִי קִרְאת לִי אָבִי

JEREMIAH 3

- 1 "If a man divorces his wife and she leaves him and becomes someone else's, has he the right to go back to her? Has not that piece of land been totally polluted? You, having played the whore with many lovers, would to me! says Yahweh.
- 2 Lift your eyes to the hilltops and see! Where have you not been lain with? You waited by the roadside for them like an Arab in the desert. You have polluted the country with your whoring and vices:
- 3 Thus, the rains have been withheld and the spring rain has not come. "Yet, you maintained a prostitute's bold front, with no trace of a blush.
- 4 From now on, do not cry out at me, "My father!

JEREMIAH 3

- 1 At the beginning of this verse, the MT adds 'Saying'; here, we follow the LXX, Peshitta and Qumran MSS.
- 2 An alternative translation for 'hilltops' is 'bare heights'. The Kethib/Qere difference here would benefit from an explanation.
- 3 Literally translated, the 3rd line reads, "Yet you have a prostitute's forehead."
- 4 The Kethib/Qere difference here would benefit from an explanation.

אֶלּוֹף נַעֲרִי אֶתָּה:
 הַיִּנְטֵר לְעוֹלָם^ה
 אִם־יִשְׁמַר לִנְצַח
 הִנֵּה דַבַּרְתָּ וַתַּעֲשֵׂי הַרְעוֹת
 וַתּוֹכַל: {פ}

My beloved ever since I was young!

⁵ Will he keep up his anger forever,
 maintain his wrath to the end?"

You say this but still go on sinning,
 being so obstinate."

^ו וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֵלַי בַּיָּמִי יֵאֱשִׁיחוּ הַמְּלֹךְ הַרְאִיתִי
 אֲשֶׁר עָשְׂתָה מְשֻׁבָּה יִשְׂרָאֵל הַלֵּכָה הִיא עַל־כָּל־
 הַר גְּבוּהָ וְאֶל־תַּחַת כָּל־עֵץ רֵעֵן וַתִּזְנֶי־שָׁם: ^ז וַאֲמַר
 אַחֲרַי עָשׂוֹתָה אֶת־כָּל־אֵלֶּה אֵלַי תָּשׁוּב וְלֹא־שָׁבָה
 וַתִּרְאֶה וַתִּרְאֵ בְּגוֹדָה אַחֻוֹתָה יְהוּדָה: ^ח וַאֲרָא כִּי
 עַל־כָּל־אֲדוּת אֲשֶׁר נָאֲפָה מְשֻׁבָּה יִשְׂרָאֵל
 שָׁלַחְתִּיהָ וְאַתָּן אֶת־סִפְר כְּרִיתְתִיהָ אֵלֶיהָ וְלֹא
 יָרָאָה בְּגוֹדָה יְהוּדָה אַחֻוֹתָה וַתִּלְךְ וַתִּזֶּן גַּם־הִיא:
^ט וְהָיָה מִקֵּל זְנוּתָהּ וַתַּחַנֵּף אֶת־הָאָרֶץ וַתִּנְאֵף אֶת־
 הָאָבֶן וְאֶת־הָעֵץ: ^י וְגַם־בְּכָל־זֹאת לֹא־שָׁבָה אֵלַי
 בְּגוֹדָה אַחֻוֹתָה יְהוּדָה בְּכָל־לִבָּהּ כִּי אִם־בְּשִׁקָּר
 נֹאֲמֵי־הִנֵּה: {ס}

⁶ In the days of King Josiah, Yahweh said to me, "Have you seen what she did, the faithless one Israel? How she has made her way up every high hill and under every green tree, and played the whore there? ⁷ And I thought, "After doing all this she will come back to me;" but she did not come back; and her faithless sister, Judah, saw this. ⁸ She also saw that for all the adulteries of that faithless one, Israel, I had sent her away with a decree of divorce; yet her false sister Judah did not fear, but she too went and played the whore. ⁹ Because she took her whoredom so lightly, she polluted the country; she committed adultery with stones and pieces of wood. ¹⁰ Worse than all this, Judah, her faithless sister, has come back to me not in sincerity, but only in pretence, says Yahweh."

⁵ Literally translated, the last 2 lines read, "... you do the evil and you are able."

⁶ This section dates from the reign of Josiah and is to be assigned to the period following the reform of 622 BCE. It attests Jeremiah's consistent hope for the Northern Kingdom (cf. 30:1-31:22) and seems to have inspired Ezk 23.

⁷ The *Kethib/Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

⁸ 'She also saw' follows one *Hebrew MS*, some *LXX MSS* and the *Peshitta*; the *MT* has 'I saw' (possible attraction to the verb at the start of v. 7).

⁹ The opening part of this verse, with some of the versions, assumes a Hiphil form (תִּתְּנֶנִּי) in place of the simple Qal (תִּתְּנֶנִּי) of the *MT*.

¹⁰ The literal translation of 'in sincerity' is 'with all her heart'.

י^א וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֵלַי צְדָקָה נִפְשָׁה מִשְׁבַּה יִשְׂרָאֵל
מִבְּגָדָה יְהוּדָה: י^ב הֲלֹךְ וּקְרֵאתָ אֶת־הַדְּבָרִים
הָאֵלֶּה צְפוֹנָה

וְאָמַרְתָּ שׁוֹבָה מִשְׁבַּה יִשְׂרָאֵל נְאֻם־יְהוָה
לֹא־אֶפְיֵל פָּנַי בְּכֶם
כִּי־חֲסִיד אֲנִי נְאֻם־יְהוָה
לֹא אֶטּוֹר לְעוֹלָם:

י^ג אֶךְ דְּעֵי עוֹנֶךָ
כִּי בִיהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ פָּשַׁעְתָּ
וּתְפֹזְרִי אֶת־דַּרְכֶיךָ לְזָרִים
תַּחַת כָּל־עֵץ רֵעֵן
וּבְקוֹלִי לֹא־שָׁמַעְתָּם
נְאֻם־יְהוָה:

י^ד שׁוּבוּ בָנִים שׁוֹבְבִים נְאֻם־יְהוָה כִּי אֲנֹכִי בַעֲלֹתִי
בְּכֶם וְלִקְחֹתִי אֶתְכֶם אֶחָד מֵעִיר וּשְׁנַיִם מִמִּשְׁפָּחָה
וְהִבֵּאתִי אֶתְכֶם צִיּוֹן: ט^ו וְנָתַתִּי לְכֶם רְעִים כָּל־בְּי
וְרָעוּ אֶתְכֶם דְּעָה וְהִשְׁכִּיל: טז וְהָיָה כִּי תִרְבוּ
וּפְרִיתֶם בְּאֶרֶץ בֵּימֵי הַהֵמָּה נְאֻם־יְהוָה לֹא־

¹¹ Then Yahweh said to me, “Disloyal Israel has shown herself less guilty than faithless Judah. ¹² So, go and proclaim these words towards the north, and say:

“Come back, disloyal Israel, says Yahweh,
I shall frown on you no more,
since I am merciful, says Yahweh.
I shall not keep my anger forever.

¹³ Only acknowledge your guilt:
how you have rebelled against Yahweh your God,
how you have prostituted yourself with the Strangers
under every green tree
and have not listened to my voice,
says Yahweh.

¹⁴ “Return, disloyal sons, says Yahweh, for I am your Master; I will take you, one from a town, two from a family, and bring you to Zion. ¹⁵ I shall give you shepherds after my own heart, who will feed you knowledge and insight. ¹⁶ And when you have multiplied and increased in the land, says Yahweh, no one will ever say again, “The Ark of the

¹¹ Judah had the advantage of seeing God discipline Israel yet ignored the warning and committed the same sin.

¹² The message is directed toward the exiles of northern Israel who have been scattered in the provinces of Assyria to the north.

¹³ The ‘Strangers’ are the false gods, as before; this is an allusion to the syncretic cult in the reigns of Manasseh and Amon.

¹⁴ This passage presupposes the events of 587 BCE.

¹⁵ NETB has ‘leaders’ in place of ‘shepherds’, here following the MT, NJB & NRSV.

¹⁶ Evidently, the Chaldeans had destroyed the Ark with the Temple in 587 BCE.

יֹאמְרוּ עוֹד אֲרוֹן בְּרִית־יְהוָה וְלֹא יַעֲלֶה עַל־לֵב וְלֹא יִזְכְּרוּ־בוֹ וְלֹא יִפְקְדוּ וְלֹא יַעֲשֶׂה עוֹד: ^ז בַּעַת הַהִיא יִקְרָאוּ לִירוּשָׁלַם כַּסָּא יְהוָה וְנִקְווּ אֵלֶיהָ כָּל־הַגּוֹיִם לְשֵׁם יְהוָה לִירוּשָׁלַם וְלֹא־יִלְכוּ עוֹד אַחֲרֵי שְׂרָרוֹת לְבָם הָרַע: {ס} י^ח בְּיָמִים הַהֵמָּה יִלְכוּ בֵּית־יְהוּדָה עַל־בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיָּבֵאוּ יַחְדָּו מֵאֶרֶץ צָפוֹן עַל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר הִנְחַלְתִּי אֶת־אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם:

י^ט וְאֲנֹכִי אֶמְרָתִי
 אֵיךְ אֲשִׁיתֶךָ בְּבָנִים
 וְאֶתְּנֶלְךָ אֶרֶץ חֶמְדָּה
 נַחֲלַת צְבִי צְבָאוֹת גּוֹיִם
 וְאֹמַר אָבִי תִקְרָאוּ תִקְרָאִי־לִי
 וּמֵאַחֲרַי לֹא תִשׁוּבוּ תִשׁוּבִי:
 כ^ב אֲבָן בְּגִדְהָ אִשָּׁה מֵרַעָה
 כֵּן בְּגִדְתֶם בֵּי בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל
 נֹאֲס־יְהוָה:
 כֹּא^כ קוֹל עַל־שִׁפְיִים נִשְׁמָע
 בְּכִי תַחֲנוּנֵי בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
 כִּי הֶעָווּ אֶת־דַּרְכֶּם

Covenant of Yahweh: It will not come to mind, they will not remember it or miss it, nor will another one be made! ¹⁷ At that time, Jerusalem will be called ‘The Throne of Yahweh’ and all the nations will converge on her, on Yahweh’s name, on Jerusalem, and will no longer follow their own stubborn and wicked inclinations. ¹⁸ In those days, the House of Judah will join the House of Israel; together, they will come from the land of the north to the country I gave your fathers as heritage.

¹⁹ “I was thinking:

How am I to rank you as my children?
 I shall give you a country of delights,
 the fairest heritage of all the nations!
 I thought: you will call me Father
 and will never cease to follow me.

²⁰ Instead, like a woman betraying her lover,
 House of Israel, you have betrayed me,”
 says Yahweh.

²¹ A noise is heard on the hilltops:
 the weeping and entreaty of the Israelites;
 for, they have gone wildly astray,

¹⁷ Jerusalem itself is to become the ‘Throne of Yahweh’, as the Ark had formerly been (see #Ex 25:10 and 1S 6:7).

¹⁸ For messianic days, the prophets foretell a kingdom united, as in the times of David and Solomon.

¹⁹ The *Kethib*/*Qere* differences here would benefit from explanations.

²⁰ *NETB* inverts the order of the 1st 2 lines.

²¹ Their supplication is not made to God but to the pagan gods.

שָׁכְחוּ אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיהֶם:
 כב שׁוּבוּ בָנִים שׁוֹבְבִים
 אֲרַפֶּה מִשׁוֹבְתֵיכֶם
 הֲנֵנוּ אֲתָנוּ לְךָ
 כִּי אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ:
 כג אֲכֵן לִשְׁקֵר מִגְבָּעוֹת
 הַמֶּזֶן הַרִים
 אֲכֵן בִּיהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ
 תְּשׁוּעַת יִשְׂרָאֵל:
 כד וְהַבִּשְׁתׁ אֲכָלָה אֶת־יְגִיעַ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ מִנְּעוּרֵינוּ
 אֶת־צֹאֲנָם וְאֶת־בְּקָרָם
 אֶת־בְּנֵיהֶם וְאֶת־בָּנוֹתֵיהֶם:
 כה נִשְׁכָּבָה בְּבִשְׁתָּנוּ
 וְתִכְסֹנוּ כָּל־מִתְּנוּ
 כִּי לִיהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ חָטָאנוּ אֲנַחְנוּ וְאֲבוֹתֵינוּ
 מִנְּעוּרֵינוּ וְעַד־הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה
 וְלֹא שָׁמַעְנוּ בְּקוֹל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ: {ס}

have forgotten Yahweh their God.

- 22 Come back, disloyal sons,
I will heal your disloyalty.”
“We are here; we are coming to you,
for you are Yahweh our God.
- 23 The hills are a delusion after all,
so is the tumult of the mountains.
Yahweh our God is, after all,
the salvation of Israel.
- 24 Shame has devoured what our ancestors worked for,
ever since we were young,
their flocks and herds, their sons and their daughters.
- 25 Let us lie down in our shame,
let our disgrace cover us,
for we have sinned against Yahweh our God,
we and our ancestors, from our youth until today,
and have not listened to the voice of Yahweh our God.”

22 For the use of the verb ‘heal’ (רפה) to refer to spiritual healing and forgiveness see Ho 14:4.

23 The first 2 lines follow the LXX (ὄπτως εἰς ψεῦδος ἤσαν οἱ βοῦνοι καὶ ἡ δύναμις τῶν ὄρέων) and Peshitta; the MT is corrupt, literally, “For the delusion of the hills tumult of the mountains.”

24 ‘Shame’ alludes to Baal (cf. 11:13); the following lines refer to the sacrifices offered to him.

25 In place of ‘disgrace’, here following NETB, the NRSV has ‘dishonour’ and the NJB has ‘confusion’.

ירמיהו פרק ד

א אִם-תָּשׁוּב יִשְׂרָאֵל | נֹאֵם-יְהוָה אֵלַי תָּשׁוּב
וְאִם-תִּסֵּיר שְׁקוּצֵיךָ מִפְּנֵי וְלֹא תִנּוּד:
ב וְנִשְׁבַּעְתָּ חֵי-יְהוָה בְּאֵמֶת בְּמִשְׁפָּט וּבְצַדִּיקָה
וְהִתְבָּרְכוּ בּוֹ גּוֹיִם וּבּוֹ יִתְהַלְלוּ: {ס}
ג כִּי-כֹה | אָמַר יְהוָה
לְאִישׁ יְהוּדָה וְלִירוּשָׁלַם
גִּירוּ לָכֶם גֵּיר
וְאַל-תִּזְרְעוּ אֶל-קִצְיִים:
ד הַמְלוּ לַיהוָה וְהִסְרוּ עֲרֻלוֹת לְבַבְכֶם
אִישׁ יְהוּדָה וַיֹּשְׁבֵי יְרוּשָׁלַם
פֶּן-תִּצָּא כְאֵשׁ חֲמָתִי
וּבְעֵרָה וְאִין מִכְבֵּה מִפְּנֵי
רַע מַעַלְלֵיכֶם:
ה הִגִּידוּ בִיהוּדָה
וּבִירוּשָׁלַם הַשְׁמִיעוּ
וְאָמְרוּ וּתְקַעוּ תְּקַעוּ שׁוֹפָר בְּאֶרֶץ

JEREMIAH 4

- 1 "If you come back, Israel, says Yahweh, if you come back to me, if you take your Horrors out of my sight, and do not waver,
- 2 if you swear, "As Yahweh lives," truthfully, justly, uprightly, then the nations will bless themselves by him and glory in him.
- 3 "Yes, thus says Yahweh to the men of Judah and Jerusalem, "Break up your fallow ground and do not sow among thorns.
- 4 Circumcise yourselves for Yahweh, circumcise your hearts, men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem, or my wrath will leap out like a fire and burn with no one to quench it, because of your evildoings.""
- 5 Announce it in Judah, proclaim it in Jerusalem, say, "Sound the trumpet in the countryside,

JEREMIAH 4

- 1 The conditions of repentance are removal of pagan shrines, recognition of God's exclusive claim (v. 2) and cleansing of hearts (v. 3).
- 2 In place of 'bless themselves' (here following the NJB), the NRSV has 'be blessed'.
- 3 The introductory particle is obviously assertive here, since a causal connection appears to make little sense.
- 4 For Israel, circumcision (see #Gn 17:10) was the symbol of the Covenant; for Jeremiah, the symbol is meaningless without inward devotion (circumcision of the heart, see Dt 10:16).
- 5 The *Kethib/Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

קראו מלאו ואמרו האספו ונבואה אל-ערי המבצר: שאו-נס ציונה ¹ העזו אל-תעמדו כי רעה אנכי מביא מצפון ושבר גדול: עלה אריה מסבכו ² ומשחית גוים נסע יצא ממקמו לשום ארצך לשמה עריך תצינה מאין יושב: על-זאת חגרו שקים ^ח ספדו והיללו כי לא-שב חרון אפי-הוה ממנו: {פ}	shout the message aloud: Mobilise! Take to the fortified towns! 6 Signpost the way to Zion! Run! Do not delay! For, I am bringing disaster from the north, an immense calamity. 7 The lion is up from his lair, the destroyer of nations is on his way, he has come from his home to reduce your land to a desert; your towns will be in ruins, uninhabited. 8 Because of this, wrap yourselves in sackcloth, lament and wail, “Yahweh’s burning anger has not turned away from us.” 9 “On that day,” says Yahweh, “courage shall fail the king and his officials, the priests will stand aghast, and the prophets stupefied.”
והיה ביום-ההוא נאס-יהוה יאבד לב-המלך ולב השרים ונשמו הכהנים והנבאים יתמהו: {ס}	

6 The enemy from the north is not any nation in particular. Jeremiah may have in mind both the Scythians (who, 630–625 BCE, are found on the Syria-Palestine border) and the Assyrians. In 605 BCE, when the Chaldaean invasion threatened, this prophecy would have alarming relevance.

7 The word translated ‘lair’ has also been understood to refer to a hiding place; however, it appears to be cognate in meaning to the word translated ‘lair’ in 25:38 & Ps 10:9, a word which also refers to the abode of Yahweh in Ps 76:3.

8 The NJB adds ‘since’ at the beginning of the 3rd line but the translation does not need to assume a shift in speaker.

9 The NJB expands the 2nd line: “the king’s heart shall fail him, and the princes’ hearts shall fail them.”

' וְאָמַר אֲהֵהּ | אֲדַנִּי יְהוָה אֲכֵן הַשָּׂא הַשְּׂאֵת לְעַם
 הַזֶּה וּלְיְרוּשָׁלַם לֵאמֹר שְׁלוֹם יִהְיֶה לָכֶם וְנִגְעָה
 חָרֵב עַד-הַנֶּפֶשׁ: " בָּעֵת הַהִיא יֵאמַר לְעַם-הַזֶּה
 וּלְיְרוּשָׁלַם רוּחַ צַח שְׁפִים בְּמִדְבָּר דֶּרֶךְ בֵּת-עַמִּי
 לֹא לְזָרוֹת וְלֹא לְהֵבֵר: " בִּי רוּחַ מְלֵא מְאֹלָה יָבוֹא
 לִי עֵתָה גַם-אֲנִי אֲדַבֵּר מִשְׁפָּטִים אוֹתָם:

י' הִנֵּה | כַּעֲנָנִים יַעֲלֶה
 וְכִסּוּפָה מְרַכְבוֹתָיו
 קָלוּ מִנְּשָׂרִים סוּסָיו
 אֹזִי לָנוּ כִּי שִׁדְדָנוּ:
 י"ד כִּבְסֵי מִרְעָה לִבְדֹּךְ יְרוּשָׁלַם
 לְמַעַן תּוֹשְׁעִי
 עַד-מָתֵי תִלִּין בְּקִרְבֶּךָ
 מִחֲשָׁבוֹת אוֹנֶךָ:
 טו כִּי קוֹל מִגִּיד מִדָּן
 וּמִשְׁמִיעַ אֶזְנוֹ מִהַר אֶפְרַיִם:

10 Then I said, "Ah, Lord Yahweh, how sadly you deceived this people and Jerusalem when you used to say, "You will have peace," even while the sword is at the throat! 11 At that time, it will be said to this people and to Jerusalem, "A hot wind from the desert heights comes towards the daughter of my people, not to winnow or to cleanse: 12 a wind too strong for that. Now I myself shall pass sentence on them!"

13 "Look, he is advancing like the clouds,
 his chariots like a hurricane,
 his horses swifter than eagles –
 woe to us, for we are ruined!

14 Wash your heart clean of evil, Jerusalem,
 and so be saved.
 How long shall your evil schemes
 lodge within you?

15 For, a voice from Dan shouts the news,
 proclaims disaster from the highlands of Ephraim.

10 It is difficult to tell if the charge here is meant literally as the emotional outburst of the prophet (cf. 15:18) or if it is a figure of speech in which a verb of direct causation is to be understood as permissive (God did not command the prophets to say this but allowed them to do so).

11 The allusion is, of course, to the destructive forces of the enemy armies of Babylon compared above in 4:7 to a destructive lion and here to the destructive desert winds of the Near Eastern sirocco.

12 The literal translation of 'pass sentence on' is 'speak judgements against'.

13 The words 'woe to' are common in funeral laments and at the beginning of oracles of judgment.

14 For the last 2 lines, here following the NRSV, the NJB reads, "How long will you go on harbouring your pernicious thoughts?"

15 'Dan' is on the north frontier of Palestine (Gn 14:14, Jos 19:47, Jg 18:29, and see #Jg 20:1). 'Ephraim' here means the mountainous area between Shechem and Bethel settled by descendants of the tribe of Ephraim son of Joseph (Jos 16:1ff, 17:15, 1S 1:1).

<p>טז הזכירו לגוים הנה השמיעו על-ירושלם נצרים באים מארץ המרחק ויתנו על-ערי יהודה קולם: יז כשמרי שדי היו עליה מסביב כי-אתי מרתה נאם-יהוה: יח דרכך ומעלליך עשו אלה לך זאת רעתך כי מר כי נגע עד-לבך: {פ}</p> <p>יט מעי מעי אוחילה אחולה קירות לבי המה-לי לבי לא אחרש כי קול שופר שמעתי שמעת נפשי תרועת מלחמה: כ שבר על-שבר נקרא כי שדה כל-הארץ פתאם שדדו אהלי רגע יריעת:</p>	<p>16 Report it to the nations, proclaim it to Jerusalem, "Besiegers are coming from a distant country, shouting their war cry against the towns of Judah.</p> <p>17 They surround her like watchmen round a field because she has rebelled against me," says Yahweh.</p> <p>18 "Your own behaviour and actions have brought this on yourself. This is your doom, how painful it is. It has reached your very heart!"</p> <p>19 In the pit of my stomach how great my agony! Walls of my heart! My heart is throbbing! I cannot keep quiet, for I have heard the trumpet call, the battle cry.</p> <p>20 Ruin on ruin is the news: the whole land is laid waste, our tents are suddenly destroyed, our curtains in a moment.</p>
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16 In place of 'besiegers', here following the MT (נצרים) & NRSV, the NJB has the conjectural translation, 'enemies'.

17 Note the irony: the men guarding a field are to stop thieves from getting in; here, the besiegers are guarding the city to stop people leaving.

18 The subject in the last line is the pain of the preceding line, as the verb is masculine; the only other possible antecedent, 'doom', is feminine.

19 The *Kethib*/*Qere* differences here would benefit from explanations.

20 The literal translation of 'our' (3rd & 4th lines) is 'my'.

כא עֲדֹמְתִי אֲרֹאֶה־נֹס
אֲשִׁמְעָה קוֹל שׁוֹפָר: {פ}

כב כִּי | אֲוִיל עַמִּי
אוֹתִי לֹא יִדְעוּ
בְּנִים סְכֵלִים הֵמָּה
וְלֹא נְבוֹנִים הֵמָּה
חֲכָמִים הֵמָּה לַהֲרֹעַ
וְלִהְיֹטִיב לֹא יִדְעוּ:

כג רָאִיתִי אֶת־הָאָרֶץ וְהִנֵּה־תָהוּ וּבָהוּ
וְאֶל־הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֵין אוֹרָם:

כד רָאִיתִי הַהָרִים וְהִנֵּה רֹעֲשִׁים
וְכָל־הַגְּבָעוֹת הַתְּקַלְקְלוּ:

כה רָאִיתִי וְהִנֵּה אֵין הָאָדָם
וְכָל־עוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם נָדְדוּ:

כו רָאִיתִי וְהִנֵּה הַפְּרָמֶל הַמְדַבֵּר
וְכָל־עָרָיו נִתְּצוּ מִפְּנֵי יְהוָה
מִפְּנֵי חֲרוֹן אַפָּי: {ס}

21 How long must I see the standard
and hear the trumpet call?"

22 "For, my people are stupid;
they do not know me,
they are senseless children,
they have no understanding,
they are skilled at doing evil,
but do not know how to do right."

23 "I looked to the earth – it was a formless waste;
to the heavens, and their light had gone.

24 I looked to the mountains – and behold, they were quaking
and the hills rocking to and fro.

25 I looked – and behold, there was no one at all;
the very birds of heaven had all fled.

26 I looked – the fruitful land was a desert,
all its towns in ruins before Yahweh,
before his burning anger.

21 The literal translation of 'trumpet' is 'ram's horn'.

22 Yahweh is the speaker of this verse.

23 In a vision (vv. 23–28), the prophet sees the terrifying results of God's irrevocable judgement (7:16, 15:1–4). As if struck by sudden devastation, the earth has been returned to its primeval state: waste and void (Gn 1:2).

24 The NJB lacks the words 'and behold', translating וְהִנֵּה (as also in v. 25).

25 The literal translation of 'no one at all' is 'no man'.

26 A more literal translation of 'before' (twice in this verse) is 'because of'.

כז כִּי־כֹה אָמַר יְהוָה
שְׁמָמָה תִּהְיֶה כָּל־הָאָרֶץ
וְכֹלָהּ לֹא אֶעֱשֶׂה:

כח עַל־זֹאת תֵּאָבֵל הָאָרֶץ
וְקִדְרוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם מִמֶּעַל
עַל כִּי־דִבַּרְתִּי זַמְתִּי
וְלֹא נִחַמְתִּי וְלֹא־אָשׁוּב מִמְּנָה:

כט מִקּוֹל פָּרֶשׁ וְרִמָּה קָשָׁת
בְּרַחַת כָּל־הָעִיר
בָּאוּ בַּעֲבִים וּבַכַּפִּים עָלוּ
כָּל־הָעִיר עֲזוּבָה
וְאִין־יֹשֵׁב בָּהֶן אִישׁ:

ל וְאֵתִי וְאֵת שְׂדוּד מִה־תַּעֲשִׂי כִּי־תִלְבְּשִׁי שָׁנִי כִּי־
תַעֲדִי עֲדִי־זֹהָב כִּי־תִקְרָעִי בַפּוֹךְ עֵינֶיךָ לְשׂוֹא
תִתִּיפִי מֵאֲסוּבֶךָ עֲגָבִים נִפְשָׁךְ יִבְקָשׁוּ: לא כִּי קוֹל
כְּחֹלֶה שְׁמַעְתִּי צָרָה כְּמִבְכִּיָּה קוֹל בַּת־צִיּוֹן
תִּתִּיפַח תִּפְרָשׁ כַּפֶּיהָ אֲוִי־נָא לִי כִי־עִיפָה נִפְשִׁי
לְהִרְגָּם: {פ}

27 Yes, Yahweh has said this,
“The whole land will be laid waste,
though I will not annihilate it completely.

28 For this, the earth will go into mourning
and the heavens above grow dark.
For I have spoken, I have decided,
I shall not change my mind or go back on it.”

29 At the din of horseman and archer,
the entire city takes to flight:
they plunge into the thickets, they scale the rocks;
every town is abandoned,
not a single person is left there.

30 And you, O desolate one, why do you dress in crimson, deck yourself
with ornaments of gold, enlarge your eyes with paint? But you make
yourself pretty in vain. Your lovers despise you: they seek your life.

31 For, I hear a cry as of a woman in labour, anguish as of one giving
birth to her first child: the cry of Daughter Zion, gasping, hands out-
stretched, “Woe is me! I am dying before these murderers!”

27 For the 3rd line, here following the *NJB*, the *NRSV* has, “yet I will not make a full end.”

28 The ‘earth’ and the ‘heavens’ are personified in the act of mourning and wearing black clothes because of the destruction of the land of Israel.

29 ‘Every town’ follows the *LXX* (*πᾶσα πόλις*); the *MT* repeats ‘the entire city’.

30 The *Kethib*/*Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

31 Like a rejected prostitute (3:2–3), like a woman in the anguish of childbirth, like a victim helpless before her murderer, Jerusalem, ‘*Daughter Zion*’, stretches out her hands in futile appeal and suffers her death throes – alone.

ירמיהו פרק ה

א שׁוֹטְטוּ בַּחוּצוֹת יְרוּשָׁלַם
וּרְאוּ-נָא וּדְעוּ וּבְקִשׁוּ בְּרַחוּבוֹתֶיהָ
אִם-תִּמְצְאוּ אִישׁ
אִם-יֵישׁ עֲשֵׂה מִשְׁפָּט מִבְּקֵשׁ אֱמוּנָה
וְאֶסְלַח לָהּ:
ב וְאִם חִי-יְהוֹה יֹאמְרוּ
לְכֹן לְשָׁקֵר יִשְׁבְּעוּ:
ג יְהוֹה עֵינָיִךָ הֲלוֹא לְאֱמוּנָה
הִפִּיתָה אֶתְּם וְלֹא-חָלוּ
כְּלִיתֶם מֵאֲנֹן קַחַת מוֹסֵר
חִזְקוּ פְּנֵיהֶם מִסֵּלַע
מֵאֲנֹן לְשׁוּב:
ד וְאֲנִי אֶמְרָתִי
אֶדְדֹּלִים הֵם
נֹאֲלוּ כִּי לֹא יִדְעוּ דֶרֶךְ
יְהוֹה מִשְׁפָּט אֱלֹהֵיהֶם:
ה אֶלְכֶּה-לִי אֶל-הַגְּדֹלִים

JEREMIAH 5

- 1 Rove the streets of Jerusalem,
now look and enquire, see in her squares
if you can find an individual,
one individual who does right and seeks the truth,
then I will pardon her.
- 2 Although they say, "As Yahweh lives,"
they are, in fact, swearing a false oath.
- 3 Yahweh, do your eyes not look for truth?
You have struck them; they have felt no anguish.
You have annihilated them, for they ignored the lesson.
They have set their faces harder than rock;
they have refused to repent.
- 4 I thought, "These are only the poor!
They behave stupidly
since they do not know Yahweh's way
or the ruling of their God.
- 5 I shall approach the great men

JEREMIAH 5

- 1 At the end of this verse, the NJB, following the LXX (λέγει κύριος), adds 'Yahweh says'; here, we follow the MT.
- 2 'In fact' follows many Hebrew MSS and the Peshitta (אכן); the MT has 'therefore' (לכן).
- 3 Scholars debate the meaning of the word here translated as 'anguish': the MT (חָלוּ) is pointed as though from a verb meaning 'to writhe in anguish or contrition' but some re-point the text as though from a verb meaning 'to be sick', thus 'to feel pain'.
- 4 For the last line, here following the NJB, NETB reads, "They do not know what their God requires of them."
- 5 In place of 'great men' (here following the NJB), the NRSV has 'rich'.

וּאֲדַבְרָה אֹתָם
כִּי הֵמָּה יִדְעוּ דֶּרֶךְ יְהוָה
מִשְׁפָּט אֱלֹהֵיהֶם
אֲךָ הֵמָּה יַחֲדוּ שִׁבְרוּ עַל
נִתְקוּ מוֹסְרוֹת:
עַל-כֵּן הַכֶּם אֲרִיָּה מִיַּעַר
זֶאֱב עֲרֵבוֹת יִשְׁדָּדִים
נֹמֵר שֶׁקֶד עַל-עֲרִיָּהֶם
כָּל-הַיּוֹצֵא מִהֲנֶה יִטָּרֵף
כִּי רַבּוּ פְּשָׁעֵיהֶם
עֲצָמוּ מִשְׁבוֹתֵיהֶם:
אֵי לִזְאֵת אֶסְלוּחַ אֶסְלַח-לָךְ
בְּנֵיךָ עֲזָבוּנִי
וַיִּשְׁבְּעוּ בְּלֹא אֱלֹהִים
וַאֲשַׁבַּע אֹתָם וַיִּנְאַפוּ
וּבֵית זוֹנָה יִתְגַּדְּדוּ:
סוֹסִים מִיִּזְנִים מְשֻׁכִּים הֵיוּ
אִישׁ אֶל-אִשְׁתֵּי רֵעֵהוּ יִצְהָלוּ:
הַעֲלֵ-אֵלֶּה לֹא-אֶפְקֹד

and speak to them,
for these will know Yahweh's way
and the ruling of their God."
But these, too, have broken the yoke;
they have burst the bonds.

- 6 And so, a lion from the forest will slaughter them,
a wolf from the plains will despoil them,
a leopard will be lurking round their towns:
anyone who goes out will be torn to pieces –
because of their many crimes,
their countless infidelities.
- 7 Why should I pardon you?
Your sons have abandoned me,
to swear by gods that are not gods at all.
I fed them full, and they became adulterers;
they hurried to the brothel.
- 8 They are well fed, roving stallions,
each neighing for his neighbour's wife.
- 9 Shall I fail to punish this,

6 It is unlikely that, in the context of judgment that Jeremiah has previously been describing, literal 'lions' are meant; the animals are metaphorical for their enemies (cf. 4:7).

7 The *Kethib*/*Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

8 The meaning of the words here translated as 'well-fed' and 'roving' (as NJB) are uncertain; the NRSV & NETB have 'lusty' and 'well-fed'.

9 For the 1st line, here following the NJB, the NRSV reads, "Shall I not punish them for these things?"

נֹאֲמֵי־יְהוָה
 וְאִם בְּגוֹי אֲשֶׁר־כָּזָה
 לֹא תִתְנַקֵּם נַפְשֵׁי: {ס}
 י עֲלוּ בְשָׂרוֹתֶיהָ וְשִׁחַתּוּ
 וְכֹלֶה אֶל־תַּעֲשׂוּ
 הַסִּירוּ נְטִישׁוֹתֶיהָ
 כִּי לֹא לַיהוָה הֵמָּה:
 יא כִּי בְגוֹד בְּגָדוֹ בִּי
 בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל וּבֵית יְהוּדָה
 נֹאֲמֵי־יְהוָה:
 יב כָּחֲשׂוּ בַיהוָה
 וַיֹּאמְרוּ לֹא־הוּא
 וְלֹא־תִבּוֹא עָלֵינוּ רָעָה
 וְחָרֵב וְרָעַב לֹא נִרְאָה:
 יג וְהַנְּבִיאִים יְהִיוּ לְרוּחַ
 וְהַדְּבָר אֵין בָּהֶם
 כִּהַּ יַעֲשֶׂה לָהֶם: {ס}

says Yahweh,
 or on such a nation
 to exact vengeance?

- 10 “Scale her vineyards and destroy,
 but do not annihilate her completely!
 Strip off her branches,
 for Yahweh does not own them!
- 11 How treacherously they have treated me,
 the House of Israel and the House of Judah!
 says Yahweh.
- 12 They have denied Yahweh,
 they have said, “He is nothing;
 no evil will overtake us,
 we shall not see sword or famine.
- 13 And the prophets: nothing but wind;
 the word is not in them:
 let those very things happen to them!”

10 The NJB has ‘terraces’ in place of ‘vineyards’, here following the NRSV.

11 ‘House of Israel’ here perhaps denotes the Southern Kingdom (see Ch. 2) and ‘House of Judah’ may be a gloss.

12 The literal translation of ‘he is nothing’ is ‘not he’. This is a denial not of God’s existence but of his intervention (see #Pr 14:1). An alternative interpretation is ‘we want none of him’.

13 There is a wordplay on the word translated ‘wind’ (רוּחַ) which also means ‘spirit’: the prophets spoke by inspiration of the Spirit of Yahweh (cf. e.g., 2Ch 20:14); hence, the prophet was sometimes called ‘the man of the spirit’ (cf. Ho 9:7). The people were claiming that the prophets were speaking lies and hence were full of wind, not the Spirit.

לְכֵן כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי צְבָאוֹת
 יְעַן דִּבַּרְתֶּם אֶת־הַדְּבָר הַזֶּה
 הַנְּגִי נִתְּן דְּבָרִי בְּפִיךָ לְאֵשׁ
 וְהָעָם הַזֶּה יֵעָצִים וְאֶכְלָתֶם:
 הַנְּגִי מְבִיא עֲלֵיכֶם גּוֹי מִמְּרָחֵק
 בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל נֹאֲס־יְהוָה
 גּוֹי | אֵיתָן הוּא גּוֹי מְעוֹלָם הוּא
 גּוֹי לֹא־תִדְעַ לְשׁוֹנוֹ
 וְלֹא תִשְׁמַע מִה־יְדַבֵּר:
 אֲשַׁפְּתוּ כְּקֶבֶר פְּתוּחַ
 כָּלֶם גְּבוּרִים:
 וְאָכְלוּ קִצְיֹרֶךָ וְלַחֲמֶךָ
 יֹאכְלוּ בָנֶיךָ וּבָנוֹתֶיךָ
 יֹאכְלוּ צֹאנֶךָ וּבְקָרֶךָ
 יֹאכְלוּ גִפְנֶךָ וְתַאֲנֶתֶךָ
 יִרְשֵׁשׁ עָרֵי מְבֻצְרֶיךָ
 אֲשֶׁר אַתָּה בֹטָח בְּהִנָּה בְּחָרֶב:

14 Because of this, Yahweh, God Sabaoth says this,
 "Since you have said such things,
 now I shall make my words a fire in your mouth
 and make this people wood for the fire to devour.
 15 Now I shall bring on you a nation from afar,
 House of Israel, says Yahweh,
 an enduring nation, an ancient nation,
 a nation whose language you do not know,
 nor can you grasp what they say.
 16 Their quiver is like a gaping tomb,
 they are all of them fighters.
 17 They will devour your harvest and your food,
 devour your sons and daughters,
 devour your flocks and herds,
 devour your vines and fig trees,
 and demolish your fortified towns
 in which you trust – with the sword!"

י"ח וְגַם בַּיָּמִים הַהֵמָּה נֹאֲס־יְהוָה לֹא־אֲעִשֶׂה אֶתְכֶם
 כְּלָה: י"ט וְהָיָה כִּי תֹאמְרוּ תַחַת מֶה עָשָׂה יְהוָה
 18 "Yet, even in those days, says Yahweh, I shall not annihilate you
 completely. 19 And when you ask, "Why has Yahweh our God done all

14 The NRSV has 'they' in place of 'you' (2nd line).

15 The literal translation of 'says Yahweh' is 'oracle of Yahweh'.

16 The words 'is like', here following the NRSV, do not occur in the MT.

17 It was typical for an army in time of war in the ancient Near East not only to eat up the crops but to destroy the means of further production.

18 Vv. 18-19 form a recurring comment (9:12-14, 16:10-13, 22:8-9) on Jeremiah's customary warnings of total destruction (vv. 16-17, 13:13-14).

19 See also 16:13 for the idea of having to serve other gods in the lands of exile.

אֱלֹהֵינוּ לָנוּ אֶת-כָּל-אֱלֹהִים וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵיהֶם כַּאֲשֶׁר
 עֲזַבְתֶּם אוֹתִי וַתַּעֲבֹדוּ אֱלֹהֵי נֹכַר בְּאֶרֶץכֶּם בְּן
 תַּעֲבֹדוּ זָרִים בְּאֶרֶץ לֹא לָכֶם: {פ}

this to us?" you will give them this answer, "As you abandon me to serve alien gods in your own country, so you must serve strangers in a country not your own."

כ הַגִּידוּ זֹאת בְּבַיִת יַעֲקֹב
 וְהִשְׁמִיעוּהָ בִיהוּדָה לֵאמֹר:
 כא שְׁמַעוּ-נָא זֹאת
 עִם סָכַל וְאֵין לֵב
 עֵינַיִם לָהֶם וְלֹא יִרְאוּ
 אָזְנַיִם לָהֶם וְלֹא יִשְׁמָעוּ:
 כב הַאֲוֹתִי לֹא-תִירָאוּ נְאֻם-יְהוָה
 אִם מִפְּנֵי לֹא תַחֲלוּ
 אֲשֶׁר-שָׁמַתִּי חוֹל גְּבוּל לַיָּם
 חֶק-עוֹלָם וְלֹא
 יַעֲבֹרְנָהוּ וַיִּתְגַּעְשׂוּ וְלֹא
 יוֹכְלוּ וְהִמּוּ גְלוּ וְלֹא יַעֲבֹרְנָהוּ:
 כג וְלַעַם הַזֶּה הִיָּה
 לֵב סוֹרֵר וּמוֹרָה
 סָרוּ וַיִּלְכוּ:

20 "Announce this in the House of Jacob,
 proclaim it in Judah and say:
 21 "Now listen to this,
 stupid, brainless people
 who have eyes and do not see,
 who have ears and do not hear!
 22 Have you no fear of me? Yahweh demands.
 Will you not tremble before me
 who set the sand as boundary to the sea,
 as an everlasting barrier it cannot pass?
 Its waves may toss but not prevail,
 they may roar, but cannot pass beyond it.
 23 But this people
 has a rebellious, unruly heart;
 they have rebelled and gone!

20 The verbs in this section are 2PL: Jeremiah, speaking for Yahweh, addresses his people, calling on them to make the message further known.

21 The literal translation of 'brainless' is 'heartless' (see #Gn 8:21, Ho 7:11).

22 In place of 'everlasting', here following the NJB, the NRSV has 'perpetual' and NETB has 'permanent'. The NJB lacks the final pronoun ('it'), here following the NRSV, and NETB replaces it with 'that boundary'.

23 At the end of this verse, here following the MT & NJB, the NRSV adds 'away' and NETB adds 'their own way'; the LXX has, for the last line, "and they have turned aside and they have departed" (καὶ ἐξέκλιναν καὶ ἀπήλθον).

כד וְלֹא־אָמְרוּ בְּלִבָּם
 נִירָא נָא אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ
 הַנֹּתֵן גֶּשֶׁם וִירֵה יוֹרֵה וּמִלְקוֹשׁ בְּעֵתוֹ
 שְׁבַעַת חֳקוֹת קָצִיר יִשְׁמְרֶלֶנוּ:
 כה עֲוֹנוֹתֵיכֶם הִטּוּ־אֵלֶּה
 וַחֲטָאוֹתֵיכֶם מָנְעוּ הַטּוֹב מִכֶּם:
 כו כִּי־נִמְצְאוּ בְּעַמִּי רָשָׁעִים
 יִשׁוּר כְּשֶׁד יְקוֹשִׁים
 הֶצִּיבוּ מִשְׁחִית אַנְשִׁים יִלְכְּדוּ:
 כז כְּכִלּוּב מְלֵא עוֹף
 כֵּן בְּתֵיהֶם מְלֵאִים מִרְמָה
 עַל־כֵּן גָּדְלוּ וַיַּעֲשִׂירוּ:
 כח שִׁמְנוּ עֲשֵׂתוֹ
 גַּם עָבְרוּ דְבַר־יָרֵעַ
 דִּין לֹא־דָנוּ
 דִּין יְתוֹם וַיִּצְלִיחוּ
 וּמִשְׁפַּט אֲבִיוֹנִים לֹא שִׁפְטוּ:

24 Nor do they say to themselves:
 Now we ought to fear Yahweh our God,
 who gives the rain of autumn and of spring at the right season,
 and reserves us the weeks appointed for harvest.
 25 Your misdeeds have upset all this;
 your sins have deprived you of good.""
 26 "Yes, there are wicked men among my people
 who watch like fowlers on the alert;
 they set traps to catch human beings.
 27 Like a cage full of birds,
 so are their houses full of treachery;
 they have grown rich and powerful because of it.
 28 They are fat, they are sleek;
 in wickedness they go to any lengths:
 they have no respect for rights,
 for orphans' rights, and yet they succeed!
 They have not upheld the cause of the needy.

24 The *Kethib*/*Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

25 The literal translation of 'deprived you of good' is 'withheld the good from you'.

26 In the 1st line, the plural is used for the sake of the context; the *MT* has the singular form. The translation, 'like fowlers on the alert' is uncertain: the verb normally means 'to abase oneself', hence perhaps, 'to bend' or 'to crouch' (on the alert).

27 In place of 'treachery', here following the *NRSV*, the *NJB* has 'loot'; *NETB* has 'the gains of their fraud and deceit', assuming that a figure of speech is being used where the cause is put for the effect.

28 The meaning of the word translated as 'sleek' (עֲשֵׂת) is uncertain; it occurs only here. It may be related to the word translated 'plate' in *Sg* 5:14 and mean 'smooth', 'shiny' or 'fat'; however, since both words only occur once there can be little certainty.

כט הַעֲלֵאֲלֶהָ לֹא־אֶפְקֹד נְאֻם־יְהוָה
 אִם בְּגוֹי אֲשֶׁר־כָּזָה לֹא
 תִּתְנַקֵּם נַפְשֵׁי: {ס}
 ל שָׁמָּה וְשַׁעֲרוֹתָהּ
 נְהִיתָה בְּאֶרֶץ:
 לא הַנְּבִאִים נִבְּאוּ בְּשִׁקָּר
 וְהַכֹּהֲנִים יִרְדּוּ עַל־יְדֵיהֶם
 וְעַמִּי אָהֲבוּ כֵן
 וּמִה־תַּעֲשׂוּ לְאַחֲרֵיתָהּ:

29 Shall I fail to punish this, Yahweh demands,
 or on such a nation
 to exact vengeance?

30 Horrible, disgusting things
 are happening in the land:

31 The prophets prophesy falsely
 and the priests exploit the people,
 and my people love it;
 but, when the end comes, what will you do?

29 The last 2 lines are repeated from 5:9 to give a kind of refrain justifying again the necessity of punishment in the light of such sins.

30 For this verse, here following the NJB, the NRSV reads, "An appalling and horrible thing has happened in the land," and NETB reads, "Something horrible and shocking is going on in the land of Judah."

31 The literal translation of 'exploit the people' is 'take into their hands', with the verb יִרְדּוּ (as used in Jg 14:9) rather than 'govern' for their hands – i.e. for their own advantage.

ירמיהו פרק ו

הָעֶזְרָא בְנֵי בְנֵימִן א
מִקְרֵב יְרוּשָׁלַם
וּבְתִקְוֵעַ תִּקְעוּ שׁוֹפָר
וְעַל־בֵּית הַכֶּרֶם שָׂאוּ מִשָּׂאת
כִּי רָעָה נִשְׁקָפָה מִצָּפוֹן
וְשִׁבְרֵי גְדוֹל:
הַנְּוָה וְהַמְעֻנָּה ב
דְּמִיתִי בַת־צִיּוֹן:
אֲלֵיהָ יָבֹאוּ רֹעִים וְעֹדְרֵיהֶם ג
תִּקְעוּ עָלֶיהָ אֲהֲלִים סָבִיב
רָעוּ אִישׁ אֶת־יָדוֹ:
קִדְשׁוּ עָלֶיהָ מִלְחָמָה ד
קוּמוּ וְנַעֲלֶה בְּצִהָרִים
אֲזִי לָנוּ כִּי־פָנָה הַיּוֹם
כִּי יִנָּטוּ צִלְלֵי־עָרֶב:
קוּמוּ וְנַעֲלֶה בַלַּיְלָה ה
וְנִשְׁחִיתָהּ אַרְמְנוֹתֶיהָ: {פ}

JEREMIAH 6

- 1 Flee in a body, Benjaminites,
right away from Jerusalem!
Sound the trumpet in Tekoa!
Light the beacon on Beth-ha-Cherem!
For disaster lowers from the north,
an immense calamity.
- 2 Beautiful, delicate as she is,
I shall destroy the daughter of Zion!
- 3 Shepherds are advancing on her with their flocks.
They have pitched their tents all round her;
each grazes his part.
- 4 Prepare for holy war was against her!
To arms! We shall attack at noon.
Disaster for us! The light is fading;
the evening shadows lengthen.
- 5 To arms: we shall attack at night
and destroy her palaces.

JEREMIAH 6

- ¹ 'Tekoa', home of the prophet Amos, was 8 Km south of Bethlehem; 'Beth-ha-Cherem' (Ne 3:14) is likely Ramath Rahel, ~5 Km south of Jerusalem.
- ² The NRSV has, "I have likened daughter Zion to the loveliest pasture." There are 2 verbs with these same consonants: 'to be like' and 'to destroy'; further, the word rendered 'beautiful' (נוה) can be taken as a noun meaning 'pasture' or as a defective form of the adjective, 'beautiful' (נְאוּה).
- ³ 'Shepherds with their flocks' is a metaphor for 'kings with their armies' (cf. 1:15, 12:10).
- ⁴ The literal translation of the 1st line (the NRSV lacks 'holy') is, "Sanctify the war against her." (War in those days was considered a sacred duty.)
- ⁵ In place of 'to arms', here following the NJB, the NRSV has 'up' (a more literal translation).

<p>כִּי כֹה אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת כָּרַתוּ עֵצֶיהָ וְשָׁפְכוּ עַל־יְרוּשָׁלַם סִלְלָהָ הִיא הָעִיר הַפְּקֻדָּה כִּלְהָ עֲשֵׂק בְקָרְבָהּ: כְּהֶקִיר בּוֹר בְּיַר מִימֶיהָ כֵּן הִקְרָה רָעֲתָהּ חֲמָס וְשׂוֹד יִשְׁמַע בָּהּ עַל־פְּנֵי תָמִיד חֲלִי וּמַכָּה: הַוֹסְרֵי יְרוּשָׁלַם פֶּן־תִּקַּע נַפְשֵׁי מִמֶּךָ פֶּן־אֲשִׁימֶךָ שְׂמָמָה אַרְץ לֹא נוֹשְׁבָה: {פ}</p> <p>כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת עוֹלָל יְעוֹלְלוּ כַגֶּפֶן שְׂאֲרֵית יִשְׂרָאֵל הַשֵּׁב יָדְךָ כְּבוֹצֵר עַל־סִלְסוּלוֹת:</p>	<p>ו</p> <p>ז</p> <p>ח</p> <p>ט</p>	<p>6 For, thus says Yahweh Sabaoth: “Cut down her trees, throw up an earthwork outside Jerusalem: this is the city to be punished, with nothing but oppression in her.</p> <p>7 As a well keeps its water fresh, so she keeps her wickedness fresh. Violence and ruin are what you hear in her, wounds and blows always forced on my attention.</p> <p>8 Reform, Jerusalem, or I shall abandon you in disgust and reduce you to a desert, a land without people.”</p> <p>9 Thus says Yahweh Sabaoth: “They will glean, glean like a vine what is left of Israel. Like a grape-picker, pass your hand over the branches!”</p>
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⁶ The literal translation of ‘punished’ is ‘visited (by God)’; the meaning of the line is uncertain: there is a masculine verb with a feminine subject in a verbal stem (Hophal) that elsewhere does not have the meaning ‘is to be punished’, so many follow the LXX (‘O city of lies’ – ὦ πόλις ψευδῆς), which presupposes הַשְׁקָר הוּי עִיר הַשְׁקָר instead of הִיא הָעִיר הַפְּקֻדָּה. The Greek is the easier reading in light of the parallelism, and it would be hard to explain how the MT arose from it. Divine visitations might be to rescue (15:15, Ex 3:16, Lk 1:68) or to punish (v. 15, 8:12, 9:24, cf. Is 10:3).

⁷ In place of ‘well’, here following the Qere, (בְּיַר), the Ketiv has ‘cistern’ (בוֹר).

⁸ The literal translation of the 2nd line is ‘lest my soul becomes disgusted with you’.

⁹ Here, as in 8:3, the expression at the end of the 2nd line is not yet technical; it becomes so in 23:3 and 31:7 (there translated ‘remnant’), indicating the faithful Israel, heir to the blessings to come (see #Is 4:3).

<p>עֲלֵמֵי אֲדַבְרָה וְאֶעֱיֹדָה וַיִּשְׁמְעוּ הִנֵּה עֲרֵלָה אָזְנָם וְלֹא יוֹכְלוּ לְהִקְשִׁיב הִנֵּה דְבַר־יְהוָה הִיא לָהֶם לְחִרְפָּה לֹא יַחְפְּצוּ־בּוֹ: וְאֵת חֲמַת יְהוָה מְלֵאתִי נִלְאַתִּי הַכִּיל שִׁפְדָּךְ עַל־עוֹלָל בְּחוּץ וְעַל סוֹד בְּחוּרִים יַחְדָּו כִּי־גַם־אִישׁ עִם־אִשָּׁה יִלְכְּדוּ זָקֵן עִם־מְלֵא יָמִים: וְנִסְבוּ בְּתֵיהֶם לְאַחֲרִים שָׂדוֹת וְנָשִׁים יַחְדָּו כִּי־אֹטָה אֶת־יָדֵי עַל־יֹשְׁבֵי הָאָרֶץ נֹאֵם־יְהוָה: כִּי מִקְטָנָם וְעַד־גְּדוֹלָם כֻּלּוֹ בּוֹצֵעַ בְּצַעַע וּמִנְבִיא וְעַד־כֹּהֵן כֻּלּוֹ עֹשֶׂה שֶׁקֶר:</p>	<p>י</p> <p>יא</p> <p>יב</p> <p>יג</p>	<p>10 To whom should I speak and give warning, for them to hear? Look, their ears are uncircumcised; they cannot listen. Look, for them the word of Yahweh is something to sneer at; they have no taste for it.</p> <p>11 So, I am full of Yahweh's wrath, I am weary of holding it in. Then pour it on the children in the streets, and on the bands of youths as well, for husband and wife will both be taken, the old folk and the very aged.</p> <p>12 Their houses will pass to other men, so will their fields and wives. Yes, I shall stretch my hand over those living in this land, declares Yahweh.</p> <p>13 For, from the least to the greatest, they are all greedy for gain; prophet no less than priest, all of them practise fraud.</p>
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¹⁰ In place of 'uncircumcised' (here following the MT & NJB), the NRSV has 'closed'.

¹¹ For the last line, here following the NRSV, the NJB has, "the greybeard and the man weighed down with years."

¹² The 3rd line involves both anthropomorphism and metonymy, where 'hand' is put for the actions or exertions of the hand.

¹³ For the last line, here following the NJB (NETB has 'deceit' in place of 'fraud'), the NRSV reads, "everyone deals falsely."

וִירְפְּאוּ אֶת־שִׁבְרֵי עַמִּי יד
עַל־נִקְלָה לֵאמֹר שָׁלוֹם | שָׁלוֹם
וְאִין שָׁלוֹם:

הֲבִישׁוּ כִי תוֹעֲבָה עָשׂוּ טו
גַּם־בּוֹשׁ לֹא־יִבוֹשׁוּ
גַּם־הַכְּלִים לֹא יִדְעוּ
לִכֵּן יִפְּלוּ בְּנִפְלִים בְּעַת־פְּקֻדֹתַיִם יִכְּשְׁלוּ
אָמַר יְהוָה: {ס}

כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה עֲמְדוּ עַל־דְּרָכַיִם וּרְאוּ וּשְׂאֲלוּ | טז
לְנִתְבוֹת עוֹלָם אֵיזָה דֶּרֶךְ הַטּוֹב וּלְכוּ־בָּהּ וּמְצְאוּ
מִרְגֻזַּע לְנַפְשֵׁיכֶם וַיֹּאמְרוּ לֹא נִלְדָּ:

וְהִקְמַתִּי עֲלֵיכֶם צְפִים יז
הַקְּשִׁיבוּ לְקוֹל שׁוֹפָר
וַיֹּאמְרוּ לֹא נִקְשִׁיב:

לִכֵּן שָׁמְעוּ הַגּוֹיִם יח
וַיִּדְעִי עֵדָה אֶת־אֲשֶׁר־בָּם:

14 Without concern, they dress my people's wound,
saying, "Peace, peace,"
whereas there is no peace.

15 Are they ashamed of their loathsome deeds? Not they!
They feel no shame, they do not even know how to blush;
and so, as others fall, they too will fall,
will be thrown down when I come and punish them,
says Yahweh.

16 Thus says Yahweh, "Stand at the crossroads and look, ask for the
ancient paths: which was the good way? Take it and you will find rest
for yourselves. But they have said, "We will not take it."

17 "I posted lookouts on your behalf:
listen to the sound of the trumpet!
But they said, "We will not listen."

18 Then hear, you nations,
and know, assembly, what will happen to them!

14 This verse alludes to the lying promises of the false prophets (4:10, 14:13, 23:16–17, 28:8–9) of whom Jeremiah is to make bitter enemies by his forecasts of disaster.

15 The literal translation of the 3rd line is 'they shall fall among the fallen'.

16 The 'ancient paths' sometimes refers to those of their sinful ancestors (Job 22:15) and sometimes those of their faithful ones (cf. 18:15, Ps 139:14).

17 The 'sound of the trumpet' would have been a warning from the 'lookouts'.

18 The last line is difficult: the meaning of the noun of address (עֵדָה - 'assembly', as NJB) is greatly debated, and is often taken as 'congregation' (as NRSV), but the lexicons and commentaries generally question the validity of reading that word since it is nowhere else applied to the nations. Several modern English versions (e.g., NIV & NCV) take it as the feminine singular noun 'witness' (cf. NETB) and understand it as a collective. The end of the line is very elliptical but is generally taken as either, 'what I will do with/to them' on the basis of the following context.

ט שְׁמַעֵי הָאָרֶץ
 הִנֵּה אֲנֹכִי מְבִיא רָעָה אֶל־הָעַם הַזֶּה
 פְּרֵי מַחְשְׁבוֹתֵם
 כִּי עַל־דְּבַרִּי לֹא הִקְשִׁיבוּ
 וְתוֹרָתִי וַיִּמְאַסּוּ־בָהּ:
 כ לְמַה־זֶּה לִּי לְבוֹנָה מִשֶּׁבַּא תָּבוֹא
 וְקִנְיַת הַטּוֹב מֵאֶרֶץ מֶרְחָק
 עֲלוֹתֵיכֶם לֹא לְרָצוֹן
 וְזִבְחֵיכֶם לֹא־עָרְבוּ לִי:
 כא לָכֵן כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה
 הֲנִי נֹתֵן אֶל־הָעַם הַזֶּה מְכַשְׁלִים
 וְכִשְׁלוּ בָם אָבוֹת וּבָנִים יַחְדָּו
 שָׁכַן וְרֵעוּ יֹאבְדוּ וְאַבְדוּ: {פ}
 כב כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה
 הִנֵּה עַם בָּא מֵאֶרֶץ צָפוֹן
 וְגוֹי גָדוֹל יַעֲזֹר מִיִּרְכַּת־אֶרֶץ:
 כג קִשְׁת׃ וְכִידּוֹן יַחְזִיקוּ
 אֲכַזְרֵי הוּא וְלֹא יִרְחָמוּ
 קוֹלָם כַּיַּם יַהֲמָה

19 Listen, earth!
 Watch, I shall bring disaster on this people,
 the fruit of their schemes,
 since they have not listened to my words,
 nor to my Law, but have rejected it.
 20 What do I care about incense imported from Sheba,
 or fragrant cane from a distant country?
 Your burnt offerings are not acceptable;
 your sacrifices do not please me.
 21 So, thus says Yahweh:
 "In front of this people I shall now lay obstacles
 for them to stumble over; father and son alike,
 neighbour and friend will perish."
 22 Thus says Yahweh,
 "Look, a people is coming from the land of the north,
 from the far ends of the earth, a great nation is rising.
 23 They are armed with bow and spear,
 they are cruel and pitiless;
 their noise is like the roaring of the sea;

19 For the 3rd line, here following the MT & NRSV, the NJB reads, "it is the fruit of the way they think."

20 An alternative reading of 'Sheba' is 'Saba' (שְׁבָא) - see #1K 10:1). The finest offerings are no substitute for faithfulness (7:21-23, Am 5:21-24).

21 The Kethib/Qere difference here would benefit from an explanation.

22 NETB translates 'a people' as 'an army'; here, we follow the MT, NJB & NRSV.

23 Jerusalem is personified as a young maiden helpless before enemy attackers.

וְעַל־סוּסִים יִרְכָּבוּ
עָרוּךְ כְּאִישׁ לְמִלְחָמָה
עָלֶיךָ בַת־צִיּוֹן:
כד שָׁמַעְנוּ אֶת־שִׁמְעוֹ
רָפוּ יָדֵינוּ
צָרָה הַחֲזֹקְתָנוּ
חֵיל כִּיּוֹלְדָה:
כה אֲל־תֵּצְאוּ תִצְאֵי הַשָּׂדֶה
וּבַדֶּרֶךְ אֲל־תֵּלְכוּ תִלְכֵי
כִּי חָרֵב לְאֵיב
מִגּוֹר מִסָּבִיב:
כו בַּת־עַמִּי חֲגִר־שָׁק
וְהִתְפַּלְשִׁי בְּאֶפֶר
אֲבֵל יַחִיד עֲשֵׂי לָךְ
מִסִּפְדַּת תְּמֻרֹתִים
כִּי פִתְאֹם
יָבֹא הַשֹּׁדֵד עָלֵינוּ:
כז בַּחֹזֶן נִתְתִּיךָ בְּעַמִּי מְבַצֵּר
וְתִדַּע וּבַחֲנֻת אֶת־דַּרְכָּם:

they are riding horses,
they are ready to fight against you as one man,
against you, Daughter Zion.

24 We have heard the news,
our hands fall limp,
and anguish has gripped us,
pain as of a woman in labour.

25 Do not go out into the countryside;
do not venture into the roads,
for the enemy's sword is there,
terror on every side.

26 Put on sackcloth, daughter of my people,
roll in ashes;
mourn as for an only son,
a very bitter dirge.
For, on us suddenly
the destroyer is coming.

27 "I have appointed you as tester and a refiner of my people,
to learn and to test how they behave.

24 The idiom of hands falling limp is used figuratively for losing heart or energy; the best example of this figurative use is in Ezk 21:12, where it appears in the context of the heart (courage) melting, the spirit sinking, and the knees becoming like water.

25 The *Kethib*/*Qere* differences here would benefit from explanations.

26 In place of 'daughter of my people', here following the *MT* & *NJB*, the *NRSV* has 'my poor people' and *NETB* has 'my dear people'.

27 The *NJB* lacks 'refiner' (here following the *NRSV*); the word used (בַּחֲזֹן) is the same as in 1:18 and can also be translated as 'fortress'.

כח כָּלֶם סָרִי סוֹרְרִים
 הַלְכֵי רָכִיל נְחֹשֶׁת וּבְרֹזָל
 כָּלֶם מְשַׁחֲתִים הֵמָּה:
 כט נָחַר מִפֶּחַ מֵאֲשֶׁתָם [מֵאֵשׁ תָּם] עִפְרַת
 לְשׂוֹא צָרָף צְרוּף
 וְרַעִים לֹא נִתְקַוּוּ:
 ל כֶּסֶף נִמְאָס קִרְאוּ לָהֶם
 כִּי־מֵאֵס יְהוָה בָּהֶם: {פ}

28 All of them are total rebels, peddlers of slander,
 hard as bronze and iron,
 and all agents of corruption.
 29 The bellows blast away, the fire burns away the lead.
 In vain, the smelter does his work,
 for the dross is not purged out.
 30 Men call them, "rejected silver,"
 and indeed Yahweh has rejected them!"

28 The literal translation of the 2nd line is '(they are) bronze and iron'.
 29 The simile of the latter part of the 1st line is drawn from the refining of metals, here specifically the treatment of silver ore, from which the silver and lead have to be extracted separately. When Israel is put in the melting pot, however, no pure metal emerges. The *Kethib/Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.
 30 The same word (מֵאֵס) is used here for 'rejected' in both lines.

ירמיהו פרק ז

א הדבר אשר היה אל־ירמיהו מאת יהוה לאמר:
ב עמד בשער בית יהוה וקראת שם את־הדבר
הזה ואמרת שמעו דבר־יהוה כל־יהודה הבאים
בשערים האלה להשתחוות ליהוה: {ס}
ג כה־אמר יהוה צבאות אלהי ישראל היטיבו
דרכיכם ומעלליכם ואשכנח אתכם במקום הזה:
ד אל־תבטחו לכם אל־דברי השקר לאמר היכל
יהוה היכל יהוה היכל יהוה המה: ה כי אם־היטיב
תיטיבו את־דרכיכם ואת־מעלליכם אם־עשו
תעשו משפט בין איש ובין רעהו: ו גר יתום
ואלמנה לא תעשקו ודם נקי אל־תשפכו במקום
הזה ואחרי אלהים אחרים לא תלכו לרע לכם:
ז ושפנתי אתכם במקום הזה בארץ אשר נתתי
לאבותיכם למן־עולם ועד־עולם: ח הנה אתם
בטחים לכם על־דברי השקר לבלתי הועיל:

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¹ The word that came to Jeremiah from Yahweh, saying, ² “Stand at the gate of the Temple of Yahweh and there proclaim this message. Say, “Listen to the word of Yahweh, all you of Judah who come in by these gates to worship Yahweh.
³ “Yahweh Sabaoth, the God of Israel, says this: Amend your behaviour and your actions and I will let you dwell in this place. ⁴ Do not put your faith in delusive words, such as, “This is the sanctuary of Yahweh, the sanctuary of Yahweh, the sanctuary of Yahweh! ⁵ No! But, if you thoroughly amend your behaviour and your actions, if you thoroughly execute justice between a man and his neighbour, ⁶ if you do not exploit the stranger, the fatherless and the widow, if you do not shed innocent blood in this place, and if you do not follow other gods, which will only bring about your own ruin, ⁷ then I shall allow you dwell in this place, in the country I gave forever to your fathers of old. ⁸ But just look at you, putting your faith in delusive, worthless words! ⁹ Steal, would you,

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- ¹ For this verse, here following the MT & NJB, NETB has simply, “The LORD said to Jeremiah.”
- ² The last sentence refers to those who have passed through the gates of the outer court and are standing in the courtyard of the Temple.
- ³ The NRSV ends this verse with, “... and let me dwell with you in this place.”
- ⁴ In place of ‘this is’, the MT has ‘they are’.
- ⁵ In the phrases ‘thoroughly amend’ and ‘thoroughly execute’, the infinitive absolute precedes the finite verb for emphasis.
- ⁶ In place of ‘which will bring about’, here following NETB, the MT, NJB & NRSV have simple ‘to’.
- ⁷ The NRSV has ‘I will dwell with you’ in place of ‘I shall let you stay’, here following the NJB.
- ⁸ The literal translation of ‘but just look at you’ (הִנֵּה) is ‘behold, you are’.
- ⁹ In place of ‘make offerings’, here following the NRSV, the NJB has ‘burn incense’.

^ט הַגָּנוּב | רָצַח וְנָאֵף וְהִשָּׁבַע לְשִׁקָּר וְקָטַר לְבַעַל
וְהִלְךְ אַחֲרֵי אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים אֲשֶׁר לֹא יִדְעֶתֶם:
' וּבֵאתֶם וְעַמְדַתֶם לִפְנֵי בַּיִת הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר נִקְרָא-
שְׁמִי עָלָיו וְאַמַּרְתֶּם נִצַּלְנוּ לְמַעַן עֲשׂוֹת אֵת כָּל-
הַתּוֹעֵבוֹת הָאֵלֶּה: ' ^{יא} הַמַּעֲרַת פְּרָצִים הִיא הַבַּיִת
הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר-נִקְרָא שְׁמִי עָלָיו בְּעֵינֵיכֶם גַּם אֲנֹכִי הֵנָּה
רְאִיתִי נְאֻם-יְהוָה: ' ^{יב} כִּי לְכוּנָא אֶל-מְקוֹמִי אֲשֶׁר
בְּשִׁילֹו אֲשֶׁר שִׁכַּנְתִּי שְׁמִי שָׁם בְּרֵאשׁוֹנָה וְרָאוּ אֵת
אֲשֶׁר-עָשִׂיתִי לוֹ מִפְּנֵי רַעַת עַמִּי יִשְׂרָאֵל: ' ^{יג} וְעַתָּה
יַעַן עֲשׂוֹתְכֶם אֶת-כָּל-הַמַּעֲשִׂים הָאֵלֶּה נְאֻם-יְהוָה
וְאִדְבַּר אֵלֵיכֶם הַשֶּׁכֶם וְדַבַּר וְלֹא שָׁמַעְתֶּם וְאַקְרָא
אֶתְכֶם וְלֹא עֲנִיתֶם: ' ^{יד} וְעָשִׂיתִי לְבַיִת | אֲשֶׁר נִקְרָא-
שְׁמִי עָלָיו אֲשֶׁר אַתֶּם בִּטְחִים בּוֹ וְלִמְקוֹם אֲשֶׁר-
נָתַתִּי לָכֶם וְלֵאבוֹתֵיכֶם כַּאֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתִי לְשִׁלֹו:
^{טו} וְהִשְׁלַכְתִּי אֶתְכֶם מֵעַל פָּנָי כַּאֲשֶׁר הִשְׁלַכְתִּי אֶת-
כָּל-אֲחֵיכֶם אֵת כָּל-זֶרַע אֶפְרַיִם: {פ}

^{טז} וְאַתָּה אֶל-תִּתְפַּלֵּל בְּעַד-הָעָם הַזֶּה וְאַל-תִּשָּׂא
בְּעַדָם רִנָּה וּתְפִלָּה וְאַל-תִּפְגַּע-בִּי כִּי-אֵינֹנִי שֹׁמֵעַ

murder, and commit adultery, and perjure yourselves, and make offerings to Baal, and follow other gods of whom you know nothing? ¹⁰ And then you come and stand before me in this Temple, which is called by my name, saying: Now we are safe to go on doing all these loathsome things! ¹¹ Do you look on this Temple, which is called by my name, as a den of bandits? I, at any rate, can see what you have done, declares Yahweh. ¹² Now, go to the place that used to be mine at Shiloh, where I gave my name a home at first, and see what I have done to it because of the wickedness of my people Israel! ¹³ And now, because you have done all these things, says Yahweh, and refused to listen when I spoke so urgently, so persistently, and when I called you, you did not answer, ¹⁴ therefore I shall treat this Temple, which is called by my name, and in which you put your heart, and the place that I gave to you and your fathers, just as I have treated Shiloh, ¹⁵ and I shall drive you out of my sight, just as I drove out all your kinsfolk, even the whole seed of Ephraim." ¹⁶ "You, for your part, must not intercede for this people, or raise either plea or prayer on their behalf; and do not plead with me, for I will not

¹⁰ The literal translation of 'which is called by my name' is 'over which my name is called' (as also in v. 11).

¹¹ Jesus quotes part of this verse in Mt 21:13.

¹² The Philistines had destroyed the shrine at Shiloh (circa 1050 BCE), although it was once the residence of the Ark (1S 4–6).

¹³ 'Spoke so urgently, so persistently' reflects a Hebrew idiom that occurs a number of times in the Book of Jeremiah (e.g. 7:25, 11:7, 25:3–4, 26:5).

¹⁴ This verse translates literally as, "I will do to this house which I ... in which you put ... and to this place which ... as I did to Shiloh."

¹⁵ Here, 'Ephraim' stands for all the northern tribes of Israel (as it often does). The NJB has 'race' in place of 'seed'.

¹⁶ God forbids Jeremiah to exercise a function of prophetic office: intercession (7:16, 11:14, 15:1, cf. Am 7:2–5).

אֲתֶדָּ: יי האִינֶדָּ רֵאָה מָה הֵמָּה עֹשִׂים בְּעָרֵי יְהוּדָה
 וּבַחֲצוֹת יְרוּשָׁלַם: יי הַבָּנִים מְלַקְטִים עֵצִים
 וְהָאֲבוֹת מְבַעְרִים אֶת־הָאֵשׁ וְהַנְּשִׂים לְשׁוֹת בַּצֶּק
 לַעֲשׂוֹת כְּוָנִים לְמַלְכַת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְהַסֶּדֶךְ נֹסְכִים
 לְאֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים לְמַעַן הַכְּעִסְנִי: יט הֲאֵתִי הֵם
 מְכַעְסִים נְאֻם־יְהוָה הֲלוֹא אַתֶּם לְמַעַן בָּשַׂת
 פְּנֵיהֶם: כ לֵכֵן כֹּה־אָמַר | אֲדַנִּי יְהוָה הִנֵּה אֲפִי
 וְחַמְתִּי נִתְּכַת אֶל־הַמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה עַל־הָאָדָם וְעַל־
 הַבְּהֵמָה וְעַל־עֵץ הַשָּׂדֶה וְעַל־פְּרֵי הָאֲדָמָה וּבַעֲרָה
 וְלֹא תִכְבֶּה: {פ}

כא כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל עֲלוֹתֵיכֶם
 סָפוּ עַל־זִבְחֵיכֶם וְאָכְלוּ בִשָּׂר: כב כִּי לֹא־דִבַּרְתִּי
 אֶת־אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם וְלֹא צִוִּיתִים בַּיּוֹם הוֹצִיא הוֹצִיא
 אוֹתָם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם עַל־דְּבָרֵי עוֹלָה וּזְבַח: כג כִּי

listen to you. ¹⁷ Can you not see what they are doing in the towns of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem? ¹⁸ The children collect the wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead the dough, to make cakes for the Queen of Heaven; and, in order to provoke me to anger, they pour out libations to alien gods. ¹⁹ Is it really me they provoke, Yahweh demands; or is it not, in fact, themselves, to their own confusion? ²⁰ Therefore, Lord Yahweh says this, “My anger and my wrath, will be poured down on this place, on man and beast, on the trees of the countryside and the fruits of the soil; it will burn, and not be quenched.”

²¹ “Yahweh Sabaoth, the God of Israel, says this, “Add your high-offerings to your sacrifices and eat all the meat. ²² For, on the day that I brought your ancestors out of Egypt, I said nothing to them, gave them no orders, about burnt offerings or sacrifices. ²³ The one command I gave

¹⁷ This verse is a rhetorical question and expects a positive answer.

¹⁸ The ‘Queen of Heaven’ refers to Ishtar (Astarte), goddess of fertility in the Mesopotamian pantheon; she was identified with the planet Venus. The pointed form of the word ‘queen’ is unusual (מְלַכַת instead of מְלִכַת) and found only in Jeremiah (cf. 44:17–25); it is as though the Masoretes wanted to read ‘hosts of heaven’, as do several Hebrew MSS, and an understanding the LXX reflects here (στρατιῶν τοῦ οὐρανοῦ). The other ancient and modern versions generally, however, accept it as a biform for the word ‘queen’.

¹⁹ In place of ‘confusion’, here following the NJB, the NRSV has ‘hurt’ and NETB has ‘shame’.

²⁰ Some see ‘this place’ as a reference to the Temple, but the context has been talking about what goes on in the towns of Judah and Jerusalem and the words that follow, meant as a further explanation, are applied to the whole land.

²¹ All the ‘high-offering’ was to be consumed on the altar (Lv 1:6–9); the meat of the other sacrifices could be eaten by the priest who offered the sacrifice and the person who brought it (Lv 7:16–18, 32). Here, God is rejecting the very ‘holy’ aspect of that high-offering.

²² The Kethib/Qere difference here would benefit from an explanation.

²³ Some modern commentators cite this passage as evidence for the lateness of the Pentateuch’s instruction regarding sacrifice.

אִם־אֶת־הַדְּבָר הַזֶּה צִוִּיתִי אֹתָם לֵאמֹר שְׁמְעוּ
 בְּקוֹלִי וְהִיִּיתִי לָכֶם לֵאלֹהִים וְאַתֶּם תִּהְיוּ־לִי לְעַם
 וְהִלַּכְתֶּם בְּכָל־הַדְּרָךְ אֲשֶׁר אֲצַוֶּה אֶתְכֶם לְמַעַן
 יֵיטֵב לָכֶם: ^{כד} וְלֹא שָׁמְעוּ וְלֹא־הָטוּ אֶת־אָזְנָם וַיִּלְכוּ
 בְּמַעֲצוֹת בְּשִׁרְרוֹת לִבָּם הִרְעוּ וַיִּהְיוּ לְאַחֲזֹר וְלֹא
 לְפָנַי: ^{כה} לְמֶזֶם־הַיּוֹם אֲשֶׁר יֵצְאוּ אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם מֵאֶרֶץ
 מִצְרַיִם עַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה וְאֲשַׁלַּח אֲלֵיכֶם אֶת־כָּל־
 עַבְדֵי הַנְּבִיאִים יוֹם הַשָּׁבָע וְשַׁלַּח: ^{כו} וְלֹא שָׁמְעוּ
 אֵלַי וְלֹא הָטוּ אֶת־אָזְנָם וַיִּקְשׁוּ אֶת־עַרְפֹּם הִרְעוּ
 מֵאֲבוֹתָם: ^{כז} וְדַבַּרְתָּ אֲלֵיהֶם אֶת־כָּל־הַדְּבָרִים
 הָאֵלֶּה וְלֹא יִשְׁמְעוּ אֵלַיךְ וְקִרְאתָ אֲלֵיהֶם וְלֹא
 יַעֲנוּכָה: ^{כח} וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵיהֶם זֶה הַגּוֹי אֲשֶׁר לֹא־
 שָׁמְעוּ בְּקוֹל יְהוָה אֱלֹהָיו וְלֹא לָקְחוּ מוֹסֵר אֲבָדָה
 הָאֱמוּנָה וְנִכְרַתָּה מִפִּיהֶם: {ס}

^{כט} גְּזִי נִזְרָךְ וְהַשְׁלִיכִי
 וּשְׂאֵי עַל־שָׁפִים קִינָה
 כִּי מָאֵס יְהוָה
 וַיִּטֵּשׁ אֶת־דָּוָר עֲבָרְתוֹ:

them was this: Listen to my voice, then I will be your God and you shall be my people. In everything, follow the way that I mark out for you, and you shall prosper. ²⁴ Yet, they did not listen, they did not pay attention; they followed their own devices, their own stubborn and wicked inclinations, and looked backwards rather than forwards. ²⁵ From the day that your ancestors left Egypt until this day, I have sent you all my servants the prophets, persistently sending them day after day. ²⁶ Yet, they have not listened to me, have not paid attention; they have deliberately resisted, behaving worse than their ancestors. ²⁷ Therefore, you will tell them all this, but they will not listen to you; you will call them, but they will not answer you.” ²⁸ Then you are to say to them, “This is the nation that will neither listen to the voice of Yahweh its God nor take correction. Sincerity is no more; it has vanished from their mouths.

²⁹ Cut off your tresses, throw them away!
 On the bare heights, raise a dirge;
 for, Yahweh has rejected, has abandoned,
 a brood that enrages him!”

²⁴ In place of ‘looked backwards rather than forwards’, here following the MT & NRSV, the NJB has ‘got worse rather than better’.
²⁵ ‘Day after day’ follows the Peshitta; the MT has just ‘day’; either יוֹם has dropped out by haplography, or a מ has been omitted from יוֹמָם (‘daily’).
²⁶ The literal translation of ‘deliberately resisted’ is ‘stiffened their necks’.
²⁷ NETB ends this verse, here following the NJB, with, “you will call to them but they will not respond to you.”
²⁸ Alternative readings for ‘sincerity’ (here following the NJB) are ‘truth’ (as NRSV) and ‘faithfulness’ (as NETB).
²⁹ Cutting one’s hair was traditional sign of mourning (16:5, Mi 1:16, Job 1:20).

ל כִּי־עָשׂוּ בְנֵי־יְהוּדָה הָרַע בְּעֵינַי נְאֻם־יְהוָה שְׁמוֹ
 שְׁקוּצֵיהֶם בְּבֵית אֲשֶׁר־נִקְרָא שְׁמִי עָלָיו לְטִמְאָו:
 לֹא וּבָנוּ בְּמֹת הַתֶּפֶת אֲשֶׁר בְּגֵיא בֶן־הֶנֶם לְשָׂרְף
 אֶת־בְּנֵיהֶם וְאֶת־בָּנֹתֵיהֶם בְּאֵשׁ אֲשֶׁר לֹא צִוִּיתִי
 וְלֹא עָלְתָה עַל־לִבִּי: {פ}

לִב לָכֵן הִנֵּה־יָמִים בָּאִים נְאֻם־יְהוָה וְלֹא־יֵאמַר עוֹד
 הַתֶּפֶת וְגֵיא בֶן־הֶנֶם כִּי אִם־גֵּיא הַהֲרָגָה וְקִבְרוֹ
 בַּתֶּפֶת מֵאִין מְקוֹם: לִב וְהִיתָה נִבְלַת הָעַם הַזֶּה
 לְמֵאֲכָל לְעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וּלְבֵהֶמַת הָאָרֶץ וְאִין
 מִחֲרִיד: לִד וְהִשְׁבַּתִּי מֵעָרֵי יְהוּדָה וּמִחֲצוֹת
 יְרוּשָׁלַם קוֹל שִׁשׁוֹן וְקוֹל שְׂמִחָה קוֹל חֲתָן וְקוֹל
 כְּלָה כִּי לְחָרְבָה תִּהְיֶה הָאָרֶץ:

³⁰ “Yes, the people of Judah have done what displeases me, says Yahweh. They have set up their Horrors in the Temple that bears my name, to defile it, ³¹ and have built the high places of Topheth in the Valley of Ben-Hinnom, to burn their sons and daughters: a thing I never ordered, that had never entered my thoughts.

³² “Thus, the days are coming, says Yahweh, when people will no longer say Topheth or Valley of Ben-Hinnom but Valley of Slaughter, and they will bury in Topheth until there is no more room. ³³ The corpses of this people will be food for the birds of the sky and the beasts of earth, and none shall drive them off. ³⁴ I shall silence the sound of rejoicing and mirth and the voice of the bride and bridegroom, in the towns of Judah and the streets of Jerusalem; for, the land will be reduced to desert.”

³⁰ The ‘Horrors’ are the false gods, as before. On ‘Topheth’ (‘the Incinerator’), where children were sacrificed in honour of Molech (32:35), see #Lv 18:21 & #Is 30:33, and cf. 2K 21:3, 5, 7, 23:4, 6, Ezk 8:3, 5, 10–12, 16. Josiah had purged the temple of these pagan elements but it is obvious from both Jeremiah and Ezekiel that they had been replaced shortly after Josiah’s death (see also 19:5, 32:34–35).

³¹ In place of ‘high places’ (here following the MT and NJB), the NRSV, following the LXX (τὸν βωμὸν) and Tg, has ‘high place’. The most gruesome of Israel’s aberrations was the sacrifice of children (19:5, 32:35) on the burning platform; strictly forbidden by God (Lv 18:21), it will eventually be recognised as murder.

³² The literal translation of ‘until there is no more room’ is ‘so that there is not room’; the NJB translates the end of this verse, here following the NRSV, with, “Topheth will become a burial ground, for lack of other space.”

³³ The prospect of corpses as carrion was frightful.

³⁴ In place of ‘voice’, here following the NRSV (the NJB has ‘voices’), NETB has ‘glad celebrations’.

ירמיהו פרק ח

בָּעֵת הַהִיא נֹאֲם־יְהוָה וַיֵּצֵאוּ יוֹצִיאוּ אֶת־עַצְמוֹת
מַלְכֵי־יְהוּדָה וְאֶת־עַצְמוֹת־שָׂרָיו וְאֶת־עַצְמוֹת
הַכֹּהֲנִים וְאֶת־עַצְמוֹת הַנְּבִיאִים וְאֶת־עַצְמוֹת
יֹשְׁבֵי־יְרוּשָׁלַם מִקְבְּרֵיהֶם: ^ב וְשִׁטְחוּם לְשֶׁמֶשׁ
וְלִירֵחַ וּלְכָל צְבֹא הַשָּׁמַיִם אֲשֶׁר אֶהְבֹּם וְאֲשֶׁר
עֲבָדוּם וְאֲשֶׁר הִלְכוּ אַחֲרֵיהֶם וְאֲשֶׁר דָּרְשׁוּם וְאֲשֶׁר
הִשְׁתַּחֲוּוּ לָהֶם לֹא יֵאָסְפוּ וְלֹא יִקְבְּרוּ לְדָמֵן עַל־פְּנֵי
הָאֲדָמָה יְהִיוּ: ^ג וְנִבְחַר מוֹת מַחֲיִים לְכָל הַשְּׂאֲרִית
הַנְּשָׂאָרִים מִן־הַמְּשֻׁפָּחָה הַרְעָה הַזֹּאת בְּכָל־
הַמְּקוֹמוֹת הַנְּשָׂאָרִים אֲשֶׁר הִדְחַתִּים שָׁם נֹאֲם יְהוָה
צְבָאוֹת: {ס}

^ד וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵיהֶם כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה
הִיפְלוּ וְלֹא יִקּוּמוּ
אִם־יָשׁוּב וְלֹא יָשׁוּב:
^ה מִדּוּעַ שׁוֹבְבָה הָעַם הַזֶּה

JEREMIAH 8

¹ “When that time comes, says Yahweh, the bones of the kings of Judah, and the bones of its chief men, and the bones of the priests, and the bones of the prophets, and the bones of all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, shall be brought out of their tombs; ² and they shall be spread out before the sun and the moon and the whole array of heaven, which they have loved and served, and which they have followed, and which they have inquired of, and which they have worshiped. They will not be gathered nor be reburied but left lying on the surface of the ground like dung. ³ Death shall be preferred to life by all the remnant that remains of this evil family in all the places where I have driven them, says Yahweh Sabaoth.

- ⁴ “You are to tell them, “Yahweh says this:
If someone falls, can he not stand up again?
If people stray, can they not turn back?
⁵ Why does this people persist in acts of infidelity,

JEREMIAH 8

- ¹ Here, Jeremiah uses biting irony. The *Kethib*/*Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.
² In place of ‘the sun and the moon and the whole array of heaven’, here following the MT and 4QJer^a, 4QJer^c has ‘the sun and the stars’; the LXX combines the 2 forms, reading ‘to the sun and the moon and to all the stars, and to all the host of heaven’ (πρὸς τὸν ἥλιον καὶ τὴν σελήνην καὶ πρὸς πάντα τοὺς ἀστέρας καὶ πρὸς πᾶσαν τὴν στρατιὰν τοῦ οὐρανοῦ).
³ The translation follows the MT & NRSV (reading the seemingly repetitive use of הַשְּׂאֲרִית & הַנְּשָׂאָרִים); the NJB reads, “Death will seem preferable to life to all the survivors of this wicked race, wherever I have driven them,” following the LXX & Peshitta, and assuming the repetition is an error.
⁴ This section (8:4–10:25) is a collection of prophecies delivered early in the reign of Jehoiakim, about 605 BCE.
⁵ The text of the 1st 2 lines is often emended, changing שׁוֹבְבָה הָעַם to שׁוֹבֵב הָעַם and omitting יְרוּשָׁלַם (‘Jerusalem’); this is due to the anomaly of

יְרוּשָׁלַם מְשִׁבָּה נִצְחָת
 הַחֲזִיקוּ בְּתִרְמָת
 מֵאַנּוּ לָשׁוּב:
 הַקְּשִׁבְתִּי וְאַשְׁמַע ^ו
 לֹא־כֵן יִדְבְּרוּ
 אִין אִישׁ נָחַם עַל־רַעְתּוֹ
 לֵאמֹר מָה עָשִׂיתִי
 כֹּלֵה שָׁב בַּמְרֻצוֹתֶם בְּמִרוּצְתֶם
 כְּסוֹס שׁוֹטֵף בַּמִּלְחָמָה:
 גַּם־חֲסִידָה בַּשָּׁמַיִם ^ז
 יִדְעָה מוֹעֲדֶיהָ
 וְתֹר וְסוֹס וְסִיס וְעִגְלוֹר
 שָׁמְרוּ אֶת־עֵת בְּאַנְהָ
 וְעַמִּי לֹא יִדְעוּ
 אֶת מִשְׁפַּט יְהוָה:
 אֵיכָה תֹאמְרוּ חֲכָמִים אֲנַחְנוּ ^ח
 וְתוֹרַת יְהוָה אֲתַנּוּ

why does Jerusalem persist in continuous infidelity?

They cling to illusion;
they refuse to turn back.

6 I have listened attentively:
they have never said anything like that.
No one repents of wickedness,
saying: What have I done?
Each one keeps returning to the course
like a horse charging into battle.

7 Even the stork in the sky
knows the appropriate season;
turtledove, swallow and crane
observe their time of migration,
but my people do not know
the Law of Yahweh!"

8 How can you say, "We are wise,
since we have Yahweh's Law?"

a feminine verb with a masculine subject and the fact that the word 'Jerusalem' is absent from 1 *Hebrew MS* and the *LXX*. However, it is possible that this is a case where the noun 'Jerusalem' is a defining apposition to the word 'this people', in which case the verb could be attracted to the appositional noun and there would be no reason to emend the text. The *NRSV* follows the *LXX*, reading "Why then has this people turned away in perpetual backsliding?" However, the translation here, following the *MT* & *NJB*, is the harder reading and is to be preferred.

6 The *Kethib/Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

7 There is debate about the identification of some of these birds but their identity makes little difference to the point being made. The *Kethib/Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

8 The 'scribes' here are the priests, guardians of the tradition preserved in the texts.

אֲכֹן הִנֵּה לַשִּׁקָּר עָשָׂה עָט שִׁקָּר סִפְרִים: הִבְשׂוּ חֲכָמִים ט חַתּוּ וַיִּלְבְּדוּ הִנֵּה בְדַבְרֵי־יְהוָה מֵאָסוּ וְחֲכָמַת מֶה לָּהֶם: לָכֵן אֶתֶּן אֶת־נְשֵׂיהֶם לְאַחֲרִים י שְׂדוֹתֵיהֶם לְיֹזְרָשִׁים כִּי מִקְטָן וְעַד־גָּדוֹל כֻּלָּהּ בִצְעַע בִצְעַע מִנְבִיא וְעַד־כֹּהֵן כֻּלָּהּ עָשָׂה שִׁקָּר: וַיִּרְפוּ אֶת־שִׁבְרֵי בַת־עַמִּי יא עַל־נַקְלָה לְאֹמֶר שָׁלוֹם שָׁלוֹם וְאִין שָׁלוֹם: הִבְשׂוּ כִי תוֹעֵבָה עָשׂוּ יב גַּם־בּוֹשׁ לֹא־יִבְשׂוּ וְהַכֹּלָם לֹא יִדְעוּ	<p>Look how it has been falsified by the lying pen of the scribes!</p> <p>9 The wise are put to shame, alarmed, caught out, because they have rejected Yahweh's word. What price their wisdom now?</p> <p>10 So, I shall give their wives to other men, their fields to new masters; for, from the least to the greatest, they are all greedy for gain; prophet no less than priest, all of them practise fraud.</p> <p>11 Without concern, they dress the wound of the daughter of my people, saying, "Peace, peace," but there is no peace.</p> <p>12 They acted shamefully, they committed abomination; yet they are not at all ashamed, they do not know how to blush. So, as others fall, they too will fall,</p>
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9 The 'word' presumably means the teaching of the prophets and the law, in oral form and perhaps, in part, committed to writing. For the 2nd line, NETB reads, "They will be dumbfounded and be brought to judgment."

10 Vv. 10-12, duplicating 6:12-15, are not present in the LXX.

11 For the last 2 lines, NETB reads, "'Everything will be all right!' But everything is not all right!"

12 The literal translation of the 3rd line is, "So, they shall fall among the fallen."

לָכֵן יִפְּלוּ בַּנְּפִלִים בְּעֵת פְּקֻדָּתָם יִכָּשְׁלוּ
אָמַר יְהוָה: {פ}

אֶסֶף אֲסִיפֶם נְאֻם־יְהוָה יג
אִין עֲנָבִים בַּגֶּפֶן וְאִין תְּאֵנִים בַּתְּאֵנָה
וְהָעֵלֶה נָבֵל וְאַתָּן לָהֶם יַעֲבְרוּם:
עַל־מָה יד

אֲנַחְנוּ יוֹשְׁבִים
הָאָסָפוּ וְנִבּוֹא אֶל־עָרֵי הַמְּבֻצָּר
וְנִדְמָה־שָׁם
כִּי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ
הִדְמָנוּ וַיִּשְׁקֵנוּ מִי־רֹאשׁ
כִּי חָטְאנוּ לַיהוָה:

קוֹה לְשָׁלוֹם וְאִין טוֹב טו
לְעֵת מְרֻפָּה וְהִנֵּה בְּעַתָּה:

מִדָּן נִשְׁמַע נַחֲרַת סוּסָיו טז
מִקּוֹל מְצַהֲלֹת אַבְיָרָיו
רַעְשָׁה כָּל־הָאָרֶץ
וַיִּבּוֹאוּ וַיֹּאכְלוּ אֶרֶץ וּמְלוֹאָהּ
עִיר וַיֹּשְׁבֵי בָהּ: {פ}

will be thrown down in the time I visit them,
Yahweh says.

13 I shall put an end to them, says Yahweh,
no more grapes on the vine, no more figs on the fig tree,
only withered leaves: the crops I gave them will be taken away!

14 Why are we sitting still?

Mobilise!

Take to the fortified towns

and there fall silent,

since Yahweh our God has condemned us

by giving us poisoned water to drink

because we have sinned against Yahweh.

15 We are hoping for peace – no good came of it!

For the time of healing – nothing but terror!

16 From Dan, you can hear the snorting of his horses;

at the neighing of his stallions,

the whole country quakes;

they are coming to devour the country and its contents,

the town and those who live in it.

13 For the end of last line, here following *NETB*, the *NJB* reads, 'I have found them people to trample on them'; the meaning is uncertain (literally, 'and I gave them they passed over them') and the translation treats the 1st expression as a noun clause, which is the subject of the following verb.

14 For the 2nd line, the same Hebrew word means 'to mobilise' and 'to put an end to'. The 4th line speaks of the silence of death.

15 Literally translated, the verse ends, "but behold, terror!"

16 The *NRSV* & *NETB* translated the singular possessive pronouns ('his') as plurals ('their'); here, we follow the *MT* & *NJB*.

כִּי הִנְנִי מְשַׁלַּח בְּכֶם נְחָשִׁים צְפֹעִיִּים אֲשֶׁר אֵין־לָהֶם לַחַשׁ וְנִשְׁכוּ אֶתְכֶם נְאֻם־יְהוָה: {ס}	ז	17	Yes, now I am sending you poisonous snakes against which no charm exists; and they will bite you, says Yahweh.
מִבְּלִיגִיתִי עָלַי יָגוֹן עָלַי לִבִּי דָוָי:	ח	18	There is no cure for my grief and my heart fails me.
הִנֵּה־קוֹל שׁוֹעֵת בְּתַעֲמִי מֵאֶרֶץ מְרַחֲקִים הִיְהוֹה אֵין בְּצִיּוֹן אִם־מֶלֶכָּה אֵין בָּהּ מִדּוֹעַ הַכְּעֶסוֹנִי בַפְּסֻלֵיהֶם בְּהַבְלֵי נֹכַר:	ט	19	Hark, the cry of my poor people, from far and wide in the land! "Is Yahweh no longer in Zion, her king no longer there?" Why have they provoked me with their idols, with their foreign gods?
עֲבַר קָצִיר כָּלָה קִיץ וְאִנְחָנוּ לֹא נוֹשְׁעָנוּ:	כ	20	"Harvest is over, summer at an end, and we have not been saved!"
עַל־שִׁבְרַ בְּתַעֲמִי הַשְּׁבִרְתִּי קִדְרְתִּי שָׁמָּה הַחֲזַקְתָּנִי:	כא	21	The wound of my poor people wounds me too, all looks dark to me, and terror grips me.
הַצִּרִי אֵין בְּגִלְעָד	כב	22	Is there no balm in Gilead any more?

¹⁷ The 'poisonous snakes' refer to enemies with whom negotiation for peace is not possible.

¹⁸ The meaning of the word translated 'cure' (מִבְּלִיגִיתִי) is uncertain; it occurs only here; the NRSV has, "My joy is gone, grief is upon me," and the NJB, following the LXX (ἀνίατα μετ' ὀδύνης) has, "Incurable sorrow overtakes me."

¹⁹ The literal translation of 'my poor people' (following the NRSV) is 'the daughter of my people' (as in the NJB).

²⁰ Judah may perhaps have been suffering a drought (Ch. 14).

²¹ As in v. 19, the NJB has 'daughter of my people' in place of 'my poor people'.

²² Gilead, east of the River Jordan and north of the River Jabbok, was an area producing balm and other medicinal herbs.

אִם־רֹפֵא אֵין שָׁם
כִּי מְדוּעַ לֹא עָלְתָה
אֲרַכֶּת בַּת־עַמִּי: {ס}
כג
מִי־יִתֵּן רֹאשִׁי מַיִם
וְעֵינַי מְקוֹר דְּמָעָה
וְאֲבֹכָה יוֹמָם וְלַיְלָה
אֵת חַלְלֵי בַת־עַמִּי: {ס}

Is there no doctor there?
Then why is there no progress
in the cure of my poor people?

²³ Who will turn my head into a fountain,
and my eyes into a spring of tears,
that I can weep day and night
over the slain of my poor people?

²³ This verse is included as 9:1 in the *NRSV* and many other English translations; here, we follow the numbering scheme of the *MT* (and *NJB*).

ירמיהו פרק ט

מִי־יִתְּנֵנִי בַּמִּדְבָּר א *
מְלוֹן אֲרָחִים
וְאֶעֱזֹבָה אֶת־עַמִּי
וְאֶלְכָה מֵאֲתָם
כִּי כָל־מְנַאֲפִים
עֲצַרְתָּ בְּגַדִּים:
וַיִּדְרְכוּ אֶת־לְשׁוֹנָם קִשְׁתָּם שֶׁקֶר ב
וְלֹא לְאֱמוּנָה גְּבְרוּ בְּאֶרֶץ
כִּי מֵרָעָה אֶל־רָעָה | יֵצְאוּ וְאֵתִי לֹא־יִדְעוּ
נְאֻם־יְהוָה:
אִישׁ מֵרַעְהוּ הַשְּׁמֵרוּ ג
וְעַל־כָּל־אָח אֶל־תִּבְטְחוּ
כִּי כָל־אָח עֹקֹב יַעֲקֹב
וְכָל־רֵעַ רֵכִיל יִהְיֶה:
וְאִישׁ בְּרַעְהוּ יִהְיֶה לּוֹ ד
וְאִמַּת לֹא יִדְבְּרוּ

JEREMIAH 9

- 1 Who will find me a wayfarer's shelter
in the desert,
for me to quit my people,
and leave them far behind?
For all of them are traitors,
a band of traitors.
- 2 They bend their tongues like bows;
not truth but falsehood holds sway in the land;
for they go from evil to evil but they do not know me,
says Yahweh.
- 3 Let each be on his guard against his friend;
do not trust a brother,
for every brother aims but to supplant,
and every friend is a peddler of slander.
- 4 Each one cheats his friend,
never telling the truth;

JEREMIAH 9

Verse numbers in this chapter here follow the *MT* (and *NJB*); in the *NRSV*, *NETB*, and most other English translations, 8:23 is included in this chapter, so verse numbers therein are correspondingly incremented.

- 1 Here, instead of sympathy, God has nothing but contempt for the lying, deceitful, untrustworthy nation (11:19–23, 12:6). A remote stopping place in the desert would be preferable (1K 19:3–4).
- 2 'Not truth ... holds sway' follows the *LXX* (οὐ πίστις ἐνίσχυσεν) and *NJB*; the *MT* has 'and they are not strong for truth'.
- 3 The literal translation for 'but to supplant' is 'supplanting supplants' (עֹקֹב יַעֲקֹב), a pun on the name Jacob.
- 4 The literal translation of the last line is, "they weary themselves with iniquity."

לְמַדּוּ לְשׁוֹנֵם דְּבַר־שָׁקֶר הַעֲוֹה נִלְאוּ: שְׁבַתְּךָ בְּתוֹךְ מְרֻמָּה בְּמְרֻמָּה מֵאֲנִי דַעַת־אוֹתִי נְאֻם־יְהוָה: {ס}		they have trained their tongues to lie and devote all their energies to doing wrong.
לְכֵן כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת הַנְּנִי צוֹרֶפֶס וּבַחֲנֻתִים כִּי־אֵיךְ אֶעֱשֶׂה מִפְּנֵי בַת־עַמִּי: חֶץ שׁוֹחֵט שָׁחוּט לְשׁוֹנֵם מְרֻמָּה דְּבַר בְּפִיו שְׁלוֹם אֶת־רֵעֵהוּ יְדַבֵּר וּבְקִרְבּוֹ יִשִּׂים אֲרָבוֹ: הַעֲלֵ־אֵלֶּה לֹא־אֶפְקֹד־בָּם נְאֻם־יְהוָה אִם בְּגוֹי אֲשֶׁר־כָּזָה לֹא תִתְנַקֵּם נַפְשֵׁי: {ס}	ה	5 You live in a world of bad faith! Out of bad faith, they refuse to know me, says Yahweh.
חֶץ שׁוֹחֵט שָׁחוּט לְשׁוֹנֵם מְרֻמָּה דְּבַר בְּפִיו שְׁלוֹם אֶת־רֵעֵהוּ יְדַבֵּר וּבְקִרְבּוֹ יִשִּׂים אֲרָבוֹ: הַעֲלֵ־אֵלֶּה לֹא־אֶפְקֹד־בָּם נְאֻם־יְהוָה אִם בְּגוֹי אֲשֶׁר־כָּזָה לֹא תִתְנַקֵּם נַפְשֵׁי: {ס}	ו	6 Therefore, Yahweh Sabaoth declares, now I shall purge them and test them, no other way to treat my sinful people!
חֶץ שׁוֹחֵט שָׁחוּט לְשׁוֹנֵם מְרֻמָּה דְּבַר בְּפִיו שְׁלוֹם אֶת־רֵעֵהוּ יְדַבֵּר וּבְקִרְבּוֹ יִשִּׂים אֲרָבוֹ: הַעֲלֵ־אֵלֶּה לֹא־אֶפְקֹד־בָּם נְאֻם־יְהוָה אִם בְּגוֹי אֲשֶׁר־כָּזָה לֹא תִתְנַקֵּם נַפְשֵׁי: {ס}	ז	7 Their tongue is a sharpened arrow, their words are in bad faith; with his mouth, each wishes his neighbour peace, while in his heart plotting a trap for him.
חֶץ שׁוֹחֵט שָׁחוּט לְשׁוֹנֵם מְרֻמָּה דְּבַר בְּפִיו שְׁלוֹם אֶת־רֵעֵהוּ יְדַבֵּר וּבְקִרְבּוֹ יִשִּׂים אֲרָבוֹ: הַעֲלֵ־אֵלֶּה לֹא־אֶפְקֹד־בָּם נְאֻם־יְהוָה אִם בְּגוֹי אֲשֶׁר־כָּזָה לֹא תִתְנַקֵּם נַפְשֵׁי: {ס}	ח	8 Shall I fail to punish them for this, says Yahweh, or on such a nation fail to exact vengeance?
חֶץ שׁוֹחֵט שָׁחוּט לְשׁוֹנֵם מְרֻמָּה דְּבַר בְּפִיו שְׁלוֹם אֶת־רֵעֵהוּ יְדַבֵּר וּבְקִרְבּוֹ יִשִּׂים אֲרָבוֹ: הַעֲלֵ־אֵלֶּה לֹא־אֶפְקֹד־בָּם נְאֻם־יְהוָה אִם בְּגוֹי אֲשֶׁר־כָּזָה לֹא תִתְנַקֵּם נַפְשֵׁי: {ס}	ט	9 I raise the wail and lament for the mountain, the dirge for the desert pastures;

5 For this verse (here following the MT & NJB), the NRSV, following the LXX (τόκος ἐπὶ τόκῳ, δόλος ἐπὶ δόλῳ· οὐκ ἤθελον εἰδέναι με.), reads, "Oppression upon oppression, deceit upon deceit! They refuse to know me, says the LORD."

6 The NJB has 'the daughter of my people' in place of 'my sinful people', here following the NRSV.

7 In place of 'sharpened', here following the Qere (שָׁחוּט), the Ketiv has 'deadly' (שׁוֹחֵט); most English translations follow the Ketiv.

8 The rhetorical question here functions as an emphatic declaration.

9 The NRSV, following the LXX and Peshitta, lacks the initial pronoun; here, we follow the MT (and NJB).

כִּי נִצְתוּ מִבְּלֵי־אִישׁ עֵבֶר
 וְלֹא שָׁמְעוּ קוֹל מִקְנֵה
 מִעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וְעַד־בְּהֵמָה
 נִדְדוּ הַלְּכוּ:
 וְנָתַתִּי אֶת־יְרוּשָׁלַם לְגִלִּים
 מִעוֹן תַּנִּים
 וְאֶת־עָרֵי יְהוּדָה אֶתֵּן שְׁמָמָה
 מִבְּלֵי יוֹשֵׁב: {ס}

for, they have been burnt: no one passes there;
 the sound of flocks is heard no more.

Both the birds of the sky and the animals
 have fled and are gone.

¹⁰ I shall make Jerusalem a heap of ruins,
 a lair for jackals,
 and I shall make the towns of Judah a desolation,
 without inhabitant.

יֵאֱמָר מִי־הָאִישׁ הַחֲכָם וַיְבִין אֶת־זֹאת וְאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר פִּי־
 יְהוָה אֵלָיו וַיִּגְדֵּה עַל־מָה אָבְדָה הָאָרֶץ נִצְתָה
 כַּמִּדְבָּר מִבְּלֵי עֵבֶר: {ס}

¹¹ Who is wise enough to understand this? To whom has Yahweh's
 mouth spoken to explain it? Why is the country annihilated, burnt like
 the desert where no one passes?

יְבֹאֵמֶר יְהוָה עַל־עֲזֹבְכֶם אֶת־תּוֹרָתִי אֲשֶׁר נָתַתִּי
 לְפָנֵיהֶם וְלֹא־שָׁמְעוּ בְקוֹלִי וְלֹא־הִלְכוּ בָהּ: יֵאֱמָרוּ
 אַחֲרַי שְׂרָרוֹת לִבָם וְאַחֲרַי הִבְעֵלִים אֲשֶׁר לְמַדּוּם
 אֲבוֹתָם: {פ}

¹² Yahweh says, "This is because they have forsaken my Law, which I
 gave them, and have not listened to my voice or followed it, ¹³ but have
 followed their own stubborn hearts, have followed the Baals as their
 ancestors taught them."

יִלְכֶן כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הֲנִנִּי
 מֵאֲכִילִם אֶת־הָעֵם הַזֶּה לְעֵנָה וְהִשְׁקִיתִים מִי־
 רָאשׁ: טו וְהִפְצוֹתִים בְּגוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר לֹא יָדְעוּ הֵמָּה

¹⁴ Therefore, Yahweh Sabaoth, the God of Israel, says this, "Now I shall
 give them, this people, wormwood to eat and poisoned water to drink.

¹⁵ I shall scatter them among nations unknown to their ancestors or to

¹⁰ The last 2 lines here follow the NRSV; the NJB reads, "and the towns of Judah and uninhabited wasteland."

¹¹ Literally translated, the 1st sentence reads, "Who is the wise man that he may understand this?"

¹² Vv. 12-15 is a composite commentary on Jeremiah's oracle in vv. 9-10 and 16-21 (cf. 5:18-19).

¹³ Here, 'the Baals' refers either to the pagan gods or to their images.

¹⁴ 'Wormwood' and 'poisoned water' are not to be understood literally here but are symbolic of judgment and suffering.

¹⁵ God will destroy them but not completely (see 5:18, 30:11 & 46:28).

וְאֲבוֹתָם וְשַׁלַּחְתִּי אַחֲרֵיהֶם אֶת־הַחֶרֶב עַד כְּלוֹתִי
 אוֹתָם: {פ}

them; and I shall pursue them with the sword until I have annihilated them.”

טז כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת

16 Yahweh Sabaoth says this,

הַתְּבוֹנְנֵנוּ וְקִרְאוּ לַמְּקוֹנְנוֹת וּתְבוֹאֵינָהּ

“Prepare to call for the mourning women!

וְאַל־הַחֲכִמּוֹת שְׁלַחוּ וּתְבוֹאֵנָה:

Send for those who are best at it!

יז וּתְמַהֲרְנָה וּתְשִׁנָּה עָלֵינוּ נְהִי

17 Let them quickly raise the lament over us!

וּתְרַדְּנָה עֵינֵינוּ דְמָעָה

Let our eyes rain tears,

וְעַפְעָפֵינוּ יִזְלוּ־מַיִם:

or eyelids run with weeping!

יח כִּי קוֹל נְהִי נִשְׁמָע מִצִּיּוֹן

18 A lament makes itself heard in Zion,

אֵיךְ שִׁדְדָנוּ

“What ruin is ours!

בְּשָׁנוּ מְאֹד כִּי־עֲזַבְנוּ אֶרֶץ

We are utterly shamed because we have left the land;

כִּי הִשְׁלִיכוּ מִשְׁכְּנוֹתֵינוּ: {ס}

they have knocked down our homes!”

יט כִּי־שָׁמְעָנָה נָשִׁים דְּבַר־יְהוָה

19 Now listen, you women, to Yahweh’s word,

וּתְקַח אָזְנְכֶם דְּבַר־פִּי

let your ears take in the word his own mouth speaks.

וּלְמַדְנָה בְּנוֹתֵיכֶם נְהִי

Teach your daughters how to wail

וְאִשָּׁה רְעוּתָהּ קִינָה:

and teach your neighbours this lament:

כ כִּי־עָלָה מוֹת בְּחַלּוֹנֵינוּ

20 “Death has climbed in at our windows;

בָּא בְּאַרְמְנוֹתֵינוּ

it has entered our palaces;

16 As customary in the ancient world, professional mourning women are hired to bewail the fate of Zion.

17 In place of ‘quickly raise’, the NJB has ‘lose no time in raising’.

18 The destruction is still in the future, but it is presented graphically as though it had already taken place.

19 It is a little difficult to explain how the particle כִּי (‘now listen’) is functioning here; it may be introducing the contents of what those who call for the mourning women are to say, in which case Jeremiah picks up the task as representative of the people.

20 This verse reflects the figure of speech of a Canaanite mythological allusion to the god of death.

לְהַכְרִית עוֹלָל מְחוּץ
 בַּחוּרִים מֵרַחֲבֹת:
 דַּבֵּר כֹּה נְאֻם־יְהוָה ^{כא}
 וְנִפְלָה נְבִלַת הָאָדָם
 כְּדָמֶן עַל־פְּנֵי הַשָּׂדֶה
 וּכְעֵמִיר מֵאַחֲרֵי הַקֶּצֶר
 וְאִין מֵאַסֵּף: {ס}

it has cut down the children in the street,
 the young people in the squares.

²¹ Speak! says Yahweh this –
 human corpses are strewn
 like dung in the open field,
 like sheaves left by the reaper,
 with no one to gather them.”

^{כב} כֹּה | אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל חֲכָם בַּחֲכָמָתוֹ וְאֵל־
 יִתְהַלֵּל הַגִּבּוֹר בַּגְּבוּרָתוֹ אֱלֹהֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל עֲשִׂיר בְּעֲשָׂרוֹ:
^{כג} כִּי אִם־בְּזֹאת יִתְהַלֵּל הַמִּתְהַלֵּל הַשֶּׁכֶל וַיִּדַע
 אוֹתִי כִי אֲנִי יְהוָה עֲשֵׂה חֶסֶד מִשְׁפָּט וּצְדָקָה
 בְּאַרְץ כִּי־בְאֵלֶּה חֲפָצְתִּי נְאֻם־יְהוָה: {ס}
^{כד} הִנֵּה יָמִים בָּאִים נְאֻם־יְהוָה וּפְקַדוֹתַי עַל־כָּל־מוֹל
 בְּעֵרְלָה: ^{כה} עַל־מִצְרַיִם וְעַל־יְהוּדָה וְעַל־אֲדוֹם וְעַל־
 בְּנֵי עַמּוֹן וְעַל־מוֹאָב וְעַל כָּל־קְצוּצֵי פְּאֵה הַיְשָׁבִים
 בַּמִּדְבָּר כִּי כָל־הַגּוֹיִם עֵרְלִים וְכָל־בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל
 עֵרְלֵי־לֵב: {פ}

²² Yahweh says this, “Let the sage not boast of wisdom, nor the valiant
 of valour, nor the wealthy of riches! ²³ But let anyone who wants to
 boast, boast of this: of understanding and knowing me. For I am
 Yahweh, who acts with faithful love, justice and uprightness on earth;
 yes, these are what pleases me,” says Yahweh.

²⁴ “Look, the days are coming, says Yahweh, when I shall punish all who
 are circumcised only in the flesh: ²⁵ Egypt, Judah, Edom, the
 Ammonites, Moab and all the men with shaven temples who live in the
 desert. For all those nations, and the whole House of Israel too, are
 uncircumcised at heart.”

²¹ The verb דַּבֵּר (*‘speak’*) could be a Piel MS imperative addressed to Jeremiah, a Piel infinitive absolute explaining what the woman are to teach their daughters and neighbours (v. 19), or an imperative addressed to the women telling them to tell of the reason for the lament.

²² Here, it is probable that vv. 22–25 were added as a further answer to the question raised in v. 11.

²³ *‘Faithful love’* translates the Hebrew word חֶסֶד (see #Ho 2:21).

²⁴ The word *‘only’* is not present in the MT; the translation but is contextually motivated to better bring out the contrast that follows.

²⁵ The *‘men with shaven temples’* are the Arabs. *‘Those nations’* is a conjectural translation – the MT has *‘these nations’* but see v. 24.

ירמיהו פרק י

JEREMIAH 10

- א שִׁמְעוּ אֶת־הַדְּבָר אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר יְהוָה עֲלֵיכֶם בַּיּוֹם
ב יִשְׂרָאֵל: כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה
- אֲל־דִּרְדְּוּ הַגּוֹיִם אֲל־תִּלְמְדוּ
וּמֵאֲתוֹת הַשָּׁמַיִם אֲל־תִּחַתּוּ
כִּי־יִחַתּוּ הַגּוֹיִם מִהֶמָּה:
ג כִּי־חֲקוֹת הָעַמִּים הַבֵּל הוּא
כִּי־עֵץ מִיעַר כָּרְתוּ
מֵעֵשֶׂה יְדִי־חָרֵשׁ בַּמַּעֲצָד:
ד בְּכֶסֶף וּבַזָּהָב יִיפְהוּ
בְּמַסְמְרוֹת וּבְמַקְבּוֹת יִחֲזְקוּם
וְלֹא יִפִּיק:
ה כְּתֹמֵר מִקְשָׁה הֶמְהָ וְלֹא יִדְבְּרוּ
נְשׂוּא יִנְשׂוּא כִּי לֹא יִצְעֲדוּ
אֲל־תִּירְאוּ מֵהֶם כִּי־לֹא יַרְעוּ
וְגַם־הֵיטִיב אֵין אוֹתָם: {פ}
- 1 Listen to the word that Yahweh addresses to you, O House of Israel.
2 thus says Yahweh:
“Do not learn the ways of the nations
or take alarm at the heavenly signs,
alarmed though the nations may be at them.
3 Yes, the customs of the people are quite futile:
wood, nothing more, cut out of a forest,
worked with a blade by a carver’s hand,
4 then embellished with silver and gold,
then fastened it with hammer and nails
to keep it from moving.
5 Like scarecrows in a cucumber field, they cannot talk;
they have to be carried, since they cannot walk.
Have no fear of them: they can do no evil,
nor is it in them to do any good!”

JEREMIAH 10

- 1 This section (10:1-16), possibly not by Jeremiah, elaborates on the themes in the second part of Isaiah. The text is overloaded: vv. 6-8 & 10 are not present in the *LXX* & *4QJer^a/4QJer^b*, in which the order is different; v. 11 is an Aramaic gloss on v. 12. Vv. 12-16 are repeated in 51:15-19.
- 2 For this use of the word דִּרְדְּוּ (*‘ways’*), cf. 12:16 & Is 2:6.
- 3 The literal translation of *‘customs’* (חֲקוֹת) is *‘decrees’* or *‘laws’* but the word is used pejoratively here to mean the rules obeyed by idolatrous nations (cf. 2K 17:8).
- 4 The pronoun translated *‘it’* in the 2nd line is plural, referring to the parts.
- 5 The NRSV has *‘their idols’* in place of *‘they’*.

<p>מֵאֵין כְּמוֹךָ יְהוָה גְדוֹל אֶתָּה וְגְדוֹל שְׁמֹךָ בְּגְבוּרָה: מִי לֹא יִרְאֶךָ מֶלֶךְ הַגּוֹיִם כִּי לָךְ יֵאָתֶה כִּי בְכָל־חֲכָמֵי הַגּוֹיִם וּבְכָל־מְלָכֹתָם מֵאֵין כְּמוֹךָ: וּבְאַחַת יִבְעֲרוּ וַיִּכְסְלוּ מוֹסֵר הַבַּלִּים עֵץ הוּא: כֶּסֶף מְרֻקָּע מִתַּרְשִׁישׁ יוֹבֵא וְזָהָב מֵאוּפָז מַעֲשֵׂה חָרֵשׁ וַיְדִי צוּרָף תְּכַלֵּת וְאַרְגָּמָן לְבוּשָׁם מַעֲשֵׂה חֲכָמִים כָּלָם: וַיְהוֶה אֱלֹהִים אֱמֶת הוּא־אֱלֹהִים חַיִּים וּמְלֶךְ עוֹלָם</p>	<p>ו ז ח ט י</p>	<p>6 There is no one like you, Yahweh, so great you are, so great your mighty name. 7 Who would not revere you, King of nations? Yes, this is your due. Among all the wise ones of the nations and all their kings there is no one like you. 8 All of them are stupid: the Futile Ones' teaching is but wood, 9 silver leaf imported from Tarshish and gold from Uphaz, the work of carver or goldsmith; then dressed up in violet and purple, all the work of skilled men. 10 But Yahweh is the true God. He is the living God, the everlasting King.</p>
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6 The form that introduces this verse has raised debate: מֵאֵין normally means 'without' and introduces a qualification of a term expressing desolation, or 'so that not' and introduces a negative result. Neither of these nuances fit either this verse or the occurrence in v. 7; some have explained this as a strengthened form of אֵין, which occurs in a similar phrase 5 other times (cf., e.g., 1K 8:23), but though many question the validity of this solution, it is probably better than the suggestion of repointing to מֵאֵין ('whence'), which scarcely fits the context, or the suggestion that the מ is a dittography of the final consonant from the preceding word.

7 The literal translation of 'kings' is 'kingdoms': this is a case of substituting the abstract for the concrete.

8 The meaning of the Hebrew word here translated 'wood' is uncertain.

9 The NJB has 'Ophir' in place of 'Uphaz', here following the MT & NRSV. This name also occurs in Dn 10:5 but may be a misspelling of Ophir (as in the Peshitta and Tg).

10 For the last 2 lines, here following the NJB, the NRSV has, "At his wrath the earth quakes, and the nations cannot endure his indignation."

מִקְצָפוֹ תִרְעַשׂ הָאָרֶץ
וְלֹא־יִכְלוּ גוֹיִם זַעֲמוֹ: {פ}

י"א כַּדְּנָה תֵאמְרוּן לְהוֹם אֱלֹהֵיָא דִּי־שְׁמִיָא וְאַרְקָא
לֹא עֲבָדוּ יַאבְדוּ מֵאַרְעָא וּמִן־תַּחֲוֹת שְׁמִיָא
אֱלֹהֵ: {ס}

י"ב עָשָׂה אֶרֶץ בְּכֹחוֹ
מִכֵּין תִּבֵּל בְּחָכְמָתוֹ
וּבְתַבּוּנָתוֹ נָטָה שָׁמַיִם:

י"ג לְקוֹל תִּתָּו הַמּוֹן מַיִם
בְּשָׁמַיִם וַיַּעֲלֶה נְשָׂאִים

מִקְצָה אֶרֶץ הָאָרֶץ
בְּרָקִים לְמָטָר עָשָׂה
וַיּוֹצֵא רוּחַ מֵאֲצֻרְתּוֹ:

י"ד נִבְעַר כָּל־אָדָם מִדַּעַת
הַבֵּישׁ כָּל־צוּרָף מִפָּסֶל
כִּי שֶׁקֶר נִסְכּוֹ

וְלֹא־רוּחַ בָּם:

טו הִבֵּל הֵמָּה מַעֲשֵׂה תַעֲתָעִים

The earth quakes when he is wrathful;
the nations cannot endure his fury.

11 "Thus, you shall say to them: "The gods who did not make the heavens and the earth will vanish from the earth and from under these heavens.""

12 By his power, he made the earth;
by his wisdom, he set the world firm,
but his discernment spread out the heavens.

13 When his voice thunders,
there is a roaring of waters in heaven;
he raises clouds from the ends of the earth,
makes the lightning flash for the downpour,
and brings the wind from his storehouse.

14 Every man stands stupefied and ignorant,
every goldsmith blushed for his idols;
his castings are but delusion,
with no breath in them.

15 They are futile, a laughable production;

11 This verse is in Aramaic (see #1) – the only Aramaic sentence in the entire Book of Jeremiah.

12 The first 2 verbs are participles and should not merely be translated as the narrative past: they are predicate nominatives of an implied copula intending to contrast Yahweh, as the one who made the earth, with the idols, which did not.

13 The *Kethib/Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

14 The pronoun of the last line refers to the 'idols', not the 'goldsmiths'.

15 For the last line, here following the *NRSV*, the *NJB* reads, "when the time comes for them to be punished, they will vanish."

בַּעַת פְּקֻדָּתָם יֵאבְדוּ:
 לֹא-כִאֲלֵה חֶלֶק יַעֲקֹב טז
 כִּי-יִזְעַר הַכֹּל הוּא
 וְיִשְׂרָאֵל שִׁבְט נַחֲלָתוֹ
 יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת שְׁמוֹ: {ס}
 אֶסְפִּי מֵאֶרֶץ כְּנַעַתָּד יז
 יִשְׁבְּתִי יִשְׁבֶּת בְּמִצּוֹר: {ס}
 כִּי-כֹה אָמַר יְהוָה יח
 הַנְּגִי קוֹלְעִי אֶת-יֹשְׁבֵי הָאָרֶץ בַּפֶּעַם הַזֹּאת
 וְהִצַּרְתִּי לָהֶם
 לְמַעַן יִמְצְאוּ: {ס}
 אֲזִי לִי עַל-שִׁבְרִי ט
 נַחֲלֵה מִכַּתִּי
 וְאֲנִי אֲמַרְתִּי
 אֲדָזֶה חֲלִי וְאֶשְׂאֲנֹ:
 אֶהְלִי שֹׁדֵד וְכֹל-מִיתָרַי נִתְּקוּ כ
 בְּנֵי יִצְאָנִי וְאֵינָם
 אֵין-נֹטָה עוֹד אֶהְלִי
 וּמְקִים יִרְעוּתִי:

- at the time of their punishment, they shall perish.
- 16 The Heritage of Jacob is not like these,
for he is the one who formed all things
and Israel is the tribe that is his heritage.
Yahweh Sabaoth is his name.
- 17 Pick up your pack from the ground,
you the besieged!
- 18 For Yahweh says this,
"Now I will throw out the inhabitants of the land, this time,
and bring distress on them,
so that they may find me!"
- 19 Disaster is on me! What a wound!
My injury is incurable!
And I used to think,
"If this is the worst, I can bear it!"
- 20 My tent is destroyed, all my ropes are snapped,
my sons have left me and are no more;
no one is left to put my tent up again
or to hang the side-cloths.

16 For the 1st line, the NRSV has, "Not like these is the LORD, the portion of Jacob."

17 The *Kethib*/*Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

18 'Find me' is conjectural (as NJB); the MT has 'find'. A change in the vowels would give 'for them to be found' (cf. LXX, εὕρεθῆναι).

19 This verse is a lament of the personified nation.

20 This passage could refer to the exiles of 605 & 597 BCE, or more probably be anticipatory of the exile of 588 BCE, since the 'tent'.

<p>כא כי נבערו הרעים ואת־יהוה לא דרשו על־כן לא השכילו וכל־מרעיתם נפוצה: {פ}</p>	<p>21 For, the shepherds are stupid: they do not search for Yahweh. So they have not prospered and their whole flock is scattered.</p>
<p>כב קול שמועה הנה באה ורעש גדול מארץ צפון לשום את־ערי יהודה שממה מעון תנים: {ס}</p>	<p>22 Listen! A terrible noise! A mighty uproar from the land of the north to reduce the towns of Judah to desert, to a lair for jackals!</p>
<p>כג ידעתי יהוה כי לא לאדם דרכו לא־לאיש הלך והכין את־צעדו:</p>	<p>23 I know, Yahweh, a man's way is not in his control, nor is it in a man's power, as he goes his way, to guide his own steps.</p>
<p>כד יסרני יהוה אך־במשפט אל־באפך פן־תמעטני:</p>	<p>24 Correct me, Yahweh, but with moderation, not in your anger, or you will reduce me to nothing.</p>
<p>כה שפך חמתך על־הגוים אשר לא־ידעוך ועל משפחות אשר בשמך לא קראו כי־אכלו את־יעקב ואכלהו ויכלהו ואת־נהוה השמו: {פ}</p>	<p>25 Pour out your anger on the nations who do not know you, and on the families that do not call on your name; for, they have devoured Jacob, have devoured and made an end of him and reduced his home to desolation.</p>

21 The idiom, 'search for Yahweh', often refers to inquiring for God's guidance through a prophet (Ex 18:15, 1S 9:9, 1K 22:8).
22 Compare this verse (especially the 2nd line) with 6:22.
23 The one who prays cites Pr 20:24 (v. 23) & Ps 79:6–7 (v. 25) to direct God's attention away from Judah and to neighbouring nations instead.
24 The words, 'to nothing' are not in the MT; however, they are implicit from the general context and are supplied by almost all English versions.
25 The idiom, 'to call on your name' (directed to God), refers to prayer (mainly) and praise (see 1K 18:24–26 & Ps 116:13, 17).

ירמיהו פרק יא

א הַדְּבַר אֲשֶׁר הָיָה אֶל־יִרְמְיָהוּ מֵאֵת יְהוָה לֵאמֹר:
ב שִׁמְעוּ אֶת־דְּבָרֵי הַבְּרִית הַזֹּאת וּדְבַרְתֶּם אֵל־
אִישׁ יְהוּדָה וְעַל־יֹשְׁבֵי יְרוּשָׁלַם: ג וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵיהֶם
כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אַרְוֹר הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר
ד לֹא יִשְׁמַע אֶת־דְּבָרֵי הַבְּרִית הַזֹּאת: ז אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתִי
ח אֶת־אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם בַּיּוֹם הוֹצִיאִי־אוֹתָם מֵאֶרֶץ־מִצְרַיִם
ט מִכּוּר הַבְּרָזֶל לֵאמֹר שִׁמְעוּ בְּקוֹלִי וַעֲשִׂיתֶם אוֹתָם
י כְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר־אָצַוְהָ אֶתְכֶם וְהִיִּיתֶם לִי לְעָם וְאֲנֹכִי
יא אֱהִיָּה לָכֶם לֵאלֹהִים: יב לְמַעַן הָקִים אֶת־הַשְּׁבוּעָה
יג אֲשֶׁר־נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי לְאֲבוֹתֵיכֶם לֵתֵת לָהֶם אֶרֶץ זָבַת
יד חֶלֶב וְדִבְשׁ בַּיּוֹם הַזֶּה וְאָעַן וְאָמַר אָמֵן | יוֹהֵה: {פ}

JEREMIAH 11

¹ This is the word that came to Jeremiah from Yahweh, saying ² “Hear the terms of this covenant and tell them to the people of Judah and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. ³ And you shall say to them, “Yahweh, the God of Israel, says this: Cursed be anyone who will not listen to the terms of this covenant, ⁴ which I ordained for your fathers in the days that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, out of that iron-smelting furnace, saying to them: Listen to my voice and do all that I command you, then you shall be my people and I will be your God, ⁵ so that I may fulfil the oath that I swore to your fathers, that I may give them a country flowing with milk and honey, as is the case today.”” And I replied, “So be it, Yahweh!”

JEREMIAH 11

- ¹ In 622 BCE, King Josiah undertook a religious reform (2K 22:3–23:27), supported by the Priestly and prophetic parties. Apparently, Jeremiah took an active part in it, as this passage records. It contains many phrases characteristic of Deuteronomy, the discovery of which (2K 22:8) prompted the reform. Vv. 7–8 are absent from the LXX.
- ² The opening form (שִׁמְעוּ, ‘hear’) is 2MP, which is followed in vv. 2–3 by singulars; this, plus the fact that the whole clause ‘hear the terms of this covenant’ is nearly repeated at the end of v. 3, has led many modern scholars to delete the whole clause. However, this only leads to further adjustments in the rest of the verse which are difficult to justify. The form has also led to a good deal of speculation about who these others were that are initially addressed here. The juxtaposition of second plural and singular forms has a precedent in Deuteronomy, where the nation is sometimes addressed with the plural and at other times with a collective singular.
- ³ ‘This covenant’ is further qualified in v. 4 with a relative clause.
- ⁴ The last clause refers to the Mosaic Law, which was instituted at Sinai and renewed on the Plains of Moab before Israel entered into the land.
- ⁵ The phrase, ‘a country flowing with milk and honey’, is very familiar to readers in the Jewish and Christian traditions as a proverbial description of the agricultural and pastoral abundance of the land of Israel; however, it may not mean too much to readers outside those traditions: an equivalent expression would be ‘a land of fertile fields and fine pastures’.

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֵלַי קְרֵא אֶת־כָּל־הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה
בְּעָרֵי יְהוּדָה וּבַחֲצוֹת יְרוּשָׁלַם לֵאמֹר שְׁמְעוּ אֶת־
דְּבַרֵי הַבְּרִית הַזֹּאת וַעֲשִׂיתֶם אוֹתָם: אֲכִי הֵעַד
הַעַדְתִּי בְּאֲבוֹתֵיכֶם בַּיּוֹם הַעֲלוֹתִי אוֹתָם מֵאֶרֶץ
מִצְרַיִם וְעַד־הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה הַשֶּׁכֶם וְהֵעַד לֵאמֹר שְׁמְעוּ
בְּקוֹלִי: ה' וְלֹא שְׁמְעוּ וְלֹא־הִטּוּ אֶת־אָזְנָם וַיִּלְכּוּ
אִישׁ בְּשָׁרֵירוֹת לִבָּם הֲרַע וְאָבִיא עֲלֵיהֶם אֶת־כָּל־
דְּבַרֵי הַבְּרִית־הַזֹּאת אֲשֶׁר־צִוִּיתִי לַעֲשׂוֹת וְלֹא
עָשׂוּ: {ס}

ט וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֵלַי נִמְצָא־קִשְׁר בְּאִישׁ יְהוּדָה
וּבִישְׁבֵי יְרוּשָׁלַם: יָשְׁבוּ עַל־עוֹנֹת אָבוֹתָם
הָרָאשׁוֹנִים אֲשֶׁר מֵאֲנֹן לִשְׁמוֹעַ אֶת־דְּבַרֵי וְהִמָּה
הָלְכוּ אַחֲרַי אֱלֹהִים אַחֲרִים לַעֲבָדָם הִפְרוּ בֵּית־
יִשְׂרָאֵל וּבֵּית יְהוּדָה אֶת־בְּרִיתִי אֲשֶׁר כָּרַתִּי אֶת־
אָבוֹתָם: {ס}

יא לָכֵן כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה הַנְּנִי מִבִּיא אֲלֵיהֶם רָעָה
אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יִוָּכְלוּ לְצַאת מִמֶּנָּה וְזָעְקוּ אֵלַי וְלֹא

6 And Yahweh said to me, “Proclaim all these words in the towns of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem, saying, “Listen to the terms of this covenant and obey them. 7 For, when I brought your ancestors out of Egypt, I solemnly warned them, and have persistently warned them until today, saying: Listen to my voice. 8 But they did not listen, did not pay attention; instead, each followed his own stubborn and wicked inclinations; and against them, in consequence, I put into action the words of this covenant, which I had ordered them to obey and which they had not obeyed.”

9 Yahweh said to me, “Plainly, there is conspiracy among the people of Judah and the citizens of Jerusalem. 10 They have reverted to the sins of their ancestors, who refused to listen to my words: they too are following other gods and serving them. The House of Israel and the House of Judah have broken my covenant, which I made with their fathers.

11 Therefore, Yahweh says this, “Surely, I shall now bring a disaster on them that they cannot escape; they will call to me for help, but I shall

6 In place of ‘this covenant’, here following the MT, NJB & NRSV, NETB has ‘my covenant with you’.

7 The phrase ‘have persistently warned them’ reflects the Hebrew idiom where the infinitive of one verb is followed by the infinitive of another.

8 There is an interesting polarity that is being exploited by two different nuances implicit in the use of דְּבַרֵי (‘words’): i.e., what Yahweh ‘brings on’ them, namely, the curses that are the penalty for disobedience and the stipulations that they are ‘to obey’, that is, to carry out.

9 Literally translated, this verse ends, “Conspiracy is found among the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem.”

10 Another reading for ‘reverted to’ is ‘repeated’.

11 In place of ‘surely’, the NRSV has ‘assuredly’; the NJB lacks the word.

אֲשַׁמַּע אֲלֵיהֶם: יְבוֹהֲלוּ עָרֵי יְהוּדָה וְיֹשְׁבֵי
 יְרוּשָׁלַם וְזַעְקוֹ אֶל־הָאֱלֹהִים אֲשֶׁר הֵם מְקַטְרִים
 לָהֶם וְהוֹשִׁיעַ לֹא־יֹשִׁיעוּ לָהֶם בְּעַת רָעָתָם: כִּי
 מִסַּפֵּר עָרֵיךָ הֵיוּ אֱלֹהֶיךָ יְהוּדָה וּמִסַּפֵּר חֲצוֹת
 יְרוּשָׁלַם שְׁמַתָּם מִזְבַּחוֹת לְבִשְׁת מִזְבַּחוֹת לְקַטֵּר
 לַבַּעַל: {ס} וְאַתָּה אֶל־תִּתְפַּלֵּל בְּעַד־הָעָם הַזֶּה
 וְאַל־תִּשָּׂא בְעַדָם רִנָּה וּתְפִלָּה כִּי אֲיַנְנִי שָׁמַע
 בְּעַת קְרָאָם אֵלַי בְּעַד רָעָתָם: {ס}

טו מָה לִּידֵיךָ בְּבֵיתִי עֲשׂוֹתָה הַמְּזֻמָּתָה הַרְבִּים
 וּבִשְׂר־קֹדֶשׁ יַעֲבֹרוּ מֵעַלְיָךְ כִּי רָעַתְכִי אֲז תַעֲלֹזִי:
 טז זֵית רַעֲנָן יִפֶּה פְרִי־תֶאֱר קָרָא יְהוָה שְׁמֶךָ לְקוֹל
 הַמוֹלָה גְדֹלָה הֲצִית אֵשׁ עָלֶיהָ וְרָעוּ דְלִיּוֹתָיו:
 ז וְיְהוָה צְבָאוֹת הַנוֹטֵעַ אוֹתָךְ דָּבַר עָלְיָךְ רָעָה
 בְּגִלְל רָעַת בֵּית־יִשְׂרָאֵל וּבֵית יְהוּדָה אֲשֶׁר עָשׂוּ
 לָהֶם לְהַכְעִסְנִי לְקַטֵּר לַבַּעַל: {פ}

יח וְיְהוָה הוֹדִיעַנִי וְאַדְּעָה
 אֲז הִרְאִיתַנִּי מֵעַלְלֵיהֶם:

not listen to them. ¹² The towns of Judah and the citizens of Jerusalem will then go and call for help to the gods to whom they burn incense, but these will be no help at all to them in their time of distress! ¹³ “For you have as many gods as you have towns, Judah! You have built as many altars to Shame, as many incense altars to Baal, as Jerusalem has streets! ¹⁴ “You, for your part, must not intercede for this people, nor raise either plea or prayer on their behalf, for I will not listen when their distress forces them to call to me for help.”

¹⁵ “What right has my beloved in my house? She has done vile deeds. Can vows and consecrated meat turn disaster from you for you to be so happy? ¹⁶ “Green olive tree covered in fine fruit,” was Yahweh’s name for you. With a shattering noise, he has set fire to it; its branches are broken.” ¹⁷ Yahweh Sabaoth, who planted you, has decreed disaster for you because of the evil of the House of Israel and the House of Judah have done, provoking me by burning incense to Baal.

¹⁸ “And Yahweh informed me and I knew it; you then revealed their scheming to me.

¹² The phrase ‘will be no help at all’ translates the idiom of having the infinitive of a verb before the verb itself (‘saving they will not save’).

¹³ The NRSV does not capitalise ‘Shame’ (here following the NJB) and NETB has ‘shameful thing’.

¹⁴ Compare this verse with 7:16, where a similar rebuke is addressed to Jeremiah.

¹⁵ ‘My beloved’ is feminine in the LXX but masculine in the MT. In place of ‘vows’, here following the LXX, the MT has ‘many’.

¹⁶ The ‘green olive tree’ is a symbol of Israel (Ho 14:6).

¹⁷ This is the continuation of vv. 1-14.

¹⁸ By championing the reform, and thus the suppression of the local shrines (Dt 12:5, cf. 2K 23), Jeremiah earned the hatred of his fellow townsfolk.

יט ואֲנִי כְּכֶבֶשׂ אֶלּוּף יוֹבֵל לְטִבּוֹחַ
 וְלֹא־יָדַעְתִּי כִּי־עָלִין חֲשָׁבוּ מַחְשְׁבוֹת
 נִשְׁחִיתָה עֵץ בְּלַחְמוֹ
 וְנִכְרַתְנוּ מֵאֶרֶץ חַיִּים
 וְשָׁמוֹ לֹא־יִזְכָּר עוֹד:
 כ וַיְהִי צְבָאוֹת שֹׁפֵט צָדֵק
 בַּחַן פְּלוֹת וְלֵב
 אֶרְאֶה נִקְמַתְךָ מֵהֵם
 כִּי אֵלֶיךָ גָּלִיתִי אֶת־רִיבִי: {ס}

19 But I was like a gentle lamb being led to the slaughter,
 not knowing the schemes they were plotting against me,
 “Let us destroy the tree in its prime,
 let us cut him off from the land of the living,
 so that his name may no longer be remembered!”

20 But Yahweh Sabaoth, who judge righteously,
 tester of motives and thoughts,
 I shall see your vengeance on them;
 for, I have revealed my cause to you.

כא לָכֵן כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה עַל־אֲנָשֵׁי עֲנָתוֹת הַמְּבַקְשִׁים
 אֶת־נַפְשִׁי לֵאמֹר לֹא תִנָּבֵא בְשֵׁם יְהוָה וְלֹא תָמוּת
 בְּיַדְנוּ: {פ}

21 Against the people of Anathoth, who are determined to kill me, and
 say to me, “Do not prophesy in the name of Yahweh or you will die at
 our hands,”

כב לָכֵן כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת הַנְּגִי פִקֵּד עֲלֵיהֶם
 הַבְּחוּרִים יָמָתוּ בַחֶרֶב בְּנֵיהֶם וּבָנוֹתֵיהֶם יָמָתוּ

22 So, thus says Yahweh Sabaoth, “I am about to punish them. Their
 young people will die by the sword, their sons and daughters by famine.

כג וְשָׂאֲרִית לֹא תִהְיֶה לָהֶם כִּי־אָבִיא רָעָה
 אֶל־אֲנָשֵׁי עֲנָתוֹת שְׁנַת פִּקְדָתָם: {ס}

23 Not one will remain when I bring disaster on the people of Anathoth,
 when the year for punishing them comes.”

19 ‘In its prime’ is a conjectural translation (בְּלַחוֹ); the MT text has ‘in its bread’ (בְּלַחְמוֹ). The LXX has ‘Let us put wood in his bread’ (the Tg has ‘poison’ in place of ‘wood’).

20 The literal translation of ‘motives and thought’ is ‘kidneys and heart’.

21 The origin of the grievance against Jeremiah may be his identification of certain fellow citizens with false prophets and priests. In his characteristic phraseology (5:12, 18:21, 19:15, 23:12), their end is foretold.

22 Here, ‘sword’ stands contextually for ‘battle’, while ‘famine’ stands for death by starvation during siege.

23 Despite the opening clause, we know from Ezr 2:23 that there were survivors.

ירמיהו פרק יב

צְדִיק אֶתָּה יְהוָה א
כִּי אֲרִיב אֵלֶיךָ
אֲךָ מִשְׁפָּטִים אֲדַבֵּר אִתְּךָ
מִדּוּעַ דְּרָךְ רָשָׁעִים צָלְחָה
שָׁלוֹם כָּל-בְּגָדֵי בָגָד:
נִטְעַתֶּם גַּם-שָׂרְשׁוֹ
יִלְכוּ גַם-עֲשׂוֹ פְרִי
קָרוֹב אֶתָּה בְּפִיהֶם
וְרָחוֹק מִכְּלִיזֹתֶיהֶם:
וְאַתָּה יְהוָה יִדְעָתָנִי
תִּרְאֵנִי וּבַחֲנֹת לִבִּי אֲתָךְ
הַתְּקַם כְּצֹאן לְטַבְחָה
וְהַקְדֵּשׁם לְיוֹם הַרְגָה: {פ}
עַד-מָתִי תֵאבֵל הָאָרֶץ
וְעֵשֶׂב כָּל-הַשָּׂדֶה יֵיבֵשׁ
מִרְעַת יִשְׁבִּי-בָהּ
סָפְתָה בְּהִמּוֹת וְעוֹף כִּי אָמְרוּ
לֹא יִרְאֶה אֶת-אֲחֵרֵיתָנוּ:

JEREMIAH 12

- 1 Your uprightness is too great, Yahweh,
for me to dispute with you;
but I should like to discuss some points of justice with you.
Why is it that the way of the wicked prospers?
Why do all treacherous people thrive?
- 2 You plant them, they take root,
and they flourish, yes, and bear fruit.
You are on their lips,
yet far from their heart.
- 3 You know me, Yahweh, you see me,
and you probe my heart, which is close to yours.
Drag them off like sheep for the slaughterhouse;
reserve them for the day of butchery.
- 4 How long will the land be in mourning
and the grass of every field wither?
For, the wickedness of those who live in it
the animals and the birds are swept away.
For, they say, "God does not see our fate."

JEREMIAH 12

- 1 This is the first time that the question of the wicked prospering is posed in the Old Testament.
- 2 The word here translated 'flourish' more often means 'go' or 'walk'.
- 3 Jeremiah appears to be complaining, like Job, that God cares nothing about the prosperity of the wicked, but watches his every move.
- 4 'God' (in the last line) follows the LXX; the MT has 'he'. The NJB parenthesises the 1st part of this verse.

<p>ה כי את־רגלים רצתה וילאון ואיך תתחרה את־הסוסים ובארץ שלום אתה בוטח ואיך תעשה בגאון הירדן: ו כי גם־אחיך ובית־אביך גם־המה בגדו בך גם־המה קראו אחריך מלא אל־תאמן בם כי־ידברו אליך טובות: {ס}</p>	<p>ו ז ח ט</p>	<p>5 “If you find it exhausting to race against me on foot, how will you compete against horses? In a country at peace, you feel secure, but how will you fare in the thickets of the Jordan? 6 For even your brothers and your own family, even they have betrayed you. They will pursue you in full cry. Put no faith in them when they speak fair to you.” 7 I have abandoned my house, left my heritage. I have delivered what I dearly loved into the clutches of its enemies. 8 To me, my heritage has behaved like a lion in the forest; she roared at me ferociously so now I hate her. 9 I see my heritage as a greedy hyena,</p>
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⁵ The literal translation of ‘*thickets*’ is ‘*height*’, i.e. the steep banks, covered in vegetation and therefore dangerous since they are the haunts of all sorts of wild animals. An alternative translation is ‘*flood*’ (literally ‘*swelling*’) but cf. 49:19.

⁶ In fact, Jeremiah wasn’t safe even in the context of his own family: they were part of the plot by the people of Anathoth to kill him.

⁷ God laments the necessary ravaging of Judah by the Babylonian inspired raids of 601 BCE, in reprisal for Jehoiakim’s revolt (2K 24:1–5).

⁸ Another possible translation for ‘*hate*’ is ‘*reject*’: the word is sometimes used in a figurative sense to refer to being neglected.

⁹ In place of ‘*greedy hyena*’, the NJB has ‘*brightly coloured bird of prey*’: the MT reads, ‘*the hyena, the bird of prey*’ but the meaning is uncertain.

הַעֵיט סָבִיב עָלֶיהָ
לָכֹן אִסְפוּ כָּל־חַיַּת הַשָּׂדֶה
הִתְיוּ לְאֹכְלָהּ׃
י רַעִים רַבִּים שָׁחֲתוּ כְרָמִי
בָּסְסוּ אֶת־חֲלֻקְתִּי
נָתְנוּ אֶת־חֲלֻקַּת חֲמֻדָּתִי
לְמַדְבָּר שְׁמָמָה׃
יא שָׁמָּה לְשִׁמְמָה אַבְלָה עָלַי שְׁמָמָה
נִשְׁמָה כָּל־הָאָרֶץ
כִּי אֵין אִישׁ
שֵׁם עַל־לֵב׃
יב עַל־כָּל־שָׁפִים בַּמְדְּבָר
בָּאוּ שִׁדְדִים
כִּי חָרַב לַיהוָה אֹכְלָהּ
מִקְצֵה־אֶרֶץ וְעַד־קְצֵה הָאֶרֶץ
אֵין שָׁלוֹם לְכָל־בְּשָׂר׃ {ס}
יג זָרְעוּ חֲטִים וְקָצְרוּ קִצְרוֹ
נָחְלוּ לֹא יוֹעֵלוּ׃

attacked by birds of prey on every side!

Go, assemble all the wild animals,
make them come and dine.

10 Many shepherds have destroyed my vineyard;
they have trampled over my plot of land,
they have made my pleasant plot of land
a deserted wilderness.

11 They have made it a waste;
wasted, it mourns before me.
The whole country has been devastated
and no one takes it to heart.

12 The devastators have arrived
on all the bare heights of the desert,
for Yahweh wields a devouring sword;
from one end of the country to the other,
there is no peace for any living thing.

13 Wheat they have sown, thorns they reap:
they have worn themselves out, to no profit.

10 The figure of Israel as God's vine and the land as God's vineyard is found several times in the Bible (e.g. Is 5:1-7).

11 'They have' follows the *Peshitta*; the *MT* has 'he has'.

12 The *NJB* parenthesises the 3rd line. An alternative translation for 'heights' is 'trails'.

13 'Their harvests' is a conjectural translation; the *MT* has 'your harvests': because the verb form (וַיִּשׂוּ) can either be Qal perfect 3PL or Qal imperative 3MP, many emend the pronoun 3PL; however, this is the easier reading and is not supported by either the *LXX* or *Vg*, which have 2PL. This is probably another case of the shift from description to direct address that has been met with several times already in Jeremiah (the

וּבְשׁוֹ מִתְּבוּאַתֵּיכֶם
מִחֲרוֹן אַף־יְהוָה: {פ}

They are disappointed in their harvests,
because of Yahweh's burning anger.

יְהוָה אָמַר יְהוָה עַל־כָּל־שֹׁכְנֵי הָרְעִים הַנִּגְעִים
בְּנַחֲלָה אֲשֶׁר־הִנַּחֲלָתִי אֶת־עַמִּי אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל הַנְּגִי
נִתְּשָׁם מֵעַל אֲדָמָתָם וְאֶת־בַּיִת יְהוּדָה אֲתוֹשׁ
מִתּוֹכֶם: ^{טו} וְהָיָה אַחֲרַי נִתְּשִׁי אוֹתָם אֲשׁוּב
וְרַחֲמֵתִים וְהִשְׁבַּתִּים אִישׁ לְנַחֲלָתוֹ וְאִישׁ לְאַרְצוֹ:
^{טז} וְהָיָה אִם־לָמַד יִלְמְדוּ אֶת־דַּרְכֵי עַמִּי לְהִשְׁבַּע
בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה כַּאֲשֶׁר לָמְדוּ אֶת־עַמִּי לְהִשְׁבַּע
בְּבַעַל וְנִבְּנוּ בְּתוֹךְ עַמִּי: ^{יז} וְאִם לֹא יִשְׁמְעוּ וְנִתְּשָׁתִי
אֶת־הַגּוֹי הַהוּא נִתּוֹשׁ וְאַבְדָּ נְאֻם־יְהוָה: {ס}

¹⁴ Thus says Yahweh regarding all my evil neighbours who touch the heritage I granted my people Israel: “Look, I shall uproot them from their soil, and I shall uproot the House of Judah from among them. ¹⁵ Yet, having uprooted them, I shall again take pity on them and bring them back to their heritage and their land, ¹⁶ and if they carefully learn my people’s ways and swear by my name, “As Yahweh lives,” as they have taught my people to swear by Baal, then they will be re-established among my people. ¹⁷ But I will completely uproot and destroy any of those nations that will not pay heed, declares Yahweh.”

figure of speech called apostrophe see, e.g., 9:4, 11:13); as in other cases, the translation has been levelled to 3PL to avoid confusion for the contemporary English reader.

¹⁴ If Judah’s erstwhile enemies convert (16:19–21, Ps 87), God will spare them when he restores Judah; otherwise, they will be destroyed (25:12–38).

¹⁵ In place of ‘to their heritage and their land’, here following the NRSV, the NJB has ‘each to its own heritage, each to its own country’.

¹⁶ Here, the word ‘ways’ has the nuance of religious practices.

¹⁷ For this verse, here following NETB, the literal translation is, “But if they will not listen, I will uproot that nation, uprooting and destroying...” However, this is not very idiomatic in contemporary English: the translation strives for the equivalent. Likewise, to translate using the conditional structure of the original seems to put the emphasis of the passage in its context on the wrong point.

ירמיהו פרק יג

א כה־אמר יהוה אלי הלׁוך וקנית לך אזור פשתים
ושמתו על־מתניך ובמים לא תבאֵהוּ: ב ואקנה
את־האזור כדבר יהוה ואשם על־מתני: {פ}
ג ויהי דבר־יהוה אלי שנית לאמר: ד קח את־
האזור אשר קנית אשר על־מתניך וקום לך
פרתה וטמנהו שם בנקיק הסלע: ה ואלך
ואטמנהו בפרת צנה יהוה אותי: ו ויהי
מקץ ימים רבים ויאמר יהוה אלי קום לך פרתה
וקח משם את־האזור אשר צויתך לטמנו־שם:
ז ואלך פרתה ואחפר ואקח את־האזור מן־
המקום אשר־טמנתיו שמה והנה נשחת האזור
לא יצלח לכל: {פ}

JEREMIAH 13

¹ Yahweh said this to me, "Go and buy yourself a linen waistcloth, and put it round your waist but do not dip it in water." ² So, according to the word of Yahweh, I bought a waistcloth and put it round my waist.
³ And the word of Yahweh came to me a second time, saying, ⁴ "Take the waistcloth that you have bought and are wearing round your waist, and go now to the Euphrates and hide it there in a cleft in the rock." ⁵ So, I went and hid it by the Euphrates as Yahweh had commanded me.
⁶ A long time later, Yahweh said to me, "Up, go to the Euphrates and take from there the waistcloth I ordered you to hide there." ⁷ So, I went to the Euphrates, and I dug, and I took the waistcloth from the place where I had hidden it; but now the waistcloth was ruined, no use for anything.

JEREMIAH 13

- ¹ The waistcloth story is a symbolic action (see #18:1, Is 20, Ezk 4, 12, 24:15ff). Unless it is to be interpreted as a vision, the action would seem to take place at the Wadi Fara, about 6 Km north of Anathoth.
- ² In place of 'waist', here following the *NJB*, the *NRSV* has 'loins'; but the latter, in this context, probably refers to the midriff of the body, from the waist to the knees.
- ³ The *NJB* lacks the word 'saying', here following the *MT* & *NRSV*.
- ⁴ There has been a great deal of debate about whether פרתה is a place (Parah, Jos 18:23, modern Khirbet Farah), about 6 Km from Jeremiah's hometown or the Euphrates River; elsewhere the word always refers to the Euphrates but it is either preceded by the word 'river of' or there is contextual indication that the Euphrates is being referred to. Because a journey to the Euphrates and back would involve a journey of more 1,000 Km and take some months, scholars both ancient and modern have questioned whether פרתה refers to the Euphrates here.
- ⁵ 'By the Euphrates' here follows *4QJer^a*, reading בפרתה in place of the *MT*'s בפרת.
- ⁶ In place of 'take from there', here following the *MT* & *NRSV*, the *NJB* has 'fetch' and *NETB* has 'get'.
- ⁷ The *NJB* has 'searched' in place of 'dug', here following the *MT*, *NRSV* & *NETB*.

ח וַיְהִי דְבַר־יְהוָה אֵלַי לֵאמֹר: ט כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה כֹּכַב אֲשֶׁחִית אֶת־גְּאוֹן יְהוּדָה וְאֶת־גְּאוֹן יְרוּשָׁלַם הָרֶב: י הָעַם הַזֶּה הָרַע הַמְּאֲנִים | לְשִׁמוּעַ אֶת־דְּבַר־יְהוָה הַלְכִים בְּשִׁרְרוֹת לִבָם וַיִּלְכוּ אַחֲרַי אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים לְעַבְדָם וּלְהִשְׁתַּחֲוֹת לָהֶם וַיְהִי כְּאֲזוֹר הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יִצְלַח לְכֹל: {ס}

יא כִּי כַּאֲשֶׁר יִדְבַק הָאֲזוֹר אֶל־מַתְּנֵי־אִישׁ כֵּן הִדְבַקְתִּי אֵלַי אֶת־כָּל־בַּיִת יְהוּדָה נְאֻם־יְהוָה לְהִיּוֹת לִי לְעַם וּלְשֵׁם וּלְתִהְיֶה וּלְתִפְאֶרֶת וּלְאֵ שִׁמְעוּ: יב וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵיהֶם אֶת־הַדְּבָר הַזֶּה {ס} כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל כֹּל־

8 Then the word of Yahweh was addressed to me, saying, 9 “Yahweh says this, “Thus, I shall ruin the exalted position of Judah, the immense pride of Jerusalem. 10 This evil people, these people who refuse to listen to my words, who follow their own stubborn inclinations and run after other gods, serving and worshipping them – this people will become like the waistcloth, no good for anything.

11 “For, just as a waistcloth clings to a man’s waist, so I made the whole House of Israel and the whole House of Judah cling to me, says Yahweh, in order that they might be t me for a people, for a name, for a praise, and for a glory. But they have not listened. 12 You will also say this message to them, “Yahweh, God of Israel, says this: Any jug can be

8 The phrase ‘was addressed to me’ follows the NJB; the MT has simply ‘came to me’.

9 Many English translations have erred in rendering the word translated as ‘exalted position’ (גְּאוֹן) as ‘pride’ (cf. NJB & NRSV) or ‘arrogance’, with the resultant implication that Yahweh is going to destroy Israel’s pride (i.e., humble them through the punishment of exile). However, it is more probably correct to classify this passage among those that deal with the ‘majesty’ or ‘excellence’ of nations, their wealth, power, magnificence of buildings, etc.; the closest parallels to the usage here are in Zc 10:1, Ps 47:5, Is 14:11 & Am 8:7. To translate it ‘pride’ also hides the wordplay on נִשְׁתָּת (‘ruined’, v. 7) and אֲשֶׁחִית. Scholars, ancient and modern, are divided over the significance of the statement, “I shall ruin the exalted position of Judah, the immense pride of Jerusalem;” some feel that it refers to the corrupting influence of Assyria and Babylon and others feel that it refers to the threat of Babylonian exile.

10 The structure of this verse is a little unusual: it consists of a subject, ‘this evil people’, qualified by several ‘which’ clauses preceding a conjunction and a form which would normally be taken as a third person imperative (a jussive, וַיְהִי). This construction, called *casus pendens*, lays focus on the subject, here calling attention to the nature of Israel’s corruption which makes it rotten and useless to God.

11 The 2nd instance of the word ‘cling’ translates a word that emphasises the closest of personal relationships and the loyalty connected with them; it is used, for example, of the relationship of a husband and a wife and the loyalty expected of them (cf. Gn 2:24, Rt 1:14, 2S 20:2, Dt 11:22).

12 In this allegory, Jeremiah uses a proverb (v. 12^a) and the figure of drunkenness (v. 13; cf. 25:15–16, Ezk 23:31) to describe the divine judgement. In place of ‘and they will answer’, here following the MT & NRSV, the NJB, following the LXX (καὶ ἔσται ἐὰν εἰπωσιν) has ‘if they answer’.

נִבֵּל יִמְלֵא יַיִן וְאָמְרוּ אֵלָיִךְ הִיִּדְעֵ לֹא נִדְעַ כִּי כָל־
 נִבֵּל יִמְלֵא יַיִן: " וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵיהֶם כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה
 הַנְּנִי מִמֶּלֶא אֶת־כָּל־יֹשְׁבֵי הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת וְאֶת־
 הַמְּלָכִים הַיֹּשְׁבִים לְדָוִד עַל־כִּסְאוֹ וְאֶת־הַכֹּהֲנִים
 וְאֶת־הַנְּבִאִים וְאֶת כָּל־יֹשְׁבֵי יְרוּשָׁלַם שְׂכָרוֹן:
 וְנִפְצְצִים אִישׁ אֶל־אָחִיו וְהָאָבוֹת וְהַבָּנִים יַחְדָּו
 נְאֻם־יְהוָה לֹא־אֲחַמּוֹל וְלֹא־אֲחַוֶּס וְלֹא אֲרַחֵם
 מִהַשְׁחִיתָם:

טו שִׁמְעוּ וְהִאֲזִינוּ אֶל־תְּגִבְהוֹ

כִּי יְהוָה דֹּבֵר:

טז תָּנוּ לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם כְּבוֹד בְּטֶרֶם יַחֲשֹׁךְ

וּבְטֶרֶם יִתְנַגְּפוּ רַגְלֵיכֶם עַל־הָרֵי נֶשֶׁף

וְקוֹיְתֵם לְאוֹר וְשִׁמָּה לְצִלְמוֹת

יִשִּׁית וְשִׁית לְעֶרְפֶּל:

זי וְאִם לֹא תִשְׁמָעוּהָ

בְּמִסְתָּרִים תִּבְכְּהוּ נַפְשֵׁי מִפְּנֵי גוֹה

וְדַמְעַ תִּדְמַעַ וְתִרְדַּע עֵינַי

דַּמְעָה כִּי נִשְׁבָּה עֵדֶר יְהוָה: {ס}

filled with wine." And they will answer you, "Do you think that we do not know that any jug can be filled with wine?" ¹³ Then you are to say, "Yahweh says this: Look, I shall fill all the inhabitants of this country, the kings who occupy the throne of David, the priests, the prophets and all the citizens of Jerusalem, with drunkenness. ¹⁴ Then I shall smash them one against the other, parents and children all together, says Yahweh. I will not pity or spare or have compassion when I destroy them.""

¹⁵ Listen and pay attention, do not be proud:
for Yahweh is speaking!

¹⁶ Give glory to Yahweh your God before the darkness comes,
before your feet stumble on the darkened mountains.
You hope for light but he will turn it to shadow dark as death,
will change it to blackness.

¹⁷ If you do not listen to this warning,
I shall weep in secret for your pride
and my eyes will weep bitterly and stream with tears;
for, Yahweh's flock is being led into captivity.

¹³ 'Drunkenness' refers first to the drunken stupor of confusion on the part of leaders and citizens of the land, which will cause them to clash with one another but it also refers to the reeling under God's wrath that results from this (cf. 25:15-29, especially vv. 15-16).

¹⁴ The NJB ends this verse with, "Mercilessly, relentlessly, pitilessly, I shall destroy them." Here, we follow the NRSV.

¹⁵ The last opportunity for repentance is offered to wayward Judah; her captivity is imminent (v. 17).

¹⁶ The *Kethib*/*Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

¹⁷ The depth of Jeremiah's sorrow for the sad plight of his people is emphasised by the triple repetition of the word 'tears'/'weep'.

<p>יְהוָה אָמַר לַמֶּלֶךְ וּלְגַבִּירָה הַשְׁפִּילוּ שִׁבּוֹ כִּי יֵרֵד מִרְאֲשׁוֹתֵיכֶם עֲטֹרֹת תְּפָאֲרֹתְכֶם: עָרֵי הַנֶּגֶב סָגְרוּ וְאִין פִּתְחָהּ הַגָּלִית יְהוּדָה כֻּלָּהּ הַגָּלִית שְׁלֹמִים: {ס}</p> <p>כ שְׂאֵי עֵינֶיכֶם וּרְאוּ הַבָּאִים מִצָּפוֹן אֵינָה הָעֵדֶר נְתוּן־לְךָ צֹאן תְּפָאֲרֹתֶיךָ:</p> <p>כא מֵה־תֹּאמְרֵי כִּי־יִפְקֹד עָלֶיךָ וְאֵת לְמַדְתָּ אֹתָם עָלֶיךָ אֲלֵפִים</p>	<p>18 Tell the king and queen mother, "Surrender your thrones, since your glorious crowns have fallen from your heads.</p> <p>19 The towns of the Negeb are shut off with no one to give access to them. All Judah has been deported, deported wholesale."</p> <p>20 Raise your eyes and look at these, now coming from the north. Where is the flock once entrusted to you, the flock that was your pride?</p> <p>21 What will you say when they set as head over you, those whom you have trained</p>
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18 The 2nd line here follows NETB; the MT reads "Make low! Sit!" and this is followed more literally by the NRSV ('take a lowly seat') and NJB ('sit in a lower place'), with support from the LXX (ταπεινώσθητε καὶ καθίσατε - 'be humbled and sit down'). This is a verbal hendiadys: 'sit' is used to represent the 'object' of sitting which, for a king, is his 'throne'. Compare the usage in Is 37:30 & Ps 110:2. The last line follows the common emendation of מְרִאשׁוֹתֵיכֶם ('place at the head') to מְרִאשֵׁיכֶם ('from your head'), with support from the LXX (ἀπὸ κεφαλῆς ὑμῶν) and Peshitta.

19 The Negeb was, presumably, 'shut off' by the Edomites, whose raids had been almost continuous since 602 BCE.

20 The *Ketiv* opens with a singular form (שְׂאֵי), followed by the LXX (Ἀνάλαβε), in place of the plural שְׂאֵי, here following the *Qere*; 'These' follows the *Qere* (וּרְאוּ) and LXX (which adds 'Jerusalem' - τούτης); the *Ketiv* has a singular pronoun (וּרְאֵי).

21 The translation of the first 3 lines (here following the NRSV) is somewhat uncertain; the MT reads, "What will you do when he appoints over you/punishes and you, yourself, taught them over you friends/chiefs for a head." The NJB has 'punishes' in place 'set as head over'. NETB has, "What will you say when he appoints as rulers over you those allies that you, yourself, had actually prepared as such?" This assumes the clause 'and you, yourself, taught them' is parenthetical, coming between the verb 'appoint' and its object and object modifier (i.e., 'appointed over you allies for rulers').

לְרֹאשׁ
 הַלּוֹא חֲבָלִים יֶאֱחָזוּךָ
 כְּמֹו אִשָּׁת לְדָה:
 כב וְכִי תֹאמְרִי בְלִבְבְּךָ
 מִדּוּעַ קִרְאַנִי אֵלֶּה
 בְּרַב עֲוֹנֶיךָ נִגְלָו שׁוּלְיֶיךָ
 נַחֲמָסוּ עֲקֵבֶיךָ:
 כג הֲיִהְיֶה כּוֹשֵׁי עוֹרוֹ
 וְנִמְר חֲבַרְבְּרָתִיו
 גַּם־אַתָּם תּוֹכְלוּ לְהִיטִיב
 לְמַדֵּי הָרַע:
 כד וְאַפִּיצֶם כְּקֹשֶׁעֹזֶבֶר
 לְרוּחַ מִדְבָּר:
 כה זֶה גּוֹרְלְךָ מִנֶּת־מִדְּיָד מֵאֵתִי
 נֶאֱס־יְהוָה
 אֲשֶׁר שָׁכַחְתָּ אוֹתִי
 וַתִּבְטַחִי בַשֶּׁקֶר:

to be your allies?

Then will not anguish grip you
as it grips a woman in labour?

22 Then ask yourself,
"Why is all this happening to me?"

It is for your great guilt that your skirts are lifted
and you have been manhandled.

23 Can the Ethiopian change his skin,
or the leopard his spots?
And can you do right,
being so accustomed to wrong?

24 "I shall scatter you like chaff
on the desert wind.

25 This is your lot, the part I have apportioned for you,
says Yahweh,
because you have forgotten me
and put your trust in Delusion.

22 The literal translation of the last line is 'your heels have been ravished' (a euphemism). Using a common biblical simile for judgement, the ravishing of a woman (Is 47:2, here the untrustworthy shepherdess), Jeremiah describes the approaching rape (vv. 22, 26) of Jerusalem by Babylon.

23 An alternative translation for 'Ethiopian' is 'Nubian'; the MT has 'Cushite'.

24 'You' is a conjectural translation; the MT has 'them'. This is another example of the rapid shift in pronouns seen several times in the book of Jeremiah; the pronouns in the preceding and the following verse are 2FS, so it could be argued that 'them' goes back to the 'flock' in v. 20, but the next verse refers the fate described here to 'you' (FS).

25 For the 1st line, NETB reads, "This is your fate, the destiny to which I have appointed you."

וְגַם־אֲנִי חֲשַׁפְתִּי שׁוּלְיֶךָ עַל־פְּנֶיךָ כו
וְנִרְאָה קְלוּנָךְ:
נֶאֱפִיךָ וּמִצְהָלוֹתֶיךָ זִמַּת זְנוּתֶךָ כו
עַל־גְּבוּעוֹת בַּשָּׂדֶה
רָאִיתִי שְׁקוּצֶיךָ
אֲזִי לְךָ יְרוּשָׁלַם
לֹא תִטְהָרִי
אַחֲרֵי מָתִי עַד: {ס}

²⁶ I am the one who pulls your skirts up over your face to let your shame be seen.

²⁷ Oh, your adulteries, your shrieks of pleasure, your wile prostitution! On the hills, in the fields, I have seen your Horrors. Jerusalem, disaster is coming for you! How much longer until you are made clean?"

²⁶ Judah will be exposed like a disgraced adulteress.

²⁷ 'Delusion' (v. 25) and 'Horrors' are false gods, as before.

ירמיהו פרק יד

JEREMIAH 14

אֲשֶׁר הָיָה דְבַר־יְהוָה אֶל־יְרֵמְיָהוּ עַל־דְּבַר־י הַבְּצֻרוֹת: 1 The word of Yahweh that came to Jeremiah on the occasion of the drought:

- ב אֲבֵלָה יְהוּדָה
וְשַׁעֲרֶיהָ אִמְלָלוּ קִדְרוּ לְאָרֶץ
וְצוֹחַת יְרוּשָׁלַם עָלְתָה:
ג וְאֲדָרִיָּהִם שָׁלְחוּ צַעוּרֵיהֶם צְעִירֵיהֶם לַמַּיִם
בָּאוּ עַל־גְּבֵיִם לֹא־מָצְאוּ מַיִם
שָׁבוּ כְלֵיהֶם רִיקָם
בָּשׂוּ וְהִכְלָמוּ וְחָפּוּ רֹאשָׁם:
ד בַּעֲבוּר הָאֲדָמָה חֲתָה
כִּי לֹא־הָיָה גֶשֶׁם בְּאָרֶץ
בָּשׂוּ אֲכָרִים
חָפּוּ רֹאשָׁם:
ה כִּי גַם־אֵילַת בְּשׂוּדָה יִלְדָה וְעִזּוֹב
כִּי לֹא־הָיָה דֶּשֶׂא:
ו וּפְרָאִים עֹמְדוּ עַל־שָׁפְיִים 6
- 2 "Judah is in mourning,
her gates are pining, sinking to the ground;
a cry goes up from Jerusalem.
3 The nobles send their servants for water,
they come to the water-tanks, find no water,
and return with their pitchers empty.
Dismayed and bewildered, they cover their heads.
4 Because the soil is all cracked,
since the country has had no rain,
the farmers are dismayed
and they cover their heads.
5 Even the doe in the field abandons her new-born fawn
because there is no grass.
6 The wild donkeys standing on the bare heights

JEREMIAH 14

- 1 This drought was probably during the reign of Jehoiakim (609–598 BCE).
2 In place of 'her gates' (here following the MT and NRSV), the NJB has 'her towns'.
3 The *Kethib*/*Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.
4 The word here translated as 'cracked' (חֲתָה) is used in 51:56 of broken bows.
5 The literal translation of 'abandons her new-born fawn' is 'she gives birth and abandons'.
6 Literally translated, the last line reads, "their eyes are strained because there is no verdure."

שֶׁאֶפּוֹ רוּחַ כְּתַנִּים
 כָּלוּ עֵינֵיהֶם כִּי־אֵין עֵשֶׁב:
 אִם־עֲוֹנוֹנֵינוּ עָנּוּ בָנוּ ז
 יְהוָה עֲשֵׂה לְמַעַן שְׁמֶךָ
 כִּי־רַבּוּ מִשׁוֹבְתֵינוּ
 לָךְ חַטָּאִים:
 מִקְוֵה יִשְׂרָאֵל ח
 מוֹשִׁיעוּ בְּעַת צָרָה
 לָמָּה תְהִיָּה כְּגַר בְּאֶרֶץ
 וּכְאֶרֶח נָטָה לְלוֹן:
 לָמָּה תְהִיָּה כְּאִישׁ נִדְהָם ט
 כְּגִבּוֹר לֹא־יֻכַל לְהוֹשִׁיעַ
 וְאַתָּה בְּקִרְבָּנוּ יְהוָה
 וְשִׁמְךָ עָלֵינוּ נִקְרָא אֶל־תִּנְחַנוּ: {ס}
 כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה לְעַם הַזֶּה י
 כִּן אָהָבוּ לְנוּעַ רַגְלֵיהֶם
 לֹא חִשְׁכוּ
 וַיְהוֶה לָא רָצָם

gasp for air like jackals;
 their eyes grow dim for lack of pasture.”
 7 Although our sins witness against us,
 Yahweh, for your name’s sake, intervene!
 Yes, our acts of infidelity have been many
 and we have sinned against you.
 8 O hope of Israel,
 its Saviour in time of distress,
 why are you like a stranger in this country,
 like a traveller staying for only one night?
 9 Why are you like someone bemused,
 like a warrior who has no power to rescue?
 Yet, you are among us, Yahweh;
 we are called by your name. Do not desert us!
 10 Yahweh says this about the people:
 Truly they have loved to wander;
 they have not restrained their feet;
 therefore Yahweh does not accept them,

7 Prostrate on the ground (v. 2), in the words of a prayer for a Day of Repentance, the people confess their sins and, as they are his covenant people, plead with God to remember them.

8 The NJB, following the LXX & *Vetus Latina*, adds the divine name, ‘Yahweh’ to the beginning of the verse; here, we follow the MT & NRSV.

9 The word translated ‘bemused’ (נִדְהָם) occurs only here in the Hebrew Bible; although most translations give the meaning of confusion or surprise, the word has been found in a letter from the 7th Century, where it appears to mean something like ‘be helpless’.

10 It is difficult to be certain how כִּן (usually used for ‘thus’) is to be rendered in the 2nd line. ‘Truly’ follows the NRSV & NETB.

עֲתָה יִזְכֹּר עֲוֹנָם
וַיִּפְקֹד חַטָּאתָם: {פ}

now he will remember their iniquity
and punish their sins.

י^א וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֵלַי אֶל-תִּפְלַל בְּעַד-הָעָם הַזֶּה
לְטוֹבָה: י^ב כִּי יִצְמוּ אֵינֶנִּי שְׂמֵעַ אֶל-רִנָּתָם וְכִי יַעֲלוּ
עֲלָהּ וּמִנְחָה אֵינֶנִּי רֹצֵם כִּי בַחֲרֹב וּבַרְעָב וּבַדָּבָר
אֲנֹכִי מְכַלֶּה אוֹתָם: {ס}

¹¹ Yahweh then said to me, “Do not intercede for the welfare of this people. ¹² If they fast, I will not listen to their plea; if they offer burnt offerings and cereal offerings, I will not accept them. Rather, I shall make an end of them by war, famine and plague.”

י^ג וַאֲמַר אֲהֵהּ | אֲדַנִּי יְהוָה הִנֵּה הַנְּבִאִים אֹמְרִים
לָהֶם לֹא-תֵרְאוּ חָרֵב וְרָעַב לֹא-יְהִיָּה לָכֶם כִּי-שָׁלוֹם
אָמַת אֲתֵן לָכֶם בַּמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה: {ס}

¹³ “Ah, Lord Yahweh,” I answered, “here are the prophets telling them, “You will not see the sword and famine will not touch you; I promise you true peace in this place.””

י^ד וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֵלַי שִׁקֵּר הַנְּבִאִים נְבִאִים בְּשְׁמִי לֹא
שָׁלַחְתִּים וְלֹא צִוִּיתִים וְלֹא דִבַּרְתִּי אֲלֵיהֶם חֲזוֹן
שִׁקֵּר וְקֶסֶם וְאֵלּוּל וְתַרְמוֹת [וְאֵלִיל וְתַרְמִית] לְבָם
הֵמָּה מִתְנַבְּאִים לָכֶם: {ס}

¹⁴ Then Yahweh said to me, “The prophets are prophesying lies in my name; I did not send them, I gave them no orders and did not speak to them. They prophesy to you delusive visions, hollow predictions and daydreams of their own.”

טו לָכֵן כֹּה-אָמַר יְהוָה עַל-הַנְּבִאִים הַנְּבִאִים בְּשְׁמִי
וְאֲנִי לֹא-שָׁלַחְתִּים וְהֵמָּה אֹמְרִים חָרֵב וְרָעַב לֹא
יְהִיָּה בְּאֶרֶץ הַזֹּאת בַּחֲרֹב וּבַרְעָב יִתְמוּ הַנְּבִאִים

¹⁵ Therefore, Yahweh says this: “As for the prophets who prophesy in my name when I have not sent them, and tell you war and famine shall not come to this land: these same prophets will meet their end by war

¹¹ The literal translation of ‘for the welfare of this people’ is ‘on behalf of these people for their benefit’.

¹² ‘War’ (literally, ‘the sword’), ‘famine’ and ‘plague’ were penalties (curses) that were to be imposed on Israel for failure to keep her covenant with God (cf. Lev 26:23–26); these 3 occur together 14 other times in the book of Jeremiah.

¹³ ‘This place’ is the Temple. Jeremiah’s efforts to excuse the people’s heedlessness because of misplaced reliance in the false prophets’ beguiling message are rejected. The people have made their decision – the wrong one – and will be punished.

¹⁴ The *Kethib*/*Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

¹⁵ The rhetoric of the passage is again sustained by an emphatic word order which contrasts what they say will not happen to the land, ‘war and famine’, with the punishment that Yahweh will inflict on them.

וְהָעָם אֲשֶׁר-הָמָה נִבְּאִים לָהֶם יִהְיוּ
מִשְׁלָכִים בְּחֻצוֹת יְרוּשָׁלַם מִפְּנֵי הָרֶעֶב וְהַחֶרֶב
וְאִין מִקְבֵר לָהֶם הָמָה נְשִׂיהֶם וּבְנֵיהֶם וּבָנֹתֵיהֶם
וְשִׁפְכֹתַי עֲלֵיהֶם אֶת-רַעְתָם: ^{טז} וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵיהֶם
אֶת-הַדְּבָר הַזֶּה תִּרְדְּנָה עֵינַי דְּמַעָה לַיְלָה וַיּוֹמֵם
וְאֶל-תְּדַמֶּינָה כִּי שֹׁבֵר גְּדוֹל נִשְׁבְּרָה בְּתוֹלַת בַּת-
עַמִּי מִכָּה נִחְלָה מְאֹד: ^{יז} אִם-יֵצְאֵתִי הַשָּׂדֶה וְהִנֵּה
חֲלָלֵי-חֶרֶב וְאִם בְּאֶתִי הָעִיר וְהִנֵּה תַחֲלוּאֵי רֶעֶב
כִּי-גַם-נִבְיָא גַם-כֹּהֵן סָחְרוּ אֶל-אֶרֶץ וְלֹא
יִדְעוּ: {ס}

^{יט} הַמָּאֵס מְאֹסָתָ אֶת-יְהוּדָה
אִם-בְּצִיּוֹן גָּעַלָה נַפְשֶׁךָ
מִדּוּעַ הִכִּיתֵנוּ וְאִין לָנוּ מִרְפָּא
קוּוָה לְשָׁלוֹם וְאִין טוֹב
וּלְעַת מִרְפָּא וְהִנֵּה בְּעַתָּה:
^כ יִדְעֵנוּ יְהוָה רְשָׁעֵנוּ
עוֹן אֲבוֹתֵינוּ
כִּי חָטְאֵנוּ לָךְ:

and famine. ¹⁶ As for the people to whom they prophesy, they will be tossed into the streets of Jerusalem, victims of famine and the sword, with not a soul to bury them; neither them nor their wives, nor their sons, nor their daughters. I shall pour their own evil down on them. ¹⁷ You shall say to them this word: Let my eyes run down with tears night and day, unceasingly, since the daughter of my people has sustained a fearsome wound, a crippling injury. ¹⁸ If I go into the countryside, there lie those killed by the sword; if I go into the city, I see people tortured with hunger; even prophets and priests roam the country at their wits' end."

¹⁹ Have you rejected Judah altogether?
Does your very soul revolt at Zion?
Why have you struck us down without hope of cure?
We were hoping for peace – no good came of it –
for the moment of cure – nothing but terror!
²⁰ Yahweh, we acknowledge our wickedness,
our ancestors' guilt:
we have indeed sinned against you.

¹⁶ Hebrew words often include within them a polarity of cause and effect; thus, the word for 'evil' includes both the concept of wickedness and the punishment for it.

¹⁷ The opening clause is an editorial link, clumsily introducing what follows.

¹⁸ The word 'hunger' has been translated 'famine' elsewhere in this passage but the hunger here may be war induced.

¹⁹ More strongly than in vv. 10-12, the people plead their case, casting themselves wholly on God's mercy.

²⁰ The 3rd line has another example of the intensive use of the particle כִּי.

אֶל־תִּנְאַץ לְמַעַן שְׁמִיךָ כֹּא
 אֶל־תִּנְבֹּל כְּסֵא כְבוֹדֲךָ
 זְכֹר אֶל־תִּפְרַר בְּרִיתְךָ אֶתְנוּ:
 הַיֵּשׁ בְּהַבְּלֵי הַגּוֹזִים מִגְּשָׁמִים כֹּב
 וְאִם־הַשָּׁמַיִם יִתְּנוּ רְבִיבִים
 הֲלֹא אַתָּה־הוּא יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ
 וְנִקְוָה־לְךָ כִּי־אַתָּה עֹשֵׂית אֶת־כָּל־אֵלֶּה:
 {פ}

- 21 For your name's sake, do not reject us;
do not dishonour the throne of your glory.
Remember us: do not break your covenant with us.
- 22 Can any of the nations' Futile Ones make it rain?
Can the heavens, of their own accord, give showers?
Are you not the one, Yahweh our God?
In you is our hope, since you make all these things.

21 The 2nd line refers to Zion.

22 The word translated 'Futile Ones' (הַבְּלִי) is a common pejorative epithet for idols or false gods (cf. 8:19 and 10:8).

ירמיהו פרק טו

^א וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֵלַי אִם־יַעֲמִד מֹשֶׁה וְשַׁמּוּאֵל לְפָנַי
אֵין נִפְשִׁי אֶל־הָעָם הַזֶּה שְׁלַח מֵעַל־פָּנָי וַיִּצְאוּ:
^ב וְהָיָה כִּי־יֹאמְרוּ אֵלֶיךָ אָנָּה נֵצַא וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵיהֶם
כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה

אֲשֶׁר לַמָּוֶת לַמָּוֶת
וְאֲשֶׁר לַחֶרֶב לַחֶרֶב
וְאֲשֶׁר לָרָעֵב לָרָעֵב
וְאֲשֶׁר לְשָׁבִי לְשָׁבִי:

^ג וּפְקַדְתִּי עֲלֵיהֶם אַרְבַּע מִשְׁפָּחוֹת נְאֻם־יְהוָה אֶת־
הַחֶרֶב לְהַרְגֹּתָם וְאֶת־הַכְּלָבִים לְסַחֲבֹתָם וְאֶת־עוֹף
הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת־בְּהֵמַת הָאָרֶץ לֶאֱכֹל וּלְהַשְׁחִית:
^ד וַיִּנְתְּתִים לְזוּעָה לְזוּעָה לְכָל מַמְלָכוֹת הָאָרֶץ בְּגִלְלֵי
מְנַשֶּׁה בֶן־יְחִזְקִיָּהוּ מֶלֶךְ יְהוּדָה עַל אֲשֶׁר־עָשָׂה
בִּירוּשָׁלַם:

^ה כִּי מִי־יַחֲמֵל עָלֶיךָ
יְרוּשָׁלַם וּמִי יִגְוֹד לָךְ

JEREMIAH 15

¹ Then Yahweh said to me, “Even if Moses and Samuel pleaded before me, I could not sympathise with this people! Drive them out of my sight; away with them!” ² And, if they ask you, “Where shall we go?” tell them this, “Yahweh says this:

Those for the plague, to the plague
and those for the sword, to the sword;
those for famine, to famine
and those for captivity, to captivity!

³ “And I shall consign them to four kinds of thing, says Yahweh: the sword to kill, and the dogs to drag away, and the birds of heaven and the wild animals of the earth to devour and to destroy. ⁴ I shall make them an object of horror to all the kingdoms of the earth, because of Manasseh son of Hezekiah, king of Judah, and what he did to Jerusalem.”

⁵ Who will pity you, Jerusalem,
who will grieve for you,

JEREMIAH 15

- ¹ Moses and Samuel were the great intercessors (see #Ex 31:11, 1S 7:8–12, Ps 99:6); to these, later tradition adds Jeremiah himself (see #2M 15:14).
- ² It is difficult to render the rhetorical force of this passage in meaningful English: the text answers the question “Where should we go?” with four brief staccato-like expressions with a play on the preposition ‘to’.
- ³ More literally translated, this verse opens, “I will appoint over them four guilds.”
- ⁴ The *Kethib*/*Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.
- ⁵ This poem was probably pronounced just before the siege of 596 BCE.

וּמִי יִסּוּר
 לְשֹׂאֵל לְשִׁלְמֵי לְדָךְ:
 אֶת־נִטְשֹׁתַי אֶת־י נְאֻם־יְהוָה
 אֲחֹזֵר תְּלִכִי
 וְאֵט אֶת־יָדַי עָלֶיךָ וְאֲשַׁחֲיִתְךָ
 נְלֵאִיתִי הַנְּחָם:
 וְאֲזַרְמֵם בְּמִזְרָה
 בְּשַׁעְרֵי הָאָרֶץ
 שִׁבַּלְתִּי אֲבֹדְתִי אֶת־עַמִּי
 מִדְּרָכֵיהֶם לֹא־שָׁבוּ:
 עֲצֻמוֹתַי לִי אֲלֻמְנוֹתָיו מִחֹל יָמִים
 הִבֵּאתִי לָהֶם עַל־אֵם בַּחֹזֵר שִׁדְד בְּצַהָרִים
 הַפְּלַתִי עָלֶיהָ פְּתָאֵם
 עִיר וּבְהִלּוֹת:
 אֲמַלְלָהּ יִלְדֹת הַשְּׁבִעָה
 נִפְחָה נִפְשָׁהּ בָּאָה בָּא שֶׁמֶשׁהּ בְּעַד יוֹמָם
 בּוֹשָׁה וְחִפְרָה
 וְשִׂאֲרֵיהֶם לְחָרֵב אֶתֶּן לְפָנַי אִיְבֵיהֶם
 נְאֻם־יְהוָה: {ס}

who will turn aside
 to ask about your welfare?

- 6 “You have rejected me, says Yahweh, you are going backward; so I have stretched my hand over you and destroyed you. Tired of relenting,
- 7 I have winnowed them with a winnow at the country’s gates. They have been bereft, I have destroyed my people, but they refuse to leave their ways.
- 8 Their widows outnumbered the sand of the sea. At noon I brought a destroyer against the mothers of youths. I have made anguish and terror fall upon her suddenly.
- 9 The mother of seven sons grows faint and gasps for breath. It is still day but already her sun has set – she is dismayed and distracted; and the rest of them I shall give to the sword, to their enemies, says Yahweh.”

6 There is a difference of opinion on how the verbs here and in the following verses are to be rendered, whether past or future; here, we follow the *NJB* & *NRSV*, in rendering them as past, whereas the *KJV*, *NASB* & *NIV*, for example, render them as future.

7 Winnowing was the process where a mixture of grain and straw was thrown up into the wind to separate them and the husks.

8 The words translated ‘mothers’ and ‘youths’ are both (collective) singulars in the *MT*.

9 ‘The mother of seven sons’ is a sign of favour (see *Rt* 4:15, *1S* 2:5). The *Kethib/Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

אִוִּי־לִי אִמִּי כִּי יִלְדֹתַנִּי אִישׁ רִיב וְאִישׁ מְדוֹן לְכָל־הָאָרֶץ לֹא־נִשְׁתִּי וְלֹא־נִשׁוּבִי כִּלְאִי מִקְלָלֹנִי: {ס}	י	10 A disaster for me, mother, that you bore me to be a man of strife and dissension for the whole country. I neither lend nor borrow, yet all of them curse me.
אָמַר יְהוָה אִם־לֹא שְׂרוּתְךָ שִׁרִיתִיךָ לְטוֹב אִם־לְזָאֵל הִפְגַּעְתִּי בְּךָ בַּעַת רָעָה וּבַעַת צָרָה אֶת־הָאֵיב: הֲיִרְעַ בְּרֹזֶל בְּרֹזֶל מִצָּפוֹן וּנְחָשֶׁת: חִלְדֶּךָ וְאוֹצְרוֹתֶיךָ לְבֹז אֶתֶּן לֹא בְמַחִיר וּבְכָל־חַטָּאוֹתֶיךָ וּבְכָל־גְּבוּלוֹיֶיךָ: וְהִעַבְרְתִּי אֶת־אֵיבֶיךָ בְּאָרֶץ לֹא יָדַעְתָּ	יא יב יג	11 Yahweh, have I not genuinely done my best to serve you? Have I not interceded with you in time of disaster and distress? 12 “Can iron break the iron of the north and the bronze? 13 Your wealth and your treasures I shall give as plunder, without repayment, because of all your sins, throughout your territory.
	יד	14 I shall enslave you to your enemies in a land that you do not know,

¹⁰ Here, as in 12:5, far from soothing Jeremiah’s distress, God condemns it as ‘despicable’ and demands of him a new ‘conversion’, which he sanctions by renewing, in almost identical terms, the commands and promises of Jeremiah’s original call (vv. 19–20, cf. 1:9, 17–19).

¹¹ At the end of this verse, the *MT* adds ‘the enemy’, possibly a gloss explaining the time of disaster. The verse is very obscure. Following the *LXX* and the *NJB*, we here assign the words to Jeremiah, which best fits the context; the *MT*, with some strain (as in the *NRSV*) can be translated: “Yahweh said: ‘Have I not rescued you for your own good? Have I not made the enemy come and plead with you in time of disaster and distress.’” In the latter case, v. 12 should presumably not be taken as a threat against Israel, linking it with what follows, but as a promise to make Jeremiah as solid as bronze (cf. v. 20, 1:18), linking it with v. 11. The *Kethib/Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

¹² Vv. 12–14 (or vv. 13–14 – *vide supra*) largely duplicate 17:3–4 and are out of context here.

¹³ The *NRSV* formats vv. 13–14 as prose; here, following the *NJB*, we use poetic formatting.

¹⁴ The 1st line follows the *LXX* (καὶ καταδουλώσω σε κύκλω τοῖς ἐχθροῖς σου) and *Peshitta*; the *MT* reads, “I shall make your enemies pass.” The difference in reading is between ד and ר.

כִּי־אֵשׁ קִדְחָהּ בְּאִפִּי
עַל־יְכֶם תּוֹקֵד: {ס}

טו אַתָּה יָדַעְתָּ יְהוָה

זְכַרְנִי וּפְקֹדֵנִי וְהִנָּקֶם לִי מִרְדֹּפָי

אֶל־לְאָרֶץ אֶפְרָיִם תִּקְחֵנִי

דַּע שְׂאֵתִי עָלֶיךָ חֲרָפָה:

טז נִמְצְאוּ דְבָרֶיךָ וְאֶכְלָם

וַיְהִי דְבַרְיֶךָ דְבָרֶךָ לִי

לְשִׁשׁוֹן וּלְשִׁמְחַת לְבָבִי

כִּי־נִקְרָא שְׁמֶךָ עָלַי

יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי צְבָאוֹת: {ס}

יז לֹא־יִשְׁבַּתִּי בְּסוּד־מְשַׁחֲקִים וְאֶעְלֹז

מִפְנֵי יָדֶךָ בְּדַד יִשְׁבַּתִּי

כִּי־זַעַם מְלֵאתָנִי:

יח לָמָּה הָיָה כְּאֲבִי נֹצֵחַ

וּמִכַּתִּי אֲנוּשָׁה

מֵאֲנָה הַרְפָּא

הָיָה תְהִיָּה לִי כִּמוֹ אֲכֹזֵב

מִיָּם לֹא נֶאֱמָנוּ: {ס}

for my anger as kindled a fire
that will burn you up.”

15 You know, Yahweh!

Remember me, visit me, and avenge me on my persecutors.

However long your anger endures, do not snatch me away.

Realise that I suffer insult for your sake.

16 When your words came, I devoured them:

your word was my delight

and the joy of my heart;

for I was called by your Name:

Yahweh, God Sabaoth.

17 I never sat in the company of scoffers amusing myself;

with your hand on me, I held myself aloof,

since you had filled me with indignation.

18 Why is my suffering continual,

my wound incurable,

refusing to be healed?

Truly, for me you are a deceptive stream

with uncertain waters!

15 With the familiar phrase, ‘you know’ (Ps 40:9, 139), Jeremiah prays to God for retribution against his persecutors.

16 The *Kethib/Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation. *NETB* completely lacks the last line of this verse.

17 The ‘hand’ of God, often the symbol of inspiration (Is 8:11, Ezk 3:14, 22) is here a symbol of burden.

18 In the last 2 lines, Jeremiah speaks of the stream beds or wadis that fill with water after the spring rains but often dry up in the summer.

ט' לִכֵּן כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה
 אִם־תָּשׁוּב וְאָשִׁיבָךָ לִפְנֵי תַעֲמֹד
 וְאִם־תּוֹצִיא יִקָּר מְזוּלָל
 כְּפִי תִהְיֶה
 יָשׁוּבוּ הֵמָּה אֵלַיךָ
 וְאַתָּה לֹא־תָשׁוּב אֲלֵיהֶם:
 כ' וּנְתַתִּיךָ לָעַם הַזֶּה
 לְחֹמַת נְחֹשֶׁת בְּצוּרָה
 וְנִלְחָמוּ אֵלַיךָ
 וְלֹא־יִנְכְּלוּ לָךְ
 כִּי־אֶתְּךָ אֲנִי לְהוֹשִׁיעַךָ וּלְהַצִּילְךָ
 נְאֻם־יְהוָה:
 כ"א וְהִצַּלְתִּיךָ מִיַּד רָעִים
 וּפְדַתִּיךָ מִכַּף עֲרָצִים: {ס}

19 To which Yahweh replied,
 "If you repent, I shall restore you to plead before me.
 If you distinguish between the precious and the base,
 you shall be as my own mouth.
 They will come back to you
 but you must not go back to them.
 20 As far as these people are concerned, I shall make you
 a fortified wall of bronze.
 They will fight against you
 but will not overcome you,
 because I am with you to save you and rescue you,
 says Yahweh.
 21 I shall rescue you from the clutches of the wicked
 and redeem you from the grasp of the violent."

19 The expression of the 2nd line is typical of Jeremiah's style (cg. 17:14, 20:7). The prophet thus underlines the very close link between human and divine action. An alternative translation is, "If you return, I shall return you," (cf. 1:17, containing the same idea but with shaper emphasis on human cooperation that makes it possible for God to act). Conversely, human beings must realise that they are powerless, if God does not act on them (cf. 31:18).
 20 Once again, the root 'return' (שׁוּב) is being played on as in 3:1-4:4 (see the threefold call to repentance in 3:12, 14 & 22). He is to serve as a model of repentance, not an imitator of their apostasy: in accusing God of being unreliable, he was dangerously close to their behaviour.
 21 In place of 'violent', here following the NJB & NETB, the NRSV has 'ruthless'.

ירמיהו פרק טז

א וַיְהִי דְבַר־יְהוָה אֵלַי לֵאמֹר: ב לֹא־תִקַּח לְךָ אִשָּׁה
וְלֹא־יִהְיוּ לְךָ בָנִים וּבָנוֹת בַּמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה: {ס}
ג כִּי־כֹה אָמַר יְהוָה עַל־הַבָּנִים וְעַל־הַבָּנוֹת
הַיִּלּוּדִים בַּמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה וְעַל־אִמֹתָם הַיִּלְדוֹת אוֹתָם
וְעַל־אֲבוֹתָם הַמּוֹלְדִים אוֹתָם בְּאֶרֶץ הַזֹּאת:
ד מִמוֹתַי תִּחְלָאִים יָמָתוּ לֹא יִסְפְּדוּ וְלֹא יִקְבְּרוּ
לְדַמֵּן עַל־פְּנֵי הָאָדָמָה יִהְיוּ וּבַחֲרָב וּבִרְעָב יִכָּלוּ
וְהָיְתָה גְבֻלָתָם לְמַאֲכָל לְעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וּלְבֵהֱמַת
הָאָרֶץ: {ס}

ה כִּי־כֹה אָמַר יְהוָה אֲל־תָּבוֹא בֵּית מְרוֹזַח וְאֲל־
תִּלְךָ לְסִפּוּד וְאֲל־תִּגְד לָהֶם כִּי־אֶסְפְּתִי אֶת־שְׁלוֹמִי
מֵאֵת הָעָם הַזֶּה נֹאֲס־יְהוָה אֶת־הַחֶסֶד וְאֶת־
הַרְחָמִים: ו וּמָתוּ גְדֹלִים וּקְטַנִּים בְּאֶרֶץ הַזֹּאת לֹא
יִקְבְּרוּ וְלֹא־יִסְפְּדוּ לָהֶם וְלֹא יִתְגַּדְד וְלֹא יִקְרַח
לָהֶם: ז וְלֹא־יִפְרְסוּ לָהֶם עַל־אֲבָל לְנַחֲמוֹ עַל־מַת
וְלֹא־יִשְׁקוּ אוֹתָם כּוֹס תְּנַחֲוּמִים עַל־אֲבִיו וְעַל־

JEREMIAH 16

1 The word of Yahweh was addressed to me as follows: 2 “You are not to marry or have sons and daughters in this place.

3 For, Yahweh says this regarding the sons and daughters who are born in this place, and concerning the mothers who give birth to them and about the fathers who sire them in this land, 4 “They shall die of deadly diseases; they shall not be lamented or buried; they will be like dung spread on the ground; they will meet their end by sword and famine, and their corpses will be food for the birds of the sky and the beasts of the earth.”

5 “Yes, Yahweh says this: “Do not go into any house where there is mourning; do not go and lament or grieve with them; for, I have withdrawn my peace from this people, says Yahweh, and faithful love and pity too. 6 Both great and small, they will die in this country, without burial or lament; there will be no gashing, no shaving of the head for them. 7 No one shall break bread for mourning to comfort him for the dead; no cup of consolation will be offered him for his father or

JEREMIAH 16

1 The prophets often use symbolic actions to reinforce their preaching (see #18:1) but sometimes their very lives become symbol and sign.

2 NETB has ‘here in this land’ in place of ‘in this place’, here following the NJB & NRSV.

3 The NJB & NRSV have the more traditional ‘beget’ in place of ‘sire’.

4 The absence of funeral rites or burial was regarded as a frightful curse (22:18–19, 1K 14:11, Ezk 29:5).

5 Israel’s faithlessness has nullified God’s obligation for covenant loyalty.

6 Such funeral rites, though forbidden by the Law (Lv 19:27–28, Dt 14:1) were practised in Israel (Jr 7:29, 41:5).

7 ‘Bread’ follows the LXX (ἄρτος); the MT has ‘for them’. The NJB, following the Vg, has ‘the mourner’ in place of ‘mourning’.

אָמוֹ: ^ח וּבֵית־מִשְׁתֶּה לֹא־תָבוֹא לְשֵׁבֶת אוֹתָם
לֶאֱכַל וּלְשָׂתוֹת: {פ}

^ט כִּי כֹה אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הֲנִי
מִשְׁבִּית מִן־הַמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה לְעֵינֵיכֶם וּבִימֵיכֶם קוֹל
שְׂשׂוֹן וְקוֹל שְׂמִחָה קוֹל חֲתָן וְקוֹל כְּלֵה: ^י וְהִיָּה כִּי
תִגִּיד לָעַם הַזֶּה אֵת כָּל־הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה וְאָמְרוּ
אֵלֶיךָ עַל־מָה דִּבֶּר יְהוָה עָלֵינוּ אֵת כָּל־הַרְעָה
הַגְּדוֹלָה הַזֹּאת וּמָה עֲוֹנֵנוּ וּמָה חָטָאתָנוּ אֲשֶׁר
חָטָאנוּ לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ: ^{יא} וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵיהֶם עַל
אֲשֶׁר־עָזְבוּ אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם אוֹתִי נְאֻם־יְהוָה וַיִּלְכוּ אַחֲרֵי
אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים וַיַּעֲבֹדוּם וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוּוּ לָהֶם וְאֵתִי עָזְבוּ
וְאֶת־תּוֹרָתִי לֹא שָׁמְרוּ: ^{יב} וְאַתֶּם הִרְעַתֶּם לַעֲשׂוֹת
מֵאֲבוֹתֵיכֶם וְהִנֵּכֶם הַלְכִים אִישׁ אַחֲרֵי שְׂרָרוֹת
לְבוֹהָרֶע לְבַלְתִּי שְׁמַע אֵלַי: ^{יג} וְהִטַּלְתִּי אֶתְכֶם
מֵעַל הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת עַל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר לֹא יִדְעַתֶּם
אֶתֶם וְאֲבוֹתֵיכֶם וְעַבַּדְתֶּם־שָׁם אֶת־אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים
יִזְמַם וְלִילָה אֲשֶׁר לֹא־אַתֶּן לָכֶם חֲנִינָה: {פ}

his mother. ⁸ “Do not enter a house where there is feasting, to sit with them and eat and drink.

⁹ For, Yahweh Sabaoth, the God of Israel, says this: In this place, before your eyes, in your own days, I will silence the shouts of rejoicing and mirth, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride. ¹⁰ “When you tell these people all these words and they ask you: “Why has Yahweh pronounced such complete and total disaster for us? What have we done wrong? What sin have we committed against Yahweh our God?” ¹¹ then you are to answer them: “It is because your fathers abandoned me, says Yahweh, and followed other gods, and served and worshipped them. They abandoned me and did not keep my Law; ¹² and because you, for your part, have behaved even worse than your ancestors. Look, each of you follows his own stubborn and wicked inclinations, without listening to me. ¹³ Therefore, I shall eject you from this country into a country unknown to you or to your ancestors, and there you can serve other gods, day and night, for I shall show you no more favour.”

⁸ The literal translation of ‘a house where there is feasting’ (here following the NJB) is ‘a house of feasting’ (as NRSV).

⁹ NETB translates the title ‘Yahweh Sabaoth’ (traditionally, ‘the LORD of Hosts’) as ‘the Lord God who rules over all’.

¹⁰ The actions of the prophet would undoubtedly elicit questions about his behaviour and he would have occasion to explain the reason.

¹¹ The NJB has ‘ancestors’ in place of ‘fathers’.

¹² For the argumentation here, compare 7:23–26.

¹³ ‘To serve other gods’ is an ancient expression for living in exile (1S 26:19, cf. 2K 5:17) outside Palestine, which was thought to be Yahweh’s only possession. Alternatively, as Judah has abandoned the true God, so she is condemned to worship false gods in Exile (5:19).

י^ד לְכֵן הַנְּהִי־יָמִים בָּאִים נְאֻם־יְהוָה וְלֹא־יֹאמַר עוֹד
 חִי־יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר הֵעֵלָה אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵאֶרֶץ
 מִצְרַיִם: ^{טו} כִּי אִם־חִי־יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר הֵעֵלָה אֶת־בְּנֵי
 יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵאֶרֶץ צָפוֹן וּמְכֹל הָאָרְצוֹת אֲשֶׁר הִדִּיחָם
 שָׁמָּה וְהִשְׁבַּתִּים עַל־אֲדָמָתָם אֲשֶׁר נָתַתִּי
 לְאֲבוֹתָם: {פ}

^{טז} הִנְנִי שֹׁלַח לְדוֹגִים לְדִיגִים רַבִּים נְאֻם־יְהוָה
 וְדִיגוֹם וְאַחֲרֵי־כֵן אֲשַׁלַּח לְרַבִּים צִידִים וְצִדּוֹם מֵעַל
 כָּל־הָר וּמֵעַל כָּל־גִּבְעָה וּמִנְקִיקֵי הַסְּלָעִים: ^{יז} כִּי
 עֵינַי עַל־כָּל־דַּרְכֵיהֶם לֹא נִסְתָּרוּ מִלְּפָנַי וְלֹא־נִצְפָן
 עוֹנָם מִנֶּגֶד עֵינַי: ^{יח} וְשַׁלַּמְתִּי רֵאשׁוֹנָה מִשְׁנֵה עוֹנָם
 וְחַטָּאתָם עַל חֲלָלָם אֶת־אֶרְצִי בְּנִבְלַת שְׁקוּצֵיהֶם
 וְתוֹעֲבוֹתֵיהֶם מִלְאוּ אֶת־נַחְלָתִי: {פ}

^{יט} יְהוָה עֲזִי וּמַעֲזִי
 וּמְנוֹסֵי בְיָוֶם צָרָה
 אֵלֶיךָ גּוֹיִם יָבֹאוּ מֵאֲפֹסֵי־אֶרֶץ

¹⁴ “Therefore, the days are surely coming, says Yahweh, when people will no longer say, “As Yahweh lives, who brought the Israelites out of the land of Egypt!” ¹⁵ Rather, “As Yahweh lives, who brought the Israelites back from the land of the north and all the countries to which he had driven them.” I shall bring them back to the very soil I gave their fathers.”

¹⁶ “See, I shall send for many fishermen, says Yahweh, and these shall catch them; next, I shall send for many huntsmen, and these shall hunt them from every mountain, every hill and out of the holes in the rocks.

¹⁷ For my eyes watch all their ways; these are not hidden from me and their guilt does not escape my gaze. ¹⁸ I shall doubly repay all their guilt and sin, since they have polluted my country with the carcasses of their Horrors, and filled my heritage with their Abominations.”

¹⁹ Yahweh, my strength, my stronghold,
 my refuge in time of distress!

To you the nations will come from the ends of the earth to say,

¹⁴ Israel’s homecoming, accomplished by God’s actions, will be celebrated as the New Exodus (the passage duplicates 23:7–8).

¹⁵ Vv. 14–15, which constitute one long sentence with compound, complex subordinations has been broken up for sake of English style.

¹⁶ This prophecy was uttered before 598 BCE. Judah cannot escape either Egypt (the ‘fishermen’) or Babylon (the ‘huntsmen’); see Hab 1:14–15. The *Kethib/Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

¹⁷ The literal translation of ‘does not escape my gaze’ is ‘is not hidden from my eyes’.

¹⁸ The *MT* adds ‘first’ at the beginning of this verse. The ‘Horrors and Abominations’ were false gods polluting the Holy Land.

¹⁹ This passage has affinities with the 2nd part of Isaiah and is possibly not by Jeremiah. Recognising the vanity of their idol worship, all nations will join in worshipping Israel’s omnipotent God.

וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֲדֹ-שֶׁקֶר נָחֲלוּ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ
הַבֵּל וְאֵין-בָּם מוֹעִיל:
הִיעֲשֶׂה-לָּו אָדָם אֱלֹהִים כ
וְהֵמָּה לֹא אֱלֹהִים:

"Our fathers inherited nothing but Delusion,
Futility of no use whatever.

²⁰ Can anyone human make his own gods?

These are not gods at all!"

כֹּא לְכֵן הִנְנִי מוֹדִיעֵם בַּפֶּעַם הַזֹּאת אוֹדִיעֵם אֶת-יָדִי
וְאֶת-גְּבוּרָתִי וַיִּדְעוּ כִּי-שְׁמִי יְהוָה: {ס}

²¹ "Now listen, I will make them acknowledge my hand and my might;
and then they will know that Yahweh is my name."

²⁰ For the 2nd line, compare 2:11 and a similar construction in 2K 19:18.

²¹ There is a decided ambiguity in this text about the identity of the pronoun 'they': is it his wicked people he has been predicting judgment upon or the nations that have come to recognise the folly of idolatry?

ירמיהו פרק יז

א חטאת יהודה כתובה בעט ברזל בצפרן שמיר
חרושה על-לוח לבם ולקרנות מזבחותיכם:
ב כזכר בניהם מזבחותם ואשריהם על-עץ רענן
על גבעות הגבהות: ג הררי בשדה חילף כל-
אוצרותיך לבז אתן במתיך בחטאת בכל-גבוליך:
ד ושמתה ובה מנחלתך אשר נתתי לך
והעבדתיך את-איביך בארץ אשר לא-ידעת כי-
אש קדחתם באפי עד-עולם תוקד: {ס}

ה פה| אמר יהוה
ארור הגבר אשר יבטח באדם
ושם בשור זרעו
ומן-יהוה יסור לבו:
והיה כערער בערבה
ולא יראה כייבוא טוב
ושכן חררים במדבר
ארץ מלחה ולא תשב: {ס}

JEREMIAH 17

¹ “The sin of Judah is written with an iron pen, engraved with a diamond point on the tablet of their heart and on the horns of their altars, ² while their children remember their altars and their sacred poles by the green trees on the high hills. ³ My mountain on the plain, your wealth and all your treasures I shall give for spoil, because of the sin of your high places throughout your territory. ⁴ You will relinquish your heritage that I gave you. I will enslave you to your enemies in a land you do not know; for, my fiery anger kindled by you will burn forever.”

- ⁵ Yahweh says this:
“Accursed be anyone who trusts in human beings,
who relies on human strength
and whose heart turns from Yahweh.
- ⁶ Such a person is like a shrub in the wastelands:
when good comes, he does not see it,
since he lives in the parched places of the desert,
uninhabited, salt land.

JEREMIAH 17

- ¹ Vv. 1–4 are not present in the LXX. ‘Their altars’ follows the Vg (*ararum eorum*); the MT has ‘the altars’.
- ² ‘Scared poles’ translates ‘Asherim’ (see #Ex 34:13 and #Jg 2:13).
- ³ In the MT, ‘your high places’ precedes ‘because of the sin of’, here transposed.
- ⁴ The literal (conjectural) translation of ‘relinquish’ is ‘relax your hand’ (לְבַדְּךָ); the MT has ‘relax and by you’ (וּבְדֶךָ). The NRSV, following 2 Hebrew MSS and Theodotion, ends this verse with, “for in my anger, a fire is kindled that shall burn forever.”
- ⁵ The model of vv. 5–8 is Ps 1; the godless person is like a fruitless desert plant; the godly is like a fruitful, well-watered tree (Ps 1:3, Pr 3:18).
- ⁶ The word translated ‘shrub’ occurs only here and in 48:6; it has been identified as a kind of juniper.

<p>בְּרוּךְ הַגֹּבֵר אֲשֶׁר יִבְטַח בַּיהוָה וְהָיָה יְהוָה מִבְּטָחוֹ: וְהָיָה כְּעֵץ שְׁתוּל עַל-מַיִם וְעַל-יֹבֵל יִשְׁלַח שָׁרְשָׁיו וְלֹא יִרָא יִרְאָה כִּי-יָבֵא חֹם וְהָיָה עָלָיו רֵעָן וּבְשָׁנַת בַּצָּרֶת לֹא יִדָּאָג וְלֹא יִמִּישׁ מַעֲשׂוֹת פְּרִי: עֵקֵב הַלֵּב מִכָּל וְאִנֹּשׁ הוּא מִי יֵדְעֵנּוּ: אֲנִי יְהוָה חֹקֵר לֵב בַּחֲן כְּלִיּוֹת וְלִתֵּת לְאִישׁ כְּדַרְכּוֹ כַּפְרֵי מַעֲלָלָיו: {ס} קָרָא דָגַל וְלֹא יֵלֵד עֹשֶׂה עֵשֶׂר וְלֹא בְּמִשְׁפָּט בְּחֻצֵי יָמוֹ יַעֲזֹבֵנוּ וּבְאַחֲרֵיתוֹ יִהְיֶה נָבֵל:</p>	<p>ז ח ט י יא</p>	<p>7 “Blessed is anyone who trusts in Yahweh, with Yahweh for his reliance. 8 He is like a tree by the waterside that thrusts its roots into the stream: when the heat comes, it has nothing to fear, its foliage stays green; untroubled in a year of drought, it never stops bearing fruit. 9 The heart is devious above all else, and is perverse; who can understand it? 10 I, Yahweh, search the heart, and test the motives, to give each person what his conduct and his actions deserve. 11 “The partridge will hatch eggs it has not laid. No different is the person who gets rich unjustly: his days half done, they will desert him and he prove a fool after all.”</p>
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⁷ NETB substitutes the divine name (twice in this verse) for the 1st person pronoun.

⁸ The *Kethib/Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

⁹ Only God can really understand human beings (Rm 7:18-19); only God can therefore properly judge human beings (1S 16:7, Ps 62:12).

¹⁰ For an earlier reference to this motif see 11:20; for a later reference see 20:12 (see also Ps 17:2-3).

¹¹ This proverb perhaps refers to Jehoiakim (22:13, 2K 23:35).

<p>כַּסָּא כְבוֹד מְרוֹם מְרֵאשׁוֹן מְקוֹם מְקַדְשָׁנוּ: מְקוֹה יִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוָה כָּל-עֹזְבֵיךָ יִבְשׁוּ יְסוּרֵי וְסוּרֵי בְּאֶרֶץ יִכְתְּבוּ כִּי עָזְבוּ מְקוֹר מַי־חַיִּים אֶת-יְהוָה: {פ}</p>	<p>יב יג יד טו טז יז יח</p>	<p>12 A glorious throne, sublime from the beginning, such is our Holy Place.</p> <p>13 O Hope of Israel, O Yahweh! All who forsake you shall be put to shame; those who turn from you will be recorded in the underworld, since they have forsaken the fountain of living water, Yahweh.</p> <p>14 Heal me, Yahweh, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved, for you are my praise.</p> <p>15 Look, they keep saying to me, "Where is Yahweh's word? Let it come true then!"</p> <p>16 Yet, I never urged you to send disaster, I never desired the fatal day; this you know - what came from my lips was not concealed from you.</p> <p>17 Do not cause me dismay, you, my refuge in time of disaster.</p> <p>18 Let my persecutors be confounded, not me;</p>
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¹² Vv. 12–13 do not seem to be by Jeremiah (cf. 7:1–15). The ‘throne’ probably refers to the Ark of the Covenant (Is 6:1).

¹³ ‘From you’ is a conjectural translation suggested by the *Qere* (יְסוּרֵי); the *Ketiv* has ‘from me’ (יְסוּרֵי).

¹⁴ Sick at heart because of his opponents’ taunts, Jeremiah prays for healing (Ps 6:2–3).

¹⁵ The threats of Jeremiah have not yet materialised; the time of this prophecy is therefore before 598 BCE.

¹⁶ ‘Disaster’ is conjectural (מְרַעָה) the *MT* reads, ‘shepherd’ (מְרַעָה).

¹⁷ For the nuance ‘dismay’ (מַחְתָּה) in place of the more usual ‘terror’ (cf. *NJB*, *NRSV*), see Pr 21:15.

¹⁸ Jeremiah now does what he says he has not wanted to do or been hasty to do; he is, however, seeking his own vindication and that of God.

יַחַתּוּ הֵמָּה וְאַל־אֶחָתָה אֲנִי
הַבִּיא עֲלֵיהֶם יוֹם רָעָה
וּמְשִׁנָּה שְׁבָרוֹן שְׁבָרָם: {ס}

let them, not me, be terrified.
On them, bring the day of disaster;
destroy them, destroy them twice over!

¹⁹ כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה אֵלַי הֲלֹךְ וְעַמְדָּתָ בְּשַׁעַר בְּנֵי־
הָעָם עִם אֲשֶׁר יָבֹאוּ בּוֹ מְלָכֵי יְהוּדָה וְאֲשֶׁר יֵצְאוּ
בּוֹ וּבְכָל שַׁעְרֵי יְרוּשָׁלַם: ²⁰ וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵיהֶם שְׁמְעוּ
דְּבַר־יְהוָה מְלָכֵי יְהוּדָה וְכָל־יְהוּדָה וְכָל יֹשְׁבֵי
יְרוּשָׁלַם הַבָּאִים בְּשַׁעְרֵים הָאֵלֶּה: ²¹ כֹּה אָמַר
יְהוָה הִשְׁמְרוּ בְּנִפְשׁוֹתֵיכֶם וְאַל־תִּשְׂאוּ מִשָּׂא בְיוֹם
הַשַּׁבָּת וְהִבַּאתֶם בְּשַׁעְרֵי יְרוּשָׁלַם: ²² כִּי וְלֹא־תוֹצִיאוּ
מִשָּׂא מִבְּתֵיכֶם בְּיוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת וְכָל־מְלֹאכָה לֹא
תַעֲשׂוּ וְקִדְשְׁתֶּם אֶת־יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתִי אֶת־
אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם: ²³ כִּי וְלֹא שְׁמְעוּ וְלֹא הִטּוּ אֶת־אָזְנָם וַיִּקְשׂוּ
אֶת־עַרְפֹּם לְבַלְתִּי שׁוֹמֵעַ שְׁמוֹעַ וּלְבַלְתִּי קַחַת
מוֹסֵר: ²⁴ וְהָיָה אִם־שָׁמַעַתְּ שְׁמְעוֹן אֵלַי נֹאם־יְהוָה

¹⁹ Yahweh said this to me: “Go and stand at the Gate of the Sons of the People by which the kings of Judah go in and out – and at all the gates of Jerusalem. ²⁰ Say to them, “Listen to the word of Yahweh, you kings of Judah, all you people of Judah too, and all you inhabitants of Jerusalem who pass through the gates. ²¹ Yahweh says this: As you value your lives, on no account carry a burden on the Sabbath day or bring it in through the gates of Jerusalem. ²² Bring no burden out of your houses on the Sabbath day and do no work. Keep the Sabbath day holy, as I ordered your fathers. ²³ They would not hear, would not pay attention; they deliberately refused to listen or accept instruction. ²⁴ But Yahweh says, if you listen carefully to me and bring no burden in through the gates of this city on the Sabbath day, if you keep the Sabbath

¹⁹ Many commentators deny the authenticity of this passage on the grounds of the importance it attributes to the Sabbath, unusual in Jeremiah. It is perhaps an insertion from the time of Nehemiah (cf. Ne 13:15–22) dealing with the violation of the Sabbath (Ex 23:12, cf. Mt 12:1–8) as symptomatic of the people’s general alienation from God (11:1–8, Am 8:5). The *Kethib/Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

²⁰ This sentence has been restructured to avoid a long complex English sentence and to put ‘Listen to the word of Yahweh’ closer to the content of what he says.

²¹ The expression ‘as you value your lives’ using the preposition בּ is unusual; more often, לְ is used.

²² For some readers, the idea of treating the Sabbath day as something sacred won’t mean much without spelling the qualification out specifically: Sabbath observance was not just a matter of not working.

²³ The *Kethib/Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

²⁴ The MT has ‘oracle of Yahweh’ in place of ‘But Yahweh says’.

לְבַלְתִּי הָבִיִּא מִשָּׂא בְשַׁעֲרֵי הָעִיר הַזֹּאת בַּיּוֹם
 הַשַּׁבָּת וּלְקַדֵּשׁ אֶת־יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת לְבַלְתִּי עֲשׂוֹת־בָּהּ
 כָּל־מְלָאכָה: ^כ וַיָּבֹאוּ בְשַׁעֲרֵי הָעִיר הַזֹּאת מְלָכִים |
 וְשָׂרִים יֹשְׁבִים עַל־כֶּסֶף דָּוָד רֹכְבִים | בְּרֹכֵב
 וּבְסוּסִים הֵמָּה וְשָׂרֵיהֶם אִישׁ יְהוּדָה וַיֵּשְׁבִי
 יְרוּשָׁלַם וַיֵּשְׁבֶה הָעִיר־הַזֹּאת לְעוֹלָם: ^כ וַיָּבֹאוּ
 מֵעַרְי־יְהוּדָה וּמִסְבִּיבוֹת יְרוּשָׁלַם וּמֵאֶרֶץ בְּנֵי־מִן
 וּמִן־הַשְּׁפֵלָה וּמִן־הַהָר וּמִן־הַנֶּגֶב מִבָּאִים עוֹלָה
 זֹבַח וּמִנְחָה וּלְבֹנָה וּמִבְּאֵי תוֹדָה בַּיִת יְהוָה:
^כ וְאִם־לֹא תִשְׁמָעוּ אֵלַי לְקַדֵּשׁ אֶת־יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת
 וּלְבַלְתִּי שְׂאֵת מִשָּׂא וַיָּבֹא בְשַׁעֲרֵי יְרוּשָׁלַם בַּיּוֹם
 הַשַּׁבָּת וְהִצַּתִּי אֵשׁ בְּשַׁעֲרֶיהָ וְאָכְלָה אֲרָמְנוֹת
 יְרוּשָׁלַם וְלֹא תִכָּבֵּה: {פ}

holy and do no work on that day, ²⁵ then, through the gates of this city, kings and princes occupying the throne of David will continue to make their entry, riding in chariots or on horseback, they, their chief men, the people of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and this city will be inhabited forever. ²⁶ They will come from the towns of Judah, from the districts round Jerusalem, from the territory of Benjamin, from the lowlands, from the highlands and from the Negeb, to offer burnt offering and sacrifice, and cereal offering and incense, to offer thanksgiving sacrifices in the Temple of Yahweh. ²⁷ However, if you do not listen to me to keep the Sabbath day holy, and to refrain from entering the gates of Jerusalem with burdens on the Sabbath day, then I shall set fire to its gates; it will devour the palaces of Jerusalem and not be quenched."

²⁵ Another reading for 'princes' (following the NJB) is 'officials'; the NRSV omits the word.

²⁶ The NRSV has 'frankincense' in place of 'incense', here following the NJB.

²⁷ Even bringing offerings for the Temple into the city was prohibited on the Sabbath!

ירמיהו פרק יח

א הדבר אשר היה אל־ירמיהו מאת יהוה לאמר:
ב קום וירדת בית היוצר ושמה אשמיעך את־
דבריי: ג וארד בית היוצר והנהו [והנה־הוא] עשה
מלאכה על־האבנים: ד ונשחת הכלי אשר הוא
עשה בחמר ביד היוצר ושב ויעשהו כלי אחר
כאשר ישר בעיני היוצר לעשות: {ס}
ה ויהי דברי־יהוה אלי לאמור: ו הכיוצר הזה לא־
אוכל לעשות לכם בית ישראל נאס־יהוה הנה
כחמר ביד היוצר כן־אתם בידי בית ישראל: {ס}
ז רגע אדבר על־גוי ועל־ממלכה לנתוש ולנתון
ול־האבד: ח ושב הגוי ההוא מרעתו אשר דברתי
עליו ונחמת־י עלי־הרעה אשר חשבתי לעשות
לו: {ס}

JEREMIAH 18

¹ The word that came to Jeremiah from Yahweh as follows, ² “Make your way down to the potter’s house, and there I shall tell you what I have to say.” ³ So, I went down to the potter’s house; and there he was, working at the wheel. ⁴ The vessel he was making came out wrong, as may happen with clay when a potter is at work, so he began again and shaped it into another vessel, as he thought fit.
⁵ Then the word of Yahweh came to me as follows, ⁶ “House of Israel, can I not do to you what this potter does? Yahweh demands. Yes, like clay in the potter’s hand, so you are mine, House of Israel.
⁷ “Sometimes, I announce that I shall uproot, break down and destroy a certain nation or kingdom ⁸ but, should the nation I have threatened abandon its wickedness, I shall revoke the disaster that I had intended to inflict on it.

JEREMIAH 18

- ¹ The time of this enacted parable is before 598 BCE, since the great disaster has not yet taken place (see v. 12).
- ² Literally translated, this verse opens, “Get up and go down;” the 1st verb is not literal but is idiomatic for the initiation of an action.
- ³ The literal translation of ‘wheel’ is ‘two stones’; the mechanism consisted of two circular plates mounted on a vertical spindle.
- ⁴ In place of ‘as may happen with clay’ (בְּחֶמֶר), following some MSS, the MT has ‘with clay’ (בִּיָּחַמֶּר); the phrase is not present in the LXX.
- ⁵ The literal translation of ‘as follows’ is simply ‘saying’.
- ⁶ The words ‘like clay’ are not in the MT; they are part of an elliptical comparison and are supplied in the translation here for clarity.
- ⁷ It is important to understand how the rhetoric of this passage is structured: the words of vv. 7–10 lead up to the conclusion, ‘so now’, in v. 11, which in turns leads to the conclusion, ‘therefore’, in v. 13.
- ⁸ There is a good deal of debate about how the word here rendered ‘revoke’ (following NETB) should be translated: there is some reluctance to translate it ‘change my mind’ (as NJB & NRSV), because some see that as contradicting Nb 23:19 and thus prefer ‘relent’; however, this suggests the softening of an attitude but not necessarily the change of course.

ט וְרָגַע אֲדַבֵּר עַל־גּוֹי וְעַל־מַמְלָכָה לְבַנּוֹת וּלְנַטּוֹעַ:
 י וְעָשָׂה הָרַע בְּעֵינַי לְבַלְתִּי שְׁמַע בְּקוֹלִי
 וְנַחַמְתִּי עַל־הַטּוֹבָה אֲשֶׁר אָמַרְתִּי לְהִיטִיב
 אוֹתוֹ: {ס}

יא וְעַתָּה אֲמַרְנָא אֶל־אִישׁ־יְהוּדָה וְעַל־יוֹשְׁבֵי
 יְרוּשָׁלַם לֵאמֹר כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה הִנֵּה אֲנֹכִי יוֹצֵר
 עֲלֵיכֶם רָעָה וְחָשַׁב עֲלֵיכֶם מַחְשְׁבָה שׁוּבוּ זָא אִישׁ
 מְדַרְכּוֹ הָרָעָה וְהִיטִיבוּ דַרְכֵיכֶם וּמַעַלְלֵיכֶם:
 יב וְאָמְרוּ נוֹאֵשׁ כִּי־אֲחֲרַי מַחְשְׁבוֹתֵינוּ נִלְךְ וְאִישׁ
 שְׂרָרוֹת לְבוֹהֶרֶע נַעֲשֶׂה: {פ}

יג לֵכֵן כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה
 שְׂאֵלוּ־נָא בְּגוֹיִם
 מִי שָׁמַע כְּאֵלֶּה
 שְׁעָרַת עָשְׂתָה מְאֹד
 בְּתוֹלַת יִשְׂרָאֵל:

יד הֲיַעֲזֹב מַצּוֹר שְׂדֵי שֶׁלֶג לְבַנּוֹן
 אִם־יִנְתָּשׁוּ מֵיִם זָרִים קָרִים נוֹזְלִים:

9 “And sometimes, I announce that I shall build up and plant a certain nation or kingdom¹⁰ but, should that nation do what displeases me and refuse to listen to my voice, I shall revoke the good that I was intending to confer on it.

11 “So now, say this to the people of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, “Yahweh says this: Listen, I am preparing a disaster for you, I am working out a plan against you. Turn now, all of you, from your evil ways, amend your conduct and actions.”¹² They, however, will say, “It is no use! We shall follow our own plans; each of us will act on his own wicked inclinations.””

13 Therefore, thus says Yahweh,
 “Ask among the nations:
 who has heard the like of this.
 The Virgin of Israel has done
 a very horrible thing.

14 Does the snow of Lebanon ever leave the rocks of its slopes?
 Do the mountain waters, the cold flowing streams, run dry?

⁹ The terms, ‘uproot’, ‘break down’, ‘destroy’ (v. 7), and ‘build’, and ‘plant’ are the 2 sides of the ministry Jeremiah was called to (cf. 1:10).

¹⁰ On the use of the word ‘revoke’, see #8.

¹¹ The word translated ‘preparing’ is the same as that for ‘potter’, so there is a wordplay taking the reader back to v. 5.

¹² There is a consistent pattern to the people’s behaviour: see 7:24, 9:13, 13:10 & 16:12.

¹³ An editor has inserted this passage characteristic of the early preaching of Jeremiah but timely under Jehoiakim’s renewal of idolatry.

¹⁴ ‘Run dry’ is a conjectural translation (יִנְתָּשׁוּ); the MT has ‘are torn away’ (יִנְתָּשׁוּ). The text of the whole verse is uncertain and various emendations have been suggested.

טו כִּי־שָׁכַחְנִי עַמִּי
 לְשׂוֹא יִקְטְרוּ
 וַיִּכְשְׁלוּם בְּדַרְכֵיהֶם
 שְׁבִילֵי עוֹלָם לְלַכֵּת נְתִיבוֹת
 דֶּרֶךְ לֹא סְלוּלָה:
 טז לְשׂוֹם אֶרֶץ לְשֹׂמֵה
 שְׂרוּקַת שְׂרִיקוֹת עוֹלָם
 כָּל עוֹבֵר עָלֶיהָ
 יִשֹּׁם וַיִּגִּיד בְּרֹאשׁוֹ:
 יז כְּרוּחַ־קִדִּים אֲפִיעֵם
 לִפְנֵי אוֹיֵב
 עֲרֹף וְלֹא־פָנִים אֲרֹאם
 בְּיוֹם אִידָם: {ס}

יח וַיֹּאמְרוּ לָכֹו וְנַחֲשֶׁבֶה עַל־יִרְמְיָהוּ מַחֲשֻׁבוֹת כִּי
 לֹא־תֵאבֵד תּוֹרָה מִפֶּהוֹן וְעֵצָה מִחֶכְם וְדָבָר מִנְּבִיא
 לָכֹו וְנַבְּהוּ בַלְשׁוֹן וְאֶל־נִקְשִׁיבָה אֶל־כָּל־דְּבָרָיו:
 יט הַקְשִׁיבָה יְהוָה אֵלַי
 וּשְׁמַע לְקוֹל יְרִיבֵי:

15 Yet, my people have forgotten me!
 They burn incense to a delusion!
 They made them to stumble in their ways,
 the ancient paths, to walk in paths,
 on an unmade road,
 16 to make their country an object of horror,
 everlastingly derided:
 every passer-by will be appalled at it
 and shake his head.
 17 Like the east wind, I shall scatter them
 before the enemy.
 I shall show them my back, not my face,
 the day they are ruined.”

18 They said, “Come on, let us make plots against Jeremiah, for the Law will not perish from the priests, nor counsel from the wise, nor the word from the prophet. Come on, let us slander him and not heed his words.”

19 “Pay attention to me, Yahweh;
 hear what my adversaries are saying.

15 The leaders of the people have led them astray, unless the LXX reading for the 3rd line is preferred: “and they have stumbled in their ways” (*καὶ ἀσθενήσουσιν ἐν ταῖς ὁδοῖς αὐτῶν*).

16 The Kethib/Qere difference here would benefit from an explanation.

17 The literal translation of ‘I shall show’ is ‘I shall make them see’, following the LXX (*δείξω αὐτοῖς*) and Peshitta; the MT has ‘I shall see them’.

18 The literal translation of ‘slander him’ is ‘strike him with the tongue’.

19 Jeremiah’s prayers against the unjust treatment by his enemies have many of the elements of the prayers of the innocent in the book of Psalms.

<p>הִישַׁלֵּם תַּחַת־טוֹבָה רָעָה כ כִּי־כָרוּ שׁוֹחָה לְנַפְשִׁי זָכַר עַמְדֵי לְפָנַי לְדַבֵּר עֲלֵיהֶם טוֹבָה לְהָשִׁיב אֶת־חַמַּתְךָ מֵהֶם: לְכֹן תֵּן אֶת־בְּנֵיהֶם לְרָעַב כא וְהִגַּרְם עַל־יַד־חֶרֶב וְתִהְיֶנָּה נְשֵׁיהֶם שְׂפֵלוֹת וְאַלְמָנוֹת וְאֲנָשֵׁיהֶם יִהְיוּ הֲרָגֵי מוֹת בַּחֲוָרֵיהֶם מִכִּי־חָרַב בַּמִּלְחָמָה: תִּשְׁמַע זַעֲקָה מִבֵּיתֵיהֶם כב כִּי־תָבִיא עֲלֵיהֶם גְּדוּד פְּתָאִם כִּי־כָרוּ שִׂיחָה שׁוֹחָה לְלַכְדֹּנִי וּפְחִים טָמְנוּ לְרַגְלֵי: וְאַתָּה יְהוָה יָדַעְתָּ אֶת־כָּל־עֲצָתְךָ עָלַי כג לְמָוֹת אֶל־תִּכַּפֵּר עַל־עוֹנָם וְחָטְאתָם מִלְּפָנַי אֶל־תִּמְחֵי וְהָיוּ וַיְהִיו מִכְשָׁלִים לְפָנַי בָּעַת אַפְּךָ עֲשֵׂה בָהֶם: {ס}</p>	<p>20 Should evil be returned for good? Now they are digging a pit for me. Remember how I pleaded before you and spoke well of them, to turn your retribution away from them.</p> <p>21 So, hand their sons over to famine and abandon them to the edge of the sword. Let their wives become childless and widowed; let their husbands die of plague, their youths be slain by the sword in battle.</p> <p>22 Let cries re-echo from their houses as you bring raiders suddenly on them, for they have dug a pit to catch me, they have laid snares to trap my feet.</p> <p>23 Yet you, Yahweh, know all their plotting to kill me. Do not forgive their guilt; do not efface their sin from your sight. Let them be hurled down before you; deal with them while you are angry!</p>
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²⁰ 'Digging a pit' is a common metaphor for plotting to kill someone.

²¹ The literal translation of 'die of plague' is 'be slain by death'; scholars generally agree that this refers to death by disease or plague as in 15:2.

²² The Kethib/Qere difference here would benefit from an explanation.

²³ The Kethib/Qere difference here would benefit from an explanation.

ירמיהו פרק יט

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אָ כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה הַלֹּדֶךְ וְקִנִּיתִּי בִקְבֵקְבֵי יוֹצֵר חֲרָשׁ
וּמִזְקֵנֵי הָעָם וּמִזְקֵנֵי הַכֹּהֲנִים: ^ב וַיֵּצֵאתָ אֶל־גֵּיא בֶן־
הַנֹּחַם אֲשֶׁר פָּתַח שַׁעַר הַחֲרָסוֹת הַחֲרָסִית וְקִרְאתָ
שָׁם אֶת־הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר־אֲדַבֵּר אֵלֶיךָ: ^ג וְאָמַרְתָּ
שְׁמָעוּ דְבַר־יְהוָה מֶלְכִי יְהוּדָה וְיֹשְׁבֵי יְרוּשָׁלַם כֹּה־
אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הִנְנִי מְבִיא רָעָה
עַל־הַמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר כָּל־שְׁמָעָה תִּצְלָנָה אֲזַנָּיו:
דִּיעֲזוּ אֲשֶׁר עֲזַבְנִי וַיִּנְכְּרוּ אֶת־הַמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה
וַיִּקְטְרוּ־בּוֹ לֵאלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יִדְעוּם הֵמָּה
וְאֲבוֹתֵיהֶם וּמֶלְכֵי יְהוּדָה וּמִלְאוּ אֶת־הַמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה
דָּם נְקִיָּם: ^ה וּבָנִוּוּ אֶת־בַּמּוֹת הַבְּעַל לְשַׂרְף אֶת־
בְּנֵיהֶם בְּאֵשׁ עֲלוֹת לְבַעַל אֲשֶׁר לֹא־צִוִּיתִי וְלֹא
דִּבַּרְתִּי וְלֹא עָלְתָה עַל־לִבִּי: {פ}

וְלִכֹּן הִנְהִי־יָמִים בָּאִים נְאֻם־יְהוָה וְלֹא־יִקְרָא
לְמָקוֹם הַזֶּה עוֹד הַתְּפֹת וְגֵיא בֶן־הַנֹּחַם כִּי אִם־גֵּיא

¹ Thus said Yahweh: “Go and buy a potter’s clay jug. Take with you some of the people’s elders and some of the senior priests. ² Go out to the Valley of Ben-Hinnom, just outside the Gate of the Potsherds. There proclaim the words I shall say to you. ³ You must say, “Hear the word of Yahweh, Kings of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem! Yahweh Sabaoth, the God of Israel, says this: I shall bring such a disaster on this place that the ears of everyone who hears it will ring. ⁴ For, they have forsaken me and have made this city foreign and offered incense here to other gods that neither they nor their ancestors nor the kings of Judah ever knew. They have filled this place with the blood of the innocent; ⁵ for they have built high places for Baal to burn their sons, as burnt offerings to Baal, a thing I never ordered, never mentioned, that had never entered my thoughts.

⁶ “Therefore, behold! The days are coming, says Yahweh, when people will no longer call this place Topheth, or the Valley of Ben-Hinnom, but

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- ¹ The NJB, following the LXX (*Τότε εἶπεν κύριος πρὸς με*) opens with ‘Then Yahweh said to Jeremiah’; here, we follow the MT (and NRSV). ‘Take with you’ follows the Peshitta and Tg; the MT omits the clause, which is undoubtedly implicit.
- ² The Kethib/Qere difference here would benefit from an explanation.
- ³ The term, ‘this place’, throughout this passage refers to the Valley of Ben-Hinnom, which will become a Valley of Slaughter (see v. 6 & 7:32).
- ⁴ In place of ‘made this city foreign’, here following the MT, the NRSV has ‘have profaned this place’.
- ⁵ The ‘thing never ordered’ refers not to the qualification ‘to Baal’ but to burning the sons in the fire.
- ⁶ See 7:31–32 for an almost word for word repetition of vv. 5–6.

הַהֲרָגָה: ^ז וּבְקִתִּי אֶת־עֵצַת יְהוּדָה וִירוּשָׁלַם
בְּמִקּוֹם הַזֶּה וְהַפְּלִתִים בַּחֲרֹב לִפְנֵי אֹיְבֵיהֶם וּבִיד
מִבְּקָשֵׁי נַפְשָׁם וְנָתַתִּי אֶת־נַבְלָתָם לְמֵאֲכָל לְעוֹף
הַשָּׁמַיִם וּלְבֵהֶמַת הָאָרֶץ: ^ח וְשָׂמַתִּי אֶת־הָעִיר
הַזֹּאת לְשִׁמָּה וּלְשָׂרָקָה כֹּל עֹבֵר עָלֶיהָ יִשֹׁם וַיִּשְׂרָק
עַל־כָּל־מַכְתָּהָ: ^ט וְהֵאֱכִלְתִּים אֶת־בָּשָׂר בְּנֵיהֶם
וְאֵת בָּשָׂר בְּנֹתֵיהֶם וְאִישׁ בְּשַׁר־רֵעֵהוּ יֹאכְלוּ
בְּמִצּוֹר וּבְמִצּוֹק אֲשֶׁר יֵצִיקוּ לָהֶם אֹיְבֵיהֶם וּמִבְּקָשֵׁי
נַפְשָׁם: ^י וְשִׁבְרַת הַבְּקָבֶקֶל לְעֵינַי הָאֲנָשִׁים הַהֹלְכִים
אוֹתָךְ: ^{יא} וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵיהֶם כֹּה־אָמַר | יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת
כִּכָּה אֲשַׁבֵּר אֶת־הָעָם הַזֶּה וְאֶת־הָעִיר הַזֹּאת
כַּאֲשֶׁר יִשְׁבַר אֶת־כָּלִי הַיּוֹצֵר אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יוֹכֵל
לְהַרְפָּה עוֹד וּבְתַתְּפַת יִקְבְּרוּ מֵאִין מְקוֹם לְקַבּוֹר:
^{יב} כִּן־אֶעֱשֶׂה לְמִקּוֹם הַזֶּה נְאֻם־יְהוָה וּלְיוֹשְׁבָיו
וּלְתַת אֶת־הָעִיר הַזֹּאת כְּתַתְּפַת: ^{יג} וְהָיוּ בְּתֵי

the Valley of Slaughter. ⁷ And, because of this place, I shall empty Judah and Jerusalem of sound advice; and I shall make them fall by the sword before their enemies, by the hand of those determined to kill them; and I shall give their corpses as food to the birds of the sky and the animals of the earth. ⁸ And I shall make this city an object of horror and derision; every passer-by will be appalled at it and whistle at the sight of all the wounds it has sustained. ⁹ And I shall make them eat the flesh of their own sons and the flesh of their own daughters: they will eat one another during the siege, in the shortage to which their enemies, and those determined to kill them, will reduce them.” ¹⁰ You must break the jug in front of the men who are with you, ¹¹ and say to them, “Yahweh Sabaoth says this: so, shall I break this people and this city as one breaks a potters pot, so that it can never be mended. In Topheth they shall bury until there is no more room to bury. ¹² That is how I shall treat this place, says Yahweh, and its inhabitants, by making this city like Topheth. ¹³ And

⁷ There is a play on words between ‘to empty’ (בְּקִתִּי) and ‘jug’ (בְּקָבֶקֶק) in vv. 1 & 10.

⁸ The word translated ‘wounds’ has been used several times for the metaphorical wounds that Israel has suffered as a result of the blows from its enemies (see, e.g., 14:17). It is used of scourging, both literally and metaphorically (cf. Dt 25:3, Is 10:26), and of slaughter and defeat (1S 4:10, Jos 10:20); here, it refers to the results of the crushing blows at the hands of her enemies which has made her the object of scorn.

⁹ Cannibalism is one of the penalties for disobedience to their covenant with God effected through the Mosaic covenant (see Dt 28:53, 55, 57); for examples of this being carried out, see 2K 6:28–29, Lm 4:10.

¹⁰ See the note on the word ‘jug’ (בְּקָבֶקֶק) in #7.

¹¹ For the last sentence, here following the NRSV, the NJB reads, “Topheth will become a burial ground, for lack of other burial space.”

¹² The literal translation of ‘says Yahweh’ is ‘oracle of Yahweh’, as frequently throughout Jeremiah.

¹³ The pollution is due to the corpses (see Lv 21:1ff, 26:30).

יְרוּשָׁלַם וּבְתֵיל מַלְכֵי יְהוּדָה כַּמְקוֹם הַתְּפֹת
הַטְּמְאִים לְכָל הַבְּתִים אֲשֶׁר קִטְרוּ עַל-גַּגְתֵיהֶם
לְכָל צְבָא הַשָּׁמַיִם וְהַסֵּד נְסֻכִים לֵאלֹהִים
אַחֲרִים: {פ}

י^ד וַיָּבֹא יִרְמְיָהוּ מִהַתְּפֹת אֲשֶׁר שָׁלְחוּ יְהוָה שָׁם
לְהַנְבִיא וַיַּעֲמֵד בַּחֲצַר בַּיַּת-יְהוָה וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל-כָּל-
הָעָם: {ס}

טו כֹּה-אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הֲנִי מִבִּי
אֶל-הָעִיר הַזֹּאת וְעַל-כָּל-עַרְיָה אֵת כָּל-הָרָעָה
אֲשֶׁר דִּבַּרְתִּי עָלֶיהָ כִּי הִקְשׁוּ אֶת-עַרְפָּם לְבַלְתִּי
שְׁמוֹעַ אֶת-דִּבְרֵי:

the houses of Jerusalem and those of the kings of Judah, all the houses on the roofs of which they offered incense to the whole array of heaven and poured libations to other gods, will be unclean, like this place, Topheth.””

¹⁴ Jeremiah then came back from Topheth, where Yahweh had sent him to prophesy, and stood in the court of the Temple of Yahweh and said to all the people:

¹⁵ “Yahweh Sabaoth, the God of Israel, says this, “Yes, on this city, and on all the towns belonging to it, I shall bring all the disaster that I had decreed for it, since they have stubbornly refused to listen to my words.””

¹⁴ Literally translated, this verse opens, “And Jeremiah entered from Topheth.”

¹⁵ The literal translation of ‘stubbornly refused to listen’ is ‘stiffened their necks so as not to listen’.

ירמיהו פרק כ

JEREMIAH 20

א וישמע פשחור בן-אמר הכהן והוא-פקיד נגיד
בבית יהוה את-ירמיהו נבא את-הדברים האלה:
ב ויכה פשחור את ירמיהו הנביא ויתן אתו על-
המהפכת אשר בשער בנימן העליון אשר בבית
יהוה: ג ויהי ממחרת ויצא פשחור את-ירמיהו
מן-המהפכת ויאמר אליו ירמיהו לא פשחור
קרא יהוה שמך כי אם-מגור מסביב: {ס}

ד כי כה אמר יהוה הנני נתנדף למגור לך ולכל-
אהביך ונפלו בחרב איביהם ועיניך ראות ואת-
כל-יהודה אתן ביד מלך-בבל והגלם בבלה והם
בחרב: ה ונתתי את-כל-חסן העיר הזאת ואת-
כל-יגיעה ואת-כל-יקרה ואת כל-אוצרות מלכי
יהודה אתן ביד איביהם ובזזום ולקחום והביאום
בבלה: ואתה פשחור וכל ישבי ביתך תלכו

¹ Now, the priest Pashhur son of Immer, who was the chief of security in the Temple of Yahweh, heard Jeremiah making this prophecy. ² Then Pashhur had the prophet Jeremiah flogged and then put him in the stocks that were in the Upper Benjamin Gate, leading into the Temple of Yahweh. ³ The next morning, Pashhur had Jeremiah taken out of the stocks; Jeremiah then said to him, “Not Pashhur but Terror-on-every-Side is Yahweh’s name for you.

⁴ “For, Yahweh says, “I will make you a terror to you and your friends; they will fall by the sword of their enemies while you look on. I will give all Judah to the king of Babylon; he shall carry them captive to Babylon or put them to the sword. ⁵ All the wealth of this city, all it stores, all its valuables, and all the treasures of the kings of Judah, I shall hand over to their enemies, who will plunder them, seize them, and carry them to Babylon. ⁶ And you, Pashhur, and your whole household, will go into

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- ¹ ‘Chief of security’ follows NETB, based on the parallel passage in 29:26–27 where this official appears to have been in charge of maintaining order in the Temple; the NRSV has ‘chief officer’ and the NJB has ‘chief of police’.
- ² Pashhur publicly punished Jeremiah to forestall a repetition of this frightful pronouncement.
- ³ On his release, Jeremiah tells Pashhur that ‘Terror-on-every-Side’ (6:25, Ps 31:13; the WEBBE translates the Hebrew, reading ‘Magormissabib’) will be his name and lot; for, he and his family will share the fate of the doomed city (25:8–11).
- ⁴ The NJB opens Yahweh’s speech with, “I am going to hand you over to terror, you and all your friends...” Here, we follow the NRSV.
- ⁵ The literal translation of ‘plunder them’ is ‘take them as plunder’.
- ⁶ The literal translation of ‘you whole household’ is ‘all who live in your house’.

<p>בְּשִׁבִי וּבְבִלְ תַּבּוּא וְשֵׁם תָּמוּת וְשֵׁם תִּקְבֹּר אֶתְּה וּכְל־אֶהְיֶה אֲשֶׁר־נִבֵּאתָ לָּהֶם בְּשִׁקְרָ: {פ}</p> <p>ז פְּתִיתָנִי יְהוָה וְאַפָּת חִזַּקְתָּנִי וְתוֹכַל הֵייתִי לְשִׁחּוֹק כָּל־הַיּוֹם כָּל־הַיּוֹם לֵעָג לִי: ח כִּי־מִדֵּי אֲדַבֵּר אֲזַעֵק חֲמָס וְשֹׁד אֶקְרָא כִּי־הָיָה דְבַר־יְהוָה לִי לְחִרְפָּה וּלְקֶלֶס כָּל־הַיּוֹם: ט וְאָמַרְתִּי לֹא־אֲזַכְּרֶנּוּ וְלֹא־אֲדַבֵּר עוֹד בְּשִׁמוֹ וְהָיָה בְּלִבִּי כַּאֲשֶׁר בְּעֶרְתִּי עָצָר בְּעַצְמוֹתַי וְנִלְאַיתִי כָּל־כֹּחַ וְלֹא אֹכֵל: י כִּי שָׁמַעְתִּי דְבַת רַבִּים מְגוֹר מִסָּבִיב הִגִּידוּ וְנִגִּידוּ כָּל אֲנָוֶשׁ שְׁלָמִי שְׁמָרֵי צַלְעֵי</p>	<p>captivity; you will go to Babylon; there you will die and there be buried, you and your friends to whom you have prophesied lies.””</p> <p>7 You have seduced me, Yahweh, and I was seduced; you have overpowered me: you were the stronger. I am a laughing-stock all day long; everyone mocks me.</p> <p>8 For, whenever I speak, I have to howl and proclaim, “Violence and ruin!” For me, Yahweh’s word has caused insult and derision all day long.</p> <p>9 If I say, “I will not mention him; or speak his name any more,” then there seemed to be a fire burning in my heart, imprisoned in my bones. The effort to restrain it wearied me; I could not do it.</p> <p>10 I heard so many disparaging me, “Terror on every side! Denounce him! Let us denounce him!” All my close friends watched for my downfall,</p>
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7 Imagery of seduction and struggle characterises Yahweh’s ascendancy over the prophet.
8 For the 3rd line, here (loosely) following the *NJB*, the *NRSV* reads, “For the word of the LORD has become for me a reproach and derision.”
9 In addition to standing as part for the whole (Ps 35:10), the ‘bones’ were associated with fear (Job 4:14) and pain (Job 33:19, Ps 102:4).
10 The enemies of Jeremiah mock him with his own familiar expression (see v. 3, 46:5, 49:29).

אֹלֵי יִפְתָּהּ וְנוֹכְלָהּ לוֹ
 וְנִקְחָהּ נִקְמַתְנוּ מִמֶּנּוּ:
 וַיְהִי אֹתִי כְּגִבּוֹר עָרִיץ ^{יא}
 עַל־בֶּן רֹדְפֵי יִכְשְׁלוּ וְלֹא יִכְלוּ
 בָּשׁוּ מְאֹד כִּי־לֹא הִשְׁפִּילוּ
 כְּלַמַּת עוֹלָם לֹא תִשְׁכַּח:
 וַיְהִי צְבָאוֹת בִּתְּנֵן צְדִיק ^{יב}
 רֹאֵה כְּלִיּוֹת וְלֵב
 אֲרֹאֵה נִקְמַתְךָ מֵהֶם
 כִּי אֵלֶיךָ גִּלִּיתִי אֶת־רִיבִי: {ס}
 שִׁירוּ לַיהוָה ^{יג}
 הַלְלוּ אֶת־יְהוָה
 כִּי הֲצִיל אֶת־נַפְשׁ אֲבִיוֹן
 מִיַּד מְרַעִים: {ס}
 אָרוּר הַיּוֹם אֲשֶׁר יִלְדַּתִּי בּוֹ ^{יד}
 יוֹם אֲשֶׁר־יִלְדַּתְנִי אִמִּי אֶל־יְהִי בְרוּךְ:
 אָרוּר הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר בָּשַׂר אֶת־אָבִי לְאֹמֶר ^{טו}
 יִלְד־לְךָ בֶּן זָכָר שִׂמַּח שִׂמְחָהּוּ:

"Perhaps he will be seduced into error;
 then we shall get the better of him and take our revenge!"
 11 However, Yahweh is at my side like a mighty warrior;
 my opponents will stumble, vanquished,
 confounded by their failure;
 everlasting, unforgettable disgrace will be theirs.
 12 Yahweh Sabaoth, you who test the upright,
 observer of motives and thoughts,
 I shall see your vengeance on them,
 for I have revealed my cause to you.
 13 Sing to Yahweh,
 praise Yahweh,
 for he has delivered the soul of one in need
 from the clutches of evildoers.
 14 A curse on the day when I was born!
 Let the day my mother bore me be unblessed!
 15 A curse on the man who brought my father the news,
 "A son, a boy has been born to you," making him overjoyed.

11 The 1st line has some ties with 15:20–21, where Jeremiah is assured by God that he is with him as he promised when he called him (1:8, 19) and will deliver him from the clutches of wicked and violent people; the word translated here 'mighty' is the same as the word 'violent' there.

12 'Upright' (the NRSV uses 'righteous') follows the Peshitta; some Hebrew MSS have 'aright'.

13 The 'one in need' (אֲבִיוֹן, literally 'the needy one') is used in a religious sense here: ill-treated by people but confident in God.

14 Called from his mother's womb (1:5), Jeremiah curses the day of his birth.

15 The literal translation of 'making him overjoyed' is 'making glad his joy'.

טז וְהִיָּה הָאִישׁ הַהוּא
 כְּעָרִים אֲשֶׁר־הִפִּיךְ יְהוָה וְלֹא נָחַם
 וּשְׁמַע זַעֲקָה בַּבֹּקֶר
 וּתְרוּעָה בְּעֵת צְהָרִים:
 זז אֲשֶׁר לֹא־מוֹתְתֵנִי מִרַחֵם
 וּתְהִי־לִי אִמִּי קִבְרִי
 וּרְחֻמָּהּ הָרַת עוֹלָם:
 חח לָמָּה זֶה מִרַחֵם יִצְאָתִי
 לְרֵאוֹת עֵמֶל וַיִּגְזֹן
 וַיִּכְלוּ בְּבֹשֶׁת יָמַי: {פ}

- 16 Let this man be like the cities
 that Yahweh overthrew without mercy;
 let him hear the warning cry at dawn
 and the shout of battle at high noon,
 17 for not killing me in the womb;
 my mother would have been my grave
 and her womb pregnant forever.
 18 Why ever did I come out of the womb
 to see toil and sorrow
 and spend my days in shame?

¹⁶ The 'cities' alluded to are Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities of the Jordan plain, which had become proverbial for their wickedness and for the destruction that God brought on them because of it (see Is 1:9–10, 13:19, Jer 23:14, 49:18).

¹⁷ NETB restructures the last 2 lines, reading, "making my pregnant mother's womb my grave forever."

¹⁸ The literal translation of the last line is "that my days might be consumed in shame."

ירמיהו פרק כא

א* הַדְּבַר אֲשֶׁר-הָיָה אֶל-יִרְמְיָהוּ מֵאֵת יְהוָה בְּשֻׁלַח
אֵלָיו הַמֶּלֶךְ צְדַקְיָהוּ אֶת-פָּשְׁחוּר בֶּן-מַלְכִיָּה וְאֶת-
צְפַנְיָה בֶן-מַעֲשִׂיָה הַכֹּהֵן לֵאמֹר: בַּדְּרָשָׁנָא בַעֲדָנוּ
אֶת-יְהוָה כִּי נְבוּכַדְרֶאֶצַּר מֶלֶךְ-בָּבֶל נֹלְחֵם עֲלֵינוּ
אוּלַּי יַעֲשֶׂה יְהוָה אוֹתָנוּ כְּכָל-נִפְלְאוֹתָיו וַיַּעֲלֶה
מֵעֲלֵינוּ: ג וַיֹּאמֶר יִרְמְיָהוּ אֲלֵיהֶם כֹּה תֹאמְרוּן אֶל-
צְדַקְיָהוּ: {ס}

ד כֹּה-אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הַגָּנִי מִסֵּב אֶת-כָּלִי
הַמִּלְחָמָה אֲשֶׁר בְּיַדְכֶם אֲשֶׁר אַתֶּם נֹלְחָמִים בָּם
אֶת-מֶלֶךְ בָּבֶל וְאֶת-הַכַּשְׂדִּים הַצָּרִים עֲלֵיכֶם מִחוּץ
לְחוּמָה וְאֶסְפְּתִי אוֹתָם אֶל-תּוֹךְ הָעִיר הַזֹּאת:
ה וְנִלְחַמְתִּי אֲנִי אֶתְכֶם בְּיַד נְטוּיָה וּבְזִרְעַ חֲזָקָה
וּבְאֵף וּבְחִמָּה וּבְקֶצֶף גָּדוֹל: ו וְהִכִּיתִי אֶת-יוֹשְׁבֵי
הָעִיר הַזֹּאת וְאֶת-הָאָדָם וְאֶת-הַבְּהֵמָה בַּדְּבַר גָּדוֹל

JEREMIAH 21

¹ This is the word that came to Jeremiah from Yahweh, when King Zedekiah sent Pashhur son of Malchiah to him, with the priest Zephaniah son of Maaseiah, saying, ² “Please consult Yahweh on our behalf, since Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon is making war on us: perhaps Yahweh will work one of his many miracles for us and force him to withdraw.” ³ Jeremiah said to them, “Take this answer to Zedekiah:

⁴ “Yahweh, the God of Israel, says this: I shall bring back the weapons of war that you are now carrying, and with which you are fighting the king of Babylon and the Chaldeans now besieging you; from outside the walls, I shall bring them together in the centre of this city. ⁵ I shall fight against you myself with outstretched hand and mighty arm, in anger, in fury and in great wrath. ⁶ And I shall strike down the inhabitants of this city, both human and animal; they will die of a great

JEREMIAH 21

- ¹ The time of this episode is the siege of Jerusalem in 588 BCE; the passage is perhaps placed here to point the contrast between the Pashhur of v. 1 and the Pashhur of 20:1. The LXX omits several words of this passage.
- ² The verb translated ‘consult’ is often used of seeking information through a prophet (e.g., 2K 1:16, 8:8); however, it is obvious from the following that they were not seeking information but help.
- ³ The NRSV includes the last part of this verse as part of v. 4; here, we follow the MT & NJB.
- ⁴ The ‘Chaldeans’ were a group of people in the country south of Babylon from which Nebuchadnezzar came.
- ⁵ A similar phrase, ‘with outstretched hand and strong arm’ is found several times with reference to God’s mighty power unleashed against Egypt at the Exodus (cf., Dt 4:34, 5:15, 26:8, Jr 32:21, Ps 136:12); here, instead of being directed at Israel’s enemies it will now be directed against her.
- ⁶ The NRSV has ‘pestilence’ in place of ‘plague’, here following the NJB.

ימתו: ^ז ואחר־יכן נא־סִיְהוּה אֶתְּךָ אֶת־צַדְקִיָּהוּ
מֶלֶךְ־יְהוּדָה וְאֶת־עַבְדָּיו | וְאֶת־הָעָם וְאֶת־
הַנְּשֹׂאֲרִים בְּעִיר הַזֹּאת מִן־הַדָּבָר | מִן־הַחֶרֶב וּמִן־
הָרָעַב בְּיַד נְבוּכַדְרֶאֶצַּר מֶלֶךְ־בָּבֶל וּבְיַד אִיְבֵיהֶם
וּבְיַד מְבַקְשֵׁי נַפְשָׁם וְהֵכֵם לְפִי־חֶרֶב לֹא־יִחוּס
עֲלֵיהֶם וְלֹא יִחְמַל וְלֹא יִרְחַם: ^ח וְאֶל־הָעָם הַזֶּה
תֹּאמַר כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה הַנְּגִי נָתַן לְפָנֶיכֶם אֶת־דְּרֹךְ
הַחַיִּים וְאֶת־דְּרֹךְ הַמּוֹת: ^ט הַיֵּשֶׁב בְּעִיר הַזֹּאת
יָמוּת בַּחֶרֶב וּבָרָעַב וּבַדָּבָר וְהַיּוֹצֵא וְנָפַל עַל־
הַכְּשָׁדִים הַצָּרִים עֲלֵיכֶם יַחִיה וְחָיָה וְהִיִּתְהַלֹּו
נַפְשׁוֹ לְשָׁלָל: ^י כִּי שָׁמַתִּי פָנַי בְּעִיר הַזֹּאת לְרָעָה
וְלֹא לְטוֹבָה נֹא־סִיְהוּה בְּיַד־מֶלֶךְ בָּבֶל תִּנָּתֵן
וְשָׂרְפָהּ בָּאֵשׁ: {ס}

^{יא} וּלְבֵית מֶלֶךְ יְהוּדָה שָׁמְעוּ דְבַר־יְהוָה: ^{יב} בֵּית דָּוִד
כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה

דִּינֹו לְבַקֵּר מִשְׁפָּט
וְהַצִּילוּ גְזוּל מִיַּד עוֹשֵׂק
פֶּן־תֵּצֵא כָאֵשׁ חֲמָתִי

plague. ⁷ Then, says Yahweh, I shall deliver Zedekiah king of Judah, his officials, the people and those of this city who have escaped the plague, the sword or the famine, into the clutches of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, into the clutches of their enemies and into the clutches of those determined to kill them; mercilessly, relentlessly, pitilessly, he will put them to the sword.” ⁸ Moreover, you must say this to the people, “Yahweh says this: Look, I offer you a choice between the way of life and the way of death. ⁹ Anyone who stays in this city will die by sword, by famine or by plague; but anyone who leaves it and surrenders to the Chaldeans now besieging you will live; he will escape with his life. ¹⁰ For I set my face against this city for disaster, and not prosperity, says Yahweh. It will be handed over to the king of Babylon and he will burn it down.””

¹¹ To the royal house of Judah: Listen to the word of Yahweh, ¹² House of David, thus says Yahweh:

Execute justice in the morning,
rescue from the oppressor those who have been robbed,
or else my wrath will leap out like a fire,

⁷ A more literal translation of the opening ‘then’ is ‘and afterward’.

⁸ The only possibility for life is surrender; but Jerusalem will be destroyed (38:17).

⁹ The *Kethib/Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

¹⁰ For the use of the idiom ‘set one’s face against’ see 1K 2:15, 2K 2:17, Jr 42:15, 17, and note the interesting interplay of usage in Jr 44:11–12.

¹¹ The heading (vv. 1–12^a, see 23:9) covers the section 21:12^b–23:8; it indicates a collection that may once have formed a separate unit.

¹² The *Kethib/Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

וּבַעֲרָהּ וְאֵין מְכַבֵּה
 מִפְּנֵי רָע מַעֲלָלֵיהֶם מֵעַלְלֵיכֶם:
 הַנְּנִי אֶלְיָךְ יִשְׁבֶּת הָעֵמֶק ^ג
 צֹר הַמִּישֹׁר נְאֻם־יְהוָה
 הָאֹמְרִים מִי־יַחַת עָלֵינוּ
 וּמִי יָבֹא בְּמַעוֹנוֹתֵינוּ:
 וּפְקֹדֹתַי עֲלֵיכֶם כַּפְּרֵי מֵעַלְלֵיכֶם ^ד
 נְאֻם־יְהוָה
 וְהִצַּתִּי אֵשׁ בִּיעֲרָהּ
 וְאָכְלָה כָּל־סְבִיבֶיהָ:

and burn, with no one to quench it,
because of your evil deeds.

¹³ My quarrel is with you, resident of the valley,
Rock-in-the-Plain, says Yahweh,
with you who say, “Who can swoop down on us?
Who can enter our places of refuge?”

¹⁴ I shall punish you as your actions deserve,
says Yahweh,
I shall set fire to its forest
and it will devour all around it.

¹³ The first 2 lines refer to Jerusalem, with its valley (the Kidron or Tyropoeon) and the rock of Ophel dominating it and crowned with the royal palace.

¹⁴ The ‘forest’ image is repeated in 22:6ff, where it refers to the cedar-wood pillars of the palace (see 1K 7:2).

ירמיהו פרק כב

אָ כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה רֵד בֵּית־מֶלֶךְ יְהוּדָה וּדְבַרְתָּ שָׁם
אֶת־הַדְּבָר הַזֶּה: ^ב וְאָמַרְתָּ שְׁמַע דְּבַר־יְהוָה מֶלֶךְ
יְהוּדָה הַיֹּשֵׁב עַל־כִּסֵּא דָוִד אַתָּה וְעַבְדֶּיךָ וְעַמֶּיךָ
הַבָּאִים בְּשַׁעְרֵים הָאֵלֶּה: ^ג כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה עֲשׂוּ
מִשְׁפָּט וְצִדְקָה וְהִצִּילוּ גְזוּל מִיַּד עֹשֹׂק וְגַר יָתוֹם
וְאַלְמָנָה אַל־תִּגְנוּ אַל־תַּחֲמִסוּ וְדָם נָקִי אַל־תִּשְׁפְּכוּ
בַּמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה: ^ד כִּי אִם־עֲשׂוּ תַעֲשׂוּ אֶת־הַדְּבָר הַזֶּה
וּבָאוּ בְשַׁעְרֵי הַבַּיִת הַזֶּה מְלָכִים יֹשְׁבִים לְדָוִד עַל־
כִּסְאוֹ לְכַבֵּים בְּרֶכֶב וּבִסּוּסִים הוּא וְעַבְדּוֹ וְעַמּוֹ:
ה וְאִם לֹא תִשְׁמָעוּ אֶת־הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה בִּי
נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי נְאֻם־יְהוָה כִּי־לַחֲרָבָה יִהְיֶה הַבַּיִת
הַזֶּה: {פ}

י כִּי־כֹה אָמַר יְהוָה עַל־בַּיִת מֶלֶךְ יְהוּדָה
גִּלְעָד אַתָּה לִּי
רֹאשׁ הַלְּבָנוֹן

JEREMIAH 22

¹ Yahweh said this, "Go down to the palace of the king of Judah and there say this word, ² "Hear the word of Yahweh, king of Judah now occupying the throne of David, you, your officials and your people who enter these gates. ³ Yahweh says this: Act uprightly and justly; rescue from the hands of the oppressor anyone who has been robbed, do not exploit or ill-treat the alien, the orphan or the widow; shed no innocent blood in this place. ⁴ For, if you will indeed obey this command, then kings occupying the throne of David will continue to make their entry through the gates of this palace, riding in chariots or on horseback, they, their officials and their people. ⁵ However, if you do not listen to these words, then I swear by myself, says Yahweh, this palace shall become a ruin!

⁶ "Yes, this is what Yahweh says about the palace of the king of Judah:
You are like Gilead to me,
like a peak of Lebanon.

JEREMIAH 22

- ¹ Jeremiah is told to 'go down' from the Temple, which stood above the palace (cf. 26:10, 36:12).
- ² The NJB has 'go through' in place of 'enter', here following the NRSV.
- ³ These were classes of people who had no one to look out for their rights: the laws of Israel, however, were careful to see that their rights were guarded (cf. Dt 10:18) and that provision was made for meeting their needs (cf. Dt 24:19-21).
- ⁴ If the people repent, their destruction will be averted and the Davidic dynasty preserved.
- ⁵ Since Yahweh is incomparably great, he could swear by no higher authority than himself or his own great name.
- ⁶ Vv. 6-7 are parallel to 21:13-14. Foresters (destroyers) with axes and saws (weapons) will burn the 'forest' (cedar wood palace), reducing its once beautiful site to a wasteland. The *Kethib/Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

אִם־לֹא אֲשִׁיתֶךָ מְדָבָר
עָרִים לֹא נוֹשְׁבָה נוֹשְׁבוֹ:
וְקִדְשִׁתִּי עֲלֶיךָ מִשְׁחָתִים ז
אִישׁ וְכָלִיו
וְכָרְתוּ מִבְּחַר אֲרָזֶיךָ
וְהִפִּילוּ עַל־הָאֵשׁ:

All the same, I will reduce you to a desert,
to uninhabited towns.

7 I dedicate me to destroy you,
each man with his weapons;
they will cut down your finest cedars
and throw them on the fire.

וְעָבְרוּ גוֹיִם רַבִּים עַל הָעִיר הַזֹּאת וְאָמְרוּ אִישׁ ח
אֶל־רֵעֵהוּ עַל־מָה עָשָׂה יְהוָה לָכֵה לָעִיר הַגְּדוֹלָה
הַזֹּאת: וְאָמְרוּ עַל אֲשֶׁר עָזְבוּ אֶת־בְּרִית יְהוָה ט
אֱלֹהֵיהֶם וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲווּ לֵאלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים וַיַּעֲבֹדוּם: {ס}

8 "And, many nations will pass this city, and all of them will say to one another: Why has Yahweh treated this great city like this? 9 And they will answer: Because they abandoned the Covenant of Yahweh their God to worship other gods and serve them.""

אֶל־תִּבְכּוּ לְמַת י
וְאֶל־תִּגְדּוּ לוֹ
בָּכּוּ בְכוּ לַהֲלֵךְ
כִּי לֹא יָשׁוּב עוֹד
וְרָאָה אֶת־אֶרֶץ מוֹלַדְתּוֹ:

10 Do not weep for him who is dead;
no grieve for him.
Weep rather for him who goes away,
since he shall return no more
to see his native land.

כִּי כֹה אָמַר־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי שְׁלֹם בֶּן־יֹאשִׁיָּהוּ מֶלֶךְ יא
יְהוּדָה הַמֶּלֶךְ תַּחַת יֹאשִׁיָּהוּ אָבִיו אֲשֶׁר יֵצֵא מִן־
הַמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה לֹא־יָשׁוּב שָׁם עוֹד: יב כִּי בַּמָּקוֹם

11 For, this is what Yahweh has said concerning Shallum son of Josiah, king of Judah, who succeeded Josiah his father and was forced to leave this place, "He will never come back to it 12 but he shall die in the place

7 The literal translation of the 1st line is 'I will sanctify destroyers against it' (see #6:4).

8 This paragraph is a later comment (5:19, Dt 29:23–28, 1K 9:8–9) referring to Jerusalem, not the palace.

9 The NJB opens with 'And the answer will be'; here, we follow the NRSV.

10 'Him who is dead' is Josiah, killed in 609 BCE (see 2K 23:29); 'him who goes away' refers to Jehoahaz, deported to Egypt by Necho the same year.

11 'Shallum' (Jehoahaz) was made king by popular acclaim after the death of his father, Josiah, who was killed at Megiddo.

12 According to 2K 23:32, Jehoahaz was a wicked king, deposed by Necho and carried into exile, where he died.

אֲשֶׁר־הִגְלוּ אֹתוֹ שָׁם יָמוּת וְאֶת־הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת לֹא־
 יִרְאֶה עוֹד: {ס} to which he has been taken captive; and he will never see this country
 again.

<p>יג הוּי בָּנָה בֵּיתוֹ בְּלֹא־צֶדֶק וְעַל־יִזְתִּיו בְּלֹא מִשְׁפָּט בְּרַעְיָהוּ יַעֲבֹד חֲנָם וּפְעָלוֹ לֹא יִתֶּן־לוֹ: יד הָאָמַר אֲבִנֶה־לִּי בַּיִת מְדוֹת וְעַל־יֹזֹת מְרוֹחִים וְקָרַע לוֹ חֲלוֹנָי וְסָפוֹן בְּאֶרֶז וּמְשׁוֹחַ בַּשָּׁשֶׁר: טו הֲתִמְלֹךְ כִּי אֲתָה מִתְחַרָּה בְּאֶרֶז אֲבִיךָ הֲלוֹא אָכַל וְשָׁתָה וְעָשָׂה מִשְׁפָּט וְצִדְקָה אִז טוֹב לוֹ: טז דָּן דִּין־עֲנִי וְאֲבִיּוֹן אִז טוֹב הֲלוֹא־הִיא הַדַּעַת אֹתִי נְאֻם־יְהוָה:</p>	<p>13 Woe to him who builds his house without uprightness, his upper rooms by injustice, who makes his neighbours work for nothing, without paying their wages, 14 who says, “I shall build myself a spacious palace with airy upper rooms,” who makes windows in it, panels it with cedar and paints it red. 15 Are you a king because of your passion for cedar? Did your father go hungry or thirsty, and did he do what is just and upright? Then all went well for him. 16 He used to examine the cases of the poor and needy, then all went well. Is no that what it means to know me? says Yahweh.</p>
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13 An administration that will do justice and righteousness, not one housed in cedar (v. 15) is what makes the king (21:11–12, Mi 3:9–10).
 14 In the last line, the MT should be probably emended to read חֲלוֹנָי וְסָפוֹן instead of חֲלוֹנָי וְסָפוֹן, i.e., the plural noun with 3rd singular suffix rather than the 1st singular, and the infinitive absolute rather than the passive participle.
 15 Jehoiakim should emulate his father Josiah, whose death was mourned; his own death will be accompanied by indignities because of his misdeeds (36:30, 2K 24:1–5).
 16 The 2nd line implies that things went well for *everyone* (in Judah).

<p>כִּי אֵין עֵינַיִךָ וְלִבְךָ ז' כִּי אִם-עַל-בְּצַעֲךָ וְעַל דַּם-הַנָּקִי לְשַׁפּוֹךְ וְעַל-הָעֶשֶׂק וְעַל-הַמְרוּצָה לַעֲשׂוֹת: {ס}</p>	<p>17 You, on the other hand, have eyes and heart for nothing but dishonest gain, for shedding innocent blood and perpetrating violence and oppression."</p>
<p>י"ח לָכֵן כֹּה-אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי-יְהוּדָה בְּנִי-יֹאשִׁיָּהוּ מֶלֶךְ-יְהוּדָה: לֹא-יִסְפְּדוּ לוֹ הוּא אָחִי וְהוּא אָחוֹת לֹא-יִסְפְּדוּ לוֹ הוּא אֲדוֹן וְהוּא הֵדָה: קְבוּרַת חֲמוֹר יִקָּבֵר יט סָחוּב וְהִשְׁלָךְ מֵהַלְאָה לְשַׁעְרֵי יְרוּשָׁלַם: {ס} כ עַלִי הַלְבָנוֹן וְצַעֲקִי וּבְבַשָּׁן תִּגִי קוֹלְךָ וְצַעֲקִי מֵעֲבָרִים כִּי נִשְׁבְּרוּ כָּל-מְאֵהָבֶיךָ:</p>	<p>18 That is why Yahweh says this about Jehoiakim son of Josiah, king of Judah: No lamenting for him, “My poor brother! My poor sister!” No lamenting for him, “His poor lordship! His poor majesty!” 19 He will have a donkey’s funeral – dragged away and thrown out of the gates of Jerusalem.” 20 Climb the Lebanon range and shriek, raise your voice in Bashan, and shriek from the Abarim, for all your lovers have been ruined.</p>

17 The NJB has ‘your own interests’ in place of ‘dishonest gain’, here following the NRSV.

18 The translation follows the majority of scholars who think that the address of brother and sister are the address of the mourners to one another, lamenting their loss. Some scholars feel that all 4 terms are parallel and represent the relation that the king had metaphorically to his subjects; i.e., he was not only Lord and Majesty to them but like a sister or a brother. In that case, something like: “How sad it is for the one who was like a brother to us! How sad it is for the one who was like a sister to us.” This makes for poor poetry and is not very likely: the lover can call his bride sister in Song of Solomon (Sg 4:9, 10) but there are no examples of a subject speaking of a king in this way in Israel or the ancient Middle East.

19 A similar judgment against this ungodly king is pronounced by Jeremiah in 36:30.

20 In vv. 20–23, Jeremiah addresses personified Jerusalem, who bewails the events of 598 BCE; he then makes a bitter commentary on these events.

כא דְּבַרְתִּי אֵלֶיךָ בְּשִׁלוֹתֶיךָ

אָמַרְתָּ לֹא אֶשְׁמַע

זֶה דְּרַכְּךָ מִנְעוּרֶיךָ

כִּי לֹא־שָׁמַעַתָּ בְּקוֹלִי:

כב כָּל־רֹעֵיךָ תִּרְעַה־רוּחַ

וּמְאַהֲבֶיךָ בְּשָׁבִי יִלְכוּ

כִּי אַז תִּבְשִׁי וְנִכְלַמְתָּ

מִכָּל רָעַתְךָ:

כג יִשְׁבַתִּי יִשְׁבַתִּי בַלְבָּנוֹן

מִקְנַנְתִּי מִקְנַנְתִּי בְּאַרְזִים

מִה־נִּחְנַתִּי בְּבֹא־לֶךְ חֲבָלִים

חֵיל כִּילְדָה:

כד כִּי־חַי־אַנִּי נֹאס־יְהוָה כִּי אִם־יְהִיָּה כְּנִיָּהּ בְּךָ

יְהוֹיָקִים מֶלֶךְ יְהוּדָה חוֹתֶם עַל־יַד יְמִינִי כִּי מִשָּׁם

אֶתְקַנְךָ: כה וְנָתַתִּיךָ בְּיַד מִבְּקָשֵׁי נַפְשֶׁךָ וּבְיַד אֲשֶׁר־

אֶתָּה יִגֹּר מִפְּנֵיהֶם וּבְיַד נְבוּכַדְרֶאֶצַּר מֶלֶךְ־בָּבֶל

וּבְיַד הַכַּשְׂדִּים: כו וְהִטַּלְתִּי אֹתְךָ וְאֶת־אִמְךָ אֲשֶׁר

21 I spoke to you in your security,
but you said, “I will not listen!”

From your youth, this is how you behaved,
refusing to listen to my voice.

22 The wind shall shepherd away all your shepherds
and your lovers shall go into captivity.

Then you will certainly blush with shame
because of all your wickedness.

23 O inhabitant of Lebanon,
nested among the cedars,

how you will groan when the anguish overtakes you,
pain as of a woman in labour!

24 “As I live, says Yahweh, even if Coniah son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, were the signet ring on my right hand, even then I would still wrench you off! 25 I shall hand you over to those determined to kill you, to those you dread, even into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and into the hands of the Chaldeans. 26 I will hurl you and the

21 For the nuance ‘security’ (as NETB) for תִּדְבַּשְׁלוֹ, rather than ‘prosperity’, as many (e.g. the NJB & NRSV) translate, see Ps 122:7 and 30:6.

22 For the use of the word ‘shepherds’ to refer to rulers/leaders, see 2:8, 10:21 & 23:1–4; for the use of the phrase ‘shepherd away’ for ‘carry off’, cf. Job 20:26. There is wordplay on the different senses of the word ‘shepherd’.

23 ‘How you will groan’ follows the LXX (καταστενάξεις) and Peshitta; the MT has the passive (unused) form of the verb ‘to pardon’, which might at a pinch be translated ‘how pitiable you will be’. The Kethib/Qere differences here would benefit from explanations.

24 ‘Coniah’ is another name for Jehoiakim (elsewhere in this book called ‘Jeconiah’).

25 The NJB omits the phrase ‘into the hands of’ (twice in this verse), here following the MT & NRSV.

26 The verb here translated ‘I will hurl’ is very forceful: it is used for Saul throwing a spear at David (1S 18:11).

יִלְדֶתְךָ עַל הָאָרֶץ אַחֶרֶת אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יִלְדֶתְם שָׁם
וְשָׁם תָּמוּתוּ: כִּי וְעַל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר־הֵם מְנַשְׂאִים
אֶת־נַפְשָׁם לָשׁוּב שָׁם שָׁמָּה לֹא יָשׁוּבוּ: {פ}

כח הָעֶצֶב נִבְזָה נִפְוֶן
הָאִישׁ הַזֶּה כְּנִיָּהוּ
אֶם־כְּלִי אֵין חֶפֶץ בּוֹ
מִדּוּעַ הוּטְלוֹ
הוּא וְזָרְעוֹ וְהַשְּׁלֹכוֹ
עַל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יָדְעוּ:
כט אֶרֶץ אֶרֶץ אֶרֶץ
שָׁמְעֵי דְבַר־יְהוָה:
ל כֹּהן אָמַר יְהוָה
כְּתַבּוּ אֶת־הָאִישׁ הַזֶּה עֲרִירִי גָבֵר
לֹא־יִצְלַח בְּיָמָיו
כִּי לֹא יִצְלַח מִזָּרְעוֹ
אִישׁ יֹשֵׁב עַל־כִּסֵּא דָוִד
וּמִשָּׁל עוֹד בִּיהוּדָה: {פ}

mother who bore you into another country; you were not born there but you shall both die there. ²⁷ They shall not return to the country to which they desperately long to return.”

²⁸ Is he a despised, broken pot,
this man Coniah,
a clay vessel that no one wants?
Why are he and his offspring ejected,
hurled into a country
they know nothing of?
²⁹ O land, land, land:
listen to the word of Yahweh!
³⁰ Yahweh says this,
“List this man as childless,
a man who made a failure of his life,
since none of his offspring will succeed
in occupying the throne of David,
or ruling in Judah again.”

²⁷ Note the sudden shift from the 2nd plural to the 3rd plural.

²⁸ ‘Despised’ follows the NRSV; the NJB has ‘shoddy’.

²⁹ There is no certain explanation for the triple repetition of the word ‘land’ here; some suggest the idea of exasperation, but exasperation at what? Their continued apostasy which made these exiles necessary? Or exasperation at their pitiful hopes of seeing Jeconiah restored?

³⁰ The 2nd line refers to the recording in the royal registers. Zerubbabel, Jehoiachin’s grandson, was governor of Judah only after the Exile.

ירמיהו פרק כג

JEREMIAH 23

- א הוֹי רְעִים מְאַבְדִּים וּמְפָצִים אֶת־צֹאן מְרֵעִיתִי נְאֻם־יְהוָה: {ס}
- ב לֵכֶן כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל עַל־הָרְעִים הָרְעִים אֶת־עַמִּי אַתֶּם הַפַּצְתֶּם אֶת־צֹאנִי וַתִּדְחֹם וְלֹא פָקַדְתֶּם אֹתָם הַנְּנִי פָקַד עֲלֵיכֶם אֶת־רַע מַעַלְלֵיכֶם נְאֻם־יְהוָה: ג וְאֲנִי אֶקְבֹּץ אֶת־שְׂאֲרֵי־צֹאנִי מִכָּל הָאֲרָצוֹת אֲשֶׁר־הִדַּחְתִּי אֹתָם שָׁם וְהִשְׁבַּתִּי אֶתְהֶן עַל־נֹהֵן וּפְרוּ וּרְבוּ: ד וְהִקְמַתִּי עֲלֵיהֶם רְעִים וְרָעוּם וְלֹא־יִירָאוּ עוֹד וְלֹא־יִחַתּוּ וְלֹא יִפְקְדוּ נְאֻם־יְהוָה: {ס}
- ה הִנֵּה יָמִים בָּאִים נְאֻם־יְהוָה וְהִקְמַתִּי לְדָוִד צֶמַח צְדִיק וּמִלֶּךְ מִלֶּךְ וְהִשְׁפִּיל וְעָשָׂה מִשְׁפָּט וַצְדָקָה בְּאֶרֶץ: ו בְּיָמָיו תֹּשֶׁעַ יְהוּדָה וַיִּשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁכֹּן לְבֶטֶח וְזֶה־שְׁמוֹ אֲשֶׁר־יִקְרָאוּ יְהוָה | צְדָקְנוּ: {פ}
- 1 “Woe to the shepherds who lose and scatter the sheep of my pasture, says Yahweh.
- 2 So, thus says Yahweh, God of Israel, about the shepherds who shepherd my people, “You have scattered my flock, you have driven them away and have not taken care of them. So, I shall attend to you for your misdeeds, says Yahweh! 3 The remnant of my flock, I myself shall gather from all the lands where I have driven them, and bring them back to their fold; they shall be fruitful and multiply. 4 For them, I shall raise up shepherds to shepherd them and pasture them. No fear, no terror for them any more; not one shall be lost, says Yahweh!
- 5 “Look, the days are coming, says Yahweh, when I will raise an upright Branch for David; he will reign as king and be wise, doing what is just and upright in the land. 6 In his days, Judah will be saved and Israel live in peace. This is the name he will use: “Yahweh is our Righteousness””

JEREMIAH 23

- 1 After reproaching Judah’s rulers (22:22, Ezk Ch. 34) for scattering Judah, God promises to establish a righteous member (‘branch’, v. 5, and see Is 11:1) of David’s line over a restored Israel (30:9).
- 2 Vv. 1–4 are an extended metaphor, in which the rulers are compared to shepherds and the people are compared to sheep; this metaphor has already been met with in 10:21 and is found elsewhere in the context of Yahweh’s covenant with David (cf. 2S 7:7–8, Ps 78:70–72).
- 3 The NJB ends this verse with, “they will be faithful and increase in numbers;” here, we follow the NRSV (and MT).
- 4 There is a play on the word פָּקַד (‘lost’); here, the word refers to the shepherds who have not taken care of the sheep (v. 2), the punishment for the evil they have done (v. 2), and the fact that after God assigns new shepherds, they will be cared for properly (v. 4).
- 5 ‘Branch’ was later to become a proper noun and Messianic title (Zc 3:8, 6:12).
- 6 This symbolic name (see #Is 1:26), given to the Messiah, is contrasted with the name Zedekiah, which means ‘Yahweh is my saving justice’.

ז לִכְן הִנֵּה יָמִים בָּאִים נֹאֲמֵי הוֹה וְלֹא יֵאמְרוּ עוֹד
 חִי־יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר הֵעֵלָה אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵאֶרֶץ
 מִצְרַיִם: ^ח כִּי אִם־חִי־יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר הֵעֵלָה וְאֲשֶׁר
 הֵבִיא אֶת־זֶרַע בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵאֶרֶץ צְפוֹנָה וּמִכָּל
 הָאֲרָצוֹת אֲשֶׁר הִדְחָתִים שָׁם וַיֵּשְׁבוּ עַל־
 אֲדָמָתָם: {פ}

^ט לְנִבְאִים נִשְׁבַּר לִבִּי בְקִרְבִּי
 רָחַפוּ כָּל־עֲצָמוֹתַי
 הִיִּתִּי כְּאִישׁ שָׂכּוֹר
 וּכְגֹבֵר עֵבְרוּ יַיִן
 מִפְּנֵי יְהוָה
 וּמִפְּנֵי דְבָרֵי קִדְשׁוֹ:
^י כִּי מִנְאֲפִים מְלֹאָה הָאָרֶץ
 כִּי־מִפְּנֵי אֱלֹה אַבְלָה הָאָרֶץ
 יִבְשׁוּ נְאוֹת מִדְבָּר
 וְתִהְיֶי מְרוֹצָתָם רָעָה
 וּגְבוּרָתָם לֹא־כֹן:
^{יא} כִּי־גַם־נְבִיא גַם־כֹּהֵן חָנְפוּ
 גַם־בְּבֵיתִי מִצְאָתִי רָעָתָם

⁷ “Look, therefore, the days are coming, says Yahweh, when it shall no longer be said, “As Yahweh lives, who brought the Israelites out of the land of Egypt,” ⁸ but, “As Yahweh lives, who led back and brought home the offspring of the House of Israel from the country of the north and all the countries to which he had driven them, to live on their own soil.””

⁹ On the prophets: My heart is broken within me,
 I tremble in all my bones;
 I am like a drunken man,
 like a man overcome with wine,
 because of Yahweh
 and because of his holy words:
¹⁰ “For, the country is full of adulterers;
 yes, because of a curse, the country is in mourning
 and the pasturage in the desert has dried up.
 They are prompt to do wrong,
 and make no effort to do right.
¹¹ Yes, even prophet and priest are godless;
 I have detected their wickedness in my own House,

⁷ The NJB lacks ‘the land of’ before ‘Egypt’; here, we follow the MT & NRSV.

⁸ ‘He had driven them’ follows the LXX (ἐξῆλθεν αὐτοὺς, reading הִדְחָתִים); the MT has ‘I had driven them’ (הִדְחָתִים).

⁹ The title (as in 21:11) is of a complete booklet, its text overloaded (vv. 9–40).

¹⁰ ‘Because of a curse’ follows the MT (מְלֹאָה) rather than the LXX and Peshitta, which have ‘because of these’.

¹¹ The particle כִּי that begins this verse is parallel to the one at the beginning of the preceding verse.

נֹאֲס־יְהוָה:
 יב לְכֹן יִהְיֶה דַרְכָּם לָהֶם
 כַּחֲלָקְלוֹת בְּאִפְלָה
 יִדְחוּ וְנָפְלוּ בָּהּ
 כִּי־אָבִיא עֲלֵיהֶם רָעָה שְׁנַת פְּקֻדָּתָם
 נֹאֲס־יְהוָה:
 יג וּבְנִבְיָאֵי שִׁמְרוֹן
 רָאִיתִי תַפְלָה
 הַנְּבִאוֹ בַבַּעַל
 וַיִּתְּעוּ אֶת־עַמִּי אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל:
 יד וּבְנִבְיָאֵי יְרוּשָׁלַם רָאִיתִי שְׁעֵרוּרָה
 נְאוּף וְהַלְדָּ בְשִׁקָּר וְחִזְקוֹ יְדֵי מְרַעִים
 לְבַלְתִּי־שָׁבוּ אִישׁ מִרְעָתוֹ
 הַיּוֹלֵי כָלֶם כְּסֻדָּם
 וַיִּשְׁבִּיָה כְעַמְרָה: {פ}
 טו לְכֹן כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת עַל־הַנְּבִאִים
 הַנְּנִי מֵאֲכִיל אוֹתָם לְעֵנָה
 וְהִשְׁקֵתִים מִי־רָאשׁ
 כִּי מֵאֵת נְבִיָאֵי יְרוּשָׁלַם
 יִצְאָה חֲנֻפָה לְכָל־הָאָרֶץ: {פ}

says Yahweh.

- 12 So, their way will be for them like slippery paths in the darkness, where they will fall, for I shall bring disaster on them, in the year of their punishment, says Yahweh.
- 13 In the prophets of Samaria, I have seen insanity; they prophesied by Baal and led my people Israel astray.
- 14 But, in the prophets of Jerusalem, I have seen a shocking thing: adultery, persistent lying, and such abetting of the wicked that no one renounces his wickedness. To me, they are all like Sodom and its inhabitants are like Gomorrah.”
- 15 So, this is what Yahweh Sabaoth says about the prophets, “Now I shall give them wormwood to eat and make them drink poisoned water, since from the prophets of Jerusalem godlessness has spread throughout the land.”

12 By their own devices, the false prophets will be destroyed.

13 Prophesying ‘by Baal’ was a clear violation of Mosaic Law and punishable by death (see Dt 13:1-5).

14 In words, the prophets of Jerusalem are worse than those of Baal in Samaria; in deeds, they are worse than the people of Sodom and Gomorrah.

15 ‘Wormwood’ and ‘poisoned water’ are not to be understood literally here but are symbolic of judgment and suffering.

טז כה־אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת
 אֶל־תִּשְׁמְעוּ עַל־דְּבָרֵי הַנְּבִאִים הַנְּבִאִים לָכֶם
 מִהַבְּלִים הֵמָּה אֶתְכֶם
 חֲזוֹן לִבָּם יְדַבְּרוּ
 לֹא מִפִּי יְהוָה:
 זי אֹמְרִים אָמֹזֶל לְמַנְאֲצֵי
 דְּבַר יְהוָה שְׁלוֹם יִהְיֶה לָכֶם
 וְכָל הַלֵּךְ בְּשִׁרְרוֹת לְבוֹ
 אָמְרוּ לֹא־תָבֹא עֲלֵיכֶם רָעָה:
 ח כִּי מִי עֹמֵד בְּסוֹד יְהוָה
 וַיֵּרָא וַיִּשְׁמַע אֶת־דְּבָרוֹ
 מִי־הִקְשִׁיב דְּבָרֵי דְבָרוֹ וַיִּשְׁמַע: {ס}
 ט הִנֵּה | סַעֲרַת יְהוָה
 חֲמָה יִצְאָה וְסַעַר מִתְחוֹלֵל
 עַל רֹאשׁ רְשָׁעִים יִחֹל:
 כ לֹא יִשׁוּב אַף־יְהוָה
 עַד־עֲשֶׂתוֹ וְעַד־הִקְיָמוֹ מְזֻמּוֹת לְבוֹ
 בַּאֲחֵרֵית הַיָּמִים תִּתְבַּוְּנֶנּוּ בָּהּ בִּינָה:

- 16 Yahweh Sabaoth says this:
 "Do not listen to what those prophets say to you;
 they are deluding you,
 they retail visions of their own
 and not what comes from Yahweh's mouth.
- 17 To those who despise me, they keep saying:
 Yahweh has spoken: you will have peace;
 and to all who follow their own stubborn inclinations:
 No disaster will touch you."
- 18 For, who has been present in Yahweh's council
 and seen, and heard his word?
 Who has paid attention to his word and listened to it?
- 19 Look, Yahweh's storm,
 his wrath, bursts out: a fearsome tempest
 to burst on the heads on the wicked.
- 20 Yahweh's anger will not withdraw
 until he has executed and accomplished what he has in mind.
 In the final days, you will understand this clearly.

16 Turning from their deeds to their message, Jeremiah reproves the prophets for their assurance of well-being to those who flout God's word.

17 'Despise me' follows the MT & NJB; the NRSV, following the LXX (ἀπωθομένους τὸν λόγον κυρίου) has 'despise the word of the LORD'.

18 This verse is perhaps a clumsily inserted gloss on v. 22. The *Kethib*/*Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

19 The syntax of the 2nd line is often misunderstood, to the point that some want to delete the word 'wrath'; both here and in 30:23, the word 'wrath' stands not as an accusative of attendant circumstance but in apposition, giving the intended referent to the figure.

20 The translation 'understand this clearly' reflects a construction where a noun functions as the object of a verb from the same root word.

כא לא־שִׁלַּחְתִּי אֶת־הַנְּבִיאִים

וְהֵם רָצוּ

לֹא־דִבַּרְתִּי אֲלֵיהֶם

וְהֵם נִבְאוּ:

כב וְאִם־עָמְדוּ בְּסוּדֵי

וַיִּשְׁמְעוּ דְבָרִי אֶת־עַמִּי

וַיִּשְׁבוּ מִדְרָכָם הָרַע

וַיִּמְרַע מֵעֲלֵיָהֶם: {ס}

21 “I did not send these prophets,
yet they ran!

I did not speak to them,
yet they prophesied!

22 Had they been present in my council,
they could have proclaimed my words to my people
and turned them from their evil way
and from the wickedness of their deeds!

כג הֲאֵלֹהִי מִקְרֹב אֲנִי נְאֻם־יְהוָה וְלֹא אֵלֹהִי מֵרָחֵק:

כד אִם־יִסְתֵּר אִישׁ בְּמִסְתָּרִים וְאֲנִי לֹא־אֶרְאֶנּוּ

נְאֻם־יְהוָה הֲלֹא אֶת־הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת־הָאָרֶץ אֲנִי

מְלֵא מְלֵא נְאֻם־יְהוָה: כה שָׁמַעְתִּי אֶת אֲשֶׁר־אָמְרוּ

הַנְּבִיאִים הַנְּבִיאִים בְּשִׁמִּי שֶׁקֶר לֵאמֹר חֲלַמְתִּי

חֲלַמְתִּי: כו עַד־מָתִי הִישׁ בְּלֵב הַנְּבִיאִים נִבְּאִי

הַשֶּׁקֶר וְנִבְּאִי תִרְמַת לָבָם: כז הַחֲשָׁבִים לְהַשְׁכִּיחַ

23 “Am I a god nearby, Yahweh asks, and not a God far off? 24 Who can hide somewhere secret without my seeing him, Yahweh demands? Do I not fill heaven and earth, Yahweh says? 25 “I have heard what the prophets say who prophesy lies in my name, saying “I have had a dream, I have had a dream!” 26 How long are there to be those among the prophets who prophesy lies and are prophets of their own delusions? 27 They plan, by means of the dreams that they keep telling

21 The image of the first 2 lines is that of a messenger bearing news from the king (see 2S 18:19–24, Jr 51:31, Is 40:9, 52:7, Hab 2:2: the tablet/scroll bore the message the runner was to read to the intended recipients of his message).

22 Another translation for ‘in my council’ (as NJB & NRSV) is ‘in my inner circle’ (as NETB).

23 The question is sometimes translated as though there is an alternative being given in v. 23, one that covers both the ideas of immanence and transcendence (i.e., “Am I only a god nearby and not also a god far off?”); however, the *hey* interrogative (הִי) at the beginning of this verse and the particle (אֵם) at the beginning of the next show that the linkage is between the question in v. 23 and that in v. 24^a.

24 The 2nd, rhetorical question clearly expects a positive answer.

25 God may indeed use dreams to convey a message (Nb 12:6) but the message and its origin need discernment.

26 Compare this with the parallel passage in 14:13–15.

27 In the Hebrew Bible, the ‘name’ reflects the person’s character (cf. Gn 27:36, 1S 25:25) or his reputation (Gn 11:4, 2S 8:13).

אֶת־עַמִּי שְׁמִי בַחֲלוּמֹתָם אֲשֶׁר יִסְפְּרוּ אִישׁ לְרֵעֵהוּ
כַּאֲשֶׁר שָׁכְחוּ אֲבוֹתָם אֶת־שְׁמִי בְּבַעַל: כֹּחַ הַנְּבִיא
אֲשֶׁר־אָתּוֹ חֲלוּם יִסְפֹּר חֲלוּם וְאֲשֶׁר דִּבְרֵי אֱתוֹ
יְדַבֵּר דִּבְרֵי אֱמֶת מֵהַלְתֵּבֶן אֶת־הַבֶּר נְאֻם־יְהוָה:
כֹּחַ הַלֹּא כֹה דִבְרֵי כְּאֵשׁ נְאֻם־יְהוָה וּכְפִטְיֵשׁ יַפְצֹץ
סֹלֶעַ: {ס}

לִּלְכֹן הַנְּנִי עַל־הַנְּבִיאִים נְאֻם־יְהוָה מִגְּנֹבֵי דִבְרֵי
אִישׁ מֵאֵת רֵעֵהוּ: לֹא הַנְּנִי עַל־הַנְּבִיאִים נְאֻם־יְהוָה
הַלְקָחִים לְשׁוֹנִם וַיִּנְאֲמוּ נְאֻם: לֵב הַנְּנִי עַל־נְבִיאֵי
חֲלֻמוֹת שֶׁקֶר נְאֻם־יְהוָה וַיִּסְפְּרוּם וַיִּתְּעוּ אֶת־עַמִּי
בְּשִׁקְרֵיהֶם וּבַפְּחֻזוֹתָם וְאֲנֹכִי לֹא־שִׁלַּחְתִּים וְלֹא
צִוִּיתִים וְהוֹעִיל לֹא־יוֹעִילוּ לְעַם־הַזֶּה נְאֻם־יְהוָה:
לֵב וְכִי־יִשְׁאַלְךָ הָעָם הַזֶּה אֹי־הַנְּבִיא אֹי־כֹהֵן לֵאמֹר
מִה־מַּשָּׂא יְהוָה וְאִמְרַת אֵלֵיהֶם אֶת־מַה־מַּשָּׂא
וְנִטְשֵׁתִי אֶתְכֶם נְאֻם־יְהוָה: לֵב וְהַנְּבִיא וְהַכֹּהֵן וְהָעָם

each other, to make my people forget my name, just as their fathers forgot my name in favour of Baal. ²⁸ Let the prophet who has had a dream tell it for a dream; and let him who receives word from me deliver my word accurately! What have straw and wheat in common, Yahweh asks? ²⁹ Is my word not like fire, Yahweh says; is it not like a hammer shattering a rock?

³⁰ “See, therefore, I have a quarrel with the prophets, says Yahweh, who steal my words from one another. ³¹ I have a quarrel with the prophets, says Yahweh, who wag their tongues to utter prophecies. ³² I have a quarrel with the prophets who make prophecies out of lying dreams, says Yahweh, who recount them, and lead my people astray with their reckless lies. I certainly never sent them or commissioned them, and they serve no good purpose for this people, says Yahweh. ³³ When this people, or a prophet, or a priest, asks you, “What is Yahweh’s burden?” you must answer, “You are the burden and I shall get rid of you, says

²⁸ The literal translation of ‘*what have straw and wheat in common*’ is ‘*what to the straw with the grain*’; this idiom represents an emphatic repudiation or denial of relationship (see, for example, the usage in 2S 16:10).

²⁹ The rhetorical question(s) here expect(s) a positive answer.

³⁰ The last clause is understood to mean that the false prophets ‘steal’ words from one another and claim they are from Yahweh.

³¹ The word translated ‘*wag their tongues*’ is used only here in the OT.

³² The literal translation of ‘*their reckless lies*’ is ‘*their lies and their recklessness*’; this is an example of hendiadys, where two nouns (in this case a concrete and an abstract one) are joined by ‘and’, but one is intended to be the adjectival modifier of the other.

³³ ‘*You are the burden*’ follows the LXX (Ἔμεις ἔστε τὸ ἄγμυμα); the MT has ‘*what burden*’ (faulty provision of vowels and word division, thus reading אֶת־מַה־מַּשָּׂא in place of אָהָם הַמַּשָּׂא). Jeremiah rejects the normal sense of the word ‘burden’ (מַשָּׂא, and ‘prophecy’ in the figurative sense – see Is 13:1, 14:28, 19:1, Zc 9:1, 12:1, Ml 1:1).

אֲשֶׁר יֹאמֶר מִשָּׂא יְהוָה וּפְקַדְתִּי עַל־הָאִישׁ הַהוּא
 וְעַל־בֵּיתוֹ: ^ל כֹּה תֹאמְרוּ אִישׁ עַל־רֵעֵהוּ וְאִישׁ אֶל־
 אָחִיו מִה־עַנָּה יְהוָה וּמִה־דְבַר יְהוָה: ^{לו} וּמִשָּׂא יְהוָה
 לֹא תִזְכְּרוּ־עוֹד כִּי הַמִּשָּׂא יִהְיֶה לְאִישׁ דְּבָרוֹ
 וְהַפְּכֹתֶם אֶת־דְּבַרִי אֱלֹהִים חַיִּים יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת
 אֱלֹהֵינוּ: ^{לז} כֹּה תֹאמֶר אֶל־הַנְּבִיא מִה־עַנְדְּ יְהוָה
 וּמִה־דְבַר יְהוָה: ^{לח} וְאִם־מִשָּׂא יְהוָה תֹּאמְרוּ לְכֹן
 כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה יַעַן אֲמַרְכֶם אֶת־הַדְּבַר הַזֶּה מִשָּׂא
 יְהוָה וְאֶשְׁלַח אֲלֵיכֶם לְאֹמֶר לֹא תֹאמְרוּ מִשָּׂא
 יְהוָה: ^{לט} לְכֹן הִנְנִי וְנָשִׂיתִי אֶתְכֶם נָשָׂא וְנִטְשִׁיתִי
 אֶתְכֶם וְאֶת־הָעִיר אֲשֶׁר נָתַתִּי לְכֶם וּלְאֲבוֹתֵיכֶם
 מֵעַל פָּנָי: ^מ וְנָתַתִּי עֲלֵיכֶם חֲרַפַּת עוֹלָם וּכְלָמוֹת
 עוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר לֹא תִשְׁכַּח: {פ}

Yahweh!” ³⁴ “As for the prophet, the priest, or anyone else who says, “Yahweh’s burden,” I shall punish that man and his household too. ³⁵ This is what you must say to one another, among yourselves, “What answer has Yahweh given” or “what has Yahweh said?” ³⁶ But stop using the expression, “Yahweh’s burden,” for what each man says will be his own burden; and you twist the words of the Living God, of Yahweh Sabaoth, our God. ³⁷ This is the way to speak to a prophet: “What answer has Yahweh given” or “what has Yahweh said?” ³⁸ But, if you say “Yahweh’s burden,” says Yahweh, when I have warned you to stop saying, “Yahweh’s burden,” ³⁹ believe me: I shall pick you up and fling you from my presence, you and the city I gave to you and to your ancestors. ⁴⁰ And I will bring upon you everlasting disgrace and perpetual shame, which shall not be forgotten.”

³⁴ The remainder of this chapter is a later commentary on v. 33, concentrating on the phrase, “Yahweh’s burden;” it is unlike Jeremiah.

³⁵ This 2nd question is sometimes rendered as a description of what the people are doing (cf. *NIV*); however, repetition with some slight modification referring to the prophet in v. 37, followed by the same kind of prohibition that follows here shows that what is being contrasted is two views toward Yahweh’s message: one of openness to receive what he says and one that characterises his message as a burden.

³⁶ There is some ambiguity regarding how the phrase ‘for what each man says will be his own burden’ should be rendered but note that **מִשָּׂא** does not mean ‘prophecy’ anywhere in this passage (see #33), so the *NIV* (‘every man’s word becomes his oracle’) should be rejected.

³⁷ The prophet alluded to is Jeremiah, who is being indirect in his reference to himself.

³⁸ The *NJB* omits the phrase ‘says Yahweh’.

³⁹ ‘I shall pick you up’ follows the *LXX*, the *Peshitta* and 5 Hebrew MSS; the verb (**נָשָׂא**, from which **מִשָּׂא** derives) continues the play on the word ‘burden’. The *MT* reads the verb **נָשָׂא** (‘to forget’ or ‘to lend against a pledge’).

⁴⁰ For this verse, here following the *NRSV*, the *NJB* reads, “I shall bring down everlasting shame on you, everlasting and unforgettable disgrace.”

ירמיהו פרק כד

א^א הִרְאֵנִי יְהוָה וְהִנֵּה שְׁנֵי דוּדָאֵי תְּאֵנִים מוּעָדִים לִפְנֵי הַיֵּכָל יְהוָה אַחֲרֵי הַגְּלוֹת נְבוּכַדְרֶאצַּר מֶלֶךְ-בָּבֶל אֶת-יְכֹנְיָהוּ בֶן-יְהוֹיָקִים מֶלֶךְ-יְהוּדָה וְאֶת-שָׂרֵי יְהוּדָה וְאֶת-הַחֲרָשׁ וְאֶת-הַמְּסַגֵּר מִירוּשָׁלַם וַיְבֹאֵם בְּבָבֶל: ב^ב הַדּוּד אֶחָד תְּאֵנִים טְבוֹת מְאֹד כִּתְּאֵנֵי הַבְּכֹרוֹת וְהַדּוּד אֶחָד תְּאֵנִים רָעוֹת מְאֹד אֲשֶׁר לֹא-תֹאכְלֵנָה מֵרַע: {פ}

ג^ג וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֵלַי מִה-אַתָּה רֹאֶה יִרְמְיָהוּ וְאָמַר תְּאֵנִים הַטְּבוֹתִים הַטְּבוֹתִים טְבוֹת מְאֹד וְהַרְעוֹת רָעוֹת מְאֹד אֲשֶׁר לֹא-תֹאכְלֵנָה מֵרַע: {פ}

ד^ד וַיְהִי דְבַר-יְהוָה אֵלַי לֵאמֹר: ה^ה כֹּה-אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל כִּתְּאֵנִים הַטְּבוֹתִים הָאֵלֶּה כִּן-אֶפְיֹר אֶת-גְּלוֹת יְהוּדָה אֲשֶׁר שְׁלַחְתִּי מִן-הַמְּקוֹם הַזֶּה אֶרֶץ כַּשְׂדִּים לְטוֹבָה: ו^ו וְשִׁמְתִּי עֵינַי עֲלֵיהֶם לְטוֹבָה וְהִשְׁבַּתִּים עַל-הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת וּבְנִיתִים וְלֹא אֶהְרָס וְנִטְעַתִּים וְלֹא אֶתּוֹשׁ: ז^ז וְנָתַתִּי לָהֶם לֵב לְדַעַת אֶתִּי

JEREMIAH 24

¹ Yahweh gave me a vision: two baskets of figs were set out in front of the Temple of Yahweh. This was after Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had led Jeconiah son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, away into exile from Jerusalem, with the chief men of Judah, the blacksmiths and metalworkers, and had taken them to Babylon. ² One basket contained excellent figs, like those that ripen first; the other contained very bad figs, so bad they were inedible.

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

⁴ Then the word of Yahweh came to me, ⁵ “Yahweh, the God of Israel, says this: “As these figs are good, so I mean to concern myself with the welfare of the exiles of Judah, whom I have sent from this place to the land of the Chaldeans. ⁶ My eyes will watch over them for their good, to bring them back to this land, to build them up and not to break them down, to plant them and not to uproot them. ⁷ I shall give them a heart

JEREMIAH 24

- ¹ ‘Set out’ follows the NJB & LXX (*κειμένους*); the MT has ‘appointed’. The country people used to bring the first fruits of their crops to the Temple.
- ² On the ‘excellent figs’, see Is 28:4 & Ho 9:10.
- ³ For the 2nd & 3rd instances of ‘figs’, the NJB & NETB substitute ‘ones’; here, we follow the NRSV.
- ⁴ Another rendering of ‘came to me’ (as NRSV & NETB) is ‘was addressed to me’ (as NJB).
- ⁵ The ‘land of the Chaldeans’ is Babylon.
- ⁶ Compare the word usage here with 1:10.
- ⁷ The NJB has ‘acknowledge’ in place of ‘know’, here following the NRSV.

כִּי אֲנִי יְהוָה וְהָיוּ לִי לְעָם וְאֲנִי אֶהְיֶה לָּהֶם
לְאֱלֹהִים כִּי-יָשׁוּבוּ אֵלַי בְּכָל-לִבָּם: {ס}

ח וְכַתְּאֵינִים הָרַעוֹת אֲשֶׁר לֹא-תֹאכְלֶנָּה מֵרַע כִּי-
כֹה אָמַר יְהוָה כֵּן אֶתֵּן אֶת-צְדָקְיָהוּ מֶלֶךְ-יְהוּדָה
וְאֶת-שָׂרָיו וְאֶת שְׂאֵרֵי יְרוּשָׁלַם הַנִּשְׁאָרִים
בְּאֶרֶץ הַזֹּאת וְהַיֹּשְׁבִים בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם: ט וְנִתְּתִים
לְזוּעָה לְזוּעָה לְרָעָה לְכָל מַמְלָכוֹת הָאָרֶץ לְחֶרֶף
וּלְמָשָׁל לְשִׁנְיָה וּלְקִלְלָה בְּכָל-הַמְּקוֹמוֹת אֲשֶׁר-
אֲדִיחֶם שָׁם: י וְשִׁלַּחְתִּי בָם אֶת-הַחֶרֶב אֶת-הָרֶעֶב
וְאֶת-הַדָּבָר עַד-תִּמָּס מֵעַל הָאֲדָמָה אֲשֶׁר-נָתַתִּי
לָהֶם וּלְאֲבוֹתֵיהֶם: {פ}

to know that I am Yahweh. They will be my people and I shall be their God, for they will return to me with all their heart.

⁸ But, as for the bad figs, the figs that are so bad they cannot be eaten – yes, Yahweh says this – that is how I shall treat Zedekiah king of Judah, and his chief men, and what is left of Jerusalem: those who remain in this land and those who live in the land of Egypt. ⁹ I shall make them an object of horror, a disaster, to all the kingdoms of the earth, a thing of shame, a byword, a laughing-stock, and a curse, in all the places where I shall drive them. ¹⁰ Sword, and famine, and the plague I shall send against them until they have vanished from the soil I gave to them and to their fathers.””

⁸ The last clause refers perhaps to those who shared the captivity of Jehohaz (2K 23:34) or perhaps Israelite refugees in Egypt.

⁹ The *Kethib*/*Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

¹⁰ The NRSV has ‘ancestors’ in place of ‘fathers’.

ירמיהו פרק כה

JEREMIAH 25

א *הַדְּבָר אֲשֶׁר-הָיָה עַל-יְרֵמְיָהוּ עַל-כָּל-עַם יְהוּדָה בַּשָּׁנָה הָרְבַעִית לַיהוֹיָקִים בֶּן-יֹאשִׁיָּהוּ מֶלֶךְ יְהוּדָה הִיא הַשָּׁנָה הָרְאשֹׁנִית לְנְבוּכַדְרֶאֶצַּר מֶלֶךְ בָּבֶל: ב אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר יְרֵמְיָהוּ הַנְּבִיא עַל-כָּל-עַם יְהוּדָה וְאֵל כָּל-יֹשְׁבֵי יְרוּשָׁלַם לֵאמֹר: ג מִן-שָׁלֹשׁ עֶשְׂרֵה שָׁנָה לַיֹּאשִׁיָּהוּ בֶן-אָמוֹן מֶלֶךְ יְהוּדָה וְעַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה זֶה שָׁלֹשׁ וְעֶשְׂרִים שָׁנָה הָיָה דְבַר-יְהוָה אֵלַי וְאֲדַבֵּר אֵלֵיכֶם אֲשֶׁכֶּם וְדַבַּר וְלֹא שְׁמַעְתֶּם: ד וְשָׁלַח יְהוָה אֵלֵיכֶם אֶת-כָּל-עֲבָדָיו הַנְּבִאִים הַשְּׂכֵם וְשָׁלַח וְלֹא שְׁמַעְתֶּם וְלֹא-הִטִּיתֶם אֶת-אָזְנוֹכֶם לִשְׁמֹעַ: ה לֵאמֹר שׁוּבוּ-נָא אִישׁ מִדְּרָכּוֹ הַרְעָה וּמִרַע מַעַלְלֵיכֶם וּשְׁבוּ עַל-הָאָדָמָה אֲשֶׁר נָתַן יְהוָה לְכֶם וְלֹא-בֹתֵיכֶם לְמַן-עוֹלָם וְעַד-עוֹלָם: ו וְאַל-תִּלְכּוּ

1 The word that was addressed to Jeremiah about all the people of Judah in the fourth year of Jehoiakim son of Josiah, king of Judah, that is to say the first year of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon. 2 The prophet Jeremiah proclaimed it before all the people of Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem. 3 “For twenty-three years, from the thirteenth year of Josiah son of Amon, king of Judah, until today, the word of Yahweh has been addressed to me and I have never tired of speaking to you, but you have not listened. 4 Furthermore, Yahweh has persistently sent you all his servants the prophets but you have not listened or paid attention. 5 The message was this, “Turn back, each of you, from your evil behaviour and your evil actions, and you will go on living on the soil Yahweh long ago gave to you and your fathers forever. 6 Do not follow other gods to serve and worship them; do not provoke me with

JEREMIAH 25

- 1 This passage recapitulates the activity of Jeremiah from his call, and proclaims the imminence of the Chaldaean danger, thus giving new urgency to all the earlier threats. It is as a summary (v. 13) of the scroll dictated by Jeremiah to Baruch in 605 BCE (36:2), then rewritten (36:32) after Nebuchadnezzar’s victory of Necho. There are many differences between the *MT* & *LXX*; generally, we here follow the *MT*.
- 2 In the *NRSV*, this verse forms part of the same sentence as v.1 (“, which the prophet ...”); here, we follow the *NJB* (and *NETB*).
- 3 The 13th year of Josiah was 627 BCE.
- 4 The *vav* consecutive with the perfect (“Yahweh has ... sent”) in a past narrative is unusual; here, it is probably indicating repeated action in past time (hence, ‘persistently’, following the *NRSV* – the *NJB* has ‘untiringly’).
- 5 The pronouns in this verse (‘you’ and ‘your’) are all 3MP.
- 6 The term ‘work of your own hands’ is often interpreted as a reference to idolatry, as is clearly the case in Is 2:8 & 37:19; however, the parallelism in 25:14 and the context in 32:30 show that it is more general and refers to what they have done.

אֲחֵרִי אֱלֹהִים אַחֲרַי לְעַבְדָּם וְלִהְשַׁתַּחֲוֹת לָהֶם
וְלֹא־תִכְעִסוּ אוֹתִי בְּמַעֲשֵׂה יְדֵיכֶם וְלֹא אֶרַע לָכֶם:
וְלֹא־שָׁמַעְתֶּם אֵלַי נְאֻם־יְהוָה לְמַעַן הִכְעִסוּנִי
הִכְעִסוּנִי בְּמַעֲשֵׂה יְדֵיכֶם לְרַע לָכֶם: {פ}

ח לָכֵן כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת יְעַן אֲשֶׁר לֹא־
שָׁמַעְתֶּם אֶת־דְּבָרַי: ט הֲנִנִי שְׁלַח וְלִקַּחְתִּי אֶת־כָּל־
מִשְׁפָּחוֹת צָפוֹן נְאֻם־יְהוָה וְאֶל־נְבוּכַדְרֶאֶצַּר מֶלֶךְ־
בָּבֶל עֲבַדְי וְהִבֵּאתִים עַל־הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת וְעַל־יֹשְׁבֵיהָ
וְעַל כָּל־הַגּוֹיִם הָאֵלֶּה סָבִיב וְהִחַרְמֹתִים וְשִׁמְתִים
לְשִׁמָּה וְלִשְׂרָקָה וְלִחְרָבוֹת עוֹלָם: י וְהֶאֱבַדְתִּי מֵהֶם
קוֹל שִׁשׁוֹן וְקוֹל שִׁמְחָה קוֹל חֲתָן וְקוֹל בַּלָּה קוֹל
רַחִים וְאוֹזֵר גֵּר: יא וְהִיתָה כָּל־הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת לְחָרְבָה
לְשִׁמָּה וְעַבְדוֹ הַגּוֹיִם הָאֵלֶּה אֶת־מֶלֶךְ בָּבֶל שְׁבַע־
שָׁנָה: יב וְהָיָה כַּמְּלֹאוֹת שְׁבַע־שָׁנָה אֶפְקֹד עַל־
מֶלֶךְ־בָּבֶל וְעַל־הַגּוֹי הַהוּא נְאֻם־יְהוָה אֶת־עוֹנָם
וְעַל־אָרֶץ כַּשְׂדִּים וְשִׁמְתִי אֹתוֹ לְשִׁמְמוֹת עוֹלָם:
יג וְהִבֵּאתִי וְהִבֵּאתִי עַל־הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת אֶת־כָּל־

the work of your own hands, and then I shall not harm you. ⁷ Yet, you have not listened to me, says Yahweh, so that you have now provoked me with things you yourselves have made, and thus harmed yourselves.”

⁸ “Thus, Yahweh Sabaoth says: “You have not listened to my words, ⁹ so I shall now send for all the families of the north, says Yahweh, even for Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, my servant, and bring them down on this land and its inhabitants and on all these nations around; I shall curse them with utter destruction and make them an object of horror, of scorn, and everlasting ruins. ¹⁰ From them, I shall banish the shouts of rejoicing and mirth, the voice of bridegroom and bride, the sound of the millstone and the light of the lamp; ¹¹ and this whole land shall become a ruin and a waste, and these nations will be enslaved to the king of Babylon for seventy years. ¹² Then, when the seventy years are over, I shall punish the king of Babylon and that nation, says Yahweh, for the wrong they have done, that is, the land of the Chaldeans, and make it desolate forever. ¹³ I will bring upon that land all the words that I have uttered

⁷ The *Kethib/Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

⁸ The name, ‘*Yahweh Sabaoth*’ (יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת), is traditionally translated ‘The LORD of Hosts’.

⁹ According to the religious conception of history shared by the prophets, even idolaters were in God’s service (see 42:9 and #Is 10:5).

¹⁰ Compare 7:24 & 16:9 for this same dire prediction limited to Judah and Jerusalem.

¹¹ ‘*Seventy years*’ is a round number for the years of the Exile, repeated in 29:10 and 27:7; the figure is also found in 2Ch 36:21 & Dn 9.

¹² Compare Is 13:19–22 & Jr 50:39–40.

¹³ The *Kethib/Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

דְּבָרַי אֲשֶׁר־דִּבַּרְתִּי עָלֶיךָ אֵת כָּל־הַכְּתוּב בַּסֵּפֶר
הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר־נִבְּא יִרְמִיָּהוּ עַל־כָּל־הַגּוֹיִם: ^ט כִּי עֲבָדוּ־
בָּם גַּם־הֵמָּה גּוֹיִם רַבִּים וּמְלָכִים גְּדוֹלִים וְשַׁלְמַתִּי
לָהֶם כַּפְעֵלָם וּכְמַעֲשֵׂה יְדֵיהֶם: {פ}

^{טו} כִּי כֹה אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֵלַי קַח אֶת־
כּוֹס הַיַּיִן הַחֲמָה הַזֹּאת מִיַּדִּי וְהִשְׁקִיתָהּ אֶתְּךָ
כָּל־הַגּוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי שֹׁלַח אוֹתָךְ אֲלֵיהֶם: ^{טז} וְשָׁתוּ
וְהִתְגַּעְשׂוּ וְהִתְהַלְּלוּ מִפְּנֵי הַחֶרֶב אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי שֹׁלַח
בֵּינְתָם: ^{יז} וְאָקַח אֶת־הַכּוֹס מִיַּד יְהוָה וְאֲשַׁקָּה אֶת־
כָּל־הַגּוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר־שִׁלַּחְנִי יְהוָה אֲלֵיהֶם: ^{יח} אֶת־
יְרוּשָׁלַם וְאֶת־עָרֵי יְהוּדָה וְאֶת־מְלָכֶיהָ אֶת־שָׂרֶיהָ
לָתֵת אֹתָם לְחֶרֶבָה לְשָׂמָה לְשָׂרָקָה וּלְקַלְלָהּ כַּיּוֹם
הַזֶּה: ^{יט} אֶת־פָּרְעֹה מֶלֶךְ־מִצְרַיִם וְאֶת־עַבְדָּיו וְאֶת־

against it, everything written in this book, which Jeremiah proclaimed against all the nations.” ¹⁴ “For these in their turn are to be enslaved to powerful nations and great kings, and I shall pay them back as their deeds and handiwork deserve.””

¹⁵ For, Yahweh, the God of Israel, said this to me: “Take from my hand this cup of the wine of wrath and make all the nations to whom I send you drink from it; ¹⁶ and they shall drink and they shall stagger, and go out of their minds, because of the sword that I am sending among them.” ¹⁷ And so, I took the cup from Yahweh’s hand and made all the nations to whom Yahweh sent me drink from it: ¹⁸ Jerusalem and the towns of Judah, and its kings and its chief men, to make them a desolation and a waste, an object of horror and derision and a curse, as is the case today; ¹⁹ Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, and his officials, and his

¹⁴ ‘Are to be enslaved’ assumes the ‘prophetic perfect’ (i.e. the actions are as good as done); the literal translation is ‘were enslaved’.

¹⁵ This vision is a sort of preface to the prophecies against the nations (Chs 46–51), the earliest of which must have formed part of the scroll dictated in 605 BCE; the LXX puts these prophecies immediately after Ch. 25, whereas the MT places them at the end of the book.

¹⁶ There is some debate about the meaning of the verb translated ‘and they shall stagger’ (וְהִתְגַּעְשׂוּ); most interpret this as the back and forth movement of staggering; the word is used elsewhere of the up and down movement of the mountains (2S 22:8) and the up and down movement of the rolling waves of the Nile (Jer 46:7, 8); but some interpret it as vomiting (a different verb is used in v. 27 for vomiting).

¹⁷ The peoples threatened fall into 4 groups, here named in the order in which they appear in Chs 46–51: 1 Egypt; 2 the Philistines; 3 Edom, Moab, and Ammon; 4 Dedan, Tema, and Buz. Vv. 18–29 were expanded by adding the Phoenicians (47:4), Elam (49:34) and Babylon (50–51).

¹⁸ The phrase ‘as is the case today’ would obviously be more appropriate after all these things had happened, as is the case in 44:6 & 44:23, where the verbs referring to these conditions are past. Some see this phrase as a marginal gloss added after the tragedies of 597 or 586 BCE; however, it may refer here to the beginning stages where Judah has already suffered the loss of Josiah, of its freedom, of some of its temple treasures, and of some of its leaders (Dn 1:1–3).

¹⁹ See also 46:2–28 for the judgment against Egypt.

שָׂרֵיו וְאֶת־כָּל־עַמּוֹ: ^כ וְאֶת כָּל־הָעָרֵב וְאֶת כָּל־
 מְלָכֵי אֶרֶץ הָעוֹז וְאֶת כָּל־מְלָכֵי אֶרֶץ פְּלִשְׁתִּים
 וְאֶת־אֲשְׁקְלוֹן וְאֶת־עֵזָה וְאֶת־עַקְרוֹן וְאֶת שְׂאֲרֵית
 אֲשְׁדוֹד: ^{כא} אֶת־אֲדוֹם וְאֶת־מוֹאָב וְאֶת־בְּנֵי עַמּוֹן:
^{כב} וְאֶת כָּל־מְלָכֵי־צֹר וְאֶת כָּל־מְלָכֵי צִידוֹן וְאֶת
 מְלָכֵי הָאֵי אֲשֶׁר בְּעֵבֶר הַיָּם: ^{כג} וְאֶת־דָּדָן וְאֶת־
 תִּימָא וְאֶת־בּוּז וְאֶת כָּל־קְצוּצֵי פְּאָה: ^{כד} וְאֶת כָּל־
 מְלָכֵי עָרֵב וְאֶת כָּל־מְלָכֵי הָעָרֵב הַשֹּׁכְנִים בַּמִּדְבָּר:
^{כה} וְאֶת כָּל־מְלָכֵי זִמְרִי וְאֶת כָּל־מְלָכֵי עֵילָם וְאֶת
 כָּל־מְלָכֵי מְדִי: ^{כו} וְאֶת כָּל־מְלָכֵי הַצִּפּוֹן הַקְּרֹבִים
 וְהַרְחֻקִים אִישׁ אֶל־אָחִיו וְאֶת כָּל־הַמַּמְלָכוֹת
 הָאֶרֶץ אֲשֶׁר עַל־פְּנֵי הָאֲדָמָה וּמִלֶּךְ שֶׁשַׁךְ יִשְׁתָּה
 אַחֲרֵיהֶם: ^{כז} וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵיהֶם {פ}

chief men, and all his people, ²⁰ with the whole conglomeration of
 peoples there, and all the kings of the country of Uz; and all the kings of
 the country of the Philistines – the people of Ashkelon, and Gaza, and
 Ekron, and what is still left of the people of Ashdod; ²¹ the people of
 Edom and Moab and the Ammonites; ²² and all the kings of Tyre, and
 all the kings of Sidon, and the kings of the island that is across the sea.
²³ The people of Dedan, and Tema, and Buz, and all the people with
 shaven temples; ²⁴ and all the kings of Arabia and all the kings of the
 conglomeration of peoples who live in the desert; ²⁵ and all the kings of
 Zimri, all the kings of Elam and all the kings of Media; ²⁶ and all the
 kings of the north, near and far, one after another: in short, all the
 kingdoms on the face of the earth. As for the king of Sheshak, he will
 drink last of all. ²⁷ “You will say to them,

²⁰ The meaning of the term ‘the whole conglomeration of peoples there’ and its connection with the preceding verse, is somewhat uncertain; the term is used of the mixture of foreign people who accompanied Israel out of Egypt (Ex 12:38) and of the foreigners that the Israelites were to separate out of their midst in the time of Nehemiah (Ne 13:3). Most commentators interpret it here of the foreign people who were living in Egypt.

²¹ See also 49:7–22 for the judgment against Edom, 48:1–47 for the judgment against Moab, and 49:1–6 for the judgment against Ammon.

²² The ‘island’ is Cyprus but perhaps includes the other Phoenician colonies as well.

²³ ‘Dedan’ was a North Arabian tribe on the borders of Edom (see 49:8, Is 21:13); ‘Tema’ was a related clan (Is 21:14); ‘Buz’ was also in the north-western part of the Arabian Peninsula. These are all related to Uz (see Gn 22:21). The ‘people with shaven temples’ were other Arabs (cf. 9:25).

²⁴ On the term ‘conglomeration of peoples’, see #20; the LXX gives evidence of having read the term without reference to the kings of Arabia.

²⁵ An alternative reading for ‘Zimri’ is ‘Zimki’, which would be a cryptogram for Elam, though in this form of writing, being posterior to Jeremiah, the words would be a gloss. If, however, one were to read ‘Gimri’, as a generic form of ‘Gomer son of Japheth’ (Gn 10:2–3), the Cimmerians would be intended.

²⁶ ‘Sheshak’ is a cryptogram for ‘Babel’ (Babylon), in which the letters are substituted in reverse order of the Hebrew alphabet.

²⁷ The imperatives following ‘Drink!’ are not parallel actions but consequent actions.

כֹּה־אָמַר׃ יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל שְׂתוּ וּשְׁכְרוּ וּקְיֹוּ וּנְפְלוּ וְלֹא תִקְוּמוּ מִפְּנֵי הַחֶרֶב אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי שֹׁלֵחַ בֵּינֵיכֶם׃ כ״ וְהָיָה כִּי יִמְאַנּוּ לְקַחְתִּי־הַכּוֹס מִיַּדְךָ לְשִׁתּוֹת וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵיהֶם כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת שְׂתוּ תִשְׁתּוּ׃ כ״ כִּי הִנֵּה בָעִיר אֲשֶׁר נִקְרָא־שְׁמִי עָלֶיהָ אֲנֹכִי מַחֵל לְהִרְעוֹתְכֶם וְאַתֶּם הַנִּקְוָה תִנְקוּ לֹא תִנְקוּ כִּי חֶרֶב אֲנִי קֹרֵא עַל־כָּל־יֹשְׁבֵי הָאָרֶץ נְאֻם יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת׃ ל׳ וְאַתָּה תִנְבֵּא אֲלֵיהֶם אֵת כָּל־

הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵיהֶם

יְהוָה מִמְרוֹם יִשְׁאָג

וּמִמְעוֹן קָדְשׁוֹ יִתֵּן קוֹלוֹ

שִׁאָג יִשְׁאָג עַל־נְוֵהוּ

הַיִּדּוּל בְּדַרְכֵי־יַעֲנֵה אֶל

כָּל־יֹשְׁבֵי הָאָרֶץ׃

בָּא שָׁאוֹן עַד־קֶצֶה הָאָרֶץ לֹא

כִּי רִיב לִיהוָה בְּגוֹיִם

נִשְׁפָּט הוּא לְכָל־בָּשָׂר

הַרְשָׁעִים נִתְּנָם לְחֶרֶב

נְאֻם־יְהוָה׃ {ס}

“Yahweh Sabaoth, the God of Israel, says this: Drink! Get drunk! Vomit! Fall, never to rise again, before the sword that I am sending among you!”²⁸ If they refuse to take the cup from your hand and drink, you will say to them, “Yahweh Sabaoth says this: You must drink!”²⁹ Look, for a start, I am bringing disaster on the city that bears my name, so are you likely to go unpunished? You certainly will not go unpunished, for next I shall summon a sword against all the inhabitants of the land, says Yahweh.”³⁰ For your part, you are to prophesy all these words to them.

Say to them:

“Yahweh roars from on high;

he thunders from his holy dwelling place;

loudly he roars at his own fold,

shouts aloud like those who tread the grape

at all the inhabitants of the land.

³¹ The noise resounds to the remotest parts of the earth,

for Yahweh is indicting the nations,

arraigning all humanity for judgement;

the wicked, he assigns to the sword,

says Yahweh.

²⁸ ‘You must drink’ translates an infinitive absolute preceding the finite verb, which is here an obligatory imperfect.

²⁹ This is an example of a question without the formal introductory particle following a conjunctive *vav* introducing an opposition; it is also an example of the use of the infinitive before the finite verb in a rhetorical question involving doubt or denial.

³⁰ The word translated ‘his own fold’ refers to the land of Canaan, which Yahweh chose to make his earthly dwelling (Ex 15:13).

³¹ Vv. 30–31, which describe the universal judgement, like Is 66, are perhaps post-Exilic.

לב כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת
 הִנֵּה רָעָה יֵצֵאת מִגּוֹי אֶל־גּוֹי
 וְסֵעַר גָּדוֹל
 יֵעוֹר מִיִּרְכַּת־אָרֶץ:

32 Yahweh Sabaoth says this:
 Look, disaster is spreading from nation to nation;
 a mighty tempest is rising
 from the far ends of the earth.

לג וְהָיוּ חֲלָלִי יְהוָה בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא מִקְצֵה הָאָרֶץ וְעַד־
 קְצֵה הָאָרֶץ לֹא יִסְפְּדוּ וְלֹא יֵאָסְפוּ וְלֹא יִקְבְּרוּ
 לְדָמָן עַל־פְּנֵי הָאָדָמָה יִהְיוּ:

33 “Those slain by Yahweh that day will be scattered across the world
 from end to end. They shall not be lamented, gathered, or buried; they
 will stay lying on the surface like dung.

לד הִילִילוּ הִרְעִים וְזַעֲקוּ
 וְהִתְפַּלְשׁוּ אֲדִירֵי הַצֹּאן
 כִּי־מָלְאוּ יְמֵיכֶם לְטִבּוֹחַ
 וּתְפוּצוֹתֵיכֶם וּנְפַלְתֶּם כְּכֹלֵי חֲמֻדָּה:

34 Howl, shepherds, shriek,
 roll on the ground, you lords of the flock,
 for your days have come to be slaughtered
 and to lie scattered; and, like choice vases, you will fall.

לה וְאָבַד מְנוּס מִן־הִרְעִים
 וּפְלִיטָה מֵאֲדִירֵי הַצֹּאן:

35 No refuge then for the shepherds,
 no escape for the lords of the flock!

לו קוֹל צַעֲקַת הִרְעִים
 וַיִּלְלֶת אֲדִירֵי הַצֹּאן
 כִּי־שָׁדַד יְהוָה אֶת־מְרֻעֵיתָם:

36 Listen: a shriek from the shepherds,
 a howl from the lords of the flock,
 for Yahweh has laid their pasture waste.

32 For the use of the term ‘mighty tempest’ in a literal sense, see Jon 1:4; for its use to refer to the wrath of Yahweh, which will rage over the wicked, see Jer 23:19 & 30:23; here, it refers to the mighty Babylonian army which will come bringing destruction over all the known world.

33 The intent here is to emphasise the number of those who are killed: there will be too many to insure proper mourning rites and proper burial.

34 The meaning of the last line is debated: the LXX does not have the words ‘lie scattered’ and has ‘like choice rams’ in place of ‘like choice vases’ (reading חֲמֻדָּה for כְּכֹלֵי חֲמֻדָּה); the LXX reading fits the context better but is probably secondary for that very reason.

35 The term ‘shepherd’ has been used several times in the book of Jeremiah to refer to the leaders of the people who were responsible for taking care of their people; here, the figure has some irony involved in it, as it is the shepherds who are to be slaughtered like sheep.

36 The verb tenses in this section are not clear: the participle in this verse is followed by a *vav* consecutive perfect like the imperatives in v. 34.

וְנִדְמוּ נְאוֹת הַשְּׁלוֹם לז
מִפְּנֵי חֲרוֹן אַף־יְהוָה:
עָזַב כַּכְּפִיר סִבּוֹ לח
כִּי־הִיתָה אֶרֶץ
לְשֹׂמֵה מִפְּנֵי חֲרוֹן הַיּוֹנָה
וּמִפְּנֵי חֲרוֹן אַפּוֹ: {פ}

³⁷ The peaceful sheepfolds are laid waste because of the furious anger of Yahweh.

³⁸ Like the lion, he has left his lair and their country is a wasteland now, owing to the devastating fury, owing to his furious anger."''

³⁷ Elsewhere, the verb here translated as 'laid waste' refers to people dying (e.g. 49:26, 50:30), hence some see a reference to 'lifelessness' or 'silence' (as *NJB*).

³⁸ The 'lion' is either Yahweh or Nebuchadnezzar.

ירמיהו פרק כו

א בראשית ממלכות יהויקים בן-יאשיהו מלך יהודה היה הדבר הזה מאת יהוה לאמר: ב כהן אמר יהוה עמד בחצר בית-יהוה ודברת על-כל-ערי יהודה הבאים להשתחוות בית-יהוה את כל-הדברים אשר צויתוך לדבר אליהם אל-תגרע דבר: ג אולי ישמעו וישבו איש מדרך הרעה ונחמתי אל-הרעה אשר אנכי חשב לעשות להם מפני רע מעלליהם: ד ואמרת אליהם כה אמר יהוה אם-לא תשמעו אלי ללכת בתורת אשר נתתי לפניכם: ה לשמע על-דברי עבדי הנבאים אשר אנכי שלח אליכם והשבם ושלח ולא שמעתם: ו ונתתי את-הבית הזה כשלה ואת-העיר הזאתה הזאת אתן לקללה לכל גוי הארץ: {פ}

JEREMIAH 26

¹ At the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, the king of Judah, this word came to Jeremiah from Yahweh, saying ² “Thus says Yahweh: “Stand in the court of the Temple of Yahweh; and, to all the people from the towns of Judah who come to worship in the Temple of Yahweh, you will say everything I have ordered you to say, not omitting a single word. ³ It may be that they will listen, and every man will turn from his evil way; if so, I shall relent and not bring the disaster on them that I intend because of their evil doings.” ⁴ And you shall say to them, “Yahweh says this: If you will not listen to me and walk in the way of my laws, which I have given you, ⁵ and pay attention to the words of my servants the prophets, whom I sent to you so urgently, so persistently, although you never have paid attention, ⁶ I shall treat this Temple as I treated Shiloh, and make this city a curse for all the nations of the world.””

JEREMIAH 26

- ¹ ‘To Jeremiah’ follows the *Peshitta* and *Vetus Latina* (and *NJB*); the *MT* (and *NRSV*) lacks the phrase.
- ² It is generally agreed that the incident recorded in this chapter relates to the Temple message that Jeremiah gave in 7:1–15; that message is summarised here in vv. 3–6, and the primary interest here is in the response to that message.
- ³ The literal translation of ‘their evil doings’ (here following the *NRSV*) is ‘the wickedness of their deeds’.
- ⁴ Examples of the ‘laws’ are found in 7:5–9; the law was summarised or epitomised in the Ten Commandments, which are called the ‘words of the covenant’ in Ex 34:28, but it contained much more. However, when Israel is taken to task by God, it often relates to their failure to live up to the standards of the Ten Commandments (see 7:9, Ho 4:1–3).
- ⁵ See #7:13 on the idiom translated ‘so persistently, so urgently’.
- ⁶ The *Kethib*/*Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

וַיִּשְׁמְעוּ הַכֹּהֲנִים וְהַנְּבִיאִים וְכָל־הָעָם אֶת־יְרֵמְיָהוּ
מְדַבֵּר אֶת־הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה בְּבַיִת יְהוָה: ^ח וַיְהִי
כְּכֹלֹת יְרֵמְיָהוּ לְדַבֵּר אֶת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר־צִוָּה יְהוָה
לְדַבֵּר אֶל־כָּל־הָעָם וַיִּתְּפְּשׂוּ אֹתוֹ הַכֹּהֲנִים
וְהַנְּבִיאִים וְכָל־הָעָם לֵאמֹר מוֹת תָּמוּת: ^ט מִדּוֹעַ
נְבִיִּת בְּשֵׁם־יְהוָה לֵאמֹר כְּשִׁלּוֹ יִהְיֶה הַבַּיִת הַזֶּה
וְהָעִיר הַזֹּאת תִּחָרֵב מֵאִין יוֹשֵׁב וַיִּקְהַל כָּל־הָעָם
אֶל־יְרֵמְיָהוּ בְּבַיִת יְהוָה: ^י וַיִּשְׁמְעוּ שְׂרֵי יְהוּדָה אֶת
הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה וַיַּעֲלוּ מִבַּיִת־הַמֶּלֶךְ בֵּית יְהוָה
וַיֵּשְׁבוּ בַּפֶּתַח שַׁעַר־יְהוָה הַחֲדָשׁ: {ס}

^{יא} וַיֹּאמְרוּ הַכֹּהֲנִים וְהַנְּבִיאִים אֶל־הַשָּׂרִים וְאֶל־כָּל־
הָעָם לֵאמֹר מִשְׁפַּט־מוֹת לְאִישׁ הַזֶּה כִּי נִבְּא אֶל־
הָעִיר הַזֹּאת כְּאֲשֶׁר שָׁמַעְתֶּם בְּאָזְנֵיכֶם: ^{יב} וַיֹּאמֶר
יְרֵמְיָהוּ אֶל־כָּל־הַשָּׂרִים וְאֶל־כָּל־הָעָם לֵאמֹר יְהוָה

⁷ The priests and prophets and all the people heard Jeremiah say these words in the Temple of Yahweh. ⁸ When Jeremiah had finished saying everything that Yahweh had ordered him to say to all the people, the priests and prophets and all the people seized hold of him and said, “You will die for this! ⁹ Why have you made this prophecy in Yahweh’s name, “This Temple will become like Shiloh, and this city will become an uninhabited ruin?” The people all crowded in on Jeremiah in the Temple of Yahweh. ¹⁰ Hearing of this, the chief men of Judah came up from the royal palace to the Temple of Yahweh and took their seats at the entry of the New Gate of the Temple of Yahweh.

¹¹ Then the priests and the prophets said to the chief men and all the people, “This man deserves the sentence of death, since he has prophesied against this city, as you have heard with your own ears.”

¹² Jeremiah, however, replied to all the chief men and all the people as

⁷ The royal officials assemble to hear the case, in which Jeremiah’s dignified defence wins his release; the judges base their decision on a century-old precedent set by Hezekiah (715–687 BCE) regarding the prophet Micah (Mi 3:12).

⁸ The construction translated ‘you will die for this’ is again emphatic, with the infinitive preceding the finite verb (compare the usage in Ex 21:28).

⁹ It is clear from the context here, and in 7:1–15, that the emphasis is on ‘in Yahweh’s name’ and that the question is rhetorical: it is not a quest for information but an accusation, a remonstrance.

¹⁰ ‘The New Gate of the Temple of Yahweh’ follows the LXX (πύλης κυρίου τῆς καινῆς) & Peshitta; the MT has ‘Yahweh’s Gate’. The location of this gate is uncertain: it is mentioned again in 36:10, where it is connected with the inner court of the Temple; some equate it with the Upper Gate that Jotham rebuilt during his reign (2K 15:35; Jotham reigned from 750–735 BCE). That gate, however, has already been referred to as the Upper Gate of Benjamin in 20:2 and would not likely have been called something different here.

¹¹ The literal translation of ‘as you have heard’ is ‘you have heard it’.

¹² In place of ‘Yahweh himself sent me’, here following the NJB, the NRSV has ‘it is the LORD who sent me’.

שְׁלַחְנִי לְהַנְבִּיאַ אֶל־הַבַּיִת הַזֶּה וְאֶל־הָעִיר הַזֹּאת
 אֵת כָּל־הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר שָׁמַעְתֶּם: ¹³ וְעַתָּה הִיטִיבוּ
 דְרֹכֵיכֶם וּמַעַלְלֵיכֶם וּשְׁמְעוּ בְקוֹל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם
 וַיִּנְחַם יְהוָה אֶל־הָרָעָה אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר עֲלֵיכֶם: ¹⁴ וְאֲנִי
 הִנְנִי בְיַדְכֶם עֹשׂוֹלִי כַטּוֹב וְכִישָׁר בְּעֵינֵיכֶם: ¹⁵ אֲדָן
 יָדַע תִּדְעוּ כִּי אִם־מִמְתִּים אַתֶּם אֶתִּי כִּי־דָם נָקִי
 אַתֶּם נֹתְנִים עֲלֵיכֶם וְאֶל־הָעִיר הַזֹּאת וְאֶל־יֹשְׁבֵיהָ
 כִּי בְאַמַּת שְׁלַחְנִי יְהוָה עֲלֵיכֶם לְדַבֵּר בְּאָזְנֵיכֶם אֵת
 כָּל־הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה: {ס}

¹⁶ וַיֹּאמְרוּ הַשָּׂרִים וְכָל־הָעָם אֶל־הַכֹּהֲנִים וְאֶל־
 הַנְּבִיאִים אֵין־לְאִישׁ הַזֶּה מִשְׁפַּט־מוֹת כִּי בָשָׂם
 יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ דְבַר אֱלֵינוּ: ¹⁷ וַיִּקְמוּ אַנְשֵׁים מִזִּקְנֵי
 הָאָרֶץ וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֶל־כָּל־קְהַל הָעָם לֵאמֹר: ¹⁸ מִיכָּה
 מִיכָּה הַמּוֹרֶשֶׁתִּי הִיָּה נִבֵּא בְיָמֵי חִזְקִיָּהוּ מֶלֶךְ־
 יְהוּדָה וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל־כָּל־עַם יְהוּדָה לֵאמֹר כֹּה־אָמַר
 יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת

follows: “Yahweh himself sent me to prophesy against this Temple and this city all the things you have heard. ¹³ Now, therefore, amend your behaviour and actions, listen to the voice of Yahweh your God and Yahweh will change his mind about the disaster that he has pronounced against you. ¹⁴ For myself, I am, as you see, in your power. Do whatever you please or think right with me; ¹⁵ but be sure of this, that if you put me to death, you will be bringing innocent blood on yourselves, on this city and on its inhabitants, since Yahweh has truly sent me to you to say all these words for you to hear.”

¹⁶ The chief men and all the people then said to the priests and the prophets, “This man does not deserve the sentence of death: he has spoken to us in the name of Yahweh our God.” ¹⁷ Some of the country’s elders rose to address all the assembled people. ¹⁸ “Micah of Moresheth,” they said, “who prophesied in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah, had this to say to all the people of Judah, “Thus says Yahweh Sabaoth:

¹³ God is consistent in applying of the principle laid down in 18:7-8: reformation of character will result in the withdrawal of the punishment.
¹⁴ The literal translation of ‘power’ is ‘hand’ – this is a common idiom in the Hebrew Bible.
¹⁵ The NJB has simply ‘all this’ in place of ‘all these words’, here following the MT & NRSV.
¹⁶ The priests and false prophets claimed that they were speaking in God’s name (i.e., as his representatives and with his authority: 1S 25:9, 1K 21:8 and cf. #Jer 23:27) and felt that Jeremiah’s claims to be doing so were false (v. 9), but Jeremiah charged that the opposite was the case (14:14-15, 23:21); the officials and the people, at least at this time, accepted his claims that God had sent him (vv. 12, 15).
¹⁷ ‘Micah of Moresheth’ was a contemporary of Isaiah (Mi 1:1 & Is 1:1) from a town in the hill country southwest of Jerusalem.
¹⁸ This threat had been conditional; it may have influenced Hezekiah in his attempted reform (2K 18:4ff). The *Kethib/Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

צִיּוֹן שָׂדֵה תַחְרָשׁ
וִירוּשָׁלַיִם עַיִם תְּהִיָּה
וְהָר הַבַּיִת לְבַמּוֹת יַעַר:

Zion will become plough-land,
Jerusalem a heap of rubble
and the Temple Mount a wooded height.”

יט הַהֵמֶת הֵמֶתְהוּ חִזְקִיָּהוּ מֶלֶךְ־יְהוּדָה וְכָל־יְהוּדָה
הֲלֹא יֵרָא אֶת־יְהוָה וַיַּחֲלֵ אֶת־פְּנֵי יְהוָה וַיִּנָּחֵם יְהוָה
אֶל־הַרְעָה אֲשֶׁר־דָּבַר עֲלֵיהֶם וַאֲנַחְנוּ עֹשִׂים רָעָה
גְּדוֹלָה עַל־נַפְשׁוֹתֵינוּ: כ וְגַם־אִישׁ הָיָה מִתְּנַבְּאֵי
בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה אֹרְיָהוּ בֶן־שֹׁמְעִיָּהוּ מִקְרִית הַיַּעֲרִים
וַיִּנָּבֵא עַל־הָעִיר הַזֹּאת וְעַל־הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת כְּכֹל
דְּבָרֵי יִרְמְיָהוּ: כא וַיִּשְׁמַע הַמֶּלֶךְ־יְהוֹיָקִים וְכָל־
גְּבוּרָיו וְכָל־הַשָּׂרִים אֶת־דְּבָרָיו וַיִּבְקֹשׁ הַמֶּלֶךְ
הַמִּיתוֹ וַיִּשְׁמַע אֹרְיָהוּ וַיֵּרָא וַיִּבְרַח וַיָּבֵא מִצְרַיִם:
כב וַיִּשְׁלַח הַמֶּלֶךְ יְהוֹיָקִים אַנְשִׁים מִצְרַיִם אֶת
אֶלְנָתָן בֶּן־עֶכְבֹּר וְאַנְשִׁים אֲתוֹ אֶל־מִצְרַיִם:
כג וַיֹּצִיאוּ אֶת־אֹרְיָהוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם וַיָּבֵאוּ אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ
יְהוֹיָקִים וַיִּכְהוּ בַּחֶרֶב וַיִּשְׁלְּךְ אֶת־נַבְלָתוֹ אֶל־קִבְרֵי
בְּנֵי הָעָם: כד אַךְ יָד אַחִיקָם בֶּן־שָׁפָן הֵיטָה אֶת־
יִרְמְיָהוּ לְבִלְתִּי תֵת־אֹתוֹ בְּיַד־הָעָם לְהַמִּיתוֹ: {פ}

19 “Did Hezekiah king of Judah and all Judah put him to death for this? Did they not, rather, fearing Yahweh, plead with him, to such effect that Yahweh relented about the disaster that he had decreed for them? Are we now to burden our souls with such a crime?” 20 There was another man, too, who used to prophecy in Yahweh’s name, Uriah son of Shemaiah, from Kiriath-Jearim. He prophesied exactly the same things against this city and this country as Jeremiah. 21 When King Jehoiakim, with all his bodyguards and all the chief men, heard what he said, the king was determined to put him to death. On hearing this, Uriah took fright and, fleeing, escaped to Egypt. 22 King Jehoiakim, however, sent Elnathan son of Achbor to Egypt with others, 23 who brought Uriah back from Egypt and took him to King Jehoiakim, who had him put to the sword and his body thrown into the common burial ground. 24 However, Jeremiah had a protector in Ahikam son of Shaphan; so, he was not handed over to the people to be put to death.

19 Hezekiah was a godly king, noted for his religious reforms and for his faith in God in the face of the Assyrian threat (2K 18–19, 2Ch 32:1–23).

20 Baruch tells the story of Uriah’s martyrdom to illustrate Jeremiah’s personal danger and fortunate official support.

21 The literal translation of ‘bodyguards’ (here following NETB) is ‘mighty men’ or ‘soldiers’ but it is unlikely that this included all the army.

22 After ‘sent’, the MT adds ‘men to Egypt’.

23 A standard part of international treaties at this time was a stipulation of mutual extradition of political prisoners.

24 ‘Shaphan’ was the king’s scribe, who had supported the reform under Josiah (2K 22:8ff). His family were always well disposed to Jeremiah.

ירמיהו פרק כז

א בְּרֵאשִׁית מַמְלַכַת יְהוֹיָקִים בֶּן־יְאוֹשִׁיָּהוּ מֶלֶךְ
יְהוּדָה הָיָה הַדְּבָר הַזֶּה אֶל־יִרְמְיָה מֵאֵת יְהוָה
לֵאמֹר: ב כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי עֲשֵׂה לְךָ מוֹסְרוֹת
וּמְטוֹת וּנְתַתֶּם עַל־צוּאֲרֹךְ: ג וְשַׁלַּחְתֶּם אֶל־מֶלֶךְ
אֲדוּם וְאֶל־מֶלֶךְ מוֹאָב וְאֶל־מֶלֶךְ בְּנֵי עַמּוֹן וְאֶל־
מֶלֶךְ צָר וְאֶל־מֶלֶךְ צִידוֹן בְּיַד מְלָאכִים הַבָּאִים
יְרוּשָׁלַם אֶל־צִדְקִיָּהוּ מֶלֶךְ יְהוּדָה: ד וְצוֹיַת אַתֶּם
אֶל־אֲדֹנֵיהֶם לֵאמֹר כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת אֱלֹהֵי
יִשְׂרָאֵל כֹּה תֹאמְרוּ אֶל־אֲדֹנֵיכֶם: ה אֲנֹכִי עָשִׂיתִי
אֶת־הָאָרֶץ אֶת־הָאָדָם וְאֶת־הַבְּהֵמָה אֲשֶׁר עַל־פְּנֵי
הָאָרֶץ בְּכַחַי הַגָּדוֹל וּבְזוּרְעֵי הַנְּטוּיָה וּנְתַתִּיָּהּ
לְאִשֶׁר יִשֶׁר בְּעֵינָי: ו וְעַתָּה אֲנֹכִי נֹתְתִי אֶת־כָּל־
הָאָרְצוֹת הָאֵלֶּה בְּיַד נְבוּכַדְנֶאֶצַּר מֶלֶךְ־בָּבֶל עַבְדִּי
וְגַם אֶת־חַיַּת הַשָּׂדֶה נֹתְתִי לוֹ לְעַבְדּוֹ: ז וְעַבְדּוֹ אֶתוֹ

JEREMIAH 27

¹ At the beginning of the reign of King Zedekiah son of Josiah, of Judah, this word came to Jeremiah from Yahweh: ² Yahweh said this to me, “Make yourself a yoke of straps and bars and put them on your neck. ³ Then, use it to send messages to the king of Edom, the king of Moab, the king of the Ammonites, the king of Tyre and the king of Sidon, by the hand of the envoys accredited to Zedekiah king of Judah in Jerusalem. ⁴ Give them the following message for their masters, “Thus says Yahweh Sabaoth, God of Israel: This is what you shall say to your masters: ⁵ It is I, by my great power and outstretched arm, who made the earth, the human beings and the animals that are on earth, and I give them to whomever I please. ⁶ For the present, I have handed all these countries over to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, my servant; I have even put the wild animals of the field at his service. ⁷ All the nations will serve him, his son, and his grandson, until the time for his own country

JEREMIAH 27

The text of this chapter is considerably shorter in the LXX than that of the MT (see #25:1).

- ¹ ‘Zedekiah’ is conjectural, following vv. 3, 12, 28:1 and the Peshitta (as well as a few Hebrew MSS); the MT has ‘Jehoiakim’.
- ² The ‘yoke’ is a common biblical symbol of political servitude; from 1K 12, it is clear that it applied to taxation and conscript labour.
- ³ ‘Use it to send messages’ is a conjectural translation (following NETB); the MT has ‘send them’.
- ⁴ Literally translated, this verse opens, “Give them a charge to their masters, saying:”
- ⁵ See Dn 4:17 for a similar statement from God.
- ⁶ The last statement is rhetorical, emphasising the totality of Nebuchadnezzar’s dominion; neither here nor in Dn 2:38 is it to be taken literally.
- ⁷ The kingdom of Babylon lasted a relatively short time by ancient standards: from 605 BCE, when Nebuchadnezzar defeated Necho at Carchemish, until the fall of Babylon in 538 BCE. There were only four rulers: Nebuchadnezzar, his son Evil Merodach, and two others.

כָּל־הַגּוֹיִם וְאֶת־בָּנָו וְאֶת־בְּנֵי עַד בֹּאֲעֵת אֶרְצוּ
גַם־הוּא וְעַבְדוּ בּוֹ גּוֹיִם רַבִּים וּמַלְכִים גְּדֹלִים:
ח וְהָיָה הַגּוֹי וְהַמְּמֹלָכָה אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יַעֲבֹדוּ אֶת־
נְבוּכַדְנֶאצַּר מֶלֶךְ־בָּבֶל וְאֵת אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יִתְּנוּ אֶת־
צוּרָאוֹ בְּעַל מֶלֶךְ בָּבֶל בַּחֲרָב וּבִרְעָב וּבַדָּבָר אֲפָקֶד
עַל־הַגּוֹי הַהוּא נְאֻם־יְהוָה עַד־תִּמְיוּ אֶתֶם בִּידוֹ:
ט וְאַתֶּם אֲל־תִּשְׁמְעוּ אֶל־נְבִיאֵיכֶם וְאֶל־קְסָמֵיכֶם
וְאֶל חֲלֹמְתֵיכֶם וְאֶל־עֲנַנֵּיכֶם וְאֶל־כַּשְׁפֵּיכֶם אֲשֶׁר־
הֵם אֹמְרִים אֲלֵיכֶם לֵאמֹר לֹא תַעֲבֹדוּ אֶת־מֶלֶךְ
בָּבֶל: י כִּי שֶׁקֶר הֵם נְבִאִים לָכֵם לְמַעַן הִרְחִיק
אֶתְכֶם מֵעַל אֲדַמְתְּכֶם וְהִדְחִיתִי אֶתְכֶם וְאֲבַדְתֶּם:
יא וְהַגּוֹי אֲשֶׁר יָבִיא אֶת־צוּרָאוֹ בְּעַל מֶלֶךְ־בָּבֶל
וְעַבְדוֹ וְהִנְחִיתִיו עַל־אֲדַמְתּוֹ נְאֻם־יְהוָה וְעַבְדָּהּ
וַיֵּשֶׁב בָּהּ: יב וְאֶל־צִדְקִיָּה מֶלֶךְ־יְהוּדָה דִּבַּרְתִּי כֹכֹל־
הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה לֵאמֹר הֲבִיאוּ אֶת־צוּרְאֵיכֶם בְּעַל
מֶלֶךְ־בָּבֶל וְעַבְדוּ אֹתוֹ וְעִמּוֹ וְחִיו: יג לְמַה תָּמוּתוּ
אֹתָהּ וְעִמָּךְ בַּחֲרָב בִּרְעָב וּבַדָּבָר כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבַּר יְהוָה

comes in its turn, when many nations and great kings will enslave him.
⁸ But if any nation or kingdom will not serve Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and will not bow its neck to the yoke of the king of Babylon, then I shall punish that nation with sword, famine, and plague, says Yahweh, until I have destroyed it by his hand. ⁹ For your own part, do not listen to your prophets, your diviners, dreamers, magicians, and sorcerers, who are saying to you: the king of Babylon will not enslave you. ¹⁰ For, they are prophesying a lie to you, the result of which will be that you will be banished far from your land and that I shall drive you out and you will perish. ¹¹ However, any nation that is prepared to bend its neck to the yoke of the king of Babylon and serve him, I shall leave in peace on its own land, says Yahweh, to farm it and stay on it.”” ¹² To Zedekiah king of Judah, I spoke in exactly the same terms. “Bend your necks,” I told him, “to the yoke of the king of Babylon; serve him and his people and you will survive. ¹³ Why so anxious to die, you and your people, by sword famine and plague, with which Yahweh has threatened the nation refusing to serve the king of Babylon? ¹⁴ Do not

⁸ ‘I have destroyed it by his hand’ is an odd expression (supported by the LXX); one could emend (as Peshitta & Tg) to, ‘I have handed it over to him’.
⁹ ‘Dreamers’ follows the LXX, Peshitta & Vg; the MT has ‘dreams’.
¹⁰ The NJB has ‘they prophesy lies’ in place of ‘they are prophesying a lie’, here following the MT (& NRSV).
¹¹ The NRSV ends this verse, here following the NJB, with, “to till it and live there.”
¹² Jeremiah repeats his warning: since God has not sent the prophets who are advising Zedekiah (14:14), they are unreliable guides. The imperative verbs in this verse are plural – addressed to Zedekiah and his royal advisers.
¹³ This rhetorical question expects the reply, “There is no reason!”
¹⁴ See #10 on the phrase ‘they are prophesying a lie’.

אֶל־הַגּוֹי אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יַעֲבֹד אֶת־מֶלֶךְ בָּבֶל׃ י' וְאֵל־
תִּשְׁמָעוּ אֶל־דְּבַר־יְהוָה הַנְּבִיאִים הָאֹמְרִים אֵלֵיכֶם
לֵאמֹר לֹא תַעֲבֹדוּ אֶת־מֶלֶךְ בָּבֶל כִּי שֶׁקֶר הֵם
נְבִיאִים לָכֵם׃ ט' כִּי לֹא שְׁלַחְתִּים נְאֻם־יְהוָה וְהֵם
נְבִיאִים בְּשֵׁמִי לְשַׁקֵּר לְמַעַן הַדִּיחִי אֶתְכֶם וְאֲבַדְתֶּם
אִתְּם וְהַנְּבִיאִים הַנְּבִיאִים לָכֵם׃ ט"ו וְאֶל־הַכֹּהֲנִים
וְאֶל־כָּל־הָעָם הַזֶּה דְּבַרְתִּי לֵאמֹר כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה
אֶל־תִּשְׁמָעוּ אֶל־דְּבַר־יְהוָה נְבִיאֵיכֶם הַנְּבִיאִים לָכֵם
לֵאמֹר הִנֵּה כָּלִי בֵּית־יְהוָה מוֹשָׁבִים מִבְּבֶלָה עֲתָה
מָהְרָה כִּי שֶׁקֶר הֵמָּה נְבִיאִים לָכֵם׃ י" אֶל־תִּשְׁמָעוּ
אֵלֵיהֶם עֲבֹדוּ אֶת־מֶלֶךְ־בָּבֶל וְחִיו לְמָה תִּהְיֶה
הָעִיר הַזֹּאת חֲרָבָה׃ י"ו וְאִם־נְבִיאִים הֵם וְאִם־יֵישׁ
דְּבַר־יְהוָה אִתְּם יִפְגְּעוּ־נָא בִּיהוָה צְבָאוֹת לְבַלְתִּי־
בָּאוּ הַכֹּלִים׃ הַנּוֹתָרִים בְּבֵית־יְהוָה וּבֵית מֶלֶךְ
יְהוּדָה וּבִירוּשָׁלַם בְּבֶלָה׃ י"ט כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה
צְבָאוֹת אֱלֹהֵי־עַמּוּדִים וְעַל־הַיָּם וְעַל־הַמְּכֻנּוֹת וְעַל־
יְתֵר הַכֹּלִים הַנּוֹתָרִים בְּעִיר הַזֹּאת׃ כ' אֲשֶׁר לֹא־
לָקָחֶם נְבוּכַדְנֶאֶצַּר מֶלֶךְ בָּבֶל בְּגִלוֹתוֹ אֶת־יְכִנְיָהּ

listen to the words the prophets say to you, “You will not be enslaved by the king of Babylon;” they are prophesying a lie to you.¹⁵ Since I have not sent them, says Yahweh, they prophesy falsely to you in my name. The result will be that I shall drive you out, you will perish, and so will the prophets who are prophesying to you.”¹⁶ I also spoke to the priests and all this people as follows, “Yahweh says this: “Do not listen to the words of your prophets who prophesy to you as follows: Look, the vessels of the Temple of Yahweh will very shortly be brought back from Babylon; for, they are prophesying a lie to you.¹⁷ Do not listen to them; serve the king of Babylon and live. Why should this city become a ruin?¹⁸ If they are real prophets, if the word of Yahweh is really with them, they ought now to be pleading with Yahweh Sabaoth that the remaining vessels in the Temple of Yahweh, in the palace of the king of Judah and elsewhere in Jerusalem, do not go to Babylon too!¹⁹ For this is what Yahweh Sabaoth says about the pillars, the Sea, the stands and the other vessels still remaining in this city,²⁰ those not carried off by Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon when he took Jeconiah son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon with all

¹⁵ For the fulfilment of this prophecy, see 39:5–7, 52:7–11 and 2K 25:4–7.

¹⁶ Jeremiah cautions the people against believing the assurance of the false prophets that the booty taken in 597 BCE would be returned shortly.

¹⁷ The imperative with *vav* here (וַחֲיוּ, ‘live’) after another imperative (עֲבֹדוּ, ‘serve’) is an example of the imperative introducing a consequence.

¹⁸ The word ‘elsewhere’ is not in the MT; it is added here (following the NJB) for clarity.

¹⁹ The ‘pillars’ here are the two free-standing bronze pillars at the entrance of the temple (Jachin and Boaz) described in 1K 7:15–22.

²⁰ The *Kethib/Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

יְכוֹנִיָּה בְּנֵי־הַזִּיקִים מֶלֶךְ־יְהוּדָה מִירוּשָׁלַם בְּבֵלָה
וְאֵת כָּל־חַרְיֵי יְהוּדָה וִירוּשָׁלַם: כֹּא כִּי כֹה אָמַר יְהוָה
צְבָאוֹת אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל עַל־הַכֵּלִים הַנּוֹתָרִים בְּבֵית
יְהוָה וּבֵית מֶלֶךְ־יְהוּדָה וִירוּשָׁלַם: כִּב בְּבֵלָה יִוָּבְאוּ
וְשָׁמָּה יִהְיוּ עַד יוֹם פְּקֻדֵי אֲתֶם נְאֻם־יְהוָה
וְהָעֲלִיתִים וְהִשִּׁיבְתִים אֶל־הַמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה: {פ}

the leading men of Judah and Jerusalem. ²¹ Yes, this is what Yahweh Sabaoth, God of Israel, says about the vessels still remaining in the Temple of Yahweh, in the palace of the king of Judah and elsewhere in Jerusalem. ²² They will be carried off to Babylon and stay there until the day I give attention to them, says Yahweh. Then I shall bring them back and restore them to this place.”

²¹ Some of the flavour of the repetitive nature of Hebrew narrative is apparent in vv. 19–21.

²² This verb translated ‘give attention to’ (as NRSV) is difficult here; the word that has been translated several times throughout Jeremiah as ‘punish’ (the NJB uses this here, too) but it can also take the positive sense of taking note and ‘showing consideration for’ (as NETB, cf. Rt 1:6).

JEREMIAH 28

ירמיהו פרק כח

א ויהי בשנה ההיא בראשית ממלכת צדקיה
מלך־יהודה בשנת בשנה הרבעית בחדש
החמישי אמר אלי חנניה בן־עזור הנביא אשר
מגבעון בבית יהוה לעיני הכהנים וכל־העם
לאמר: ב כה־אמר יהוה צבאות אלהי ישראל
לאמר שברתי את־על מלך בבל: ג בעודו שנתים
ימים אני משיב אל־המקום הזה את־כל־כלי בית
יהוה אשר לקח נבוכדנאצר מלך־בבל מן־
המקום הזה ויביאם בבל: ד ואת־יכניה בן־
יהויקים מלך־יהודה ואת־כל־גלות יהודה הבאים
בבלה אני משיב אל־המקום הזה נאם־יהוה כי
אשבר את־על מלך בבל: ה ויאמר ירמיה הנביא
אל־חנניה הנביא לעיני הכהנים ולעיני כל־העם
העומדים בבית יהוה: ו ויאמר ירמיה הנביא אמן
כן יעשה יהוה יקם יהוה את־דבריך אשר נבאת
להשיב כלי בית־יהוה וכל־הגולה מבבל אל־

¹ And it came to pass that, in that same year, at the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah king of Judah, in the fifth month of the fourth year, the prophet Hananiah, the son of Azzur, a Gibeonite, spoke as follows to Jeremiah in the Temple of Yahweh in the presence of the priests and of all the people, ² “Yahweh Sabaoth, the God of Israel, says this, “I will break the yoke of servitude to the king of Babylon. ³ Before two full years are over, I shall bring back all the vessels of the Temple of Yahweh, which Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, took away from this place and carried off to Babylon. ⁴ I will also bring back to this place Jeconiah son of Jehoiakim, the king of Judah and all the exiles of Judah who have gone to Babylon, says Yahweh; for, I shall break the yoke of servitude to the king of Babylon.”” ⁵ Then the prophet Jeremiah replied to the prophet Hananiah in the presence of the priests and in the presence of all the people who were standing in the Temple of Yahweh; ⁶ and the prophet Jeremiah said, “Amen! Let Yahweh do so! Let him fulfil the words that you have prophesied and bring back all the vessels of the

JEREMIAH 28

- ¹ The *Kethib*/*Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation. ‘*To Jeremiah*’ is conjectural; the *MT* has ‘*to me*’: the rest of the chapter is all in 3rd person narrative – many explain the 1st person here as a misunderstanding of the abbreviation ‘*to Jeremiah*’ (אלי = אל ירמיה).
- ² The literal translation of ‘*I will break*’ is ‘*I have broken*’; this is a case of the ‘*prophetic perfect*’ – the past tense indicating certainty.
- ³ The *NJB* opens this verse with ‘*In exactly two years’ time*’; here, we (loosely) follow *NETB*.
- ⁴ The *NJB* & *NRSV* lack the words ‘*servitude to*’, here following *NETB* (as also in v. 2).
- ⁵ The *NJB* has simply ‘*present*’ in place of ‘*who were standing*’, here following the *NRSV*.
- ⁶ The *NJB* has ‘*so be it*’ in place of ‘*Amen*’ (אמן), here following the *NRSV* & *NETB*.

הַמְּקוֹם הַזֶּה: אֲדַבֵּר שְׁמַעֲנָא הַדְּבָר הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר
אֲנִי דֹבֵר בְּאָזְנֶיךָ וּבְאָזְנֵי כָּל־הָעָם: הַנְּבִיאִים
אֲשֶׁר הָיוּ לִפְנֵי וּלְפָנֶיךָ מִן־הָעוֹלָם וַיִּנְבְּאוּ אֶל־
אַרְצוֹת רַבּוֹת וְעַל־מַמְלָכוֹת גְּדוֹלוֹת לְמַלְחָמָה
וּלְרָעָה וּלְדָבָר: ט הַנְּבִיא אֲשֶׁר יִנְבֵּא לְשָׁלוֹם בָּבֶא
דְּבַר הַנְּבִיא יוֹדֵעַ הַנְּבִיא אֲשֶׁר־שָׁלְחוּ יְהוָה
בְּאַמַּת: י וַיִּקַּח חֲנַנְיָה הַנְּבִיא אֶת־הַמוֹטֶה מֵעַל
צוּאֵר יִרְמְיָה הַנְּבִיא וַיִּשְׁבְּרֵהוּ: יא וַיֹּאמֶר חֲנַנְיָה
לְעֵינַי כָּל־הָעָם לֵאמֹר כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה כִּכָּה אֲשַׁבֵּר
אֶת־עַלְ| נְבֻכַדְנֶאצַּר מֶלֶךְ־בָּבֶל בְּעוֹד שְׁנָתַיִם יָמִים
מֵעַל צוּאֵר כָּל־הַגּוֹיִם וַיִּלְךְ יִרְמְיָה הַנְּבִיא
לְדַרְכּוֹ: {פ}

יב וַיְהִי דְבַר־יְהוָה אֶל־יִרְמְיָה אַחֲרַי שְׁבוֹר חֲנַנְיָה
הַנְּבִיא אֶת־הַמוֹטֶה מֵעַל צוּאֵר יִרְמְיָה הַנְּבִיא
לֵאמֹר: יג הַלּוֹךְ וְאָמַרְתָּ אֶל־חֲנַנְיָה לֵאמֹר כֹּה אָמַר
יְהוָה מוֹטֵת עֵץ שִׁבְרֵת וְעָשִׂיתָ תַּחְתֵּיהֶן מוֹטוֹת

Temple of Yahweh and all the exiles back to this place from Babylon.

⁷ Listen carefully, however, to this word that I am now going to say for you and all the people to hear: ⁸ From ancient times, the prophets who preceded you and me prophesied war, disaster, and plague for many countries and for great kingdoms; ⁹ the prophet who prophesies peace can be recognised as one truly sent by Yahweh only when his word comes true.” ¹⁰ The prophet Hananiah then snatched the yoke from the neck of the prophet Jeremiah and broke it. ¹¹ In front of all the people, Hananiah then said, “Yahweh says this: “This is how, before two years are over, I shall break the yoke of servitude to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and take it off the necks of all the nations.”” At this, the prophet Jeremiah went away.

¹² After the prophet Hananiah had broken the yoke from the prophet Jeremiah’s neck, the word of Yahweh came to Jeremiah, ¹³ “Go to Hananiah and tell him this, “Yahweh says this: You have broken the wooden yokes only to make iron yokes to replace them! ¹⁴ For Yahweh

⁷ Literally translated, this verse reads, “Listen to this word that I am about to speak in your ears and the ears of all these people.”

⁸ In place of ‘disaster’, many Hebrew MSS read ‘famine’, which is the 2nd member of a common triad (‘sword, famine, and plague’) in Jr; it occurs 13 times and undoubtedly influenced a scribe to read ‘starvation’ = ‘famine’ here. (The words ‘disaster and plague’ are missing from the LXX.)

⁹ In stating that the prophet foretells disaster, Jeremiah implicitly refers to the sins of the nation, always condemned by the true prophets.

¹⁰ Note how Hananiah acts dramatically, so as to draw the attention of the audience.

¹¹ The literal translation of ‘went away’ is ‘went his way’.

¹² At the beginning of this verse, the NRSV adds ‘sometime’ and NETB adds ‘shortly’; here, we follow the NJB.

¹³ Jeremiah’s yoke was symbolic of submission to Babylonian rule; Hananiah breaking it showed that that rule would not last.

¹⁴ The emphasis is on the absoluteness of Nebuchadnezzar’s control; the statement is again rhetorical and not to be taken literally (see #27:6).

בְּרֹזֶל: יְיָ כֹה־אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
 עַל בְּרֹזֶל נָתַתִּי עַל־צוּאֵר | כָּל־הַגּוֹיִם הָאֵלֶּה לְעַבְדֹּ
 אֶת־נְבֻכַדְנֶאֶצַּר מֶלֶךְ־בָּבֶל וְעַבְדָּהוּ וְגַם אֶת־חַיֵּית
 הַשָּׂדֶה נָתַתִּי לוֹ: ^{טו} וַיֹּאמֶר יְרֵמְיָה הַנְּבִיא אֶל־
 חֲנַנְיָה הַנְּבִיא שָׁמַע־נָא חֲנַנְיָה לֹא־שָׁלַחְךָ יְהוָה
 וְאַתָּה הַבְּטַחְתָּ אֶת־הָעָם הַזֶּה עַל־שָׁקֶר: ^{טז} לָכֵן כֹּה
 אָמַר יְהוָה הַנְּנִי מִשְׁלַחְךָ מֵעַל פְּנֵי הָאָדָמָה הַשָּׁנָה
 אֲתָה מֵת כִּי־סָרָה דְבַרְתָּ אֶל־יְהוָה: ^{יז} וַיָּמָת חֲנַנְיָה
 הַנְּבִיא בַשָּׁנָה הַהִיא בַּחֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁבִיעִי: {פ}

Sabaoth, the God of Israel, says this: An iron yoke is what I now lay on the necks of all the nations to enslave them to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon. They will be enslaved to him; I have even given him the wild animals.”” ¹⁵ The prophet Jeremiah said to the prophet Hananiah, “Listen carefully, Hananiah: Yahweh has not sent you; and, thanks to you, these people are now relying on a lie. ¹⁶ Therefore, Yahweh says this, “I am going to send you off the face of the earth; you will die this year, since you have preached rebellion against Yahweh.”” ¹⁷ The prophet Hananiah died the same year, in the seventh month.

¹⁵ Another way to read the end of this verse is, “you are giving these people false assurances.”

¹⁶ What Hananiah had done was contrary to the law of Dt 13:6 and was punishable by death.

¹⁷ The fulfilment of a short-term prophecy was a sign that the prophet’s ministry was from God (cf. 20:6, 29:32, 44:29–30, 45:5 and #Dt 18:21).

ירמיהו פרק כט

וְאֵלֶּה דְבַרֵי הַסֵּפֶר אֲשֶׁר שָׁלַח יִרְמְיָה הַנְּבִיא מִירוּשָׁלַם אֶל־יֵתֶר זְקֵנֵי הַגּוֹלָה וְאֶל־הַכֹּהֲנִים וְאֶל־הַנְּבִיאִים וְאֶל־כָּל־הָעָם אֲשֶׁר הִגְלָה נְבוּכַדְנֶאֶצַּר מִירוּשָׁלַם בְּבִלְהָ: ^ב אַחֲרַי צֵאת יְכִנְיָה־הַמֶּלֶךְ וְהַגְבִּירָה וְהַסָּרִיסִים שְׂרֵי יְהוּדָה וִירוּשָׁלַם וְהַחֲרָשׁ וְהַמְּסַגֵּר מִירוּשָׁלַם: ^ג בְּיַד אֶלְעָזָר בֶּן־שַׁפָּן וְגִמְרְיָה בֶן־חֶלְקִיָּה אֲשֶׁר שָׁלַח צְדַקְיָה מֶלֶךְ־יְהוּדָה אֶל־נְבוּכַדְנֶאֶצַּר מֶלֶךְ בָּבֶל בְּבִלְהָ לֵאמֹר:

^ד כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לְכֹל־הַגּוֹלָה אֲשֶׁר־הִגְלִיתִי מִירוּשָׁלַם בְּבִלְהָ: ^ה בְּנוּ בָתִּים וְשָׁבוּ וְנָטְעוּ גִּזְוֹת וְאָכְלוּ אֶת־פְּרִיָן: ^ו קַחוּ נָשִׁים וְהוֹלִידוּ בָנִים וּבָנוֹת וְקַחוּ לְבָנֵיכֶם נָשִׁים וְאֶת־בָּנוֹתֵיכֶם תִּנּוּ לְאִנָּשִׁים וְתִלְדְּנָה בָנִים וּבָנוֹת וְרַבּוּ־שָׁם וְאַל־תִּמְעָטוּ: ^ז וְדַרְשׂוּ אֶת־שְׁלוֹם

JEREMIAH 29

¹ This is the text of the letter that the prophet Jeremiah sent from Jerusalem to the remaining elders in exile, to the priests, the prophets and all the people, whom Nebuchadnezzar had exiled from Jerusalem to Babylon, ² after King Jeconiah, the queen mother, the officials, the leaders of Judah and Jerusalem, and the artisans and smiths had left Jerusalem. ³ The letter was entrusted to Elasah son of Shaphan and to Gemariah son of Hilkiah, whom Zedekiah king of Judah had sent to Babylon, to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon. The letter said:

⁴ “Yahweh Sabaoth, the God of Israel, says this to all the exiles sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: ⁵ Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat what they produce; ⁶ take wives and have sons and daughters; choose wives for your sons and give your daughters in marriage, so that these can bear sons and daughters in their turn; you must multiply there, and not decrease. ⁷ Work for

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- ¹ The exiles were being misled by the same baseless assurances of speedy return as those in Palestine (Ch. 27). To counter this, Jeremiah sent a letter by Elasah (possibly the brother of Ahikam, 26:24) and Gemariah (36:10) to the elders of the people (Ezk 8:1, 14:1).
- ² The *NJB* has ‘*eunuchs*’ in place of ‘*officials*’ (here following *NETB*).
- ³ This verse possibly refers to the same mission as in 51:59. ‘*Elasah son of Shaphan*’ may have been the brother of Ahikam, who supported Jeremiah when the priests and the prophets in Jerusalem sought to kill him for preaching that the Temple and the city would be destroyed (cf. 26:24).
- ⁴ Elsewhere, Nebuchadnezzar is the one who carried them into exile (cf. 27:20; 29:1); here and in v. 14, God is seen as the one who deports them.
- ⁵ The message here is a clear indication that the period of the Exile will be long.
- ⁶ It is also clear here that God expects the Hebrew Nation to prosper during the Exile.
- ⁷ The *NJB* ends this verse (here following the *NRSV*) with, “... since on its welfare yours depends.”

הָעִיר אֲשֶׁר הִגַּלְתִּי אֶתְכֶם שָׁמָּה וְהִתְפַּלְלֻוּ
 בְּעֵדָה אֶל־יְהוָה כִּי בְשָׁלוֹמָהּ יִהְיֶה לָכֶם שָׁלוֹם:
 כִּי כֹה אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶל־
 יְשִׂיאוֹ לָכֶם נְבִיאֵיכֶם אֲשֶׁר־בְּקִרְבְּכֶם וְקִסְמֵיכֶם
 וְאֶל־תְּשֻׁמְעוּ אֶל־חִלְמֹתֵיכֶם אֲשֶׁר אַתֶּם
 מַחְלִמִים: ט כִּי בִשְׁקֶר הֵם נְבִאִים לָכֶם בְּשֵׁמִי לֹא
 שְׁלַחְתִּים נְאֻם־יְהוָה: {ס}

י כִּי־כֹה אָמַר יְהוָה כִּי לִפִּי מְלֹאת לְבַבְלִי שְׁבַעִים
 שָׁנָה אֶפְקֹד אֶתְכֶם וְהִקְמַתִּי עֲלֵיכֶם אֶת־דְּבָרֵי
 הַטּוֹב לְהַשִּׁיב אֶתְכֶם אֶל־הַמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה: יא כִּי
 אֲנֹכִי יֹדַעְתִּי אֶת־הַמַּחְשְׁבֹת אֲשֶׁר אֲנֹכִי חֹשֵׁב
 עֲלֵיכֶם נְאֻם־יְהוָה מַחְשְׁבוֹת שָׁלוֹם וְלֹא לְרָעָה
 לָתֵת לָכֶם אַחֲרֵית וְתִקְוָה: יב וְקִרְאתֶם אֹתִי
 וְהִלַּכְתֶּם וְהִתְפַּלַּלְתֶּם אֵלַי וְשָׁמַעְתִּי אֲלֵיכֶם:
 יג וּבְקִשְׁתֶּם אֹתִי וּמְצַאתֶם כִּי תִדְרָשְׁנִי בְּכָל־
 לְבַבְכֶם: יד וְנִמְצַאתִי לָכֶם נְאֻם־יְהוָה וְשִׁבַּתִּי

the welfare of the city to which I have sent you in exile and pray to Yahweh on its behalf for, in its welfare you will find your welfare.

⁸ For Yahweh Sabaoth, the God of Israel, says this: Do not let the prophets and the diviners who are among you deceive you, and do not listen to the dreams you are encouraging them to dream, ⁹ since they prophesy lies to you in my name. I have not sent them, says Yahweh.

¹⁰ “For, Yahweh says this: only when the seventy years granted to Babylon are over, shall I intervene on your behalf; and I will fulfil my favourable promise to you by bringing you back to this place.

¹¹ For surely, I know what plans I have in mind for you, says Yahweh, plans for your welfare, not for your harm, to give you a future and a hope. ¹² And then, when you call to me and you come and pray to me, I shall listen to you. ¹³ And when you search for me, you will find me – when you search for me with all your heart and soul. ¹⁴ And I shall let you find me, says Yahweh. I shall restore

⁸ In place of ‘dreams you are encouraging them to dream’, here following NETB, the NJB has ‘dreams you have’.

⁹ See #23:27 on the significance of the phrase ‘in my name’.

¹⁰ See #25:11 for the reckoning of ‘seventy years’.

¹¹ An alternative reading for ‘a future and a hope’ is ‘the future you hope for’; this is an example of hendiadys, where two formally coordinated nouns (adjectives, verbs) convey a single idea, with one of the terms functioning as a qualifier of the other.

¹² The verbs translated ‘call’ and ‘pray’ are *vav* consecutive perfects and can be taken either as unconditional futures or as contingent futures.

¹³ The MT does not have the words ‘and soul’, here following NETB: the translation attempts to reflect the theological nuances of ‘seeking’ and ‘finding’ and the psychological significance of ‘heart’, which refers more to volitional concerns in the Hebrew Bible than to emotions.

¹⁴ The *Kethib*/*Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

אֶת־שְׁבוּתְכֶם שְׁבִיתְכֶם וְקִבַּצְתִּי אֶתְכֶם מִכָּל־
 הַגּוֹיִם וּמִכָּל־הַמְּקוֹמוֹת אֲשֶׁר הִדַּחְתִּי אֶתְכֶם שָׁם
 נְאֻם־יְהוָה וְהִשְׁבֹּתִי אֶתְכֶם אֶל־הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר־
 הִגְלִיתִי אֶתְכֶם מִשָּׁם: ^{טו} כִּי אָמַרְתֶּם הַקִּים לָנוּ
 יְהוָה נְבִאִים בַּבֵּלָה: {ס} ^{טז} כִּי־כֹה | אָמַר יְהוָה
 אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ הַיּוֹשֵׁב אֶל־כִּסֵּא דָוִד וְאֶל־כָּל־הָעָם
 הַיּוֹשֵׁב בְּעִיר הַזֹּאת אַחֲיֵיכֶם אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יָצְאוּ
 אִתְּכֶם בַּגּוֹלָה: {ס} ^{יז} כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת הַנְּנִי
 מִשְׁלַח בָּם אֶת־הַחֶרֶב אֶת־הָרֶעֱב וְאֶת־הַדָּבָר
 וְנָתַתִּי אוֹתָם כַּתְּאֲנִים הַשְּׁעָרִים אֲשֶׁר לֹא־
 תֵּאכְלָנָה מֵרַע: ^{יח} וְרִדַּפְתִּי אַחֲרֵיהֶם בַּחֶרֶב
 בָּרֶעֱב וּבַדָּבָר וְנָתַתִּים לְזוּעָה לְזוּעָה לְכָל־
 מַמְלָכוֹת הָאָרֶץ לְאֵלָה וּלְשִׁמָּה וּלְשָׂרָקָה
 וּלְחִרְפָּה בְּכָל־הַגּוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר־הִדַּחְתִּים שָׁם:
^{יט} תַּחַת אֲשֶׁר־לֹא־שָׁמְעוּ אֶל־דְּבָרֵי נְאֻם־יְהוָה
 אֲשֶׁר שָׁלַחְתִּי אֵלֵיהֶם אֶת־עֲבָדֵי הַנְּבִאִים הַשְּׂכֵם
 וְשָׁלַח וְלֹא שָׁמְעֶתֶם נְאֻם־יְהוָה: ^כ וְאַתֶּם שָׁמְעוּ

your fortunes and gather you in from all the nations and from all
 the places to which I have driven you, says Yahweh. I shall bring
 you back to the place from which I had you carried into exile.
¹⁵ Furthermore, you have said: Yahweh has raised up prophets for
 us in Babylon. ¹⁶ However, this is what Yahweh says
 concerning the king who is now sitting on the throne of David, and
 concerning all the people living in this city, your brothers who did
 not go with you into exile: ¹⁷ Yahweh Sabaoth says this: I am
 now going to let loose on them the sword, the famine, and the
 plague; and I shall make them like rotten figs that are so bad they
 cannot be eaten. ¹⁸ I will pursue them with the sword, with the
 famine, and with the plague. I shall make them an object or terror
 to all the kingdoms of the earth, a curse, a thing of horror, of scorn,
 and of derision, to all the nations where I have driven them,
¹⁹ because they have refused to listen to my words, says Yahweh,
 although I have persistently sent them all my servants the
 prophets; but they would not listen, says Yahweh. ²⁰ But all you of

¹⁵ The *NJB* & *NRSV* place this verse after a paragraph break, thus making it a causal link to v. 16: “Since you have said...” here, we follow the *Setumah* ({ס}) in the *MT*, which is indicated in the translation by 2 Em-Space characters.

¹⁶ Vv. 16–20, missing from the *LXX*, are additional, all the more obviously so since the sentence begun in v. 15 finishes in v. 21.

¹⁷ The meaning of the word translated ‘so bad’ (הַשְּׁעָרִים) is somewhat uncertain; it occurs only here in the Hebrew Bible.

¹⁸ The *Kethib*/*Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

¹⁹ ‘They would not listen’ is a conjectural translation demanded by the context and following the *Peshitta*; the *MT* has ‘you would not listen’ (as does *JPS*).

²⁰ Note the further example of the shift from 1st person to 3rd – common in Hebrew poetry and prophecy.

דְּבַר־יְהוָה כָּל־הַגּוֹלָה אֲשֶׁר־שַׁלַּחְתִּי מִירוּשָׁלַם
בְּבַלְהָ: {ס}

כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶל־
אֲחָאָב בֶּן־קוֹלֵיָה וְאֶל־צְדַקְיָהוּ בֶן־מַעֲשִׂיָה
הַנְּבָאִים לָכֶם בְּשֵׁמי שְׁקֵר הַנְּגִי | נָתַן אֶתְּם בְּיַד
נְבוּכַדְרֶאצַּר מֶלֶךְ־בָּבֶל וְהֵפֶם לְעֵינֵיכֶם: כִּי וְלִקַּח
מֵהֶם קָלְלָה לְכָל־גְּלוֹת יְהוּדָה אֲשֶׁר בְּבָבֶל לֵאמֹר
יִשְׁמַךְ יְהוָה כְּצְדַקְיָהוּ וְכֶאֱחָב אֲשֶׁר־קָלַם מֶלֶךְ־
בָּבֶל בְּאֵשׁ: כִּי יַעַן אֲשֶׁר עָשׂוּ נְבִלָה בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל
וַיִּנְאַפוּ אֶת־נְשֵׁי רַעִיָהֶם וַיְדַבְּרוּ דְבַר בְּשֵׁמי שְׁקֵר
אֲשֶׁר לֹא צִוִּיתֶם וְאַנְכִי הוֹיֵדַע הַיּוֹדַע וְעַד נֹאֵם־
יְהוָה: {ס}

כִּי וְאֶל־שְׁמַעְיָהוּ הַנְּחַלְמִי תֹאמַר לֵאמֹר: כֹּה־
אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר יַעַן
אֲשֶׁר אָתָּה שַׁלַּחְתָּ בְּשֵׁמְכָה סְפָרִים אֶל־כָּל־
הָעָם אֲשֶׁר בִּירוּשָׁלַם וְאֶל־צַפְנִיָה בֶן־מַעֲשִׂיָה
הַכֹּהֵן וְאֵל כָּל־הַכֹּהֲנִים לֵאמֹר: כִּי יְהוָה נָתַן־כֹּהֵן
תַּחַת יְהוֹיָדַע הַכֹּהֵן לְהִיזֹת פְּקָדִים בְּבֵית יְהוָה

the captivity, whom I have sent from Jerusalem to Babylon, listen to Yahweh's word!

²¹ “Thus says Yahweh Sabaoth, God of Israel, about Ahab son of Kolaiah, and Zedekiah son of Maaseiah, who prophesy a lie to you in my name: I will hand them over to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, who will kill them before your very eyes. ²² On account of them, this curse will be used by all the exiles of Judah in Babylon: May Yahweh treat you like Zedekiah and Ahab, whom the king of Babylon roasted in the fire, ²³ because they have perpetrated outrage in Israel, committing adultery with their neighbours' wives and speaking lying words in my name without orders from me. I am witness to it, says Yahweh.

²⁴ “To Shemaiah of Nehelam you will speak as follows: ²⁵ Yahweh Sabaoth, God of Israel, says this: Since you, in your own name, have sent a letter to all the people in Jerusalem, to the priest Zephaniah son of Maaseiah and to all the priests, saying: ²⁶ Yahweh has appointed you priest in place of the priest Jehoiada to keep order in the Temple of Yahweh, to put any crazy fellow posing as

²¹ Jeremiah condemned two colleagues of Hananiah, Ahab and Zedekiah (compare Ezk 13) and predicted their execution.

²² Being ‘roasted in the fire’ appears to have been a common method of execution in Babylon (see Dn 3:6, 19-21).

²³ The *Kethib*/*Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

²⁴ Shemaiah wrote a scathing letter to the new Temple overseer, Zephaniah, charging him with dereliction of duty in not arresting Jeremiah.

²⁵ The *NJB* has ‘on your own initiative’ in place of ‘in your own name’, here following the *MT* & *NRSV*.

²⁶ The term translated ‘crazy fellow’ applies to anyone who exhibits irrational behaviour.

לְכַל־אִישׁ מִשָּׁנַע וּמִתְנַבֵּא וְנִתְּתָה אִתּוֹ אֶל־
הַמֶּהֱפֶכֶת וְאֶל־הַצִּיֵּנֶק: ^{כז} וְעַתָּה לָמָּה לֹא גִעַרְתָּ
בִּירְמְיָהוּ הָעֹנֵתֵנִי הַמִּתְנַבֵּא לָכֶם: ^{כח} כִּי עַל־כֵּן
שָׁלַח אֵלֵינוּ בְּבַל לֵאמֹר אֲרַכָּה הִיא בְּנוֹ בְּתִים
וְשָׁבוּ וְנִטְעוּ גִזְוֹת וְאָכְלוּ אֶת־פְּרִיָהֶן:

^{כט} וַיִּקְרָא צְפַנְיָה הַכֹּהֵן אֶת־הַסֵּפֶר הַזֶּה בְּאָזְנֵי
יְרְמְיָהוּ הַנְּבִיא: {פ}

לֵי וַיְהִי דְבַר־יְהוָה אֶל־יְרְמְיָהוּ לֵאמֹר: ^{לא} שָׁלַח עַל־
כָּל־הַגּוֹלָה לֵאמֹר כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי־שִׁמְעִיָּה
הַנְּחַלְמִי יַעַן אֲשֶׁר נָבֵא לָכֶם שִׁמְעִיָּה וְאֲנִי לֹא
שָׁלַחְתִּיו וַיִּבְטַח אֶתְכֶם עַל־שִׁקְר: ^{לב} לָכֵן כֹּה־אָמַר
יְהוָה הַנְּגִי פִקֹּד עַל־שִׁמְעִיָּה הַנְּחַלְמִי וְעַל־זִרְעוֹ
לֹא־יִהְיֶה לוֹ אִישׁ יוֹשֵׁב בְּתוֹד־הָעַם הַזֶּה וְלֹא־
יִרְאֶה בְּטוֹב אֲשֶׁר־אֲנִי עֹשֶׂה־לְעַמִּי נְאֻם־יְהוָה כִּי־
סָרָה דְבַר עַל־יְהוָה: {ס}

a prophet in the stocks and collar, ²⁷ why then have you not disciplined Jeremiah of Anathoth, now posing as a prophet to you? ²⁸ Why, he has even sent us a message in Babylon, saying: It will be a long time; build houses and settle down; plant gardens and eat what they produce ...”

²⁹ The priest Zephaniah then read this letter in the hearing of the prophet Jeremiah,

³⁰ The word of Yahweh came then to Jeremiah: ³¹ “Send this message to all the exiles, “This is what Yahweh says about Shemaiah of Nehelam: Since Shemaiah has prophesied to you without my sending him, and since he has caused you to rely on what is false, ³² for that reason, says Yahweh, I shall punish Shemaiah of Nehelam and his descendants; no male member of his family will survive among this people to see the happiness that I will bestow on my people, says Yahweh, since he has preached rebellion against Yahweh.

²⁷ The rhetorical question functions as an emphatic assertion.

²⁸ The sentence beginning ‘Since’ in v. 25 is left in suspense. Vv. 24–25 seem to have been tampered with; the LXX, which is very different, seems to have found the text embarrassing but is just as unsatisfactory.

²⁹ The NJB merges this verse with the following paragraph, reading, “Now, after the priest Zephaniah had read this letter to the prophet Jeremiah...”

³⁰ At the end of this verse, the NJB adds ‘as follows’; here, we follow the NRSV.

³¹ An alternate reading for the end of this verse is, “...he has given you false assurances.”

³² ‘To see’ follows the LXX; the MT has ‘and he shall not see’.

ירמיהו פרק ל

א הַדְּבַר אֲשֶׁר הָיָה אֶל־יִרְמְיָהוּ מֵאֵת יְהוָה
לֵאמֹר: ב כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר
כְּתַב־לְךָ אֶת כָּל־הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר־דִּבַּרְתִּי אֵלֶיךָ
אֶל־סֵפֶר: ג כִּי הִנֵּה יָמִים בָּאִים נְאֻם־יְהוָה
וְשָׁבְתִי אֶת־שְׁבוֹת עַמִּי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיהוּדָה אָמַר
יְהוָה וְהִשְׁבַּתִּים אֶל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר־נָתַתִּי לְאֲבוֹתָם
וַיְרִשׁוּהָ: {פ}

ד וְאֵלֶּה הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר יְהוָה אֶל־יִשְׂרָאֵל
וְאֶל־יְהוּדָה:

ה כִּי־כֹה אָמַר יְהוָה
קוֹל חֲרָדָה שָׁמַעְנוּ
פַּחַד וְאִין שָׁלוֹם:
ו שְׂאֵל־וַיֵּא וַיֵּא
אִם־יֵלֵד זָכָר
מִדּוֹעַ רְאִיתִי כָל־גֹּבֶר
יָדָיו עַל־חֻלְצֵי

JEREMIAH 30

¹ The word that came to Jeremiah from Yahweh, as follows, ² “Yahweh, the God of Israel, says this, “Write for yourself in a book all the words that I am about to speak to you. ³ For look, the days are surely coming, says Yahweh, when I shall bring back the captives of my people, Israel and Judah, Yahweh says, and I shall make them come back to the country that I gave to their ancestors, and they shall take possession of it.””

⁴ And these are the words that Yahweh spoke concerning Israel and Judah:

⁵ Yes, Yahweh says this:

We have heard a cry of panic,
of terror, not of peace.

⁶ Now ask and see:

can a man bear children?

Why do I see each man with his hands on his loins

like a woman in labour?

JEREMIAH 30

¹ The NRSV lacks ‘as follows’, here following the NJB, and NETB has simply, “The LORD spoke to Jeremiah.”

² The literal translation of ‘am about to speak’ is ‘have spoken’; this is an example of the use of the prophetic perfect.

³ The literal translation of ‘bring back the captives’ (here following the NJB) is ‘restore the fortunes’.

⁴ NETB has ‘speaks’ in place of ‘spoke’ (see #2); however, here, the sentence forms part of the narrative, so the past tense is appropriate.

⁵ The particle כִּי (‘yes’) is functioning here as loosely causal or exegetical of the preceding introduction.

⁶ The word rendered ‘loins’ refers to the area between the ribs and the thighs.

כִּי־לִדָּה וְנִהְפְּכוּ כָל־פָּנִים לִירְקוֹן:
 הוּי כִּי גְדוֹל הַיּוֹם הַהוּא ז
 מֵאִין כָּמֹהוּ
 וְעַת־צָרָה הִיא לִיעֲקֹב
 וּמִמְנָה יִוָּשָׁע:

וְהָיָה בַיּוֹם הַהוּא נְאֻם | יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת אֲשֶׁר
 עָלוּ מֵעַל צְוֹאֲרֶךְ וּמוֹסְרוֹתֶיךָ אֲנֹתְךָ וְלֹא־יַעֲבֹדוּ־
 בּוֹ עוֹד זָרִים: ט וְעֲבָדוּ אֶת יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיהֶם וְאֶת
 דָּוִד מֶלֶכָם אֲשֶׁר אָקִים לָהֶם: {ס}

וְאַתָּה אֶל־תִּירָא עֲבָדֵי יַעֲקֹב נְאֻם־יְהוָה י
 וְאֶל־תַּחַת יִשְׂרָאֵל
 כִּי הִנְנִי מוֹשִׁיעֶךָ מִרְחֹק
 וְאֶת־זֶרְעֶךָ מֵאֶרֶץ שְׁבִים
 וְשָׁב יַעֲקֹב וְשָׁקֵט וְשָׁאֲנָן
 וְאִין מַחְרִיד:

כִּי־אֲתִיךָ אֲנִי נְאֻם־יְהוָה לְהוֹשִׁיעֶךָ יא
 כִּי אֶעֱשֶׂה כָּל־הַבְּלִיָּגוֹת |
 אֲשֶׁר הִפְצוֹתִיךָ שָׁם
 אֲךָ אֲתִיךָ לֹא־אֶעֱשֶׂה כָּל־

Why has every face grown pale?

7 Alas! That day is so great,
 no other like it:
 A time of distress for Jacob,
 though he will be saved from it.

8 That day, Yahweh Sabaoth declares, I shall break his yoke now on your neck and snap your chains; and foreigners will enslave you no more, 9 but they will serve Yahweh their God and David their king, whom I shall raise up for them.

10 Thus, do not be afraid, my servant Jacob, says Yahweh;
 do not be dismayed, Israel:
 for, I am going to save you from far away,
 your descendants from the land of their captivity.
 Jacob will return and be at peace,
 secure, with no one to trouble him.

11 For I am with you, says Yahweh, to save you,
 I shall make and end of all the nations
 where I have driven you,
 but I shall not make an end of you,

7 The reference to 'that day' is a common reference in the prophets to 'the Day of Yahweh', when God will judge against the wicked.

8 In place of 'his yoke', here following the MT, the NJB & NRSV, following the LXX & *Vetus Latina*, have 'the yoke'.

9 'They' follows the MT (and NRSV); the NJB supplies the explicit subjects, 'Israel and Judah'.

10 The terms 'Jacob' (יעֲקֹב) and 'Israel' (יִשְׂרָאֵל) are poetic for the people of Israel descended from the patriarch Jacob.

11 The translation 'entirely unpunished' (following NETB) reflects the emphatic construction of the infinitive absolute before the finite verb.

וְיִסְרְתֶיךָ לְמִשְׁפָּט
וְנִקְהָ לֹא אֲנַקְדֶךָ: {פ}

יב כִּי כֹה אָמַר יְהוָה
אֲנוּשׁ לְשִׁבְרֶךָ
נִחְלָה מִכְתָּד:

יג אִי־יִדָּן דִּינְךָ לְמִזֹּר
רַפְאוֹת תִּעְלֶה אִין לְךָ:

יד כָּל־מְאַהֲבֶיךָ שָׁכְחוּךָ
אוֹתְךָ לֹא יִדְרְשׁוּ
כִּי מַכַּת אוֹיֵב הִכִּיתֶיךָ
מוֹסֵר אֲכַזְרִי עַל רֹב עֲוֹנֶיךָ
עֲצָמוֹ חֲטֹאתֶיךָ:

טו מִה־תִּזְעַק עַל־שִׁבְרֶךָ
אֲנוּשׁ מִכְּאֲבֶיךָ

טז עַל רֹב עֲוֹנֶיךָ עֲצָמוֹ חֲטֹאתֶיךָ
עָשִׂיתִי אֵלֶּה לְךָ:

טז לְכֹן כָּל־אֲכָלֶיךָ יֵאָכְלוּ
וְכָל־צָרֶיךָ בְּלֹם בְּשִׁבְי יִלְכוּ

only discipline you in moderation,
not to let you go entirely unpunished.

12 Yes, Yahweh says this:
Your hurt is incurable,
your wounds past healing.

13 There is no one to uphold your cause,
no medicine for your wound, no healing for you.

14 All your lovers have forgotten you;
they care nothing for you.
For, I have struck you as an enemy strikes,
with cruel punishment because of your great guilt
and countless sins.

15 Why cry out about your hurt?
Your pain is incurable!
Because of your great guilt and countless sins,
I have treated you like this.

16 But all those who devoured you will be devoured,
all your enemies, all, go into captivity;

12 The particle כִּי ('yes') is parallel to the one in v. 5.

13 The translation here follows the re-division of lines suggested by the NRSV, rather than that of the Masoretes who read, "There is no one who pleads your cause with reference to (your) wound."

14 Here, the 'lovers' (NETB has 'allies') are the nations on whom Israel relied for support (see Ezk 16 & 23).

15 The NJB has 'wound' in place of 'hurt', here following the NRSV (as also in v. 12).

16 The particle לְכֹן ('but') is normally translated as 'therefore' (cf. NJB & NRSV) but here it introduces a contrast, a rather unexpected salvation.

וְהָיוּ שֹׂאֲסִידֶיךָ לְמִשְׁפָּה
וְכָל־בְּזוּיֶיךָ אֶתָּן לְבָז׃
כִּי אֵעֲלֶה אֲרֻכָּה לָךְ וּמִמְבוֹתֶיךָ אֲרַפְּאֶךָ
נְאֻם־יְהוָה
כִּי גִדְחָה קָרְאוּ לָךְ
צִיּוֹן הִיא דֶרֶשׁ אֵין לָהּ׃ {ס}
כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה
הַנְּגִי־שֵׁב שְׁבוֹת אֶהְלִי יַעֲקֹב
וּמִשְׁכְּנֹתַי אֲרַחֵם
וְנִבְנְתָה עִיר עַל־תְּלָהּ
וְאֲרַמֹּן עַל־מִשְׁפָּטוֹ יֵשֵׁב׃
וַיֵּצֵא מֵהֶם תּוֹדָה
וְקוֹל מְשֻׁחָקִים
וְהִרְבַּתִּים וְלֹא יִמְעָטוּ
וְהִכְבַּדְתִּים וְלֹא יִצְעֲרוּ׃
וְהָיוּ בָנָיו כְּקֶדֶם
וְעַדְתּוֹ לִפְנֵי תִבּוֹן
וּפְקַדְתִּי עַל כָּל־לֹחֲצֵיו׃

those who despoiled you will be despoiled
and all who pillaged you will be pillaged.
17 For I shall restore you to health and heal your wounds,
Yahweh declares,
you who used to be called 'Outcast',
'Zion for whom no one cares'.
18 Yahweh says this:
Look, I shall restore the tents of Jacob
and take pity on his dwellings;
this city will be rebuilt on its mound,
the stronghold where it ought to stand.
19 From them will come thanksgiving
and shouts of joy.
I shall make them increase, they will not decrease;
I shall make them honoured, no more to be humbled.
20 Their sons will be as once they were,
their community fixed firmly before me,
and I shall punish all their oppressors.

17 The literal translation of the last line is 'This Zion, she for whom no one cares', an adaptation making 'Israel' here the whole community of God's people and not merely the Northern Kingdom. The LXX has 'our booty' in place of 'Zion', which may reflect the original reading.

18 It was customary to rebuild on the levelled rubble (its 'mound', literally 'Tel' - תל) of the former city, producing the present, flat-topped hills.

19 Compare the 3rd line with 29:6.

20 Some see the reference here to the restoration of numbers in accordance with the previous verse; however, the last line of this verse and the reference to the ruler in the following verse suggests rather restoration of the religious and political institutions to their former state.

כֹּא וְהָיָה אֲדִירוֹ מִמֶּנּוּ
 וּמִשְׁלוֹ מִקְרָבוֹ יֵצֵא
 וְהִקְרַבְתִּיו וְנִגַּשׁ אֵלַי
 כִּי מִי הוּא־זֶה עָרַב אֶת־לִבּוֹ
 לְגַשֵּׁת אֵלַי נְאֻם־יְהוָה:
 כִּב וְהִייתֶם לִי לְעָם
 וְאֲנֹכִי אֶהְיֶה לָכֶם לֵאלֹהִים: {ס}
 כג הִנֵּה | סַעֲרַת יְהוָה חֲמָה יִצְאָה
 סַעַר מִתְּגוֹרָר
 עַל רֹאשׁ רְשָׁעִים יַחֲוֹל:
 כד לֹא יָשׁוּב חֲרוֹן אַף־יְהוָה
 עַד־עֲשׂוֹתוֹ וְעַד־הַקִּימוֹ
 מִזְמוֹת לִבּוֹ
 בְּאַחֲרֵית הַיָּמִים תִּתְּבוּנְנוּ בָּהּ:
 כה בָּעֵת הַהִיא נְאֻם־יְהוָה
 אֶהְיֶה לְאֱלֹהִים
 לְכָל מְשֻׁפְחוֹת יִשְׂרָאֵל
 וְהָמָּה יִהְיוּ־לִי לְעָם: {ס}

- 21 Their prince shall be one of their own,
 their ruler shall come from their own people,
 and I will permit him to approach me freely;
 for who, otherwise, would be so bold
 as to approach me, Yahweh demands?
- 22 You will be my people
 and I shall be your God.
- 23 Look, Yahweh's storm, his wrath, bursts out:
 a roaring hurricane,
 to burst on the heads of the wicked!
- 24 Yahweh's burning anger will not turn aside
 until he has performed, has carried out,
 what he has in mind.
 In the final days, you will understand this.
- 25 When that time comes, Yahweh declares,
 I will be the God
 of all the families of Israel,
 and they shall be my people.

21 The 2nd line contrasts the situation under Assyrian domination, when the governor was a representative of a foreign power.

22 This verse, which is an addition, contains the formula of the Covenant (see Dt 26:17–28, 27:9), frequently repeated by Jeremiah.

23 For the 2nd line, here following the *NJB*, the *NRSV* has 'a whirling tempest'; the meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

24 Vv. 23–24 repeat 23:19–20 almost verbatim: there, the verses were addressed to the people of Jerusalem as a warning that the false prophets had no intimate awareness of God's plans; here, they function as further assurance that God will judge the wicked nations oppressing them.

25 The *NJB*, *NRSV* and most English translations include this verse as 31:1; here, we follow the Hebrew Bible.

ירמיהו פרק לא

כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה א
מָצָא חַן בַּמִּדְבָּר
עִם שְׂרִידֵי חָרֵב
הַלֹּךְ לְהַרְגִיעוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל:
מִרְחֹק יְהוָה נִרְאָה לִי ב
וְאֶהְבֶּת עוֹלָם אֶהְבֶּתִיךָ
עַל־כֵּן מִשְׁכַּתִּיךָ חֲסֹד:
עוֹד אֶבְנֶךָ וְנִבְנִית ג
בְּתוֹלַת יִשְׂרָאֵל
עוֹד תַּעֲדֵי תַפְיִךָ
וְיֵצְאָת בַּמַּחֹל מִשְׁחַקִּים:
עוֹד תִּטְעֵי כְרָמִים ד
בְּהַרֵי שָׁמְרוֹן
נִטְעוּ נִטְעִים וְחִלְלוּ:

JEREMIAH 31

- 1 Yahweh says this:
They have found pardon in the desert,
those who have survived the sword.
Israel is marching to his rest.
- 2 Yahweh has appeared to me from afar;
I have loved you with an everlasting love
and so I still maintain my faithful love for you.
- 3 I shall build you once more, yes, you will be rebuilt,
Virgin of Israel!
Once more in your best attire,
and with your tambourines, you will go out dancing gaily.
- 4 Once more you will plant vineyards
on the mountains of Samaria;
those who plant will themselves enjoy its fruit.

JEREMIAH 31

Most English translations (including the *NJB* & *NRSV*) include 30:25 as part of this chapter (here following the *MT*); in such editions, the verse numbers of this chapter are accordingly incremented. This is Ch. 38 in the *LXX*.

- 1 For the 'desert' as the scene of conversion, see #Ho 2:16. The theme of the Second Exodus, which will bring Israel back from Exile, broached here and in vv. 8–9 & 21, is resumed and developed in the second part of Isaiah (see Is 40:3).
- 2 An alternative reading of 'afar' is 'long ago'.
- 3 Contrast this verse with 7:34 & 25:10.
- 4 The terms used here refer to the enjoyment of a period of peace and stability and the reversal of the curse (cf. Dt 28:30); the word translated 'enjoy its fruit' is a technical one that refers to the owner of a vineyard getting to enjoy its fruit in the fifth year after it was planted, the crops of the first three years lying fallow, and that of the fourth being given to Yahweh (cf. Lv 19:23–25).

<p>כִּי יִשְׂרֹיִם קָרְאוּ נֹצְרִים בְּהַר אֶפְרַיִם קוּמוּ וְנַעֲלֵה צִיּוֹן אֶל־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ: {פ}</p>	ה	<p>5 Yes, a day will come when the watchmen shout on the mountains of Ephraim, “Up! Let us go up to Zion, to Yahweh our God!”</p>
<p>כִּי־כֹה אָמַר יְהוָה רְנוּ לִיעֲקֹב שִׂמְחָה וְצַהֲלוּ בְּרֹאשׁ הַגּוֹיִם הַשְּׁמִיעוּ הַלְלוּ וְאָמְרוּ הוֹשַׁע יְהוָה אֶת־עַמּוֹ אֶת שְׂאֵרֵית יִשְׂרָאֵל: הַנְּנִי מִבְּיַא אוֹתָם מֵאֶרֶץ צָפוֹן וּקְבֹצְתֵימָם מִירְכַת־אֶרֶץ בְּסֵם עֵנָו וּפְסָח הָרָה וְיֹלְדָת יַחְדָּו קָהֵל גְּדוֹל יִשׁוּבוּ הִנֵּה: בְּבִכֵי יָבֹאוּ וּבִתְחִנּוּנִים אוֹבִילִם אוֹלִיכֶם אֶל־נַחֲלֵי מַיִם בְּדֶרֶךְ יֵשֶׁר לֹא יִכָּשְׁלוּ בָּהּ</p>	ו	<p>6 For, Yahweh says this: Shout with joy for Jacob! Hail the chief of nations! Proclaim! Praise! Shout, “Yahweh has saved his people, the remnant of Israel!”</p>
<p>צָפוֹן וּקְבֹצְתֵימָם מִירְכַת־אֶרֶץ בְּסֵם עֵנָו וּפְסָח הָרָה וְיֹלְדָת יַחְדָּו קָהֵל גְּדוֹל יִשׁוּבוּ הִנֵּה: בְּבִכֵי יָבֹאוּ וּבִתְחִנּוּנִים אוֹבִילִם אוֹלִיכֶם אֶל־נַחֲלֵי מַיִם בְּדֶרֶךְ יֵשֶׁר לֹא יִכָּשְׁלוּ בָּהּ</p>	ז	<p>7 Watch, I shall bring them back from the land of the north and gather them in from the far ends of the earth. With them, the blind and the lame, women with child, women in labour, all together: a mighty throng will return here!</p>
<p>בְּבִכֵי יָבֹאוּ וּבִתְחִנּוּנִים אוֹבִילִם אוֹלִיכֶם אֶל־נַחֲלֵי מַיִם בְּדֶרֶךְ יֵשֶׁר לֹא יִכָּשְׁלוּ בָּהּ</p>	ח	<p>8 In tears, they will return; in prayer, I shall lead them. I shall guide them to streams of water, by a smooth path where they will not stumble;</p>

5 ‘Watchmen’ were stationed at vantage points to pass on warning of coming attack (Jr 6:17; Ezk 33:2, 6) or to spread the news of victory (Is 52:8).
6 ‘Has saved his’ follows the LXX (‘Εσωσεν) and Tg; the MT has ‘save your’. The differences in the two readings are the omission of one vowel and the confusion of a final ך for ם, which are very similar in form. The key to a decision here is the shift from the verbs of praise to the imperative ‘say’, which introduces the quotation; there is a shift from praise to petition. The shift in mood is not uncommon, occurring, for example, in Ps 118:25 & 126:4; it is the shift in mood between praise for what has begun to petition for what is further hoped for. It is easier to explain the origin of the LXX and Tg than it is the MT, thus, the former probably smooth the text.
7 In place of ‘watch’, following the NJB (the NRSV has ‘see’), NETB has, ‘and I will reply’.
8 The text of the first two lines is unexpected and it is tempting to emend, as does the LXX, to read, “In tears, they went away; consoled, I shall bring them back,” (ἐν κλαυθμῷ ἐξήλθον, καὶ ἐν παρακλησει ἀνάξω αὐτούς - cf. Ps 126:5–6), though this is likely a correction to make an easier text.

<p>כִּי־הֵייתִי לְיִשְׂרָאֵל לְאָב וְאֶפְרַיִם בְּכֹרִי הוּא: {ס}</p>	<p>for, I am a father to Israel and Ephraim is my first-born son.</p>
<p>ט שְׁמַעוּ דְבַר־יְהוָה גּוֹיִם וְהִגִּידוּ בְּאֵיִם מִמֶּרְחֹק וְאָמְרוּ מִזֶּרֶחַ יִשְׂרָאֵל יִקְבְּצֵנוּ וְשָׁמְרוּ כְרֵעָה עֲדָרוֹ:</p>	<p>9 Listen, nations, to the word of Yahweh. On the farthest coasts and islands, proclaim it; say, "He who scattered Israel is gathering him, will guard him as a shepherd guarding his flock."</p>
<p>י כִּי־פָדָה יְהוָה אֶת־יַעֲקֹב וַגְּאָלוֹ מִיַּד חֲזָק מִמֶּנּוּ:</p>	<p>10 For Yahweh has ransomed Jacob, redeemed him from a hand stronger than his own.</p>
<p>יא וּבָאוּ וְרָנְנוּ בְּמְרוֹם־צִיּוֹן וְנִהְרָוּ אֶל־טוֹב יְהוָה עַל־דָּגָן וְעַל־תִּירֵשׁ וְעַל־יֵצֶהָר וְעַל־בְּנֵי־צֹאן וּבִקֹּר וְהֵייתָ נֶפֶשׁ כְּגֵן רוֹהַ וְלֹא־יִוָּסְפוּ לְדָאֲבָה עוֹד:</p>	<p>11 They will come, shouting for joy on the heights of Zion, thronging towards Yahweh's lavish gifts, for wheat, new wine and oil, sheep and cattle; they will be like a well-watered garden; they will sorrow no more.</p>
<p>יב אַז תִּשְׂמַח בְּתוֹלָה בְּמַחֲוֹל וּבְחֹרִים וּזְקֵנִים יִחְדּוּ וְהִפְכֹתִי אֲבֵלִים לְשִׂשׂוֹן וְנַחֲמָתִים וְשִׂמְחָתִים מִיְגוֹנָם:</p>	<p>12 The young girl will then take pleasure in the dancing, and young men and old me shall rejoice; I shall change their mourning into gladness, comfort them, and give them joy after their troubles.</p>

9 In place of 'on the farthest coasts and islands', here following the NJB, the NRSV has 'in the coastlands far away'.

10 Two theologically significant metaphors are used here: the word translated 'ransomed' is used in the legal sphere for paying a redemption price to secure the freedom of a person (Ex 13:13, 15); the word translated 'redeemed' is used in the sphere of family responsibility where a person paid the price to free an indentured relative (Lv 25:48-49) or paid the price to restore a property seized to pay a debt (Lv 25:25,33).

11 For the 2nd line, here following the NJB, the NRSV reads, "and they shall be radiant over the goodness of the LORD."

12 The 2nd line here follows the LXX (*νεανίσκων καῑ πρεσβῦται χαρήσονται*) and NRSV; the MT (and NJB) has 'young men and old alike'.

<p>וְרוֹיְתִי גַּפְשׁ הַכֹּהֲנִים דְּשֶׁן וְעַמִּי אֶת־טוֹבֵי יִשְׁבְּעוּ נְאֻם־יְהוָה: {ס}</p>	<p>ג</p>	<p>13 I shall refresh my priests with rich food, and my people will gorge themselves on my lavish gifts, says Yahweh.</p>
<p>כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה קוֹל בְּרָמָה נִשְׁמַע נְהִי בְּכִי תַמְרוּרִים רַחֵל מְבַכָּה עַל־בָּנֶיהָ מֵאַנָּה לְהִנָּחַם עַל־בָּנֶיהָ כִּי אֵינָנּוּ: {ס}</p>	<p>ד</p>	<p>14 Yahweh says this: A voice is heard in Ramah, lamenting and weeping bitterly: it is Rachel weeping for her children, because they are no more.</p>
<p>כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה מִנְעֵי קוֹלְךָ מִבְּכִי וְעֵינֶיךָ מִדְּמָעָה כִּי יֵשׁ שָׂכָר לַפְּעֻלָּתְךָ נְאֻם־יְהוָה וְשָׁבוּ מֵאֶרֶץ אוֹיֵב: וַיִּשְׁתַּקּוּהָ לְאַחֲרֵיתָךְ נְאֻם־יְהוָה וְשָׁבוּ בָנִים לְגְבוּלָם: {ס}</p>	<p>טו</p>	<p>15 Yahweh says this: Stop your lamenting and dry your eyes, for your labour will have a reward, says Yahweh, and they will return from the enemy's country.</p>
<p>שָׁמוֹעַ שְׁמַעְתִּי אֶפְרַיִם מִתְנוּדָד יִסְרַתְנִי וְאוֹסֵר</p>	<p>ז</p>	<p>16 There is hope for your posterity after all, says Yahweh, your children will return to their homeland.</p> <p>17 I have indeed heard Ephraim's grieving, "You flogged me; I took a flogging, like a young, untrained bull.</p>

13 The literal translation of the 1st line is, "I will satiate the priests with fat." However, the word translated 'fat' (דֶּשֶׁן) refers literally to the fat ashes of the sacrifices (Lv 1:16, 4:2); the word is used more abstractly for 'abundance' or 'rich food' (cf. Job 36:16).

14 'They are no more' follows the LXX (ὅτι οὐκ εἰσὶν) and Peshitta; the MT has 'we are no more' or 'he is no more'.

15 Contextually, her 'labour' refers to her weeping and refusing to be comforted (v. 14).

16 In place of 'posterity' (אַחֲרֵיתָ), the NJB & NRSV have 'future', translating more literally.

17 2:20 & 5:5 already referred to Israel's refusal to bear the yoke of loyalty and obedience to Yahweh's demands; here, Israel expresses that she has learned from the discipline of Exile and is ready to bear his yoke.

כְּעֵגֹל לֹא לָמַד הַשְּׁבִי וְאֶשׁוּבָה
 כִּי אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי:
 כִּי־אֲחֲרַי שׁוּבִי נִחַמְתִּי יח
 וְאַחֲרַי הוֹדַעְתִּי סִפְקֹתַי עַל־יָרֵךְ
 בְּשֹׁתִי וְגַם־נִכְלַמְתִּי
 כִּי נִשְׂאֵתִי חֲרַפְתִּי נְעוּרַי:
 הֲבֵן יִקִּיר לִי אֶפְרַיִם יט
 אִם יֵלֵד שְׁעֲשָׁעִים
 כִּי־מִדֵּי דִבְרֵי בֹו
 זָכַר אֲזַכְרֶנּוּ עוֹד
 עַל־כֵּן הֶמוּ מֵעַי לוֹ
 רַחֵם אֲרַחֲמֶנּוּ
 נְאֻם־יְהוָה: {ס}
 הַצִּיבִי לְךָ צִיָּנִים כ
 שְׁמִי לְךָ תִּמְרוּרִים
 שְׁתִּי לִבְדָּךְ
 לְמִסְלָה דְרָךְ הַלְכְתִּי הַלְכָתָּה
 שׁוּבִי בְּתוֹלַת יִשְׂרָאֵל
 שְׁבִי אֶל־עָרֶיךָ אֵלֶּה:

Bring me back; let me come back,
for you are Yahweh my God!

18 For, since I turned away, I have repented;
having understood, I struck my thigh.
I was deeply ashamed; I blushed,
aware of the disgrace incurred when I was young.”

19 Is Ephraim, then, so dear a son to me,
a child so favoured,
that whenever I mention him,
I remember him lovingly still?
That is why I yearn for him,
why I must take pity on him,
says Yahweh.

20 Set up your signposts,
raise yourself landmarks,
and fix your mind on the road,
the way by which you went.
Come home, Virgin of Israel,
come home to these towns of yours.

18 In place of ‘struck my thigh’ (here following the MT and NRSV), the NJB has ‘beat my breast’. This was a gesture of vexation, sadness, sorrow, or remorse (cf. Ezk 21:17).

19 The literal translation of ‘I yearn’ is ‘my stomach churns’.

20 The verb הַלְכָתָּה (‘which you went’), following the Qere, is an example of the old 2FS that the MT re-vocalises (the Ketiv has הַלְכְתִּי).

כא עֲדַמְתִּי תִתְחַמְקִין
הַבַּת הַשׁוֹבְבָה
כִּי־בָרָא יְהוָה חֲדָשָׁה בְּאֶרֶץ
נִקְבָּה תִסּוּבֵב גָּבֵר: {ס}

21 How long will you hesitate,
rebellious daughter?
For Yahweh is creating something new on earth:
the Woman sets out to find her Husband again.

כב כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל עוֹד יֹאמְרוּ
אֶת־הַדְּבָר הַזֶּה בְּאֶרֶץ יְהוּדָה וּבְעָרָיו בְּשׁוֹבֵי אֶת־
שְׁבוּתָם
יְבָרְכֶךָ יְהוָה נְוֵה־צֶדֶק
הַר הַקִּדְשׁ:

22 Yahweh Sabaoth, the God of Israel, says this, “In the country of Judah
and in its towns, they will use these words once more, when I bring their
captives home:
“May Yahweh bless you, home of Saving Justice,
Holy Mountain!”

כג וַיֵּשְׁבוּ בָּהּ יְהוּדָה וְכָל־עָרָיו יַחְדָּו אֶפְרַיִם וְנַסְעֵי
בְּעֵדֶר: כד כִּי הָרִוּוּתִי נִפְשׁ עֵיפָה וְכָל־נַפְשׁ דָּאָבָה
מִלְּאֵתִי:
כה עַל־זֹאת הִקִּיצְתִּי וְאָרְאָה
וּשְׁנַתִּי עָרְבָה לִי: {ס}

23 “And in this country, Judah and all its towns, the ploughmen and
those who wander with their flocks, will live together, ²⁴ for I shall give
the weary all they need and satisfy all those whose strength has gone.”
²⁵ At this, I awoke and saw
that my sleep had been sweet to me.

כו הִנֵּה יָמִים בָּאִים נְאֻם־יְהוָה וְזָרַעְתִּי אֶת־בַּיִת
יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאֶת־בַּיִת יְהוּדָה זָרַע אָדָם וְזָרַע בְּהֵמָה:

26 “Look, the days are coming, Yahweh declares, when I shall sow the
House of Israel and the House of Judah with the seed both of people

21 The verb here translated as ‘hesitate’ (חמק) occurs only here in this stem (the Hitpael) and only one other time in any other stem (the Qal, in Sg 5:6); other translations are ‘waver’ (NRSV) and ‘vacillate’ (NETB).

22 This and the following prophecy were pronounced in about 587 BCE (see #30:1).

23 ‘Those who wander’ is a conjectural translation (וְנַסְעֵי - Qal participle); the MT has ‘they shall wander’ (וְנַסְעוּ - 3PL Qal perfect).

24 The verbs here again emphasise that the actions are as good as done (i.e., they are prophetic perfects).

25 This verse is a comment by the prophet, perhaps quoting lines from a popular song.

26 God will reverse the fortunes of Israel & Judah and restore them to their lands, increase their numbers and build them up (31:27-28), and make a new agreement with them involving forgiveness of sins (31:31-34).

כז והיה כאשר שקדתי עליהם לנטוש ולנתון ולהרס ולהאביד ולהרע בן אשקד עליהם לבנות ולנטע נאם־יהוה:

כח בימים ההם לא־יאמרו עוד
אבות אכלו בסר
ושני בנים תקהינה:

כט כי אם־איש בעונו ימות כל־האדם האכל
הבסר תקהינה שניו: {ס}

ל הנה ימים באים נאם־יהוה וכרתי את־בית
ישראל ואת־בית יהודה ברית חדשה: לא לא
כברית אשר כרתי את־אבותם ביום החזיקי
בידם להוציאם מארץ מצרים אשר־המה הפרו
את־בריתי ואנכי בעלתי בם נאם־יהוה: לב כי זאת
הברית אשר אכרת את־בית ישראל אחרי הימים
ההם נאם־יהוה נתתי את־תורת־י בקרבם ועל־
לבם אכתבנה והייתי להם לאלהים והמה יהיו־לי

and cattle;²⁷ and, as I once watched over them to uproot, to knock down, to overthrow, destroy and bring disaster, so now I shall watch over them to build and to plant, Yahweh declares.

²⁸ “In those days, people will no longer say:

“The fathers have eaten unripe grapes;
the children’s teeth are set on edge.”

²⁹ But each will die for his own guilt. Everyone who eats unripe grapes will have his own teeth set on edge.

³⁰ “Look, the days are coming, Yahweh declares, when I shall make a New Covenant with the House of Israel and the House of Judah,³¹ but not like the Covenant I made with their ancestors the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of Egypt, a covenant that they broke, even though I was their Master, Yahweh declares.³² No, this is the Covenant I shall make with the House of Israel when those days have come, Yahweh declares. Within them, I shall plant my Law, writing it on their hearts. Then I shall be their God and they will be my people.³³ “There

²⁷ The words here repeat those of 1:10 and 1:12

²⁸ Here, Jeremiah refutes a common saying (also refuted by Ezekiel, 18:2) expressing the old principle of collective responsibility: in this context, the penalty contracted by all the members of a family for the fault of one.

²⁹ To a certain extent the principle articulated here is anticipatory of the statement in v. 34, which refers to the forgiveness of former sins.

³⁰ The Old Covenant has been violated and the reform under Josiah was short-lived; it is evident now that God has other plans.

³¹ In place of ‘Master’, here following the NJB, the NRSV has ‘husband’.

³² Commentators agree that the term, ‘House of Israel’ (בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל), here refers to the whole nation, which was divided into Israel and Judah.

³³ In place of the quoted ‘Learn to know Yahweh’, NETB has an indirect quote, to better parallel the later part of the verse.

לְעַם: לֹא יִלְמְדוּ עוֹד אִישׁ אֶת־רֵעֵהוּ וְאִישׁ אֶת־
 אָחִיו לֵאמֹר דַּעוּ אֶת־יְהוָה כִּי־כֹלֶם יֵדְעוּ אוֹתִי
 לְמִקְטָנָם וְעַד־גְּדֹלָם נְאֻם־יְהוָה כִּי אֶסְלַח לְעֹנְוֵם
 וְלֹחֲטָאתֵם לֹא אֶזְכֹּר־עוֹד: {ס}

לְדָה | אָמַר יְהוָה נִתֵּן שֶׁמֶשׁ לְאֹר לְיוֹמָם
 חֻקֵּי יָרֵחַ וְכֹכְבִים לְאֹר לְלַיְלָה
 רָגַע הַיָּם וַיִּהְיֶה גִלְיוֹ
 יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת שְׁמוֹ:

לְהָא | אִם־יִמָּשׁוּ הַחֻקִּים הָאֵלֶּה
 מִלְּפָנַי נְאֻם־יְהוָה
 גַּם זֶרַע יִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁבְּתוּ
 מִהַיּוֹת גְּזוּי לְפָנַי כָּל־הַיָּמִים: {ס}

לְוָה | אָמַר יְהוָה
 אִם־יִמְדוּ שָׁמַיִם מִלְּמַעְלָה
 וַיִּחְקְרוּ מוֹסְדֵי־אָרֶץ לְמַטָּה
 גַּם־אֲנִי אֶמְאָס בְּכָל־זֶרַע יִשְׂרָאֵל
 עַל־כָּל־אֲשֶׁר עָשׂוּ נְאֻם־יְהוָה: {ס}

לְוָה הִנֵּה יָמִים [בָּאִים] נְאֻם־יְהוָה וְנִבְנְתָה הָעִיר
 לְיְהוָה מִמִּגְדַל חֲנַנְאֵל שְׁעַר הַפְּנָה: לְוָה וַיֵּצֵא עוֹד

will be no further need for everyone to teach neighbour or brother, saying, "Learn to know Yahweh!" No, they will all know me, from the least to the greatest, Yahweh declares, since I shall forgive their guilt and never more call their sin to mind."

³⁴ Yahweh, who provides the sun to shine by day, who regulates the moon and stars to shine by night, who stirs the sea, making its waves roar, he whose name is Yahweh Sabaoth, says this:

³⁵ "Were this established order ever to cease before me, Yahweh declares, then the race of Israel would also cease being a nation forever before me!"

³⁶ Yahweh says this:

"Were the heavens above ever to be measured, the foundations of the earth below ever to be fathomed, then I, too, would reject the whole race of Israel for all that they have done, says Yahweh."

³⁷ Look, the days are coming, Yahweh declares, when the City will be rebuilt for Yahweh, from the Tower of Hananel to the Corner Gate.

³⁴ 'Regulates' is a conjectural translation (חֻקֵּי); the MT has 'the laws of' (חֻקֵּי).

³⁵ For this usage of מָשָׁה ('cease'), cf. Is 54:10, Ps 55:12(11) & Pr 17:13, where what is usually applied to persons or things is applied to abstract things like this.

³⁶ This verse answers Jeremiah's question of 14:19.

³⁷ The phrase 'are coming', here following the Qere (בָּאִים), is not present in the Ketiv.

קוה קו המדה נגדו על גבעת גרב ונסב געתה:
לט וכל-העמק הפגרים | והדשן וכל-השדות
השרמות עד-נחל קדרון עד-פנת שער הסוסים
מזרחה קדש ליהוה לא-ינתש ולא-יהרס עוד
לעולם: {פ}

³⁸ Then, once again, the measuring line will stretch straight to the Hill of Gareb, turning then to Goah; ³⁹ and the whole valley, with its corpses and ashes, and all the fields as far as the Kidron Valley, as far as the corner of the Horse Gate, eastwards, will be consecrated to Yahweh. It will never be destroyed or demolished again.

³⁸ The *Kethib*/*Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

³⁹ In place of השדות ('fields'), here following the *Qere*, the *Ketiv* has the otherwise unknown word, השרמות. In place of 'as far as', following the *MT*, the *NJB* has the conjectural 'beside'. This passage (vv. 38–40) also comes from after the time of Jeremiah (cf. Zc 14:10–11).

ירמיהו פרק לב

JEREMIAH 32

א* הַדְּבָר אֲשֶׁר-הָיָה אֶל-יִרְמְיָהוּ מֵאֵת יְהוָה בְּשַׁנַּת
בְּשָׁנָה הָעֲשָׂרִית לְצַדְקִיָּהוּ מֶלֶךְ יְהוּדָה הִיא הַשָּׁנָה
שְׁמֹנֶה-עֶשְׂרֵה שָׁנָה לְנְבוּכַדְרֶאֶצַּר: ב וְאִזְ חִיל מֶלֶךְ
בָּבֶל צָרִים עַל-יְרוּשָׁלַם וִירְמְיָהוּ הִנְבִּיא הָיָה כְּלוּא
בְּחֶצֶר הַמִּטְרָה אֲשֶׁר בֵּית-מֶלֶךְ יְהוּדָה: ג אֲשֶׁר
כְּלוּא צַדְקִיָּהוּ מֶלֶךְ-יְהוּדָה לֵאמֹר מִדּוּעַ אַתָּה נֹבֵא
לֵאמֹר כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה הַנְּנִי נָתַן אֶת-הָעִיר הַזֹּאת
בְּיַד מֶלֶךְ-בָּבֶל וּלְכַדָּה: ד וְצַדְקִיָּהוּ מֶלֶךְ יְהוּדָה לֹא
יִמְלֹט מִיַּד הַכַּשְׂדִּים כִּי הִנָּתַן יָנְתַן בְּיַד מֶלֶךְ-בָּבֶל
וְדַבֵּר-פִּי עִם-פִּי וְעֵינָיו אֶת-עֵינָיו תִּרְאִינָה: ה וּבָבֶל
יִוֹלְךָ אֶת-צַדְקִיָּהוּ וְשֵׁם יְהוָה עַד-פִּקְדֵי אֹתוֹ נֹאֵם-
יְהוָה כִּי תִלְחַמוּ אֶת-הַכַּשְׂדִּים לֹא תִצְלִיחוּ: {פ}

ו וַיֹּאמֶר יִרְמְיָהוּ הִיָּה דְבַר-יְהוָה אֵלַי לֵאמֹר: ז הִנֵּה
חַנְמָאֵל בֶּן-שָׁלֹם דָּדְךָ בָּא אֵלֶיךָ לֵאמֹר קְנֵה לִּי
אֶת-שָׂדֵי אֲשֶׁר בְּעַנְתוֹת כִּי לִּי מִשְׁפַּט הַגְּאֻלָּה

¹ The word that came to Jeremiah from Yahweh in the tenth year of Zedekiah king of Judah, which was the eighteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar. ² At that time, the army of the king of Babylon was besieging Jerusalem and the prophet Jeremiah was kept in the Court of the Guard in the palace of the king of Judah, ³ where Zedekiah king of Judah had put him, saying, “Why do you keep prophesying like this, “Yahweh says this: I am going to hand this city over to the king of Babylon and he shall capture it; ⁴ and Zedekiah king of Judah shall not escape the Chaldeans, but shall be handed over to the king of Babylon, and shall speak to him directly and see him eye to eye. ⁵ He will take Zedekiah away to Babylon and there he will stay until I attend to him, Yahweh declares. If you fight the Chaldeans you will not succeed!”

⁶ So, Jeremiah said, “The word of Yahweh has been addressed to me thus: ⁷ “Hanamel the son of your uncle Shallum will come to you and say: Buy my field that is at Anathoth, for you have the right of redemp-

JEREMIAH 32

- ¹ The *Kethib/Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.
- ² The expression translated ‘Court of the Guard’ occurs only in the book of Jeremiah (32:2, 8, 12, 33:1, 37:21, 38:6, 12, 28, 39:14, 15) and in Ne 3:25.
- ³ Zedekiah’s question has been called a rhetorical question of expostulation or remonstrance; *NJPS* translates as, “How dare you prophesy...”
- ⁴ Literally translated, this verse ends, “his mouth will speak with his mouth and his eyes will see his eyes.”
- ⁵ Cf. 34:2-3 for this same prophecy; the incident in 34:1-7 appears to be earlier than this one: here, Jeremiah is confined to the Court of the Guard.
- ⁶ This is the most detailed account of a business transaction in the Bible (compare Gn 23:1-16).
- ⁷ Underlying this request are the laws of redemption of property spelled out in Lv 25:25-34 and illustrated in Rt 4:3-4.

לְקַנּוֹת: ^ח וַיָּבֹא אֵלַי חֲנַמְאֵל בֶּן־דָּדַי כַּדְּבַר יְהוָה
 אֲל־חֲצַר הַמְּטָרָה וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלַי קְנֵה נָא אֶת־שָׂדֵי
 אֲשֶׁר־בְּעֵנְתוֹת אֲשֶׁר בְּאֶרֶץ בְּנֵימִין כִּי־לָךְ מִשְׁפָּט
 הִירָשָׁה וְלָךְ הַגְּאֻלָּה קְנֵה־לָךְ וְאַדַּע כִּי דְבַר־יְהוָה
 הוּא: ^ט וְאִקְנֵה אֶת־הַשָּׂדֶה מֵאֵת חֲנַמְאֵל בֶּן־דָּדַי
 אֲשֶׁר בְּעֵנְתוֹת וְאִשְׁקָלְה־לוֹ אֶת־הַכֶּסֶף שִׁבְעָה
 שְׁקָלִים וְעֵשְׂרֵה הַכֶּסֶף: ^י וְאִכְתָּב בְּסֵפֶר וְאִחַתָּם
 וְאֶעֱד עֵדִים וְאִשְׁקַל הַכֶּסֶף בְּמֵאזְנַיִם: ^{יא} וְאִקַּח
 אֶת־סֵפֶר הַמְּקָנָה אֶת־הַחֲתוּם הַמְצוּה וְהַחֲקִים
 וְאֶת־הַגְּלוּי: ^{יב} וְאִתֵּן אֶת־הַסֵּפֶר הַמְּקָנָה אֶל־בְּרוּךְ
 בֶּן־נְרִיָּה בֶּן־מַחְסִיָּה לְעֵינַי חֲנַמְאֵל דָּדַי וְלְעֵינַי
 הָעֵדִים הַכֹּתְבִים בְּסֵפֶר הַמְּקָנָה לְעֵינַי כָּל־
 הַיְהוּדִים הַיֹּשְׁבִים בְּחֲצַר הַמְּטָרָה: ^{יג} וְאַצְוָה אֶת־
 בְּרוּךְ לְעֵינֵיהֶם לֵאמֹר: ^{יד} כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת
 אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לְקוֹחַ אֶת־הַסֵּפְרִים הָאֵלֶּה אֶת־סֵפֶר
 הַמְּקָנָה הַזֶּה וְאֶת־הַחֲתוּם וְאֶת־סֵפֶר הַגְּלוּי הַזֶּה
 וְנִתְּתָם בְּכִל־חֶרֶשׁ לְמַעַן יַעֲמְדוּ יָמִים רַבִּים: {ס}

tion to purchase it.” ⁸ Then my cousin Hanamel came to me, in the Court of the Guard, according to the word of Yahweh, and said to me, “Buy my field that is at Anathoth in the territory of Benjamin, for you have the right of inheritance and the right of redemption; buy it for yourself.” When this happened, I knew that Yahweh had indeed spoken to me. ⁹ So, I bought the field from my cousin Hanamel of Anathoth and weighed out the money to him: seventeen shekels of silver. ¹⁰ I drew up the deed and sealed it, called in witnesses and weighed out the money on the scales. ¹¹ I then took both the sealed deed of purchase (the terms and conditions) and the open copy ¹² and handed over the deed of purchase to Baruch son of Neriah, son of Mahseiah, before my cousin Hanamel, before the witnesses who had signed the deed of purchase, and before all the Judaeans who then happened to be in the Court of the Guard. ¹³ In the presence of all these people, I gave Baruch this order, ¹⁴ “Yahweh Sabaoth, God of Israel, says this: Take these deeds, the sealed deed of purchase and its open copy, and put them in an earthenware pot, so that they may be preserved for a long time.

⁸ The last sentence follows NETB; the NRSV (and NJB) have, “Then I knew that this was the word of the LORD.”

⁹ Payment in gold and silver was made by cutting off pieces and weighing them in a balance using standard weights; a ‘shekel’ was about 11.4g.

¹⁰ Since the idiom translated ‘drew up’ (וְאִכְתָּב בְּסֵפֶר) is used later (v. 12) with respect to the witnesses, it may simply refer to signing the document.

¹¹ The official copy of the deed, written on papyrus, was rolled up and sealed; the ‘open copy’ was for easy reference. Similar storage of deeds in earthenware pots is known from Elephantine in Egypt. Jeremiah’s purchase illustrates his confidence in the future of Judah.

¹² ‘My cousin’ (literally, ‘the son of my uncle’) follows the LXX and Peshitta; the MT has ‘my uncle’. Baruch was Jeremiah’s secretary (see 36:22).

¹³ In place of ‘in the presence of all these people’, here following NETB, the NJB & NRSV have ‘in their presence’.

¹⁴ The literal translation of ‘a long time’ is ‘many days’.

^{טו} כִּי כֹה אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל עוֹד יִקְנֻ
 בָּתַיִם וְשָׂדוֹת וְכַרְמִים בְּאֶרֶץ הַזֹּאת: {פ} ^{טז}
 וְאַתְּפַלֵּל אֶל־יְהוָה אַחֲרַי תְּתִי אֶת־סֵפֶר הַמִּקְנָה
 אֶל־בְּרוּךְ בֶּן־נְרִיָּה לֵאמֹר: " אָהָה אֲדַנִּי יְהוָה הִנֵּה |
 אַתָּה עָשִׂיתָ אֶת־הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת־הָאָרֶץ בְּכַחֲךָ
 הַגָּדוֹל וּבְזוֹרְעֶךָ הַנְּטוּיָה לֹא־יִפְלֹא מִמֶּךָ כְּל־דְּבַר:
 י" עָשֵׂה חֶסֶד לְאֲלֹפִים וּמִשְׁלָם עֹן אָבוֹת אֶל־חֵיק
 בְּנֵיהֶם אַחֲרֵיהֶם הֵאֵל הַגָּדוֹל הַגְּבוֹר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת
 שְׁמוֹ: ט" גְּדֹל הַעֲצָה וְרַב הָעֲלִילִיָּה אֲשֶׁר־עֵינֶיךָ
 פְּקַחוֹת עַל־כָּל־דַּרְכֵי בְנֵי אָדָם לְתֵת לְאִישׁ כְּדַרְכּוֹ
 וּכְפָרֵי מַעַלְלוֹ: כ" אֲשֶׁר־שָׁמַתָּ אֶתוֹת וּמִפְתֵּיִם
 בְּאֶרֶץ־מִצְרַיִם עַד־הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה וּבִישְׂרָאֵל וּבְאָדָם

¹⁵ "For, Yahweh Sabaoth, the God of Israel, says this: Houses, fields and vineyards will again be bought in this country."

¹⁶ "After I had entrusted the deed of purchase to Baruch son of Neriah, I prayed to Yahweh thus, ¹⁷ "Ah, Lord Yahweh, you made the heavens and the earth by your great power and by your outstretched arm. To you, nothing is impossible. ¹⁸ You show faithful love to the thousandth generation but repay the guilt of fathers into the laps of their children after them. O Great and mighty God, whose name is Yahweh Sabaoth, ¹⁹ great in purpose and mighty in deed, whose eyes are open to all the ways of mortals, rewarding all according to their ways the fruit of their doings. ²⁰ You did miracles and amazing deeds in the land of Egypt which have had lasting effect. By this means you gained both in Israel

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- ¹⁵ The significance of the symbolic act performed by Jeremiah as explained here was a further promise (see the 'again' statements in 31:4, 5, 23 and the 'no longer' statements in 31:12, 29, 34, 40) of future restoration beyond the destruction implied in vv. 3-5; after the interruption of the Exile, normal life of buying and selling of fields, etc. would again be resumed and former property rights would be recognised.
- ¹⁶ This section deals with the theme of the future of Judah; some of it represents editorial expansion.
- ¹⁷ The parallel usage of the same introduction in 1:6, 4:10 and 14:13 shows that, although this prayer has a lengthy introductory section of praise (vv. 17-22), it is really one of complaint or lament.
- ¹⁸ The literal translation of 'laps' is 'breast'; apparently, the expression refers to the custom of carrying provisions in the fold of the gown (Rt 3:15, 2K 4:39 and cf. #Is 65:6). An alternative translation is 'straight to the heart'.
- ¹⁹ The NJB ends this verse, here following the MT & NRSV, with, "...rewarding every individual as that person's ways and actions deserve!"
- ²⁰ For this verse, here following NETB, the NJB reads, "You performed signs and wonders in the land of Egypt, as you still do in Israel and among all humankind today. You have won the name for yourself that is yours today." Our translation follows the syntactical understanding reflected also in NJPS; many English versions understand the phrases, 'until this day and in Israel and in mankind', to be an elliptical sentence with the preceding verb and objects supplied. However, the emphasis on the miraculous deeds in Egypt in this section both before and after this elliptical phrase and the dominant usage of the phrase 'signs and wonders' to refer to the miraculous signs in Egypt calls this interpretation into question.

וּתְעַשֶׂה-לָךְ שֵׁם כְּיוֹם הַזֶּה: כֹּא וַתֵּצֵא אֶת-עַמְךָ
אֶת-יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם בְּאֹתוֹת וּבְמוֹפְתִים
וּבְיַד חֲזָקָה וּבְאַזְרוּעַ נְטוּיָה וּבְמוֹרָא גָדוֹל: כִּב וַתִּתֵּן
לָהֶם אֶת-הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת אֲשֶׁר-נִשְׁבַּעְתָּ לְאֲבוֹתָם
לֵאמֹר לָהֶם אֶרֶץ זָבַת חֶלֶב וּדְבַשׁ: כִּג וַיָּבֹאוּ וַיִּרְשׁוּ
אֹתָהּ וְלֹא-שָׁמְעוּ בְקוֹלְךָ וּבַתּוֹרַתְךָ לֹא-
הִלְכוּ אֶת כָּל-אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתָהּ לָהֶם לַעֲשׂוֹת לֹא עָשׂוּ
וַתִּקְרָא אַתָּם אֶת כָּל-הָרַעָה הַזֹּאת: כִּד הִנֵּה
הַסְּלִלוֹת בָּאוּ הָעִיר לְלַכְדָּה וְהָעִיר נִתְּנָה בְיַד
הַכַּשְׂדִּים הַנֹּלְחָמִים עָלֶיהָ מִפְּנֵי הַחֶרֶב וְהָרֶעֱב
וְהַדָּבָר וְאֲשֶׁר דִּבַּרְתָּ הִיא וְהַנֶּגֶד רָאָה: כִּה וְאֹתָהּ
אָמַרְתָּ אֵלַי אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה קִנְיֵה-לָךְ הַשָּׂדֶה בַּכֶּסֶף
וְהָעֵד עֲדִים וְהָעִיר נִתְּנָה בְיַד הַכַּשְׂדִּים: {ס}
כִּו וַיְהִי דְבַר-יְהוָה אֶל-יִרְמְיָהוּ לֵאמֹר: כִּז הִנֵּה אָנֹכִי
יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי כָל-בָּשָׂר הַמִּמְּנִי יִפְלֹא כָל-דְּבָר: כִּח לָכֵן

and among mankind a renown that lasts to this day.²¹ You brought your people Israel out of the land of Egypt with signs and wonders, with mighty hand and outstretched arm and fearsome terror.²² Then you gave them this land, which you had promised on oath to their ancestors, a land where milk and honey flow.²³ They then entered it and took possession of it; but they would not listen to your voice nor follow your Law: of all you commanded them to do, they did nothing; so, you made this total disaster come upon them.²⁴ Look! The earthworks are already in place to take the city and, through sword, famine and plague, the city is now in the clutches of the Chaldeans attacking it. What you said has now come true, as you can see.²⁵ Yet you yourself, Lord Yahweh, told me: Buy the field, pay for it, have it witnessed although the city is already in the Chaldeans' clutches.""

²⁶ The word of Yahweh was addressed to Jeremiah as follows, ²⁷ "Look, I am Yahweh, God of all humanity. Is anything impossible to me?" ²⁸ So,

²¹ The NJB lacks 'land of' before 'Egypt', here following the MT, NRSV & NETB (as also in v. 20).

²² A more traditional rendering of 'where milk and honey flow' is 'flowing with milk and honey'.

²³ The Kethib/Qere difference here would benefit from an explanation.

²⁴ Literally translated, the last sentenced reads, "And what you said has happened and behold you see it."

²⁵ The Divine Title, 'Lord Yahweh', translates אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה.

²⁶ The NJB, following the LXX and *Vetus Latina* (cf. v. 16), has 'me' in place of 'Jeremiah'; here, we follow the MT & NRSV.

²⁷ Literally translated, this verse reads, "Behold, I am Yahweh, the God of all flesh. Is anything too hard for me?" The question is rhetorical expecting an emphatic negative answer: the particle הִנֵּה ('behold', 'look') introduces the grounds for this rhetorical negative.

²⁸ The MT opens this verse with, "So, Yahweh says this;" however the speech has already been introduced as 1st person, so the 1st person style has been retained for smoother narrative style.

כָּה אָמַר יְהוָה הַנְּנִי נָתַן אֶת־הָעִיר הַזֹּאת בְּיַד
 הַכַּשְׂדִּים וּבְיַד נְבוּכַדְרֶאֶצַּר מֶלֶךְ־בָּבֶל וּלְכַדָּה:
 כֹּט וּבָאוּ הַכַּשְׂדִּים הַנְּלַחֲמִים עַל־הָעִיר הַזֹּאת
 וְהִצִּיתוּ אֶת־הָעִיר הַזֹּאת בָּאֵשׁ וּשְׂרָפוּהָ וְאֵת
 הַבָּתִּים אֲשֶׁר קִטְרוּ עַל־גּוֹזְתֵיהֶם לְבַעַל וְהִסְכוּ
 נִסְכִּים לְאֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים לְמַעַן הַכְּעִסְנִי: ל כִּי־הָיוּ
 בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל וּבְנֵי יְהוּדָה אָדָּךְ עֹשִׂים הָרַע בְּעֵינַי
 מִנְעַרְתֵיהֶם כִּי בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל אָדָּךְ מִכְּעִסִים אֶתִּי
 בְּמַעֲשֵׂה יְדֵיהֶם נֹאֵם־יְהוָה: לא כִּי עַל־אִפִּי וְעַל־
 חַמְתִּי הִיתָה לִּי הָעִיר הַזֹּאת לְמִן־הַיּוֹם אֲשֶׁר בָּנוּ
 אוֹתָהּ וְעַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה לְהַסִּירָהּ מֵעַל פָּנָי: לב עַל־כֹּל־
 רַעַת בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל וּבְנֵי יְהוּדָה אֲשֶׁר עָשׂוּ לְהַכְּעִסְנִי
 הֵמָּה מְלַכֵיהֶם שָׂרֵיהֶם כַּהֲנִיָּהִם וּנְבִיאֵיהֶם וְאִישׁ
 יְהוּדָה וַיִּשְׁבִּי יְרוּשָׁלַם: לג וַיִּפְּנוּ אֵלַי עֵרָף וְלֹא פָנִים
 וְלִמַּד אֶתֶם הַשְׁכָּם וְלִמַּד וְאִינָם שִׁמְעִים לְקַחַת
 מוֹסֵר: לד וַיִּשְׂימוּ שְׁקוּצֵיהֶם בַּבַּיִת אֲשֶׁר־נִקְרָא־
 שְׁמִי עָלָיו לְטַמְּאוֹ: לה וַיִּבְנוּ אֶת־בְּמוֹת הַבַּעַל

I, Yahweh say this, "I shall hand this city over to the Chaldeans and to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and he will capture it; ²⁹ the Chaldeans attacking this city will enter it, set fire to it and burn it to the ground, with the houses on whose roofs incense has been offered to Baal and libations poured to other gods, to provoke my anger. ³⁰ For the people of Israel and Judah alike have done nothing but what displeases me since they were young. The people of Israel, in fact, have done nothing but provoke my anger by their actions, Yahweh declares. ³¹ Yes, from the day when this city was built until today, it has been such a cause of anger and wrath to me that I mean to remove it from my sight, ³² on account of all the wickedness the people of Israel and the people of Judah have done to provoke my anger; they, their kings and their chief men, their priests and their prophets, the citizens of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. ³³ They turned to me their backs, never their faces; and though I taught them so urgently, so untiringly, they would not listen and accept correction. ³⁴ Instead, they set up their abominations in the Temple that bears my name to defile it, ³⁵ and built

²⁹ Compare this verse to 19:13.

³⁰ Compare 3:24–25 & 11:21; the nation is being personified and reference is made to her history from the time she left Egypt onward (cf. 2:2).

³¹ The statements in vv. 28–29 regarding the certain destruction of the city are motivated by 3 parallel causal clauses in vv. 30^a, 30^b & 31, the last of which extends through subordinate and coordinate clauses until the end of v. 35.

³² The NRSV has 'officials' in place of 'chief men', here following the NJB.

³³ 'I taught them' follows the LXX and Peshitta; the MT has 'of teaching'.

³⁴ In place of 'abominations', here following the NRSV, the NJB has 'Horrors' and NETB has 'disgusting idols'.

³⁵ 'Molech' is especially associated with the practice of child sacrifice; in 1K 11:7, he is identified as the god of the Ammonites.

אֲשֶׁר בָּגִיאוּ בְּזֵהֶם לְהַעֲבִיר אֶת־בְּנֵיהֶם וְאֶת־
בְּנוֹתֵיהֶם לְמִלְךְ אֲשֶׁר לֹא־צִוִּיתִים וְלֹא עֲלִיתָה עַל־
לְבִי לַעֲשׂוֹת הַתּוֹעֵבָה הַזֹּאת לְמַעַן הַחֲטִי אֶת־
יְהוּדָה: {ס}

לִי וְעַתָּה לֵכֵן כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶל־
הָעָרִי הַזֹּאת אֲשֶׁר אַתֶּם אֹמְרִים נִתְּנָה בְיַד מְלָךְ־
בָּבֶל בַּחֲרָב וּבְרָעַב וּבַדָּבָר: לִי הִנְנִי מְקַבְּצִים מְכָל־
הָאֲרָצוֹת אֲשֶׁר הִדְחַתִּים שָׁם בְּאַפִּי וּבַחֲמָתִי
וּבְקֶצֶף גָּדוֹל וְהִשְׁבַּתִּים אֶל־הַמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה
וְהִשְׁבַּתִּים לְבֵטַח: לִי וְהָיוּ לִי לְעָם וְאֲנִי אֶהְיֶה לָהֶם
לְאֱלֹהִים: לִט וְנִתַּתִּי לָהֶם לֵב אֶחָד וְדַרְךְ אֶחָד
לִירְאָה אוֹתִי כֹל־הַיָּמִים לְטוֹב לָהֶם וּלְבְנֵיהֶם
אַחֲרֵיהֶם: מ וְכִרְתִּי לָהֶם בְּרִית עוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר לֹא־
אֲשׁוּב מֵאַחֲרֵיהֶם לְהִיטִיבֵי אוֹתָם וְאֶת־יְרֵאָתִי אֶתֵּן
בְּלִבָּם לְבִלְתִּי סוּר מֵעָלַי: מא וְשִׁשְׁתִּי עָלֵיהֶם
לְהִטִּיב אוֹתָם וּנְטַעְתִּים בָּאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת בְּאַמַּת בְּכָל־
לְבִי וּבְכָל־נַפְשִׁי: {ס}

the high places of Baal in the Valley of Ben-Hinnom, to burn their sons and daughters alive in honour of Molech: a thing I have never ordered, that had never entered my thoughts – that they would cause Judah to sin by anything so loathsome!

³⁶ “So now, this is what Yahweh, God of Israel, says of this city of which you now say: By means of sword, famine and plague, it is already within the king of Babylon’s clutches: ³⁷ Look, I shall gather them in from all the countries where I have driven them in my anger, my fury and great wrath. I shall bring them back to this place and make them live in safety. ³⁸ Then they will be my people, and I shall be their God. ³⁹ I shall give them singleness of heart and singleness of conduct, so that they will always fear me, for their own good and that of their children after them. ⁴⁰ I shall make an everlasting Covenant with them, never to cease in my efforts for their welfare, and I shall put respect for me in their hearts, so that they will never turn away from me again. ⁴¹ My joy will lie in them and in doing them good, and I shall plant them firmly in this country, with all my heart and soul.

³⁶ In this verse, the pronoun ‘you’ is singular in the LXX but plural in the MT (as also in v. 43).

³⁷ NETB interprets the verb ‘have driven’ as a future perfect: though some of the people have already been exiled (in 605 and 597 BCE), some have not yet been exiled at the time this prophecy is given.

³⁸ The covenant formula setting forth the basic relationship is reinstated along with a new covenant (v. 40); see also 24:7, 30:22, 31:1 & #30:22.

³⁹ The literal translation of ‘singleness of heart and singleness of conduct’ is ‘one heart and one way’.

⁴⁰ For other references to the lasting (or everlasting) nature of the new covenant, see Is 55:3, 61:8, Jr 50:5, Ezk 16:60, 37:26.

⁴¹ Compare Dt 6:5.

מב כי־כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה כַּאֲשֶׁר הֵבֵאתִי אֶל־הָעָם הַזֶּה
אֶת כָּל־הָרָעָה הַגְּדוֹלָה הַזֹּאת בְּנֹאֲכִי מִבֵּיא
עֲלֵיהֶם אֶת־כָּל־הַטּוֹבָה אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי דֹבֵר עֲלֵיהֶם:
מג וְנִקְנְוּ הַשָּׂדֶה בְּאֶרֶץ הַזֹּאת אֲשֶׁר אַתֶּם אֹמְרִים
שְׂמָמָה הִיא מֵאִין אָדָם וּבַהֲמָה נִתְּנָה בְיַד
הַכְּשָׁדִים: מד שְׂדוֹת בְּכֶסֶף יִקְנוּ וְכָתוּב בְּסֵפֶר |
וְחִתּוּם וְהָעֵד עֵדִים בְּאֶרֶץ בְּנֵי־מִן וּבְסָבִיבֵי יְרוּשָׁלַם
וּבְעָרֵי יְהוּדָה וּבְעָרֵי הָהָר וּבְעָרֵי הַשְּׁפֵלָה וּבְעָרֵי
הַנֶּגֶב כִּי־אָשִׁיב אֶת־שְׁבוּתָם נְאֻם־יְהוָה: {פ}

⁴² “For I, Yahweh, say this: Just as I have brought this complete and total disaster on this people, so I shall bring upon them all the good fortune that I now promise them. ⁴³ Fields will again be bought in this country of which you are now saying: It is a wasteland without human or animal; it is already in the clutches of the Chaldeans. ⁴⁴ People will buy fields, pay money for them, draw up deeds, seal them and have them witnessed in the territory of Benjamin, in the districts around Jerusalem, in the towns of Judah, of the highlands, of the lowlands and of the Negeb. For I shall bring back their captives, Yahweh declares.”

⁴² See #28 on the opening clause.

⁴³ The pronoun ‘you’ is plural, addressing more than just Jeremiah.

⁴⁴ The literal translation of ‘I shall bring back their captives’ is ‘I shall reverse their fortunes’.

ירמיהו פרק לג

JEREMIAH 33

א וַיְהִי דְבַר־יְהוָה אֶל־יִרְמְיָהוּ שְׁנִית וְהוּא עוֹדְנוּ
עֲצוֹר בַּחֲצַר הַמַּטְרָה לֵאמֹר: ב כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה
עֲשֵׂה יְהוָה יוֹצֵר אוֹתָהּ לַהֲכִינָה יְהוָה שְׁמוֹ: ג קְרָא
אֵלַי וְאֶעֱנֶךָ וְאֶגִּידָה לְךָ גְּדוּלוֹת וּבְצֻרוֹת לֹא
יִדְעֹתֶם: {פ}

ד כִּי כֹה אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל עַל־בְּתֵי הָעִיר
הַזֹּאת וְעַל־בְּתֵי מַלְכֵי יְהוּדָה הַנִּתְצָיִם אֶל־הַסְּלָלוֹת
וְאֶל־הַחֲרָב: ה בָּאִים לְהִלָּחֵם אֶת־הַכַּשְׂדִּים
וּלְמַלְאֵם אֶת־פְּגְרֵי הָאָדָם אֲשֶׁר־הִכִּיתִי בְּאֶפֶי
וּבַחֲמָתִי וְאֲשֶׁר הִסְתַּרְתִּי פָּנַי מֵהָעִיר הַזֹּאת עַל
כָּל־רַעְתָּם: ו הִנְנִי מַעֲלֶה־לָּהּ אֲרֻכָּה וּמְרַפָּא
וּרְפָאוֹתַי וְגִלִּיתִי לָהֶם עֵתֶרֶת שָׁלוֹם וְאַמֶּת:
ז וְהִשְׁבַּתִּי אֶת־שְׁבוֹת יְהוּדָה וְאֶת שְׁבוֹת יִשְׂרָאֵל
וּבְנִתִים כְּבָרָאשְׁנָה: ח וְטִהַרְתִּים מִכָּל־עוֹנָם אֲשֶׁר

¹ Jeremiah was still confined to the Court of the Guard when the word of Yahweh came to him a second time: ² “Thus says Yahweh, who made the earth, who formed it and set it firm – Yahweh is his name: ³ “Call to me and I will answer you; I will tell you great and hidden things that you have not known.

⁴ “For, this is what Yahweh, the God of Israel, says about the houses of this city and the palaces of the kings of Judah that have been torn down for defence against earthworks and sword, ⁵ about those now fighting the Chaldeans, only to fill the city with corpses, those whom I have slaughtered in my furious anger, those whose wickedness has made me hide my face from this city. ⁶ Look, I shall bring them remedy and cure; I shall cure them and reveal a new order of peace and loyalty to them.

⁷ I will restore the fortunes of Judah and the fortunes of Israel, and will rebuild them as they were before. ⁸ I shall cleanse them of all their guilt,

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¹ This prophecy dates from the same period as that of Ch. 32. The first verse is an editorial connection with the preceding chapter.

² ‘Who made the earth’ follows the LXX; the MT has ‘who made it’.

³ The passive participle or adjective translated ‘hidden’ (as NRSV) is normally used to describe cities or walls as ‘fortified’ or ‘inaccessible’; however, all the lexicons agree in seeing it used here metaphorically of ‘secret’ (as NJB) or ‘mysterious’ (as NETB) things.

⁴ The meaning of the last phrase is uncertain.

⁵ ‘To fill the city’ follows the LXX (literally, ‘to fill it’); the MT has ‘to fill them’.

⁶ ‘Bring them’ follows the LXX and Peshitta; the MT has ‘bring it (to the city)’.

⁷ The NJB opens this verse with, “I shall bring back the captives of Judah and the captives of Israel;” here, we follow the MT (and NRSV).

⁸ The Kethib/Qere difference here would benefit from an explanation.

חַטָּאוֹלֵי וְסִלְחֹתַי לְכוֹל לְכַל־עוֹנוֹתֵיהֶם אֲשֶׁר
 חַטָּאוֹלֵי וְאֲשֶׁר פָּשְׁעוּ בִּי: ⁹ וְהִיְתָה לִי לְשֵׁם שְׂשׂוֹן
 לְתִהְיֶה וּלְתִפְאֶרֶת לְכָל גּוֹי הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁמְעוּ
 אֶת־כָּל־הַטּוֹבָה אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי עֹשֶׂה אוֹתָם וּפְחָדוֹ
 וְרָגְזוֹ עַל כָּל־הַטּוֹבָה וְעַל כָּל־הַשְּׁלוֹם אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי
 עֹשֶׂה לָּהּ: {ס}

י' כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה עוֹד יִשְׁמַע בְּמִקּוֹם־הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר
 אָתֶם אָמַרְתֶּם חָרֵב הוּא מֵאִין אָדָם וּמֵאִין בְּהֵמָה
 בְּעָרֵי יְהוּדָה וּבְחֻצוֹת יְרוּשָׁלַם הַנְּשֹׁמֹת מֵאִין אָדָם
 וּמֵאִין יוֹשֵׁב וּמֵאִין בְּהֵמָה: ¹⁰ קוֹל שְׂשׂוֹן וְקוֹל
 שְׂמִחָה קוֹל חֲתָן וְקוֹל כַּלָּה קוֹל אֲמָרִים הוֹדוּ אֶת־
 יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת בְּיִטּוֹב יְהוָה כִּי־לְעוֹלָם חֶסֶדּוֹ
 מִבְּאֵים תּוֹדָה בֵּית יְהוָה כִּי־אָשִׁיב אֶת־שְׁבוֹת־
 הָאָרֶץ כְּבָרֵאשֶׁנָּה אָמַר יְהוָה: {ס}

יב כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת עוֹד יִהְיֶה בְּמִקּוֹם הַזֶּה
 הַחֲרָב מֵאִין־אָדָם וְעַד־בְּהֵמָה וּבְכָל־עָרָיו נוֹה
 רְעִים מְרֹבְצִים צֹאן: ¹¹ בְּעָרֵי הַהָר בְּעָרֵי הַשְּׁפֵלָה
 וּבְעָרֵי הַנֶּגֶב וּבְאֶרֶץ בְּנִימֵן וּבְסִבְיַי יְרוּשָׁלַם וּבְעָרֵי

by which they have offended me; I shall forgive all their guilty actions,
 by which they have offended me and rebelled against me; ⁹ and, for me,
 it will become a name of joy and praise and pride for all the nations on
 earth to see. When they hear of all the prosperity that I shall give, they
 will be seized with fear and trembling at all the prosperity and peace
 that I provide for it."

¹⁰ "Thus says Yahweh, "In this place of which you now say: it is a ruin,
 without human or animal, in the towns of Judah and desolate streets of
 Jerusalem where there is neither human nor animal, once more will be
 heard ¹¹ shouts of rejoicing and mirth, the voices of bridegroom and
 bride, and the singing of those who bring thanksgiving sacrifices to the
 Temple of Yahweh: Give thanks to Yahweh Sabaoth, for Yahweh is
 good, for his faithful love is everlasting. For I will restore the fortunes
 of the land, as at first, Yahweh says."

¹² "Yahweh Sabaoth says this, "In this ruinous place, without human or
 animal, in all its towns, once again there will be pastures for the shep-
 herds to rest their flocks. ¹³ In the towns of the highlands, of the low-
 lands and the Negeb, in the territory of Benjamin, in the districts round

⁹ In place of 'it' (before 'will become'), here following the MT, the NJB has 'Jerusalem' and the NRSV has 'the city'.

¹⁰ The pronoun, 'you', here is plural, referring to the people of Jerusalem. Vv. 10-11 reverse 7:34.

¹¹ A more literal translation of 'as at first' is 'as formerly'.

¹² What is predicted here is a reversal of the decimation caused by the Babylonian conquest that had been threatened in 7:34, 16:9 & 25:10.

¹³ This appears to be a reference to counting the sheep to make sure that none was missing as they returned to the fold; see the same idiom in Lv 27:52 and in the metaphor in Ezk 20:37.

יְהוּדָה עַד תַּעֲבֹרְנָה הַצֹּאֵן עַל־יְדֵי מוֹנֶה אָמַר
יְהוָה: {ס}

יִהְיֶה יָמִים בָּאִים נְאֻם־יְהוָה וְהִקְמַתִּי אֶת־הַדָּבָר
הַטּוֹב אֲשֶׁר דִּבַּרְתִּי אֶל־בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל וְעַל־בֵּית
יְהוּדָה: טו בַּיָּמִים הָהֵם וּבָעֵת הַהִיא אֶצְמַח לְדָוִד
צֶמַח צְדָקָה וְעָשָׂה מִשְׁפָּט וְצְדָקָה בְּאֶרֶץ: טז בַּיָּמִים
הָהֵם תּוֹשַׁע יְהוּדָה וִירוּשָׁלַם תִּשְׁכֹּן לְבֶטֶח וְזֶה
אֲשֶׁר־יִקְרָא־לָהּ יְהוָה | צְדָקְנוּ: {ס}

יִכָּה אָמַר יְהוָה לֹא־יִכָּרֵת לְדָוִד אִישׁ יֹשֵׁב עַל־
כִּסֵּא בֵּית־יִשְׂרָאֵל: יז וְלִכְהֻנִּים הַלְוִיִּם לֹא־יִכָּרֵת
אִישׁ מִלִּפְנֵי מַעֲלָה עוֹלָה וּמִקְטִיר מִנְחָה וְעָשָׂה
זֶבַח כָּל־הַיָּמִים: {פ}

יִהְיֶה דְבַר־יְהוָה אֶל־יְרֵמְיָהוּ לֵאמֹר: כ זֶה אָמַר
יְהוָה אֲסַתְּפֹרוּ אֶת־בְּרִיתִי הַיּוֹם וְאֶת־בְּרִיתִי
הַלַּיְלָה וּלְבַלְתִּי הַיּוֹת יוֹמִם־וּלְיַלָּה בְּעֵתָם: כא גַּם־
בְּרִיתִי תִפָּר אֶת־דָּוִד עַבְדִּי מִהָיֹת־לוֹ בֶן מֶלֶךְ עַל־

Jerusalem and in the towns of Judah, once again the flocks shall pass under the hand of one who counts them, Yahweh says.

¹⁴ “Look, the days are coming, Yahweh declares, when I shall fulfil the promise of happiness I made to the House of Israel and the House of Judah: ¹⁵ In those days and at that time, I shall make an upright Branch grow for David, who will do what is just and upright in the country.

¹⁶ In those days, Judah will triumph and Israel live in safety; and this is the name the city will be called: ‘Yahweh is our Saving Justice’.”

¹⁷ “For Yahweh says this, “David will never lack a male heir to occupy the throne of the House of Israel, ¹⁸ nor will the Levitical priests ever lack male heirs to stand before me and offer the burnt offering, to burn the cereal offering and to offer sacrifice every day.””

¹⁹ The word of Yahweh came to Jeremiah: ²⁰ “Yahweh says this, “If you could break my covenants with the day and the night, so that day and night do not come in due time, ²¹ then my covenant with my servant David might be broken and he would have no son to sit on his throne,

¹⁴ Vv. 14–26 are not present in the LXX and probably date from 450–400 BCE. The passage, which is not by Jeremiah, describes the administration of the messianic community as in Zc 4:1–14, 6:13.

¹⁵ The NJB does not capitalise ‘Branch’, here following the NRSV.

¹⁶ Vv. 15–16 repeat 23:5–6, but the last couplet glorifies Jerusalem (see #Is 1:26 and Ezk 48:35).

¹⁷ There will be not one but a succession of Davidic rulers (2S 7:16, 1K 9:5).

¹⁸ The reference to ‘Levitical priests’ is unique in Jeremiah (Dt 18:1–5).

¹⁹ The introduction affirms this section as a continuation of that begun in v. 1.

²⁰ The word יוֹמִם is normally an adverb meaning ‘daily’, but here, in v. 25 and in 15:9 it means ‘day’.

²¹ The NJB has ‘Levitical priests’ in place of ‘Levites’, here following the NRSV.

כִּסְאוֹ וְאֶת־הַלְוִיִּם הַכֹּהֲנִים מִשְׁרָתִי: כִּבְ אֲשֶׁר לֹא־
 יִסְפָּר צְבָא שָׁמַיִם וְלֹא יִמָּד חוֹל הַיָּם כֵּן אֲרֻבָּה
 אֶת־זֶרַע דָּוִד עַבְדִּי וְאֶת־הַלְוִיִּם מִשְׁרָתִי אֲתִי: {ס}
 כִּג וַיְהִי דְבַר־יְהוָה אֶל־יִרְמְיָהוּ לֵאמֹר: כִּד הֲלוֹא
 רָאִיתָ מִה־הָעַם הַזֶּה דְּבָרוּ לֵאמֹר שְׁתֵּי הַמִּשְׁפָּחוֹת
 אֲשֶׁר בָּחַר יְהוָה בָּהֶם וַיִּמָּאֲסוּם וְאֶת־עַמִּי יִנְאַצּוּן
 מִהָיֹת עוֹד גּוֹי לְפָנֶיהֶם: {ס}

כִּה כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה אֱסֹלָא בְרִיתִי יוֹמָם וְלַיְלָה חֻקוֹת
 שָׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ לֹא־שָׁמַתִּי: כִּו גַּם־זֶרַע יַעֲקֹב וְדוֹד
 עַבְדִּי אֲמָאֵס מִקַּחַת מִזְרְעוֹ מִשְׁלִים אֶל־זֶרַע
 אַבְרָהָם יִשְׁחַק וַיַּעֲקֹב בִּי־אָשִׁיב אֲשׁוּב אֶת־
 שְׁבוֹתָם וְרַחֲמַתִּים: {פ}

and my covenant with my ministers the Levites. ²² Just as the host of heaven cannot be counted, nor the sand of the sea be measured, so I will increase the heirs of my servant David, and my ministers the Levites.””

²³ The word of Yahweh came to Jeremiah as follows, ²⁴ “Have you noticed what these people say, “The two families that Yahweh chose he has now rejected”? So, they despise my people, whom they no longer think of as a nation.

²⁵ “Thus says Yahweh, “If I had not created day and night, and fixed the laws governing heaven and earth, ²⁶ then I may reject the descendants of Jacob and of David my servant, and cease to choose rulers from his descendants for the heirs of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob! For I will restore their fortunes and take pity on them.””

²² This verse is a reinterpretation of Gn 22:17-18.

²³ The introduction again affirms this section as a continuation of that begun in v. 1.

²⁴ Some identify the ‘two families’ as those of David and Levi mentioned in the previous verses, and some identify them as the families of Jacob and of David mentioned in v. 26; however, the next clause in this verse and the emphasis on the restoration and re-gathering of Israel and Judah in this section (cf. 33:7, 14) show that the reference is to Israel and Judah (see also 30:3, 4; 31:27, 31 & 3:18).

²⁵ ‘Created day’ is a conjectural translation following the NJB; the MT has ‘my covenant with day’.

²⁶ The Kethib/Qere difference here would benefit from an explanation.

ירמיהו פרק לד

א הַדְּבַר אֲשֶׁר-הָיָה אֶל-יִרְמְיָהוּ מֵאֵת יְהוָה
וּנְבוּכַדְרֶאצַּר מֶלֶךְ-בָּבֶל וְכָל-חֵילוֹ וְכָל-מַמְלָכוֹת
אֶרֶץ מִמְּשַׁלַּת יָדוֹ וְכָל-הָעַמִּים נֹלְחָמִים עַל-
יְרוּשָׁלַם וְעַל-כָּל-עָרֶיהָ לֵאמֹר: ב כֹּה-אָמַר יְהוָה
אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הַלֵּךְ וְאָמַרְתָּ אֶל-צְדַקְיָהוּ מֶלֶךְ-
יְהוּדָה וְאָמַרְתָּ אֵלָיו כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה הֲנִנִי נָתַן אֶת-
הָעִיר הַזֹּאת בְּיַד מֶלֶךְ-בָּבֶל וְשָׂרְפָהּ בָּאֵשׁ: ג וְאַתָּה
לֹא תִמָּלֵט מִיָּדוֹ כִּי תִפֶּשׂ תִּתְּפֹשׂ וּבִידוֹ תִּנְתָּן
וְעֵינֶיךָ אֶת-עֵינֵי מֶלֶךְ-בָּבֶל תִּרְאֶינָה וּפִיָּהוּ אֶת-פִּיךָ
יְדַבֵּר וּבָבֶל תִּבּוֹא: ד אַךְ שָׁמַע דְּבַר-יְהוָה צְדַקְיָהוּ
מֶלֶךְ יְהוּדָה כֹּה-אָמַר יְהוָה עֲלֶיךָ לֹא תָמוּת בַּחֶרֶב:
ה בְּשָׁלוֹם תָּמוּת וְכַמְּשֻׂרְפוֹת אֲבוֹתֶיךָ הַמְּלָכִים
הָרַאשׁוֹנִים אֲשֶׁר-הָיוּ לְפָנֶיךָ כֵּן יִשְׂרְפוּ-לָךְ וְהוּי
אֲדוֹן יִסְפְּדוּ-לָךְ כִּי-דַבַּר אֲנִי-דַבַּרְתִּי נְאֻם-
יְהוָה: {ס}

JEREMIAH 34

¹ The word that came to Jeremiah from Yahweh when Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and his whole army, with all the kingdoms of earth and all the peoples under his dominion, were fighting against Jerusalem and all its towns., ² "Thus says Yahweh, the God of Israel: "Go and speak to Zedekiah, king of Judah, and say to him: Thus says Yahweh: I am going to hand this city over to the power of the king of Babylon and he will burn it with fire. ³ You yourself will not escape his clutches but will certainly be captured and handed over to him. You will see the king of Babylon eye to eye and speak to him face to face; then you will go to Babylon. ⁴ Even so, listen to the word of Yahweh, Zedekiah king of Judah! This is what Yahweh says about you: You will not die by the sword; ⁵ you will die in peace; and, as spices were burnt for your ancestors, the kings who in times past preceded you, so spices will be burnt for you and a dirge sung for you: Alas for his highness! I have spoken, Yahweh declares.""

JEREMIAH 34

- ¹ This incident must belong to the opening months of the siege (588–587 BCE), when Nebuchadnezzar had not yet concentrated his forces on Jerusalem but was still fighting in the southeast (v. 7); Zedekiah has time to avert the catastrophe by surrendering, like Jehoiakim in 605 BCE.
- ² Note that the translation has attempted to avoid confusion by avoiding multiply nested quotations.
- ³ Literally translated, the 2nd sentence reads, "Your eyes will see the eyes of the king of Babylon and his mouth will speak with your mouth."
- ⁴ Zedekiah was captured, witnessed the execution of his sons, had his eyes put out, and was taken to Babylon where he died after a lengthy imprisonment (52:10–11).
- ⁵ The literal translation of 'as spices were burnt' is 'as there was burning'. Warning Zedekiah of Jerusalem's imminent destruction and his own captivity, Jeremiah assured him of a peaceful death and appropriate funeral rites (but compare 52:8–11).

וַיִּדְבֹר יִרְמְיָהוּ הַנְּבִיא אֶל־צְדַקְיָהוּ מֶלֶךְ יְהוּדָה
 אֶת כָּל־הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה בִּירוּשָׁלַם: ז' וְחֵיל מֶלֶךְ־
 בָּבֶל נִלְחָמִים עַל־יְרוּשָׁלַם וְעַל כָּל־עָרֵי יְהוּדָה
 הַנּוֹתְרוֹת אֶל־לְכִישׁ וְאֶל־עֶזְקָה כִּי הֵנָּה נִשְׁאָרוּ
 בְּעָרֵי יְהוּדָה עָרֵי מְבָצָר: {פ}

ח הַדְּבָר אֲשֶׁר־הָיָה אֶל־יִרְמְיָהוּ מֵאֵת יְהוָה אַחֲרֵי
 כָּרַת הַמֶּלֶךְ צְדַקְיָהוּ בְרִית אֶת־כָּל־הָעָם אֲשֶׁר
 בִּירוּשָׁלַם לִקְרֹא לָהֶם דְּרוֹר: ט לְשַׁלַּח אִישׁ אֶת־
 עַבְדּוֹ וְאִישׁ אֶת־שִׁפְחָתוֹ הָעִבְרִי וְהָעִבְרִיָּה חֲפְשִׁים
 לְבִלְתִּי עֲבָד־בָּם בִּיהוּדֵי אָחִיהוּ אִישׁ: י וַיִּשְׁמְעוּ
 כָּל־הַשָּׂרִים וְכָל־הָעָם אֲשֶׁר־בָּאוּ בְּבְרִית לְשַׁלַּח
 אִישׁ אֶת־עַבְדּוֹ וְאִישׁ אֶת־שִׁפְחָתוֹ חֲפְשִׁים לְבִלְתִּי
 עֲבָד־בָּם עוֹד וַיִּשְׁמְעוּ וַיִּשְׁלְחוּ: יא וַיָּשׁוּבוּ אַחֲרֵי־כֵן
 וַיָּשׁוּבוּ אֶת־הָעֲבָדִים וְאֶת־הַשִּׁפְחֹת אֲשֶׁר שִׁלְחוּ
 חֲפְשִׁים וַיִּכְבְּשׁוּם וַיִּכְבְּשׁוּם לְעֲבָדִים
 וּלְשִׁפְחֹת: {פ}

6 Then the prophet Jeremiah repeated all these words to Zedekiah king of Judah in Jerusalem, 7 while the army of the king of Babylon was attacking Jerusalem and all such towns of Judah as still held out, namely Lachish and Azekah, these being the only fortified towns of Judah remaining.

8 The word that came to Jeremiah from Yahweh, after King Zedekiah had made a covenant with all the people in Jerusalem to issue a proclamation of liberty for their slaves: 9 each man was to free his Hebrew male slaves and Hebrew female slaves, and no one was any longer to keep a brother Judaeen in slavery. 10 And they obeyed: all the chief men and all the people who had entered into the covenant had agreed that everyone should free his slaves, male or female and no longer keep them as slaves: they had agreed on this and freed them.

11 Afterwards, however, they changed their minds, recovered the slaves, male and female, whom they had set free, and reduced them to slavery again.

6 The NJB lacks the opening 'then', here following the NRSV.

7 'Azekah' (modern Tell Zakariyeh) is about 30 Km southwest of Jerusalem; 'Lachish' (modern Tell Ed-Duweir) is about 20 Km southwest of Azekah.

8 A better translation for 'covenant' may be 'pact' or 'agreement' but the same word (בְּרִית) is used for any agreement between two parties.

9 Through economic necessity, some of the poorer people of the land had on occasion to sell themselves or their children to wealthier Hebrew landowners; however, the terms of their servitude were strictly regulated under Mosaic Law (cf. Ex 21:2-11, Lv 25:39-55, Dt 15:12-18).

10 Most commentators are agreed that the incident referred to here occurred during the period of relief from the siege provided by the Babylonians going off to fight against the Egyptians who were apparently coming to Zedekiah's aid.

11 The Kethib/Qere difference here would benefit from an explanation.

יב וַיְהִי דְבַר־יְהוָה אֶל־יִרְמְיָהוּ מֵאֵת יְהוָה לֵאמֹר:
 יג כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲנֹכִי כָרַתִּי בְרִית
 אֶת־אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם בְּיוֹם הוֹצֵאִי אוֹתְכֶם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם
 מִבֵּית עֲבָדִים לֵאמֹר: יד מִקֵּץ שִׁבְעַת שָׁנִים תִּשְׁלַחֻ
 אִישׁ אֶת־אָחִיו הָעִבְרִי אֲשֶׁר־יָמַכְר לְךָ וְעַבְדְּךָ שֵׁשׁ
 שָׁנִים וְשִׁלַּחְתּוּ חֲפָשִׁי מֵעִמְךָ וְלֹא־שָׁמְעוּ אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם
 אֵלָי וְלֹא הָטוּ אֶת־אָזְנָם: טו וַתִּשְׁבוּ אֹתָם הַיּוֹם
 וַתַּעֲשׂוּ אֶת־הַיָּשָׁר בְּעֵינַי לְקַרְא דְרוֹר אִישׁ לְרֵעֵהוּ
 וַתְּכַרְתּוּ בְרִית לִפְנֵי בַּיִת אֲשֶׁר־נִקְרָא שְׁמִי עָלָיו:
 טז וַתִּשְׁבוּ וַתַּחֲלִלוּ אֶת־שְׁמִי וַתִּשְׁבוּ אִישׁ אֶת־עַבְדּוֹ
 וְאִישׁ אֶת־שִׁפְחָתוֹ אֲשֶׁר־שִׁלַּחְתֶּם חֲפָשִׁים לְנַפְשָׁם
 וַתִּכְבְּשׂוּ אֹתָם לְהִיּוֹת לָכֶם לְעַבְדִּים
 וְלִשְׁפָחוֹת: {ס} יז לָכֵן כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה אֹתָם לֹא־
 שָׁמַעְתֶּם אֵלָי לְקַרְא דְרוֹר אִישׁ לְאָחִיו וְאִישׁ
 לְרֵעֵהוּ הִנְנִי קֹרֵא לָכֶם דְרוֹר נְאֻם־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי הַחֶרֶב
 אֶל־הַדְּבָר וְאֶל־הָרֶעַב וְנָתַתִּי אֹתְכֶם לְזוּעָה לְזוּעָה
 לְכָל מַמְלָכוֹת הָאָרֶץ: יח וְנָתַתִּי אֶת־הָאֲנָשִׁים
 הָעִבְרִים אֶת־בְּרִיתִי אֲשֶׁר לֹא־הִקִּימוּ אֶת־דְּבָרֵי

12 The word of Yahweh came then to Jeremiah from Yahweh, saying,
 13 “Yahweh, God of Israel, says this, “I made a Covenant with your anc-
 estors when I brought them out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of
 slavery; it said: 14 At the end of seven years, each one of you is to free
 his brother Hebrew who has sold himself to you; he may be your slave
 for six years, then you must free him from your service. But they did not
 listen to me and would not pay attention. 15 You recently repented and
 did what was right in my sight by proclaiming freedom for your
 neighbour; and you made a covenant before me in the Temple that bears
 my name. 16 But you then changed your minds and profaned my name,
 when each of you recovered his slaves, men and women, whom you had
 set free according to their desire, and has forced them to become your
 slaves again.” 17 “Therefore, Yahweh says this: “You have
 disobeyed me, by failing to grant freedom to brother and neighbour.
 Very well, I in my turn, Yahweh declares, shall leave sword, famine and
 plague free to deal with you and I shall make you an object of horror to
 all the kingdoms of the earth. 18 As for the people who have broken my
 Covenant, who have not observed the terms of the covenant that they

12 The NJB, following the LXX and Peshitta, omits ‘from Yahweh’, here following the MT & NRSV.

13 The NJB lacks ‘land of’ before ‘Egypt’, here following the NRSV.

14 See Dt 15:12–18 for the complete statement of this law; here, only the first part of it is cited.

15 The presence of the independent pronoun (here translated ‘you yourselves’) is intended to contrast their actions with those of their ancestors.

16 The literal translation of ‘changed your minds’ (here following the NJB) is ‘turned around’.

17 The Kethib/Qere difference here would benefit from an explanation.

18 On this ancient covenant ritual, in which the contracting parties passed between the two halves of a sacrificial animal, see #Gn 15:17.

הַבְּרִית אֲשֶׁר כָּרְתוּ לִפְנֵי הָעֵגֶל אֲשֶׁר כָּרְתוּ לְשָׁנִים
וַיַּעֲבְרוּ בֵּין בְּתָרָיו: ^{יט} שְׂרֵי יְהוּדָה וְשְׂרֵי יְרוּשָׁלַם
הַסָּרְסִים וְהַכְּהֻנִים וְכָל עַם הָאָרֶץ הָעֹבְרִים בֵּין
בְּתָרֵי הָעֵגֶל: ^כ וְנָתַתִּי אוֹתָם בְּיַד אֹיְבֵיהֶם וּבְיַד
מִבְּקָשֵׁי נַפְשָׁם וְהִיתָה נִבְלָתָם לְמֵאֲכָל לְעוֹף
הַשָּׁמַיִם וּלְבִהֵמַת הָאָרֶץ: ^{כא} וְאֶת־צְדָקִיהוּ מֶלֶךְ־
יְהוּדָה וְאֶת־שָׂרָיו אֶתֵּן בְּיַד אֹיְבֵיהֶם וּבְיַד מִבְּקָשֵׁי
נַפְשָׁם וּבְיַד חֵיל מֶלֶךְ בָּבֶל הָעֹלִים מֵעַלְיָכֶם:
^{כב} הַנְּנִי מִצְוָה נְאֻם־יְהוָה וְהִשְׁבַּתִּים אֶל־הָעִיר
הַזֹּאת וְנִלְחַמוּ עָלֶיהָ וּלְכַדוּהָ וְשָׂרְפָהּ בָּאֵשׁ וְאֶת־
עָרֵי יְהוּדָה אֶתֵּן שְׂמָמָה מֵאִין יֵשֵׁב: {פ}

made before me, I shall treat them like the calf that people cut in two to pass between its pieces. ¹⁹ The chief men of Judah and Jerusalem, the eunuchs, the priests and all the country people who have passed between the pieces of the calf, ²⁰ I shall hand over to their enemies and those determined to kill them, and their corpses will be food for the birds of the sky and the animals of earth. ²¹ As for Zedekiah king of Judah and his chief men, I shall hand them to their enemies, to those determined to kill them, and to the army of the king of Babylon, which has just withdrawn. ²² Listen, I shall give the order, Yahweh declares, and bring them back to this city to attack it, capture it and burn it with fire; and I shall make an uninhabited waste of the towns of Judah.””

¹⁹ This verse is a prepositioned object to v. 20, known as a *casus pendens*; it is used to draw attention to a subject or object.

²⁰ Compare the last part of this verse with 7:33, 16:4 & 19:7.

²¹ The last clause refers to the relief offered by the withdrawal of the Babylonian troops to fight against the Egyptians who were coming to Zedekiah's aid (cf. 37:5, 7, 11).

²² The NJB has 'burn it down' in place of 'burn it with fire', here following the MT & NRSV.

ירמיהו פרק לה

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א* הַדְּבַר אֲשֶׁר-הָיָה אֶל-יִרְמְיָהוּ מֵאֵת יְהוָה בְּיָמֵי יְהוֹיָקִים בֶּן-יֹאשִׁיָּהוּ מֶלֶךְ יְהוּדָה לֵאמֹר: ב הַלֹּדֶף אֶל-בַּיִת הַרְכָּבִים וּדְבַרְתָּ אֹתָם וְהִבְאוֹתֶם בַּיִת יְהוָה אֶל-אֶחָת הַלְּשָׁכוֹת וְהִשְׁקִיתָ אוֹתָם יַיִן: ג וְאָקַח אֶת-יָאֲזַנְיָה בֶן-יִרְמְיָהוּ בֶן-חֲבַצְנִיָּה וְאֶת-אָחָיו וְאֶת-כָּל-בָּנָיו וְאֶת כָּל-בַּיִת הַרְכָּבִים: ד וְאָבֵא אֹתָם בַּיִת יְהוָה אֶל-לְשַׁכַּת בְּנֵי חָנָן בֶּן-יִגְדָלְיָהוּ אִישׁ הָאֱלֹהִים אֲשֶׁר-אָצַל לְשַׁכַּת הַשָּׁרִים אֲשֶׁר מִמַּעַל לְלְשַׁכַּת מַעֲשִׂיָהוּ בֶן-שָׁלֹם שֹׁמֵר הַסֶּף: ה וְאָתֹן לִפְנֵי בְנֵי בַיִת-הַרְכָּבִים גְּבַעִים מִלְּאִים יַיִן וְכִסּוֹת וְאָמַר אֲלֵיהֶם שְׁתוּ-יַיִן: ו וַיֹּאמְרוּ לֹא נִשְׁתֶּה-יַיִן כִּי יֹנָדָב בֶּן-רְכָב אָבִינוּ צִוָּה עָלֵינוּ לֵאמֹר לֹא תִשְׁתּוּ-יַיִן אַתֶּם וּבְנֵיכֶם עַד-עוֹלָם: ז וּבַיִת לֹא-תִבְנוּ וְזָרַע לֹא-תִזְרְעוּ וְכָרֶם לֹא-תִטְעוּ

1 The word that came to Jeremiah from Yahweh in the days of Jehoiakim son of Josiah, king of Judah, 2 "Go to the house of the Rechabites and speak to them; bring them into one of the rooms of the Temple of Yahweh and offer them wine to drink." 3 So I took Jaazaniah son of Jeremiah, son of Habazziniah, with his brothers and all his sons, the whole house of the Rechabites, 4 and brought them to the Temple of Yahweh into the room of the sons of Hanan son of Igdaliah, a man of God, which was next to the room of the chief men, above the room of Maaseiah son of Shallum, guardian of the threshold. 5 I then set pitchers full of wine, and some cups, before the members of the Rechabite clan and said, "Have some wine." 6 But they replied, "We do not drink wine, because our father Jonadab son of Rechab gave us this order, "You shall not drink wine, neither you nor your sons forever; 7 nor shall you build houses or sow seed, nor plant vineyards or own them, but shall live in

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- 1 This incident took place around 598 BCE; since about 602 BCE, incursions into Palestine by armed bands had been almost incessant (see 2K 24:2) and many people abandoned the countryside to take refuge in Jerusalem (v. 11).
- 2 Nothing is known about the 'house of the Rechabites' other than what is said about them in this chapter: from vv. 7-8, it appears that they were a nomadic tribe that had resisted settling down and taking up farming and had also agreed to abstain from drinking wine.
- 3 NETB reads 'the grandson of Habazziniah' in place of 'son of Habazziniah', here following the MT, MJB & NRSV.
- 4 The NJB, following 1 Hebrew MS, 1 LXX MS & Tg, has 'Of Ben-Johanan' in place of 'of the sons of Hanan', here following the MT (and NRSV).
- 5 The literal translation of 'have some wine' (here following the NRSV) is 'drink wine'.
- 6 See #2 on the likely identity of 'Jonadab'.
- 7 The literal translation of 'where you reside' is 'where you are sojourning'.

וְלֹא יִהְיֶה לָכֶם כִּי בְּאֶהְלִים תִּשְׁבוּ כְּלִי־יִמֵיכֶם לְמַעַן
 תַּחֲיוּ יָמִים רַבִּים עַל־פְּנֵי הָאֲדָמָה אֲשֶׁר אַתֶּם גָּרִים
 שָׁם: ^ח וְנִשְׁמַע בְּקוֹל יְהוֹנָדָב בֶּן־רֵכָב אָבִינוּ לְכָל
 אֲשֶׁר צִוָּנוּ לַבְּלֹתֵי שְׁתוֹת־יַיִן כְּלִי־יַמֵּינוּ אֲנַחְנוּ וְנִשְׁנוּ
 בְּגִינוּ וּבְנֹתֵינוּ: ^ט וּלְבִלְתֵּי בְנוֹת בָּתִּים לְשִׁבְתָּנוּ
 וְכָרֶם וְשָׂדֶה וְזֵרַע לֹא יִהְיֶה־לָּנוּ: ^י וְנִשְׁבַּ בְּאֶהְלִים
 וְנִשְׁמַע וְנַעֲשֶׂה כְּכָל אֲשֶׁר־צִוָּנוּ יוֹנָדָב אָבִינוּ: ^{יא} וַיְהִי
 בְּעֵלוֹת נְבוּכַדְרֶאֶצַּר מֶלֶךְ־בָּבֶל אֶל־הָאָרֶץ וְנֹאמַר
 בָּאוּ וְנִבְּאוּ יְרוּשָׁלַם מִפְּנֵי חֵיל הַכַּשְׂדִּים וּמִפְּנֵי חֵיל
 אַרְם וְנִשְׁבַּ בִּירוּשָׁלַם: {פ}

^{יב} וַיְהִי דְבַר־יְהוָה אֶל־יְרֵמְיָהוּ לֵאמֹר: ^{יג} כֹּה־אָמַר
 יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הֲלֹךְ וְאָמַרְתָּ לְאִישׁ
 יְהוּדָה וּלְיֹשְׁבֵי יְרוּשָׁלַם הֲלֹא תִקְחוּ מוֹסֵר לְשִׁמְעַ
 אֶל־דְּבָרֵי נְאֻם־יְהוָה: ^{יד} הֲוֹקֵם אֶת־דְּבָרֵי יְהוֹנָדָב
 בֶּן־רֵכָב אֲשֶׁר־צִוָּה אֶת־בָּנָיו לַבְּלֹתֵי שְׁתוֹת־יַיִן וְלֹא
 שָׁתוּ עַד־הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה כִּי שָׁמְעוּ אֶת מִצְוַת אָבִיהֶם

tents all your lives, so that you may live long in the land where you reside.” ⁸ We have obeyed the orders of our father, Jonadab son of Rechab, never drinking wine ourselves, nor our wives, our sons or our daughters, ⁹ nor building houses to live in. We own neither vineyard nor field nor seed, ¹⁰ living in tents. We have obeyed the orders of our ancestor Jonadab, respecting them in every particular. ¹¹ However, when Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up against this country, we decided, “We must get away! We will go to Jerusalem to escape the army of the Chaldeans and the army of the Aramaeans.” That is why we are living in Jerusalem.

¹² Then the word of Yahweh came to Jeremiah as follows, ¹³ “Yahweh Sabaoth, the God of Israel, says this, “Go and say to the people of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem: Will you never learn the lesson and listen to my words, Yahweh demands? ¹⁴ The words of Jonadab son of Rechab, ordering his sons to drink no wine, have been carried out; obedient to their ancestors’ command, and they drink none even today;

⁸ Vv. 8^b-9^a is a series of infinitive constructs plus the negative לְבִלְתֵּי, explaining the particulars of how they have obeyed.

⁹ The Rechabite clan represented a reaction against urban civilisation in favour of the ancient religious practices of the desert (see #Ho 2:16). As a religious order, similar to the nazirites (Nb 6:1-21), they were founded by Jonadab, son of Rechab, during the reign of Jehu (842-815 BCE). Religiously devoted, they assisted Jehu in the purge accompanying the revolt against the dynasty of Omri (2K 10:15-28).

¹⁰ Literally translated, the last sentence reads, “We have obeyed and done according to all which our ancestor Jonadab commanded us.”

¹¹ The NJB lacks the 2nd instance of ‘the army of’, changing the 1st to ‘the armies of’; here, we follow the MT & NRSV.

¹² The literal translation of ‘as follows’ is simply ‘saying’.

¹³ The rhetorical question here has the force of an imperative.

¹⁴ On the idiom translated ‘so urgently and so untiringly’, see #7:13.

וְאֲנֹכִי דִבַּרְתִּי אֵלֵיכֶם הַשְׁכֵּם וּדְבַר וְלֹא שָׁמַעְתֶּם אֵלַי: ^{טו} וְאֶשְׁלַח אֵלֵיכֶם אֶת-כָּל-עֲבָדַי הַנְּבָאִים | הַשְׁכֵּם וְשַׁלַּח | לֵאמֹר שׁוּבוּ-נָא אִישׁ מִדַּרְכּוֹ הַרְעָה וְהִיטִיבוּ מַעַלְלֵיכֶם וְאַל-תִּלְכוּ אַחֲרֵי אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים לְעַבְדָּם וּשְׁבוּ אֶל-הָאֲדָמָה אֲשֶׁר-נָתַתִּי לָכֶם וְלֹא-בָתֵיכֶם וְלֹא הִטִּיתֶם אֶת-אָזְנוֹכֶם וְלֹא שָׁמַעְתֶּם אֵלַי: ^{טז} כִּי הִקִּימוּ בְנֵי יְהוֹנָדָב בֶּן-רֵכָב אֶת-מִצְוֹת אֲבִיהֶם אֲשֶׁר צִוָּם וְהָעַם הַזֶּה לֹא שָׁמְעוּ אֵלַי: ^{יז} לָכֵן כֹּה-אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי צְבָאוֹת אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הַנְּנִי מֵבִיא אֶל-יְהוּדָה וְאֶל כָּל-יֹשְׁבֵי יְרוּשָׁלַם אֶת כָּל-הַרְעָה אֲשֶׁר דִּבַּרְתִּי עֲלֵיהֶם יַעַן דִּבַּרְתִּי אֵלֵיהֶם וְלֹא שָׁמְעוּ וְאֶקְרָא לָהֶם וְלֹא עָנוּ: ^{יח} וְלִבֵּית הַרְכָבִים אָמַר יִרְמְיָהוּ כֹה-אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל יַעַן אֲשֶׁר שָׁמַעְתֶּם עַל-מִצְוֹת יְהוֹנָדָב אֲבִיכֶם וַתִּשְׁמְרוּ אֶת-כָּל-מִצְוֹתָיו וַתַּעֲשׂוּ כְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר-צִוָּה אֶתְכֶם: ^{יט} לָכֵן כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא-יִכָּרֵת אִישׁ לְיֹנָדָב בֶּן-רֵכָב עַמֵּד לִפְנֵי כָל-הַיָּמִים: {פ}

but to me, who spoke myself to you so urgently and so untiringly, you have not listened. ¹⁵ I have urgently and untiringly sent you all my servants the prophets to say: Turn back, every one of you, from your evil behaviour and amend your actions, and do not follow other gods to serve them, and then you will go on living on the soil I gave to you and your ancestors; but you have not paid attention or listened to me. ¹⁶ Thus, the sons of Jonadab son of Rechab have kept the command their ancestor gave them, but this people have not listened to me. ¹⁷ Therefore, Yahweh, God Sabaoth, God of Israel, says this: Look, on Judah and the citizens of Jerusalem I am going to bring all the disaster that I have decreed for them, because I spoke to them and they would not listen, called to them and they would not answer." ¹⁸ Then Jeremiah said to the Rechabite clan, "Yahweh Sabaoth, the God of Israel, says this, "Because you have obeyed the orders of your ancestor Jonadab and observed all his rules and done everything he has ordered you to do, ¹⁹ therefore, Yahweh Sabaoth, the God of Israel, says this: Jonadab son of Rechab shall never lack a male descendant to stand before me forever.""

¹⁵ In place of 'follow', NETB has 'pay allegiance to'.

¹⁶ The lesson here is one of simple obedience.

¹⁷ God now ends the lesson by announcing the imminent punishment for disobedience.

¹⁸ The Rechabites are to be spared the punishment as a reward for their obedience to their ancestors' commands.

¹⁹ The phrase 'to stand before me' is often used of the liturgical priests but it also applies to laymen – a person is 'before Yahweh' while alive.

ירמיהו פרק לו

JEREMIAH 36

א ויהי בשנה הרבעית ליהויקים בן-יאשיהו מלך יהודה ה'ה הדבר הזה אל-ירמיהו מאת יהוה לאמר: ב קח-לך מגלת-ספר וכתבת עליה את כל-הדברים אשר-דברתי אליך על-ישראל ועל-יהודה ועל-כל-הגוים מיום דברתי אליך מימי יאשיהו ועד היום הזה: ג אולי ישמעו בית יהודה את כל-הרעה אשר אנכי חשב לעשות להם למען ישובו איש מדרכו הרעה וסלחתי לעונם ולחטאתם: {ס}

ד ויקרא ירמיהו את-ברוך בן-נריה וכתב ברוך מפני ירמיהו את כל-דברי יהוה אשר-דבר אליו על-מגלת-ספר: ה ויצוה ירמיהו את-ברוך לאמר אני עצור לא אוכל לבוא בית יהוה: ו ובאת אתה וקראת במגלה אשר-כתבת מפני את-דברי יהוה באזני העם בית יהוה ביום צום וגם באזני כל-

¹ And it came to pass, in the fourth year of Jehoiakim, the son of Josiah, the king of Judah, that this word came to Jeremiah from Yahweh, saying, ² "Take a scroll and, on it, write all the words that I have spoken to you against Israel, and against Judah, and against all the nations, from the day I first spoke to you, in the time of Josiah, up until today. ³ It may be that, when the House of Judah hears about all the disaster that I intend to inflict on them, they will turn, every man among them, from their evil behaviour, so that I can forgive their iniquity and their sin."

⁴ Jeremiah then called Baruch son of Neriah, who at his dictation wrote on the scroll all the words Yahweh had spoken to him. ⁵ And Jeremiah gave Baruch this order, "I am prevented from entering the Temple of Yahweh, ⁶ so you yourself must go and, from the scroll you wrote at my dictation, read all Yahweh's words to the people in the Temple on the day of the fast, and you shall read them in the hearing also of all the

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- ¹ The year was 605 BCE; Jehoiakim has just capitulated to Nebuchadnezzar and feels safe. In the light of portentous contemporary events (25:1–14), Jeremiah commissioned Baruch, son of Neriah and brother of Seraiah (32:12, 51:59), to transcribe his oracles on a papyrus scroll.
- ² What the 'scroll' most likely contained was a synopsis of Jeremiah's messages as constructed from his memory.
- ³ In place of 'their iniquity and their sin', here following the MT & NRSV, the NJB has 'their sinful guilt'.
- ⁴ Some critics suggest transposing v. 9 to after this verse.
- ⁵ For an unknown reason, Jeremiah was barred from the Temple.
- ⁶ A fast day was chosen to read the scroll as the people would be more mindful of the crisis they were in and be in more of a repentant mood.

יהודה הבאים מעריהם תקראם: 'אולי תפל
 תחנתם לפני יהוה וישבו איש מדרך הרעה כי
 גדול האף והחמה אשר דבר יהוה אלהים הזה:
 ח ויעש ברוך בן נריה ככל אשר צוהו ירמיהו
 הנביא לקרא בספר דברי יהוה בית יהוה: {פ}
 ט ויהי בשנה החמשית ליהויקים בן יאשיהו מלך
 יהודה בחודש התשעי קראו צום לפני יהוה כל
 העם בירושלם וכל העם הבאים מערי יהודה
 בירושלם: 'ויקרא ברוך בספר את דברי ירמיהו
 בית יהוה בלשכת גמריהו בן שפן הספר בחצר
 העליון פתח שער בית יהוה החדש באזני כל
 העם: יא וישמע מליהו בן גמריהו בן שפן את
 כל דברי יהוה מעל הספר: יב וירד בית המלך
 על לשכת הספר והנהשם כל השרים יושבים
 אלישמע הספר ודליהו בן שמעיהו ואלנתן בן
 עכבור וגמריהו בן שפן וצדקיהו בן חנניהו וכל
 השרים: יג ויגד להם מליהו את כל הדברים אשר

Judaeans who come in from their towns. ⁷ Perhaps their plea will move
 Yahweh and they will turn one and all from their evil ways, for great is
 the furious anger that Yahweh has pronounced against this people."
⁸ Baruch son of Neriah did all that the prophet Jeremiah had ordered
 him, reading all Yahweh's words from the book in Yahweh's Temple.
⁹ Now, in the fifth year of Jehoiakim, the son of Josiah, king of Judah, in
 the ninth month, all the people of Jerusalem and all the people who
 could get to Jerusalem from the towns of Judah were summoned to a
 fast before Yahweh. ¹⁰ Baruch then read Jeremiah's words from the
 scroll; this happened in the room of Gemariah son of the royal secretary
 Shaphan, in the upper court at the entry of the New Gate of the Temple
 of Yahweh, where all the people could hear. ¹¹ When Micah son of
 Gemariah son of Shaphan had heard all Yahweh's words read from the
 scroll, ¹² he went down to the royal palace, to the scribe's room. All the
 chief men were in session: the secretary Elishama, Delaiah son of
 Shemaiah, Elnathan son of Achbor, Gemariah son of Shaphan, Zedekiah
 son of Hananiah and all the other chief men; ¹³ and to them, Micah

⁷ The literal translation of 'furious anger' is 'anger and wrath'.

⁸ Literally translated, this verse reads, "And Baruch son of Neriah did according to all that the prophet Jeremiah commanded him with regard to reading from the scroll the words of Yahweh in the temple of Yahweh."

⁹ The date is December 604 BCE.

¹⁰ 'Shaphan' was the 'royal secretary' during Jehoiakim's father's rule; in the course of his official duties, the Book of the Law was discovered.

¹¹ Baruch was asked to re-read the scroll before an assembly of royal officials.

¹² If, as many believe, 'Elishama' was the same as mentioned in 41:1 and 2K 25:25, he was also a member of the royal family.

¹³ The literal translation of 'hearing' is 'ears'.

שָׁמַע בְּקֶרֶא בְּרוּךְ בַּסֵּפֶר בְּאָזְנֵי הָעָם: י' וַיִּשְׁלַחוּ
 כָּל־הַשָּׂרִים אֶל־בְּרוּךְ אֶת־יְהוּדִי בֶן־נְתַנְיָהוּ בֶן־
 שְׁלֵמְיָהוּ בֶן־כוּשִׁי לֵאמֹר הַמְּגִלָּה אֲשֶׁר קָרַאתָ בָּהּ
 בְּאָזְנֵי הָעָם קַחנָה בְיָדְךָ וּלְךָ וַיִּקַּח בְּרוּךְ בֶּן־נְרִיָּהוּ
 אֶת־הַמְּגִלָּה בְיָדוֹ וַיָּבֵא אֲלֵיהֶם: טו' וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֵלָיו שֵׁב
 נָא וּקְרָאנָה בְּאָזְנֵינוּ וַיִּקְרָא בְרוּךְ בְּאָזְנֵיהֶם: טז' וַיְהִי
 כְּשָׁמְעֵם אֶת־כָּל־הַדְּבָרִים פָּחְדוּ אִישׁ אֶל־רֵעֵהוּ
 וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֶל־בְּרוּךְ הַגִּיד נְגִיד לַמֶּלֶךְ אֵת כָּל־
 הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה: יז' וְאֶת־בְּרוּךְ שָׁאלוּ לֵאמֹר הַגִּיד־
 נָא לָנוּ אֵיךְ כָּתַבְתָּ אֶת־כָּל־הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה מִפִּי:
 יח' וַיֹּאמֶר לָהֶם בְּרוּךְ מִפִּי יִקְרָא אֵלַי אֵת כָּל־
 הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה וְאָנֹכִי כָתַב עַל־הַסֵּפֶר בְּדִין: {ס}
 טט' וַיֹּאמְרוּ הַשָּׂרִים אֶל־בְּרוּךְ לֵךְ הַסֵּתֵר אֶתְּךָ
 וַיִּרְמִיָּהוּ וְאִישׁ אֶל־יָדַע אֵיפָה אַתָּם: כ' וַיָּבֹאוּ אֶל־
 הַמֶּלֶךְ חֲצֵרָה וְאֶת־הַמְּגִלָּה הִפְקִדוּ בְּלִשְׁבַת
 אֱלִישָׁמָע הַסֵּפֶר וַיִּגִּידוּ בְּאָזְנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ אֵת כָּל־
 הַדְּבָרִים: כא' וַיִּשְׁלַח הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶת־יְהוּדִי לְקַחַת אֶת־

reported all the words that he had heard when Baruch had read the scroll in the hearing of the people. ¹⁴ The chief men then, by common consent, sent Jehudi son of Nethaniah son of Shelemiah son of Cushi to Baruch, to say, "Come and bring the scroll with you that you have been reading to the people." So, Baruch son of Neriah took the scroll in his hand and came to them. ¹⁵ And they said to him, "Sit down and read it to us." So, Baruch read it to them. ¹⁶ When they heard all the words, they turned to one another in alarm and said to Baruch, "We must certainly report all these things to the king." ¹⁷ They then questioned Baruch, "Tell us," they said, "how you came to write all these words. Was it at his dictation?" ¹⁸ "Jeremiah dictated them all to me," Baruch replied, "and I wrote them down in ink in this book."

¹⁹ The chief men said to Baruch, "You and Jeremiah had better go into hiding; and do not tell anyone where you are." ²⁰ Whereupon they went off to the king in the palace court, depositing the scroll in the chamber of the secretary Elishama. They then reported the whole affair in the hearing of the king. ²¹ Then the king sent Jehudi to get the scroll, and he

¹⁴ The NJB includes the last sentence as part of v. 15.

¹⁵ The literal translations of 'to us' and 'to them' are 'in our ears' and 'in their ears'.

¹⁶ Towards the end of this verse, the word דְּבָרִים most likely means 'things' rather than 'words'.

¹⁷ The NJB omits 'Was it at his dictation?' (Literally, 'was it with his mouth?') This may be a dittography (see #18); here, we follow the NRSV.

¹⁸ The literal translation of 'Jeremiah dictated them all to me' is 'He said them all to me with his mouth'.

¹⁹ The verbs here are both direct imperatives but it sounds awkward to say "You and Jeremiah, go and hide" in contemporary English.

²⁰ The NJB has 'scribe' in place of 'secretary', here following the NRSV & NETB.

²¹ The NJB lacks the 2nd occurrence of the name 'Jehudi' and NETB replaces it with 'he himself'; here, we follow the MT & NRSV.

הַמְּגִלָּה וַיִּקְחָהּ מִלְּשַׁכַּת אֱלִישַׁמָּע הַסֹּפֵר וַיִּקְרָאָהּ
 יְהוּדִי בְּאָזְנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ וּבְאָזְנֵי כָּל־הַשָּׂרִים הַעֹמְדִים
 מִעַל הַמֶּלֶךְ: ^{כב} וְהַמֶּלֶךְ יוֹשֵׁב בֵּית הַחֹרֶף בְּחֹדֶשׁ
 הַתְּשִׁיעִי וְאֶת־הָאֵח לִפְנֵי מִבְעֶרֶת: ^{כג} וַיְהִי כִּקְרוֹא
 יְהוּדִי שְׁלֹשׁ דְּלָתוֹת וְאַרְבַּעַת יִקְרַעַהּ בְּתֵּעַר הַסֹּפֵר
 וְהַשֵּׁלֶךְ אֶל־הָאֵשׁ אֲשֶׁר אֶל־הָאֵח עַד־תֵּם כָּל־
 הַמְּגִלָּה עַל־הָאֵשׁ אֲשֶׁר עַל־הָאֵח: ^{כד} וְלֹא פָּחְדוּ
 וְלֹא קָרְעוּ אֶת־בְּגָדֵיהֶם הַמֶּלֶךְ וְכָל־עַבְדָּיו
 הַשְּׂמֹמִים אֵת כָּל־הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה: ^{כה} וְגַם אֶלְנָתָן
 וְדַלְיָהוּ וְגַמְרִיָּהוּ הִפְגְּעוּ בַּמֶּלֶךְ לְבַלְתִּי שָׂרֵף אֶת־
 הַמְּגִלָּה וְלֹא שָׁמַע אֲלֵיהֶם: ^{כו} וַיִּצְוֶה הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶת־
 יְרַחְמֵאֵל בֶּן־הַמֶּלֶךְ וְאֶת־שָׂרְיָהוּ בֶן־עֲזַרְיָאֵל וְאֶת־
 שְׁלֹמִיָּהוּ בֶן־עַבְדָּאֵל לְקַחַת אֶת־בְּרוּךְ הַסֹּפֵר וְאֶת־
 יְרֵמְיָהוּ הַנְּבִיא וַיִּסְתַּרְם יְהוָה: {ס}

^{כז} וַיְהִי דְבַר־יְהוָה אֶל־יְרֵמְיָהוּ אַחֲרָיו שָׂרֵף הַמֶּלֶךְ
 אֶת־הַמְּגִלָּה וְאֶת־הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר כָּתַב בְּרוּךְ מִפִּי

brought it from the chamber of the secretary Elishama; and Jehudi read it in the hearing of the king and all the chief men standing round the king. ²² Now, the king was sitting in his winter apartments – it was the ninth month – with a fire burning in a brazier in front of him. ²³ And it happened that, each time Jehudi had read three or four columns, the king would cut them off with a scribe’s knife and throw them into the fire in the brazier until the whole of the scroll had been burnt in the fire in the brazier. ²⁴ Yet, in spite of hearing all these words, neither the king nor any of his courtiers took alarm or tore their clothes; ²⁵ and although Elnathan and Delaiah and Gemariah had urged the king not to burn the scroll, he would not listen to them; ²⁶ and the king commanded the king’s son Jerahmeel and Seraiah son of Azriel and Shelemiah son of Abdeel to arrest the scribe Baruch and the prophet Jeremiah; but Yahweh had hidden them.

²⁷ And then the word of Yahweh came to Jeremiah, after the king had burnt the scroll containing the words that Baruch had written

²² ‘With a fire burning in a brazier’ follows the LXX, Tg and Peshitta; the MT has ‘and with a brazier’.

²³ In place of ‘the king’ (here following the NJB & NRSV), the MT has ‘he’. The literal translation of ‘columns’ is ‘doors’; this is the only time the word is used in this way but all the commentaries and lexicons agree on its meaning, which is figurative based on the similarity of shape.

²⁴ The action of the king and his courtiers should be contrasted with that of the officials who heard the same things read (v. 16); the former did not tear their clothes in grief and sorrow but, instead, the king cut up the scroll (the words ‘tear’ and ‘cut off’ are the same in Hebrew – קרע).

²⁵ This verse is essentially a flashback to a time before the scroll was totally burned (v. 23).

²⁶ The title ‘king’s son’ (cf. 38:6, 1K 22:26–27) indicates a court functionary, perhaps, from the context, a courtier.

²⁷ Using the destruction of the scroll as a symbol, Jeremiah announced the ignominious death of Jehoiakim (22:18–19, 2K 24:6–15) and dictated an expanded copy of the scroll (probably contained largely in Chs 1–25).

יִרְמִיָּהוּ לֵאמֹר: כִּי שׁוּב קַח־לְךָ מִגִּלָּה אַחֲרֵת וּכְתַב
עָלֶיהָ אֶת כָּל־הַדְּבָרִים הַרְּאֻשִׁים אֲשֶׁר הָיוּ עַל־
הַמִּגִּלָּה הַרְּאֻשָּׁה אֲשֶׁר שָׂרַף יְהוֹיָקִים מִלְּךְ־
יְהוּדָה: כִּי וְעַל־יְהוֹיָקִים מִלְּךְ־יְהוּדָה תֹּאמֶר כֹּה
אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי שָׂרְפָת אֶת־הַמִּגִּלָּה הַזֹּאת לֵאמֹר
מִדּוּעַ כָּתַבְתָּ עָלֶיהָ לֵאמֹר בְּא־יָבוֹא מִלְּךְ־בָּבֶל
וְהִשְׁחִית אֶת־הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת וְהִשְׁבִּית מִמֶּנָּה אָדָם
וּבְהֵמָה: {ס}

לִלְכֹן כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה עַל־יְהוֹיָקִים מִלְּךְ יְהוּדָה לֹא־
יִהְיֶה־לּוֹ יוֹשֵׁב עַל־כִּסֵּא דָוִד וְנִבְלָתוֹ תִּהְיֶה
מִשְׁלֶכֶת לַחֲרֹב בַּיּוֹם וּלְקָרָח בַּלַּיְלָה: לֹא וּפְקַדְתִּי
עָלָיו וְעַל־זֵרְעוֹ וְעַל־עַבְדָּיו אֶת־עוֹנָם וְהִבֵּאתִי
עָלֵיהֶם וְעַל־יֹשְׁבֵי יְרוּשָׁלַם וְאֶל־אִישׁ יְהוּדָה אֶת
כָּל־הָרָעָה אֲשֶׁר־דִּבַּרְתִּי אֲלֵיהֶם וְלֹא שָׁמְעוּ:
לִב וְיִרְמִיָּהוּ לֵקַח מִגִּלָּה אַחֲרֵת וַיִּתְּנָהּ אֶל־בְּרוּךְ
בֶּן־נֶרְיָהוּ הַסֹּפֵר וַיִּכְתֹּב עָלֶיהָ מִפִּי יִרְמִיָּהוּ אֶת כָּל־
דְּבָרֵי הַסֹּפֵר אֲשֶׁר שָׂרַף יְהוֹיָקִים מִלְּךְ־יְהוּדָה בְּאֵשׁ
וְעוֹד נֹסֵף עָלֵיהֶם דְּבָרִים רַבִּים כִּהְמָה: {פ}

down at Jeremiah's dictation, saying, ²⁸ "Take for yourself another scroll and write down on it all the former words that were written on the first scroll, which Jehoiakim, the king of Judah, has burnt; ²⁹ and, as regards Jehoiakim, the king of Judah, you are to say to him, "Yahweh says this: You have dared to burn that scroll, saying: Why have you written down: the king of Babylon will most certainly come and lay waste to this country and leave it without any human or any animal?

³⁰ Therefore, this is what Yahweh says about Jehoiakim king of Judah: He shall have no one to occupy the throne of David, and his dead body shall be tossed out to the heat of the day and the frost of the night. ³¹ And I will punish him, and his offspring, and his courtiers, for their iniquity; on them, on the inhabitants of Jerusalem and on the people of Judah, I will bring the total disaster that I had decreed for them but to which they have paid no attention."³² Jeremiah then took another scroll and gave it to the scribe Baruch son of Neriah, who in it, at Jeremiah's dictation, wrote all the words of the scroll that Jehoiakim king of Judah had burnt, and many similar words were added to them.

²⁸ Literally translated, the verse opens, 'Return, take another...' but the verb 'return' (שׁוּב) is used in the sense of repetition.

²⁹ There is no indication in the narrative that Jehoiakim ever directly asked Jeremiah this question.

³⁰ This prophesy was not 'totally' fulfilled: his son Jehoiachin (Jeconiah) did occupy the throne for 3 months (2Kgs 23:8) but his rule was negligible and, after his exile to Babylon, he himself was promised that neither he nor his successors would occupy the throne of David (cf. 22:30).

³¹ Literally translated, this verse ends, "...all the disaster which I spoke against them and they did not listen (or obey)."

³² The NJB, avoiding the use of the passive verb, ends the verse with, "with many similar words in addition;" here, we follow the NRSV.

ירמיהו פרק לז

א וַיִּמְלֹךְ-מֶלֶךְ צְדָקְיָהוּ בֶן-יֹאשִׁיָּהוּ תַּחַת כְּנִיָּהוּ בֶן-
יְהוֹיָקִים אֲשֶׁר הַמֶּלֶךְ נְבוּכַדְרֶאֶצַּר מֶלֶךְ-בָּבֶל
בְּאַרְץ יְהוּדָה: ב וְלֹא שָׁמַע הוּא וְעַבְדָּיו וְעַם הָאָרֶץ
אֶל-דְּבָרֵי יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר בְּיַד יְרֵמְיָהוּ הַנָּבִיא:
ג וַיִּשְׁלַח הַמֶּלֶךְ צְדָקְיָהוּ אֶת-יְהוֹכָל בֶּן-שְׁלֵמְיָהוּ
וְאֶת-צְפַנְיָהוּ בֶן-מַעֲשִׂיָּהוּ הַכֹּהֵן אֶל-יְרֵמְיָהוּ הַנָּבִיא
לֵאמֹר הֲתַפְלֵל-נָא בְעַדְנוּ אֶל-יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ:
ד וַיְרַמְיָהוּ בָּא וַיֵּצֵא בְתוֹךְ הָעָם וְלֹא-נִתְּנָו אֶתוֹ בַּיִת
הַכְּלִיא הַכְּלוּא: ה וַיְחִיל פְּרֻעָה יֵצֵא מִמִּצְרַיִם
וַיִּשְׁמְעוּ הַכַּשְׂדִּים הַצָּרִים עַל-יְרוּשָׁלַם אֶת-שְׁמֵעַם
וַיַּעֲלוּ מֵעַל יְרוּשָׁלַם: {פ}

ו וַיְהִי דְבַר-יְהוָה אֶל-יְרֵמְיָהוּ הַנָּבִיא לֵאמֹר: ז כֹּה-
אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל כֹּה תֹאמְרוּ אֶל-מֶלֶךְ-

JEREMIAH 37

¹ Zedekiah son of Josiah became king, succeeding Coniah son of Jehoiakim. Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had made him king of Judah; ² but neither he nor his courtiers nor the people of the country paid any attention to the words Yahweh spoke through the prophet Jeremiah. ³ King Zedekiah sent Jehucal son of Shelemiah and the priest Zephaniah son of Maaseiah to the prophet Jeremiah with this message, "Intercede for us with Yahweh our God." ⁴ (Now Jeremiah was still moving freely among the people: he had not yet been put in prison. ⁵ Meanwhile, Pharaoh's army was on the move from Egypt and the Chaldeans besieging Jerusalem had raised the siege when they heard the news.) ⁶ Then the word of Yahweh came to Jeremiah as follows, ⁷ "Yahweh, the God of Israel, says this, "This is what the two of you shall say to the king

JEREMIAH 37

- ¹ 'Coniah' is another name for Jehoiakim (elsewhere in this book called 'Jeconiah').
- ² Vv. 1-2 are introductory to Chs 37-38 and are intended to characterize Zedekiah and his regime as disobedient, just like Jehoiakim and his regime had been (36:27, cf. 2K 24:19-20); this characterisation is important because Zedekiah is portrayed in the incidents that follow as seeking God's help or seeking a word from God.
- ³ This is the 2nd of 2 delegations that Zedekiah sent to Jeremiah to ask him to pray for a miraculous deliverance; both are against the background of the siege of Jerusalem instigated by Zedekiah's rebelling against Nebuchadnezzar and sending to Egypt for help (cf. Ezk 17:15).
- ⁴ The *Kethib*/*Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.
- ⁵ Shortly after his accession (589 or 588 BCE), Pharaoh Hophra (Apries, see 44:30) came up from Egypt to relieve Jerusalem from the siege (34:12).
- ⁶ The literal translation of 'as follows' is simply 'saying'.
- ⁷ The NJB & NRSV have 'inquire of' in place of 'ask help from', here following NETB: the dominant use of **שׁוּא** is in the sense of gaining information but it is also used in the sense of seeking help.

יהודה השלח אתכם אלי לדרשני הנה חיל פרעה היצא לכם לעזרה שב לארצו מצרים: וישבו הכשדים ונלחמו על-העיר הזאת ולכדה ושרפה באש: {פ}

ט כה אמר יהוה אל-תשאון נפשתיכם לאמר הלך ילכו מעלינו הכשדים כילא ילכו: כי אם-הכיתם כל-חיל כשדים הנלחמים אתכם ונשארו-בם אנשים מדקרים איש באהלו יקומו ושרפו את-העיר הזאת באש: י והיה בהעלות חיל הכשדים מעל ירושלם מפני חיל פרעה: {ס} יב ויצא ירמיהו מירושלם ללכת ארץ בנימין לחלק משם בתוך העם: יג ויהי-הוא בשער בנימין ושם בעל פקדת ושמם יראיה בן-שלמיה בן-חנניה ויתפש את-ירמיהו הנביא לאמר אל-הכשדים אתה נפל: יד ויאמר ירמיהו שקר אינני נפל על-הכשדים ולא שמע אליו ויתפש יראיה בירמיהו ויבאהו אל-השרים: טו ויקצפו השרים על-ירמיהו

of Judah, who sent you to me to ask help from me: Is Pharaoh's army marching to your aid? It will withdraw to its own country, Egypt. ⁸ The Chaldeans will return to fight against this city; they will capture it and burn it down.

⁹ "Yahweh says this: Do not cheer yourselves, thinking: The Chaldeans are leaving us for good! They will not leave. ¹⁰ Even if you defeated the whole Chaldaean army now fighting against you until there were only the wounded left, they would stand up again, each man in his tent, to burn this city down." ¹¹ At the time when the Chaldaean army had withdrawn from Jerusalem at the approach of Pharaoh's army, ¹² Jeremiah set out from Jerusalem for the land of Benjamin to receive a share of his property among the people there. ¹³ He was at the Benjamin Gate when the sentinel there, a certain Irijah son of Shelemiah, son of Hananiah, arrested the prophet Jeremiah, shouting, "You are deserting to the Chaldeans!" ¹⁴ "It is a lie," Jeremiah answered, "I am not deserting to the Chaldeans." But Irijah would not listen to Jeremiah and took him under arrest to the officials; ¹⁵ and the officials, furious

⁸ The NJB has 'attack' in place of 'fight against', here following the NRSV.

⁹ In place of 'will not leave', the NJB has 'are not leaving'; here, we follow the MT.

¹⁰ There is no easy way to reduce the complexity of this verse without losing the causal/conditional connexions that provide its rhetorical force.

¹¹ The *Setumah* at the end of this verse is represented in the translation by 2 Em-Space characters.

¹² This verse probably speaks of the same matter as was to occupy Jeremiah's mind some time later, and which is reported in Ch. 32.

¹³ The 'Hananiah' mentioned here is not the false prophet of the same name whom Jeremiah confronted about 6 years earlier (28:1, 5, 10, 15).

¹⁴ The NJB has 'chief men' in place of 'officials', here following the NRSV & NETB.

¹⁵ The officials mentioned here are not the same as those mentioned in 36:12, most of whom were favourably disposed toward Jeremiah.

והִכּוּ אֹתוֹ וְנָתְנוּ אוֹתוֹ בַּיַּת הָאֲסוּר בַּיַּת יְהוֹנָתָן
הַסֹּפֵר כִּי־אֶתוֹ עָשׂוּ לְבַיִת הַכְּלָא: ^{טז} כִּי בָא יִרְמְיָהוּ
אֶל־בַּיִת הַבּוֹר וְאֶל־הַחֲנִיּוֹת וַיֵּשֶׁב־שָׁם יִרְמְיָהוּ
יָמִים רַבִּים: ^{יז} וַיִּשְׁלַח הַמֶּלֶךְ צְדָקְיָהוּ וַיִּקְחֵהוּ
וַיִּשְׁאַלְהוּ הַמֶּלֶךְ בְּבֵיתוֹ בְּסֹתֵר וַיֹּאמֶר הֲיֵשׁ דָּבָר
מֵאֵת יְהוָה וַיֹּאמֶר יִרְמְיָהוּ יֵשׁ וַיֹּאמֶר בְּיַד מְלָךְ־
בָּבֶל תָּנֻתָּן: ^{יח} וַיֹּאמֶר יִרְמְיָהוּ אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ צְדָקְיָהוּ
מָה חָטָאתִי לָךְ וְלַעֲבָדֶיךָ וְלָעָם הַזֶּה כִּי־נָתַתָּם
אוֹתִי אֶל־בַּיִת הַכְּלָא: ^{יט} וְאִיזוֹ וְאִיָּה נְבִיאֵיכֶם אֲשֶׁר־
נְבִאִו לָכֶם לֵאמֹר לֹא־יָבֵא מֶלֶךְ־בָּבֶל עָלֵיכֶם וְעַל
הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת: ^כ וְעַתָּה שְׁמַע־נָא אֲדֹנָי הַמֶּלֶךְ תִּפְלֵ־
נָא תַּחֲנֹנְתִי לְפָנֶיךָ וְאֶל־תִּשְׁבְּנִי בַּיַּת יְהוֹנָתָן הַסֹּפֵר
וְלֹא אָמוֹת שָׁם: ^{כא} וַיִּצְוָה הַמֶּלֶךְ צְדָקְיָהוּ וַיִּפְקְדוּ
אֶת־יִרְמְיָהוּ בַּחֲצַר הַמִּטְרָה וְנָתַן לוֹ כֶּכֶר־לֶחֶם
לְיוֹם מִחוּץ הָאֲפִים עַד־תֵּם כָּל־הַלֶּחֶם מִן־הָעִיר
וַיֵּשֶׁב יִרְמְיָהוּ בַּחֲצַר הַמִּטְרָה:

with Jeremiah, had him beaten and shut up in the house of the scribe Jonathon, which had been turned into a prison. ¹⁶ Thus, Jeremiah found himself in an underground vault; and there he stayed for a long time. ¹⁷ Later, King Zedekiah had sent for him, and the king questioned him privately in his palace. He asked, “Is there any word from Yahweh?” “There is,” Jeremiah answered, and added, “you will be handed over to the king of Babylon.” ¹⁸ Jeremiah then said to King Zedekiah, “What wrong have I done you, or your servants or this people, for you to have me put in prison? ¹⁹ Where are your prophets now who prophesied, “The king of Babylon will not attack you or this country”? ²⁰ Now I beg you to hear me, my lord king! I beg you to approve my request! Do not have me taken back to the house of the scribe Jonathon, or I shall die there.” ²¹ King Zedekiah then gave an order, and Jeremiah was confined to the Court of the Guard and given a loaf of bread a day from the Street of the Bakers as long as there was bread left in the city. Thus, Jeremiah stayed in the Court of the Guard.

¹⁶ The ‘underground vault’ was probably a cellar containing water cisterns.

¹⁷ Jeremiah’s answer, even under duress, was the same that he had given Zedekiah earlier.

¹⁸ The NJB has ‘courtiers’ in place of ‘servants’, here following the NRSV.

¹⁹ The *Kethib*/*Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

²⁰ More literally translated, the verse ends ‘so that I shall not die there’; the particle that introduces this clause (וְלֹא) regularly introduces negative purpose clauses after the volitive sequence; however, purpose and result clauses in Hebrew are often indistinguishable: here, the clause is more in the nature of a negative result.

²¹ The ‘Street of the Bakers’ was probably connected with ‘Furnace Tower’ (Ne 3:11); the order given by the king indicates that the city was already blockaded, and that the supply of provisions was falling short.

ירמיהו פרק לח

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א וַיִּשְׁמַע שַׁפְטִיָּה בֶן־מַטָּן וְגַדְלִיָּהוּ בֶן־פִּשְׁחוֹר וַיּוֹכֵל בֶּן־שְׁלֵמְיָהוּ וּפִשְׁחוֹר בֶּן־מַלְכִּיָּה אֶת־הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר יִרְמְיָהוּ מְדַבֵּר אֶל־כָּל־הָעָם לֵאמֹר: ב כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה הַיֹּשֵׁב בְּעִיר הַזֹּאת יָמוּת בַּחֶרֶב בְּרָעַב וּבַדְּבַר וְהֵיטֵא אֶל־הַכַּשְׂדִּים יַחִיה וְחָיָה וְהִיתָה־לּוֹ נַפְשׁוֹ לְשָׁלָל וְחָי: {ס}

ג כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה הַנֹּתֵן הַנֶּתֵן תִּנְתָּן הָעִיר הַזֹּאת בְּיַד חֵיל מֶלֶךְ־בָּבֶל וּלְכַדָּה: ד וַיֹּאמְרוּ הַשָּׂרִים אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ יוֹמַת נָא אֶת־הָאִישׁ הַזֶּה כִּי־עַל־כֵּן הוּא־מַרְפָּא אֶת־יְדֵי אַנְשֵׁי הַמְּלַחְמָה הַנּוֹשְׂאִים בְּעִיר הַזֹּאת וְאֵת יְדֵי כָל־הָעָם לְדַבֵּר אֲלֵיהֶם כְּדְבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה כִּי הָאִישׁ הַזֶּה אֵינָנו דֹּרֵשׁ לְשָׁלוֹם לָעָם הַזֶּה כִּי אִם־לְרָעָה: ה וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ צְדַקְיָהוּ הִנֵּה־הוּא בְּיַדְכֶם כִּי־אֵין הַמֶּלֶךְ יוֹכֵל אֶתְכֶם דָּבַר: ו וַיִּקְחוּ אֶת־יִרְמְיָהוּ וַיִּשְׁלְכוּ אֹתוֹ אֶל־הַבּוֹר מַלְכִּיָּהוּ בֶן־הַמֶּלֶךְ אֲשֶׁר בַּחֲצַר הַמַּטְרָה וַיִּשְׁלְחוּ אֶת־יִרְמְיָהוּ

1 Now Shephatiah son of Mattan, Gedaliah son of Pashhur, Jucal son of Shelemiah and Pashhur son of Malchiah heard the words that Jeremiah was saying to all the people, 2 “Yahweh says this, “Anyone who stays in this city will die by the sword, by famine or by plague; but anyone who leaves it and surrenders to the Chaldeans will live; he will escape with his life.

3 Yahweh says this: This city will certainly be handed over to the army of the king of Babylon, and he will capture it.” 4 And the chief men then said to the king, “You must, we implore you, have this man put to death, because he is unquestionably disheartening the soldiers who are left in the city and all the people too, by speaking such words to them. For, this man is seeking not the welfare of the people but their ruin.” 5 And King Zedekiah answered, “Here he is; he is in your hands as you know; for, the king is powerless to oppose you.” 6 So, they took Jeremiah and put him into the storage-well of the king’s son Malchiah, which was in the Court of the Guard, letting Jeremiah down with ropes. Now, there was

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1 Jeremiah’s continued insistence on surrender to Nebuchadnezzar was dangerous for Zedekiah’s pro-Egyptian counsellors.

2 The *Kethib/Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

3 See 21:10, 32:28, 34:2 & 37:8 for this same prophecy; Jeremiah had repeatedly said this or words to the same effect.

4 The literal translation of ‘disheartening’ is ‘weakening the hands of’.

5 ‘To oppose you’ is a conjectural translation; the MT has ‘(with) you’.

6 The fact that the storage-well was virtually dry indicates a time shortly before Nebuchadnezzar’s final assault, in August 587 BCE (52:5–7).

בַּחֲבָלִים וּבַבּוֹר אֵין־מַיִם כִּי אִם־טֵיט וַיִּטְבַּע
יִרְמְיָהוּ בְּטֵיט: {ס}

וַיִּשְׁמַע עֶבֶד־מֶלֶךְ הַכּוּשִׁי אִישׁ סָרִיס וְהוּא בְּבַיִת
הַמֶּלֶךְ כִּי־נָתַן אֶת־יִרְמְיָהוּ אֶל־הַבּוֹר וְהַמֶּלֶךְ יוֹשֵׁב
בְּשַׁעַר בְּנֵי־מִן: ^ח וַיֵּצֵא עֶבֶד־מֶלֶךְ מִבַּיִת הַמֶּלֶךְ
וַיְדַבֵּר אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ לֵאמֹר: ^ט אֲדַנִּי הַמֶּלֶךְ הִרְעוּ
הָאֲנָשִׁים הָאֵלֶּה אֶת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר עָשׂוּ לִירְמְיָהוּ
הַנְּבִיא אֶת אֲשֶׁר־הִשְׁלִיכוּ אֶל־הַבּוֹר וַיָּמָת תַּחְתָּיו
מִפְּנֵי הָרָעֵב כִּי אֵין הַלֶּחֶם עוֹד בְּעִיר: ^י וַיֵּצֵא הַמֶּלֶךְ
אֶת עֶבֶד־מֶלֶךְ הַכּוּשִׁי לֵאמֹר קַח בִּידְךָ מִזֶּה
שְׁלֵשִׁים אָנָשִׁים וְהַעֲלִיתָ אֶת־יִרְמְיָהוּ הַנְּבִיא מִן־
הַבּוֹר בְּטָרִם יָמוֹת: ^{יא} וַיִּקַּח עֶבֶד־מֶלֶךְ אֶת־
הָאֲנָשִׁים בִּידּוֹ וַיָּבֵא בֵּית־הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶל־תַּחַת הָאוֹצֵר
וַיִּקַּח מִשָּׁם בְּלוּיֵי הַסַּחֲבוֹת סַחֲבוֹת וּבְלוּיֵי מְלָחִים
וַיִּשְׁלַח אֶל־יִרְמְיָהוּ אֶל־הַבּוֹר בַּחֲבָלִים: ^{יב} וַיֹּאמֶר
עֶבֶד־מֶלֶךְ הַכּוּשִׁי אֶל־יִרְמְיָהוּ שִׁים נָא בְּלוּאֵי
הַסַּחֲבוֹת וְהַמְּלָחִים תַּחַת אַצְלוֹת יָדֶיךָ מִתַּחַת

no water in the storage-well, only mud and, into the mud, Jeremiah sank.

⁷ Now, Ebed-Melech the Cushite, a eunuch attached to the king's house, heard that Jeremiah had been put into the storage-well. The king happened to be sitting at the Benjamin Gate, ⁸ so Ebed-Melech came out from the king's house and spoke to the king. ⁹ "My lord king," he said, "these men have done a wicked thing by treating the prophet Jeremiah like this: they have thrown him into the storage-well. He will die of starvation there, since there is no bread left in the city." ¹⁰ At this, the king gave Ebed-Melech the Cushite the following order: "Take thirty men with you from here and pull the prophet Jeremiah out of the storage-well before he dies." ¹¹ So, Ebed-Melech took the men with him and went into the house of the king, to the wardrobe of the Treasury; and, out of it, he took some old rags and worn-out clothes, which he then lowered on ropes to Jeremiah in the storage-well. ¹² And Ebed-Melech the Cushite then said to Jeremiah, "These rags and worn-out clothes are for you to put under your armpits to pad the ropes."

⁷ A 'Cushite' is an Ethiopian; the NRSV uses the latter term.

⁸ The NJB & NETB have 'palace' in place of 'king's house', here following the MT & NRSV (as also in v. 7).

⁹ 'There is no bread left in the city' is rhetorical exaggeration: the food did not run out until just before the city fell.

¹⁰ Some modern English versions (e.g., NRSV, REB, TEV) read 'three' in place of 'thirty' on the basis that 30 men would not be necessary for the task; though the difference involves minimal emendation (שְׁלֵשִׁים for שְׁלֹשָׁה), there is no textual evidence for it except for one Hebrew MS.

¹¹ 'To the wardrobe' is a conjectural translation (אֶל־מְלַתְחַת, see 2K 10:22); the MT has 'to under' (אֶל־תַּחַת). The Kethib/Qere difference here would benefit from an explanation.

¹² The literal translation of 'to pad the ropes' is 'under the ropes'.

לְחַבְלִים וַיַּעַשׂ יִרְמְיָהוּ כֵן: ^י וַיִּמְשְׁכוּ אֶת־יִרְמְיָהוּ
בְּחַבְלִים וַיַּעֲלוּ אֹתוֹ מִן־הַבּוֹר וַיָּשֶׁב יִרְמְיָהוּ בְּחֶצֶר
הַמְטָרָה: {ס}

^י וַיִּשְׁלַח הַמֶּלֶךְ צְדָקְיָהוּ וַיִּקַּח אֶת־יִרְמְיָהוּ הַנְּבִיא
אֵלָיו אֶל־מְבוֹא הַשְּׁלִישִׁי אֲשֶׁר בְּבַיִת יְהוָה וַיֹּאמֶר
הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶל־יִרְמְיָהוּ שְׂאֵל אֲנִי אֶתְּךָ דְבַר אֶל־תִּכְחַד
מִמֶּנִּי דְבַר: ^{טו} וַיֹּאמֶר יִרְמְיָהוּ אֶל־צְדָקְיָהוּ כִּי אֲגִיד
לְךָ הַלְּזָא הַמֵּת תִּמְיתֵנִי וְכִי אֵינְעָדָךְ לֹא תִשְׁמַע
אֵלָי: ^{טז} וַיִּשָּׁבַע הַמֶּלֶךְ צְדָקְיָהוּ אֶל־יִרְמְיָהוּ בַּסֶּתֶר
לֵאמֹר חַי־יְהוָה (את) אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה־לָנוּ אֶת־הַנֶּפֶשׁ
הַזֹּאת אִם־אֲמִיתְךָ וְאִם־אֶתְּנֶךָ בְּיַד הָאֲנָשִׁים
הָאֵלֶּה אֲשֶׁר מִבְּקָשִׁים אֶת־נַפְשְׁךָ: {ס}

^{יז} וַיֹּאמֶר יִרְמְיָהוּ אֶל־צְדָקְיָהוּ {ס} כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה
אֱלֹהֵי עֲבָאוֹת אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אִם־יֵצֵא תֵצֵא אֶל־
שָׂרֵי מַלְךְ־בָּבֶל וְחִיתָה נַפְשְׁךָ וְהָעִיר הַזֹּאת לֹא
תִשְׂרָף בָּאֵשׁ וְחִיתָה אַתָּה וּבֵיתְךָ: ^{יח} וְאִם לֹא־תֵצֵא
אֶל־שָׂרֵי מַלְךְ־בָּבֶל וְנִתְּנָה הָעִיר הַזֹּאת בְּיַד

Jeremiah did this. ¹³ Then they hauled Jeremiah up with the ropes and pulled him out of the storage-well; and Jeremiah stayed in the Court of the Guard.

¹⁴ King Zedekiah had the prophet Jeremiah summoned to him at the third entrance to the Temple of Yahweh. “I want to ask you for a word,” the king said to Jeremiah, “keep nothing back from me.” ¹⁵ Jeremiah answered Zedekiah, “If I do proclaim it to you, are you not sure to have me put to death? And, if I give you advice, you will not listen to me.”

¹⁶ King Zedekiah then secretly swore an oath to Jeremiah, saying, “As Yahweh lives, giver of this life of ours, I will have you neither put to death nor handed over to those men who are determined to kill you.”

¹⁷ And Jeremiah then said to Zedekiah: “Yahweh, God Sabaoth, God of Israel, says this, “If you will only surrender to the king of Babylon’s generals, your life will be safe and this city will not be burnt down; you and your family will live. ¹⁸ But if you do not surrender to the king of Babylon’s generals, this city will be handed over to the

¹³ Jeremiah has been released from the storage-well but still had to stay in the Court of the Guard.

¹⁴ The precise location of the ‘third entrance’ is unknown, since it is mentioned nowhere else in the Hebrew Bible.

¹⁵ Jeremiah’s question is rhetorical and expects a positive answer.

¹⁶ For the word את, here highlighted according to the MAM text, the Mechon Mamre text has an empty set of parentheses (containing just a space) after the word.

¹⁷ Zedekiah held out his hope of escape until the end and attempted to do so but was unsuccessful (cf. 39:4–5).

¹⁸ The literal translation of ‘clutches’ is ‘hand’.

הַכַּשְׂדִּים וְשָׂרְפוּהָ בְּאֵשׁ וְאַתָּה לֹא־תִמְלֹט
מִיָּדָם: {ס}

יט וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ צְדָקְיָהוּ אֶל־יִרְמְיָהוּ אֲנִי דָאֵג אֶת־
הַיְהוּדִים אֲשֶׁר נָפְלוּ אֶל־הַכַּשְׂדִּים פֶּן־יִתְּנוּ אֹתִי
בְיָדָם וְהִתְעַלְלוּ־בִּי: כ וַיֹּאמֶר יִרְמְיָהוּ לֹא יִתְּנוּ
שְׁמַע־נָא | בְּקוֹל יְהוָה לֹא־אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי דֹבֵר אֲלֶיךָ וַיִּיטֹב
לְךָ וְתַחֲי נַפְשֶׁךָ: כא וְאִם־מָאֵן אַתָּה לָצֵאת זֶה
הַדְּבָר אֲשֶׁר הִרְאֵנִי יְהוָה: כב וְהִנֵּה כָל־הַנְּשִׁים
אֲשֶׁר נִשְׂאָרוּ בְּבַיִת מֶלֶךְ־יְהוּדָה מוֹצְאוֹת אֶל־שָׂרֵי
מֶלֶךְ בָּבֶל

וְהִנֵּה אָמַרְתְּ
הַסִּיתוּךָ וַיִּכְלוּ לְךָ אַנְשֵׁי שְׁלָמְךָ
הִטְבְּעוּ בְּבֶץ רַגְלֶךָ
נִסְגּוּ אַחֲזֹר:

כג וְאַתָּה כָּל־נְשֵׁיךָ וְאַתָּה בְּנֵיךָ מוֹצְאִים אֶל־הַכַּשְׂדִּים
וְאַתָּה לֹא־תִמְלֹט מִיָּדָם כִּי בְיַד מֶלֶךְ־בָּבֶל תִּתְּפֹשׂ
וְאַתָּה־הָעִיר הַזֹּאת תִּשְׂרֹף בְּאֵשׁ: {ס}

Chaldaeans and they will burn it down; nor will you yourself escape their clutches.”

¹⁹ King Zedekiah said to Jeremiah, “I am afraid of the Judaeans who have deserted to the Chaldaeans: I may be handed over to them and they would torture me.” ²⁰ Jeremiah said, “You will not be handed over to them.” “Please listen to Yahweh’s voice as I have relayed it to you, and all will go well with you and your life will be spared. ²¹ But if you refuse to surrender, this is what Yahweh has shown me: ²² the sight of all the women left in the king of Judah’s palace being led off to the king of Babylon’s generals and saying:

“They have misled you;
they have triumphed over you, those friends of yours!
Your feet have sunk in the mud!
They are up and away!”

²³ “Yes, all your wives and children will be led off to the Chaldaeans, and you yourself will not escape their clutches but will be seized by the king of Babylon; and as for this city, it will be burnt down.”

¹⁹ Other possible translations for ‘torture’ (following NETB) are ‘abuse’ (NRSV) and ‘ill-treat’ (NJB); cf. Jg 19:25 & 1S 31:4.

²⁰ Literally translated, this verse ends, “...and your life will live.”

²¹ For this verse, here following the NJB, the NRSV reads, “But if you are determined not to surrender, this is what the LORD has shown me” and NETB has “But if you refuse to surrender, the LORD has shown me a vision of what will happen. Here is what I saw.”

²² The literal translation of ‘these friends of yours’ is ‘these men of your peace’. These lines seem to have been borrowed from a popular song.

²³ ‘It will be burnt down’ follows the LXX and some Hebrew MSS; the MT has ‘you (masculine) will burn it down’ or ‘it (feminine, i.e. the hand of Nebuchadnezzar) will burn it down’.

כִּד וַיֹּאמֶר צְדָקְיָהוּ אֶל־יִרְמְיָהוּ אִישׁ אֶל־יָדַע
 בְּדַבְרֵי־הָאֱלֹהִים וְלֹא תָמוּת: כִּי וְכִי־יִשְׁמְעוּ הַשָּׂרִים
 כִּי־דַבַּרְתִּי אִתְּךָ וַיָּבֹאוּ אֵלַיךָ וְאָמְרוּ אֵלַיךָ הַגִּידָה־
 נָא לָנוּ מֵהַדְּבָרָתְךָ אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶל־תַּכְחֹד מִמֶּנּוּ וְלֹא
 נָמִיתְךָ וּמֵהַדְּבָר אֵלַיךָ הַמֶּלֶךְ: כִּי וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵיהֶם
 מִפִּיל־אֲנִי תַחֲנַנְתִּי לִפְנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ לְבַלְתִּי הַשִּׁיבֵנִי בֵּית
 יְהוֹנָתָן לְמוֹת שָׁם: {פ}

כִּי וַיָּבֹאוּ כָּל־הַשָּׂרִים אֶל־יִרְמְיָהוּ וַיִּשְׁאֲלוּ אֹתוֹ וַיַּגִּד
 לָהֶם כְּכָל־הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה הַמֶּלֶךְ
 וַיַּחֲרְשׁוּ מִמֶּנּוּ כִּי לֹא־נִשְׁמַע הַדָּבָר: כִּי וַיֵּשֶׁב
 יִרְמְיָהוּ בַּחֲצַר הַמַּטְרָה עַד־יוֹם אֲשֶׁר־נִלְכְּדָה
 יְרוּשָׁלַם {ס}

וְהָיָה כַּאֲשֶׁר נִלְכְּדָה יְרוּשָׁלַם:

²⁴ Zedekiah then said to Jeremiah, “Do not let anyone else know of this conversation, or you will die. ²⁵ If the chief men hear that I have been talking to you, and come and say, “Tell us what you said to the king and what the king said to you; keep nothing back from us, or we shall put you to death,” ²⁶ then you must say to them, “I presented this request to the king: that he would not have me sent back to Jonathon’s house to die.””

²⁷ In fact, all the chief men came to Jeremiah and they questioned him. He told them exactly what the king had ordered him to say. They then left him in peace, since the conversation had not been overheard.

²⁸ Jeremiah stayed in the Court of the Guard until the day Jerusalem was captured.

And he was there when Jerusalem actually was captured.

²⁴ The literal translation of ‘know of this conversation’ (following the NRSV) is ‘hear these words’.

²⁵ The MT (and NRSV) transposes ‘and what the king said to you’ to the end of the verse; here, we follow the Peshitta (and NJB).

²⁶ Vv. 25–26 form a long compound, complex conditional sentence: the condition is found in v. 25 and contains a long quote; the consequence is found in v. 26 and contains another long quote.

²⁷ Literally translated, this verse ends, “And they were silent from him because the word had not been heard.”

²⁸ The precise meaning of the last line and its relation to the context are somewhat uncertain; it is missing from the LXX & Peshitta, and from a few Hebrew MSS. Some English versions omit it as a double writing of the final words of the preceding line; others see it as misplaced from the beginning of 39:3 (NRSV, TEV). The clause probably does belong syntactically with 39:3, but it should not be moved there because there is no textual evidence for doing so; the intervening verses can be interpreted as parenthetical, giving the background for the events that follow.

ירמיהו פרק לט

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א בַּשָּׁנָה הַתְּשַׁעִית לְצִדְקִיָּהוּ מֶלֶךְ־יְהוּדָה בַּחֹדֶשׁ הָעֲשָׂרִי בָּא נְבוּכַדְרֶאצַּר מֶלֶךְ־בָּבֶל וְכָל־חִילוֹ אֶל־יְרוּשָׁלַם וַיִּצְרוּ עָלֶיהָ: **ב** בַּעֲשָׂתֵי־עֶשְׂרֵה שָׁנָה לְצִדְקִיָּהוּ בַּחֹדֶשׁ הָרְבִיעִי בְּתַשְׁעָה לַחֹדֶשׁ הִבְקַעָה הָעִיר: **ג** וַיָּבֹאוּ כָּל שָׂרֵי מֶלֶךְ־בָּבֶל וַיֵּשְׁבוּ בְּשַׁעַר הַתּוֹךְ נִרְגַל שְׂרָאֶצֶר סַמְגַר־נָבוֹ שֵׁר־סָכִים רַב־סָרִיס נִרְגַל שְׂרָאֶצֶר רַב־מַגּוֹ וְכָל־שְׂאֲרֵי־שָׂרֵי מֶלֶךְ בָּבֶל: **ד** וַיְהִי כַּאֲשֶׁר רָאָם צִדְקִיָּהוּ מֶלֶךְ־יְהוּדָה וְכָל־אֲנָשֵׁי הַמְּלַחְמָה וַיִּבְרְחוּ וַיֵּצְאוּ לַיְלָה מִן־הָעִיר דְּרֹךְ־גֵּן הַמֶּלֶךְ בְּשַׁעַר בֵּין הַחֲמַתִּים וַיֵּצֵא דְרֹךְ הָעֲרָבָה: **ה** וַיִּרְדְּפוּ חֵיל־כַּשְׂדִּים אַחֲרָיָהֶם וַיִּשְׁגּוּ אֶת־צִדְקִיָּהוּ בְּעֲרֻבוֹת יָרְחוֹ וַיִּקְחוּ אוֹתוֹ וַיַּעֲלֵהוּ אֶל־נְבוּכַדְרֶאצַּר מֶלֶךְ־בָּבֶל רַב־לְתָהּ בְּאֶרֶץ חַמַת

¹ In the ninth year of Zedekiah king of Judah, in the tenth month, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and all his army advanced on Jerusalem and besieged it. ² In the eleventh year of Zedekiah, in the fourth month, a breach was made in the city. ³ The king of Babylon's officials came and sat in the Middle Gate: Nergal-Sharezer, Samgar-Nebo, Sarsechim a high dignitary of state, Nergal-Sharezer the chief astrologer, and all the king of Babylon's other officials. ⁴ On seeing them, Zedekiah king of Judah and all the soldiers fled, leaving the city under cover of dark, by way of the king's garden through the gate between the two walls, and they went towards the Arabah. ⁵ But the Chaldaean troops pursued them and caught up with Zedekiah in the plains of Jericho; they captured him and took him to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon at Riblah in the territory of Hamath, where he passed sentence

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- ¹ The date here was December 589 – January 588 BCE, at the end of the 9th year of Zedekiah's reign. The text of this section is composed of disparate, ill-assorted elements. The LXX lacks 38:28^b and 39:4–13.
- ² The date here is June–July 587 BCE; so, the siege lasted a full 18 months.
- ³ This is a difficult verse – the text seems to be confused. The repetition of the name 'Nergal-Sharezer' is suspect; the 'high dignitary of state' (literally 'chief eunuch', though the term often has the wider sense of court official) is called Nebushazban in v. 13. Furthermore, the names 'Samgar-Nebo' and 'Sarsechim' are dubious and appear only here. Some suggest amending 'Samgar' to 'prince of Sin-Magir' (appearing on a Babylonian list) and 'Nebo' to 'Nebushazban', also suppressing 'Sarsechim' (which may be a title and a doublet of 'high dignitary of state') and one mention of Nergal-Sharezer. However, these emendations, which would indeed make the passage more coherent, have no textual support.
- ⁴ 'They went' follows the Peshitta (cf. 52:7); the MT has 'he went'.
- ⁵ 2K 25:5 and Jr 52:8 mention that the soldiers all scattered from him: that is why the text focuses on Zedekiah here.

וַיִּדְבֹר אֹתוֹ מִשְׁפָּטִים: ^ו וַיִּשְׁחַט מְלָךְ בְּבֶל אֶת־בְּנֵי צְדָקִיָּהוּ בְּרִבְלָה לְעֵינָיו וְאֶת כָּל־חֲרֵי יְהוּדָה שָׁחַט מְלָךְ בְּבֶל: ^ז וְאֶת־עֵינָיו צְדָקִיָּהוּ עָוַר וַיֹּאסְרֵהוּ בַּנְּחֹשְׁתִּים לְבִיא אֹתוֹ בְּבֶלָה: ^ח וְאֶת־בַּיִת הַמְּלָךְ וְאֶת־בַּיִת הָעָם שָׂרְפוּ הַכְּשָׁדִים בָּאֵשׁ וְאֶת־חֲמוֹת יְרוּשָׁלַם נָתְצוּ: ^ט וְאֶת יֵתֶר הָעָם הַנְּשָׂאָרִים בְּעִיר וְאֶת־הַנְּפִלִים אֲשֶׁר נָפְלוּ עָלָיו וְאֶת יֵתֶר הָעָם הַנְּשָׂאָרִים הִגְלָה נְבוּזַרְאֲדָן רַב־טַבָּחִים בְּבֶל: ^י וּמִן־הָעָם הַדְּלִים אֲשֶׁר אִין־לֵהֶם מְאוּמָה הַשְּׂאִיר נְבוּזַרְאֲדָן רַב־טַבָּחִים בְּאַרְץ יְהוּדָה וַיִּתֵּן לָהֶם כְּרָמִים וַיְגַבִּים בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא: ^{יא} וַיִּצְוּ נְבוּכַדְרֶאֱצַר מְלָךְ־בְּבֶל עַל־יְרֵמְיָהוּ בֶּיַד נְבוּזַרְאֲדָן רַב־טַבָּחִים לֵאמֹר: ^{יב} קַחֲנוּ וְעִינֶיךָ שִׁים עָלָיו וְאַל־תַּעַשׂ לוֹ מְאוּמָה רָע כִּי (אִם) כָּאֲשֶׁר יִדְבֹר אֵלֶיךָ כֵּן עֲשֵׂה עִמּוֹ: ^{יג} וַיִּשְׁלַח נְבוּזַרְאֲדָן רַב־טַבָּחִים וּנְבוּשַׁזְבָּן

on him. ⁶ The king of Babylon slaughtered Zedekiah's sons before his eyes at Riblah; the king of Babylon also had all the nobles of Judah put to death. ⁷ He then put out Zedekiah's eyes and bound him in chains to take him to Babylon. ⁸ The Chaldeans burnt down the royal palace and the private houses and demolished the walls of Jerusalem. ⁹ Nebuzaradan, captain of the guard, deported the rest of the people left in the city, the deserters who had gone over to him, and the rest of the artisans, to Babylon. ¹⁰ But Nebuzaradan, captain of the guard, left some of the poor people behind in the country of Judah, those who had nothing, at the same time giving them vineyards and fields. ¹¹ With regard to Jeremiah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had commanded Nebuzaradan, captain of the guard, as follows ¹² "Take him, look after him; do him no harm, but treat him as he may ask you." ¹³ He entrusted this mission to Nebuzaradan commander of the guard, Nebushazban the high dignitary of state, Nergal-Sharezer the chief astrologer and all

⁶ The NJB has 'leading men' in place of 'nobles', here following the NRSV & NETB.

⁷ A more literal translation of 'chains' would be 'fetters'.

⁸ The literal translation of 'private houses' is 'houses of the people', following the Peshitta; the MT has 'house of the people'. Perhaps the reading ought to be, 'the House of Yahweh and the houses of the people', corresponding to 52:13 and 2K 25:9.

⁹ 'Artisans' is a conjectural translation following the NJB (cf. 52:15); the MT (and NRSV) has 'people who remained'.

¹⁰ Just why Nebuzaradan should do this is uncertain – perhaps he was thinking they would maintain the country for future settlement.

¹¹ In place of 'had commanded', the MT has 'commanded'; however, since Nebuchadnezzar is at Riblah (v. 6) and Nebuzaradan and the other officers named in the next verse are at Jerusalem, the *vav* consecutive imperfect should be translated as a pluperfect.

¹² On the word אֵת, here highlighted according to the MAM text, see #38:16. Note the unusual/unexpected dagesh on the *resh* in רָע.

¹³ The translation, 'he entrusted this mission' (literally 'he despatched'), is uncertain; perhaps it should be understood as 'Nebuzaradan ... Nebushazban ... despatched (men)'.

רַב־סָרִיס וְנִרְגַל שְׂרָאֶצֶר רַב־מַג וְכָל רַבֵּי מְלָךְ־
בָּבֶל: ^ד וַיִּשְׁלְחוּ וַיִּקְחוּ אֶת־יִרְמְיָהוּ מִחֶצֶר הַמְּטָרָה
וַיִּתְּנוּ אֹתוֹ אֶל־גְּדַלְיָהוּ בֶן־אֲחִיקָם בֶּן־שָׁפָן
לְהוֹצֵאֵהוּ אֶל־הַבַּיִת וַיֵּשֶׁב בְּתוֹךְ הָעָם: {ס}

^{טו} וְאַל־יִרְמְיָהוּ הָיָה דְבַר־יְהוָה בְּהִיתוֹ עֹצוֹר בַּחֲצֵר
הַמְּטָרָה לֵאמֹר: ^{טז} הַלֹּדֶךְ וְאִמְרָתְךָ לְעַבְד־מֶלֶךְ
הַכּוּשִׁי לֵאמֹר כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת אֱלֹהֵי
יִשְׂרָאֵל הַנְּנִי מִבֵּי אֶת־דְּבָרֵי אֱלֹהֵי עִיר הַזֹּאת
לְרַעָה וְלֹא לְטוֹבָה וְהָיוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא:
^{יז} וְהִצַּלְתִּיךָ בַּיּוֹם־הַהוּא נְאֻם־יְהוָה וְלֹא תִנָּתֵן בְּיַד
הָאֲנָשִׁים אֲשֶׁר־אַתָּה יָגוֹר מִפְּנֵיהֶם: ^{יח} כִּי מִלֵּט
אֲמַלְטֶךָ וּבַחֲרָב לֹא תִפֹּל וְהִיְתָה לְךָ נַפְשֶׁךָ לְשָׁלָל
כִּי־בִטַחְתָּ בִּי נְאֻם־יְהוָה: {פ}

the king of Babylon's other officials. ¹⁴ These despatched men to take Jeremiah from the Court of the Guard and turned him over to Gedaliah son of Ahikam, son of Shaphan for safe conduct home; thus, he remained among the people.

¹⁵ While Jeremiah was confined in the Court of the Guard, the word of Yahweh came to him as follows, ¹⁶ "Go and tell Ebed-Melech the Cushite, "Yahweh, God of Israel, says this: Look, I am about to perform my words about this city for its ruin and not for its prosperity. That day, they will come true before your eyes. ¹⁷ However, I shall rescue you that day, Yahweh declares, and you will not be handed over to the hands of the men you fear. ¹⁸ Yes, I shall certainly rescue you: you will not fall to the sword; you will escape with your life, because you have put your trust in me, Yahweh declares."

¹⁴ This is the first reference to 'Gedaliah', the appointed governor over the people left to live in Judah; his father spoke up for Jeremiah when he was accused of being a false prophet (26:24); his grandfather was the royal secretary under Josiah who brought the discovery of the Book of the Law to Josiah's attention, read it to him and was involved in helping Josiah institute his reforms (2K 22:8-10).

¹⁵ This passage continues the narrative of 38:7-13 and is out of chronological order.

¹⁶ Even though Jeremiah was confined to the Court of the Guard, he was still free to entertain visitors (32:2, 8); moreover, Ebed-Melech was an official attached to the royal court and would have had access to the Court of the Guard (38:7, 13). Jeremiah would not have had to leave the Court of the Guard to 'go and tell' him something.

¹⁷ Some see 'the men you fear' as a reference to the princes from whose clutches Ebed-Melech delivered Jeremiah (38:7-13); however, it is clear that, in this context, it refers to those that he would fear when God brings about the threatened disaster - the Babylonians attacking the city.

¹⁸ The literal translation of 'you will escape with your life' is 'your life will be to you for spoil'.

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ירמיהו פרק מ

א הַדְּבָר אֲשֶׁר-הָיָה אֶל-יִרְמְיָהוּ מֵאֵת יְהוָה אַחֲרַי
שָׁלַח אֹתוֹ נְבוּזַרְאֲדָן רֹב־טַבָּחִים מִן-הָרְמָה
בְּקַחְתּוֹ אֹתוֹ וְהוּא-אֲסוּר בְּאֲזָקִים בְּתוֹךְ כָּל-גְּלוֹת
יְרוּשָׁלַם וַיהוָה הַמַּגְלִים בְּבִלְהָ: ב וַיִּקַּח רֹב־
טַבָּחִים לִירְמְיָהוּ וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ דִּבֶּר
אֶת-הָרָעָה הַזֹּאת אֶל-הַמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה: ג וַיָּבֵא וַיַּעַשׂ
יְהוָה כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר כִּי-חָטָאתֶם לַיהוָה וְלֹא-
שָׁמַעְתֶּם בְּקוֹלוֹ וְהִיָּה לָכֵן דְּבַר הַדְּבָר הַזֶּה:
ד וְעַתָּה הִנֵּה פִתַּחְתִּיךָ הַיּוֹם מִן-הָאֲזָקִים אֲשֶׁר עַל-
יָדֶיךָ אִם-טוֹב בְּעֵינֶיךָ לָבוֹא אִתִּי בְּבָל בֹּא וְאֲשִׁים
אֶת-עֵינַי עָלֶיךָ וְאִם-רָע בְּעֵינֶיךָ לָבוֹא-אִתִּי בְּבָל
חֲדַל רְאֵה כָל-הָאָרֶץ לִפְנֶיךָ אֵל-טוֹב וְאֵל-הַיָּשָׁר
בְּעֵינֶיךָ לָלֶכֶת שָׁמָּה לָךְ: ה וְעוֹדְנֹנוּ לֹא-יָשׁוּב וְשָׁבָה
אֶל-גְּדַלְיָה בֶן-אֲחִיקָם בֶּן-שָׁפָן אֲשֶׁר הִפְקִיד מֶלֶךְ-
בָּבֶל בְּעָרֵי יְהוּדָה וְשָׁב אִתּוֹ בְּתוֹךְ הָעָם אִזּוֹ אֵל-
כָּל-הַיָּשָׁר בְּעֵינֶיךָ לָלֶכֶת לָךְ וַיִּתְּנוּ-לוֹ רֹב־טַבָּחִים

¹ The word that came to Jeremiah from Yahweh after Nebuzaradan, captain of the guard, had released him from Ramah, where he had found him in chains with all the other captives from Jerusalem and Judah who were being deported to Babylon: ² The captain of the guard took Jeremiah and said to him, “Yahweh your God foretold calamity for this country, ³ and now he has brought it. He has done what he threatened to do, because you had sinned against Yahweh and would not listen to his voice: so, all this has happened to you. ⁴ Look, today I am having your hands unchained. If you like to come with me to Babylon, come: I shall look after you. If you do not want to come with me to Babylon, do not. Look, you have the whole country before you: go wherever you think it best and most suitable to go.” ⁵ “If you remain,” he added, “Go back to Gedaliah son of Ahikam, son of Shaphan, whom the king of Babylon has appointed governor of the towns of Judah, and stay with him among the people, or go anywhere else you think suitable.” With that, the captain of the guard gave him

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- ¹ There are evident gaps in the group of biographical narratives about Jeremiah. He was released in Jerusalem (39:14) but here we find him among the captives at Ramah (see #31:15). This second account must follow 39:11-12. ‘*Ramah*’ (31:15) was a transit point for deportees.
- ² Jeremiah was mistakenly rounded up in Jerusalem but, when he arrived at Ramah, Nebuzaradan recognized and released him.
- ³ The *Kethib*/*Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.
- ⁴ For reasons unknown, Jeremiah was allowed to choose exile or residence in Judah.
- ⁵ The opening of this verse follows the *NRSV* & *Peshitta*, reading אֵל-גְּדַלְיָה וְעוֹדְךָ לֹא יָשׁוּב וְשָׁבָה for what is likely a very corrupt *MT* reading of יָשׁוּב וְשָׁבָה אֶל-גְּדַלְיָה וְעוֹדְנֹנוּ לֹא-יָשׁוּב וְשָׁבָה (‘and he was not yet turning and return to Gedaliah’).

אַרְחָה וּמִשָּׂאת וַיִּשְׁלַחְהוּ: ^ו וַיָּבֵא יִרְמְיָהוּ אֶל־
גְּדַלְיָה בֶן־אֲחִיקָם הַמְצַפְתָּה וַיֵּשֶׁב אִתּוֹ בְּתוֹךְ הָעָם
הַנִּשְׁאָרִים בְּאֶרֶץ: {פ}

^ז וַיִּשְׁמְעוּ כָל־שָׂרֵי הַחֲיָלִים אֲשֶׁר בְּשָׂדֵה הַמָּה
וְאֲנָשֵׁיהֶם כִּי־הִפְקִיד מֶלֶךְ־בָּבֶל אֶת־גְּדַלְיָהוּ בֶן־
אֲחִיקָם בְּאֶרֶץ וְכִי הִפְקִיד אִתּוֹ אֲנָשִׁים וְנָשִׁים וְטָף
וּמִדַּלַּת הָאָרֶץ מֵאֲשֶׁר לֹא־הִגְלוּ בְּבִלְהָ: ^ח וַיָּבֹאוּ
אֶל־גְּדַלְיָה הַמְצַפְתָּה וַיִּשְׁמַעֵאל בֶּן־נְתַנְיָהוּ וַיֹּזְחַנָּן
וַיֹּזַנְתָן בְּנֵי־קָרַח וְשָׂרְיָה בֶן־תַּנְחֻמֶת וּבְנִי עוֹפִי
עֵיפִי הַנְּטֹפְתִי וַיִּזְנִיָהוּ בֶן־הַמַּעַכְתִּי הָמָה וְאֲנָשֵׁיהֶם:
^ט וַיֵּשְׁבַע לָהֶם גְּדַלְיָהוּ בֶן־אֲחִיקָם בֶּן־שָׁפָן
וְלֹאֲנָשֵׁיהֶם לֵאמֹר אַל־תִּירְאוּ מֵעַבֹּד הַכַּשְׂדִּים
שָׁבוּ בְּאֶרֶץ וְעַבְדוּ אֶת־מֶלֶךְ בָּבֶל וַיֵּיטֵב לָכֶם: ^י וְאֲנִי
הַנְּנִי יֹשֵׁב בַּמְצַפָּה לְעַמֵּל לִפְנֵי הַכַּשְׂדִּים אֲשֶׁר
יָבֹאוּ אֵלֵינוּ וְאַתֶּם אִסְפוּ יַיִן וְקִיץ וְשֶׁמֶן וְשִׂמוּ
בְּכַלְיֵיכֶם וּשְׁבוּ בְּעָרֵיכֶם אֲשֶׁר־תִּפְשֹׁתֶם: ^{יא} וְגַם כָּל־
הַיְהוּדִים אֲשֶׁר־בְּמוֹאָב וּבְבְנֵי־עַמּוֹן וּבְאֲדוֹם
וְאֲשֶׁר בְּכָל־הָאֲרָצוֹת שָׁמְעוּ כִּי־נָתַן מֶלֶךְ־בָּבֶל

provisions and a present, and dismissed him. ⁶ Jeremiah went to Mizpah, to Gedaliah son of Ahikam and stayed with him, among those people still left in the country.

⁷ When all the military leaders in the field, with their troops, heard that the king of Babylon had appointed Gedaliah son of Ahikam as governor of the land, committing to him men, women and children, those of the poor country people who had not been deported to Babylon, ⁸ they came to Gedaliah at Mizpah: Ishmael son of Nethaniah, Johanan and Jonathon sons of Kareah, Seraiah son of Tanhumeth, the sons of Ephai the Netophathite, Jezaniah son of the Maacathite, they and their men.

⁹ Gedaliah son of Ahikam son of Shaphan swore an oath to them and their men, saying: "Do not be afraid of serving the Chaldeans; stay in the land, serve the king of Babylon, and all will go well with you. ¹⁰ I, for my part, shall stay here at Mizpah to represent you before the Chaldeans who come to us, whereas you can harvest the wine, summer fruit and oil, fill your storage jars and settle in the towns that you have seized." ¹¹ Likewise, when all the Judaeans living in Moab, with the Ammonites, in Edom and elsewhere, heard that the king of Babylon had

⁶ 'Mizpah' is either Tell-En-Nasbah, 13 Km north of Jerusalem or Nebi Samwil, 8 Km north of Jerusalem, and a former sanctuary (Jg 20:1, 1S 7:5).

⁷ Gedaliah assured his countrymen that he would represent them before the Babylonians and urged them to return to their fields and cities.

⁸ The *Kethib*/*Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

⁹ Gedaliah's oath served as an assurance of safety.

¹⁰ The 'summer fruit' most likely comprised dates and figs.

¹¹ NETB splits vv. 11 & 12 into 2 sentences, opening the former with, "Moreover, all the Judaeans..." and the latter with, "So the Judaeans..."

שְׂאֲרִית לַיהוּדָה וְכֹל הַפְּקִיד עֲלֵיהֶם אֶת־גְּדַלְיָהוּ
בֶן־אֲחִיקָם בֶּן־שָׁפָן: ^{יב} וַיָּשׁוּבוּ כָּל־הַיהוּדִים מִכָּל־
הַמְּקוֹמוֹת אֲשֶׁר נִדְחוּ־שָׁם וַיָּבֹאוּ אֶרֶץ־יְהוּדָה אֶל־
גְּדַלְיָהוּ הַמְּצַפְתָּה וַיֹּאסְפוּ יַיִן וְקִיץ הַרְבֵּה
מְאֹד: {ס}

^{יג} וַיּוֹחֲנֹן בֶּן־קָרַח וְכָל־שָׂרֵי הַחֲיָלִים אֲשֶׁר בְּשָׂדֵה
בָּאוּ אֶל־גְּדַלְיָהוּ הַמְּצַפְתָּה: ^{יד} וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֵלָיו הֲיָדַע
תִּדְעַ כִּי בַעֲלִיסוֹ מֶלֶךְ בְּנֵי־עַמּוֹן שָׁלַח אֶת־
יִשְׁמַעֵאל בֶּן־נְתַנְיָה לְהַכְתִּיף נַפֶּשׁ וְלֹא־הָאֱמִין לָהֶם
גְּדַלְיָהוּ בֶן־אֲחִיקָם: ^{טו} וַיּוֹחֲנֹן בֶּן־קָרַח אָמַר אֶל־
גְּדַלְיָהוּ בְּסֹתֵר בַּמְּצַפָּה לֵאמֹר אֵלֶכָה נָא וְאֶכֶּה
אֶת־יִשְׁמַעֵאל בֶּן־נְתַנְיָה וְאִישׁ לֹא יָדַע לָמָּה יִבְכֶּה
נַפֶּשׁ וְנִפְצוּ כָּל־יְהוּדָה הַנִּקְבָּצִים אֵלָיְךָ וְאֲבָדָה
שְׂאֲרִית יְהוּדָה: ^{טז} וַיֹּאמֶר גְּדַלְיָהוּ בֶן־אֲחִיקָם אֶל־
יּוֹחָנָן בֶּן־קָרַח אֶל־תַּעֲשֶׂה תַעַשׂ אֶת־הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה
כִּי־שָׁקֵר אַתָּה דֹבֵר אֶל־יִשְׁמַעֵאל: {פ}

left a remnant in Judah and had appointed Gedaliah son of Ahikam so of Shaphan as their governor, ¹² the Judaeans all came back from wherever they had been driven. On their return to the land of Judah, to Gedaliah at Mizpah, they harvested wine and summer fruit in great abundance.

¹³ Now, Johanan son of Kareah and all the military leaders still in the field came to Gedaliah at Mizpah ¹⁴ and said to him, “Are you aware that Baalis king of the Ammonites has sent Ishmael son of Nethaniah to assassinate you?” However, Gedaliah son of Ahikam would not believe them. ¹⁵ Johanan son of Kareah then spoke in secret to Gedaliah at Mizpah, as follows: “Please let me go and kill Ishmael son of Nethaniah, and no one will be any the wiser. Why should he assassinate you and cause the dispersal of all the Judaeans who have rallied round you? Why should the remnant of Judah perish? ¹⁶ Nevertheless, Gedaliah son of Ahikam replied to Johanan son of Kareah, “You will do no such thing, for what you say about Ishmael is false.”

¹² The NJB has ‘an immense quantity of’ in place of ‘in great abundance’, here following the NRSV.

¹³ Johanan was seemingly the principal captain of the resistance, after Ishmael.

¹⁴ ‘Baalis’ was still holding out against Nebuchadnezzar and presumably felt further threatened by Gedaliah’s submissiveness. Ishmael, an army officer of Davidic descent (v. 8) no doubt regarded Gedaliah as a political upstart.

¹⁵ The question, “Why should he assassinate you ...?” is rhetorical, here introducing the reason why something should not be done.

¹⁶ The *Kethib*/*Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

ירמיהו פרק מא

א ויהי בחדש השביעי בא ישמעאל בן־נתניה בן־אלישמע מזרע המלוכה ורבי המלך ועשרה אנשים אתו אל־גדליהו בן־אחיקם המצפתה ויאכלו שם לחם יחדו במצפה: ב ויקם ישמעאל בן־נתניה ועשרת האנשים אשר־היו אתו ויכו את־גדליהו בן־אחיקם בן־שפן בחרב וימת אתו אשר־הפקיד מלך־בבל בארץ: ג ואת כל־היהודים אשר־היו אתו את־גדליהו במצפה ואת־הכשדים אשר נמצאו־שם את אנשי המלחמה הבה ישמעאל: ד ויהי ביום השני להמית את־גדליהו ואיש לא ידע: ה ויבאו אנשים משכם משלו ומשמרון שמנים איש מגלחי זקן וקרעי

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¹ But, in the seventh month, Ishmael son of Nethaniah son of Elishama, who was of royal descent, came with officers of the king and ten men to Gedaliah son of Ahikam at Mizpah. As they were taking their meal together, there at Mizpah, ² Ishmael son of Nethaniah stood up with his ten men and struck down Gedaliah son of Ahikam son of Shaphan with their swords and killed him, because the king of Babylon had appointed him governor of the country. ³ Ishmael also killed all the Judaeans who were with him – that is with Gedaliah at Mizpah – and the Chaldaean soldiers who happened to be there. ⁴ On the day after the murder of Gedaliah, before the news had become known, ⁵ eighty men arrived from Shechem, Shiloh and Samaria, with their beards shaved off, their clothing torn and covered in self-inflicted gashes; they were bringing

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- ¹ It is not clear if this is in the same year that Jerusalem fell or not: the wall was breached in the 4th month (early July, 39:2) and Nebuzaradan came and burned the palace, the Temple and many of the houses, and tore down the wall in the 5th month (early August, 52:12); that would have left time between the 5th month and the 7th month (October) to gather in the harvest of grapes, dates and figs, and olives (40:12). However, many commentators feel that too much activity takes place in too short a time for this to have been in the same year and posit that it happened the following year or even five years later, when a further deportation took place, possibly in retaliation for the murder of Gedaliah and the Babylonian garrison at Mizpah (52:30).
- ² The NJB reads the sense of this verse slightly differently (here, we follow the NRSV): “and, attacking Gedaliah ... with their swords, they killed the man whom the king of Babylon had made governor.”
- ³ The anniversary of this event (September 587 BCE) was celebrated in subsequent years (see Zc 7:5, 8:19).
- ⁴ The NRSV ends this verse, “before anyone knew of it;” here, we follow the NJB.
- ⁵ Evidently, Jerusalem was still regarded as the religious centre by many Israelites of the Northern Kingdom, or at least it had regained this status since the reform under Josiah (2K 23:19–20). The fall of Jerusalem has not put an end to Temple worship.

בגִּדִים וּמִתְגַּדְּדִים וּמִנְחָה וּלְבוּנָה בַיָּדִים לְהַבִּיא
 בֵּית יְהוָה: וַיֵּצֵא יִשְׁמַעֵאל בֶּן־נְתַנְיָה לִקְרֹאתָם
 מִן־הַמְּצִפָּה הַלֵּךְ הַלֵּךְ וּבִכָּה וַיְהִי כִפְגֹּשׁ אֹתָם
 וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵיהֶם בָּאוּ אֶל־גְּדַלְיָהוּ בֶן־אֲחִיקָם: וַיְהִי
 כְּבוֹאָם אֶל־תּוֹךְ הָעִיר וַיִּשְׁחָטֵם יִשְׁמַעֵאל בֶּן־
 נְתַנְיָה אֶל־תּוֹךְ הַבּוֹר הוּא וְהָאֲנָשִׁים אֲשֶׁר־אָתוּ:
 ח וַעֲשָׂרָה אָנָשִׁים נִמְצְאוּ־בָם וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֶל־יִשְׁמַעֵאל
 אֶל־תִּמְתְּנוּ כִּי־יִשְׁלַלְנוּ מִטְּמָנִים בַּשָּׂדֶה חֲטִיִּם
 וְשִׁעָרִים וְשֶׁמֶן וְדָבָשׁ וַיַּחֲדֵל וְלֹא הִמִּיתָם בַּתּוֹךְ
 אֲחֵיהֶם: ט וְהַבּוֹר אֲשֶׁר הִשְׁלִיךְ שָׁם יִשְׁמַעֵאל אֶת
 כָּל־פְּגָרֵי הָאֲנָשִׁים אֲשֶׁר הִכָּה בַיַּד־גְּדַלְיָהוּ הוּא
 אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה הַמֶּלֶךְ אָסָא מִפְּנֵי בַעֲשָׂא מֶלֶךְ־יִשְׂרָאֵל
 אֹתוֹ מִלֹּא יִשְׁמַעֵאל בֶּן־נְתַנְיָהוּ חָלְלִים: י וַיֵּשְׁבּוּ
 יִשְׁמַעֵאל אֶת־כָּל־שְׂאֵרֵית הָעָם אֲשֶׁר בַּמְּצִפָּה
 אֶת־בָּנוֹת הַמֶּלֶךְ וְאֶת־כָּל־הָעַם הַנִּשְׁאָרִים בַּמְּצִפָּה
 אֲשֶׁר הִפְקִיד נְבוּזַרְאֲדָן רַב־טַבָּחִים אֶת־גְּדַלְיָהוּ
 בֶן־אֲחִיקָם וַיֵּשְׁבּוּ יִשְׁמַעֵאל בֶּן־נְתַנְיָה וַיֵּלֶךְ לַעֲבֹר
 אֶל־בְּנֵי עַמּוֹן: {ס}

cereal offerings and incense with them to present to the Temple of Yahweh. ⁶ And Ishmael son of Nethaniah went out of Mizpah to meet them, weeping as he went. When he met them, he said to them, “Come to Gedaliah son of Ahikam.” ⁷ However, once they reached the middle of the city, Ishmael son of Nethaniah slaughtered them, with the help of his men, and had them thrown into the storage-well. ⁸ But there were ten among them, however, who said to Ishmael, “Do not kill us, for we will give you the stocks of wheat and barley, oil and honey we have, hidden away in the fields.” Therefore, he spared them and did not kill them with their brothers. ⁹ The storage-well into which Ishmael threw the corpses of all the men he had killed was the large one that King Asa had built as a precaution against Baasha king of Israel. Ishmael son of Nethaniah filled it with the murdered men. ¹⁰ Ishmael then took all the rest of the people prisoner who were at Mizpah, the king’s daughters and all the remaining people at Mizpah, who Nebuzaradan, commander of the guard, had entrusted to Gedaliah son of Ahikam. Ishmael son of Nethaniah took them prisoner and set out, intending to cross over to the Ammonites.

⁶ Ishmael’s tears were, of course, feigned.

⁷ ‘Had them thrown’ follows the *Peshitta* (the *MT* omits) but see v. 9.

⁸ This sentence is a good example of the elliptical nature of some of the causal connections in the Hebrew Bible; all the *MT* says literally is, “For we have hidden stores of wheat, barley, olive oil, and honey in a field.”

⁹ ‘Was the large one’ follows the *LXX*, translating בּוֹר גְּדוֹל הוּא for the *MT*’s בַּיַּד־גְּדַלְיָהוּ הוּא (‘by the hand of Gedaliah’).

¹⁰ The actual daughters of Zedekiah are not referred to here, since they would have been too politically important to have escaped exile.

^{יא} וַיִּשְׁמַע יוֹחָנָן בֶּן־קָרַח וְכָל־שָׂרֵי הַחִילִים אֲשֶׁר
 אִתּוֹ אֵת כָּל־הַרְעָה אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה יִשְׁמַעְאֵל בֶּן־
 נְתַנְיָה: ^{יב} וַיִּקְחוּ אֶת־כָּל־הָאֲנָשִׁים וַיֵּלְכוּ לְהִלָּחֵם
 עִם־יִשְׁמַעְאֵל בֶּן־נְתַנְיָה וַיִּמְצְאוּ אֹתוֹ אֶל־מַיִם
 רַבִּים אֲשֶׁר בְּגִבְעוֹן: ^{יג} וַיְהִי כִּרְאוֹת כָּל־הָעָם אֲשֶׁר
 אִתְּ־יִשְׁמַעְאֵל אֶת־יוֹחָנָן בֶּן־קָרַח וְאֵת כָּל־שָׂרֵי
 הַחִילִים אֲשֶׁר אִתּוֹ וַיִּשְׂמְחוּ: ^{יד} וַיָּסְבוּ כָּל־הָעָם
 אֲשֶׁר־שָׁבָה יִשְׁמַעְאֵל מִן־הַמִּצְפָּה וַיָּשְׁבוּ וַיֵּלְכוּ אֶל־
 יוֹחָנָן בֶּן־קָרַח: ^{טו} וַיִּשְׁמַעְאֵל בֶּן־נְתַנְיָה נִמְלֹט
 בְּשִׂמְנָה אֲנָשִׁים מִפָּנָיו יוֹחָנָן וַיֵּלֶךְ אֶל־בְּנֵי
 עַמּוֹן: {ס}

^{טז} וַיִּקַּח יוֹחָנָן בֶּן־קָרַח וְכָל־שָׂרֵי הַחִילִים אֲשֶׁר־אִתּוֹ
 אֵת כָּל־שְׂאֵרֵי הָעָם אֲשֶׁר הֵשִׁיב מֵאֵת יִשְׁמַעְאֵל
 בֶּן־נְתַנְיָה מִן־הַמִּצְפָּה אַחַר הַכָּה אֶת־גְּדַלְיָה בֶּן־
 אַחִיקָם גְּבָרִים אֲנָשִׁי הַמִּלְחָמָה וְנָשִׁים וְטָף
 וְסָרְסִים אֲשֶׁר הֵשִׁיב מִגִּבְעוֹן: ^{יז} וַיֵּלְכוּ וַיָּשְׁבוּ בְּגֵרוֹת

¹¹ However, when Johanan, the son of Kareah, and all the leaders of the forces who were with him heard about all the crimes committed by Ishmael, the son of Nethaniah, ¹² they mustered all their men and set out to attack Ishmael, the son of Nethaniah. They caught up with him at the great pool that is in Gibeon. ¹³ And, when all the people who were with Ishmael saw Johanan, the son of Kareah, and all the military leaders who were with him, they were delighted. ¹⁴ So, all the people, whom Ishmael had taken as prisoners from Mizpah turned around and went back, and joined Johanan, the son of Kareah. ¹⁵ Ishmael son of Nethaniah, however, escaped from Johanan with eight of his men and fled to the Ammonites.

¹⁶ Johanan son of Kareah and all the military leaders with him then rallied all the remaining people whom Ishmael son of Nethaniah had taken prisoners from Mizpah after killing Gedaliah son of Ahikam: men – fighting men – women, children and eunuchs, whom they brought back from Gibeon. ¹⁷ Setting off, they made a halt at Geruth Kimham

¹¹ Other readings for 'all the crimes' (here following the NJB & NRSV) are 'atrocities' (NETB), 'evil things' and 'the evil'.

¹² The 'Pool of Gibeon' (2S 2:13) is at modern El-Jib, about 10 Km northwest of Jerusalem.

¹³ The phrase 'the people with Ishmael' does not refer to his own troops but to those he had taken with him from Mizpah, i.e., the captives.

¹⁴ In place of 'turned around and went back', here following the NRSV, the NJB has 'turned about, came back'.

¹⁵ NETB has 'Ammon' in place of 'the Ammonites', here following the NJB, NRSV & MT (אֶל־בְּנֵי עַמּוֹן).

¹⁶ 'Whom he (Ishmael) had taken prisoners' is a conjectural translation following the NJB & NRSV (see v. 10); the MT has 'whom he (Johanan) had recovered from him' (אֲשֶׁר הֵשִׁיב מֵאֵת).

¹⁷ In place of 'Geruth Kimham' (following NETB), the NJB has 'Khan Kimham' and the NRSV has 'Geruth Chimham'. The Kethib/Qere difference here would benefit from an explanation.

כְּמוֹהֶם בְּמָהֶם אֲשֶׁר־אָצֵל בַּיִת לַחֵם לְלַכֵּת לְבוֹא
מִצָּרִים: יי מִפְּנֵי הַכַּשְׂדִּים כִּי יֵרְאוּ מִפְּנֵיהֶם כִּי־
הָכָה יִשְׁמַעְיָאל בֶּן־נְתַנְיָה אֶת־גְּדַלְיָהוּ בֶן־אֲחִיקָם
אֲשֶׁר־הִפְקִיד מֶלֶךְ־בָּבֶל בְּאֶרֶץ: {פ}

near Bethlehem, intending to go on to Egypt,¹⁸ to get away from the Chaldeans. They were now terrified of them, since Ishmael son of Nethaniah had killed Gedaliah son of Ahikam, whom the king of Babylon had made governor of the country.

¹⁸ Vv. 16–18^a are one long, complicated sentence in the *MT*, with some rather awkward placements of qualifying terms.

ירמיהו פרק מב

א וַיִּגְשׁוּ כָּל־שָׂרֵי הַחֵיָלִים וַיּוֹחֲנָן בֶּן־קָרַח וַיִּזְנְיָה בֶן־
הוֹשַׁעְיָה וְכָל־הָעָם מִקָּטָן וְעַד־גָּדוֹל: ב וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֶל־
יִרְמְיָהוּ הַנְּבִיא תִּפְלֶגְנָא תַּחֲנֻנָּתֵנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ וְהַתְּפַלֵּל
בְּעַדָּנוּ אֱלֹהֵי־הָהוּא אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּעַד כָּל־הַשְּׂאֲרִית הַזֹּאת
כִּי־נִשְׁאַרְנוּ מֵעַט מֵהַרְבֵּה כַּאֲשֶׁר עֵינֶיךָ רְאוּת
אֲתָנוּ: ג וַיִּגְדַּלְנוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֶת־הַדֶּרֶךְ אֲשֶׁר
נִלְךְ־בָּהּ וְאֶת־הַדְּבָר אֲשֶׁר נַעֲשֶׂה: ד וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵיהֶם
יִרְמְיָהוּ הַנְּבִיא שְׁמַעְתִּי הַנְּגִי מִתְּפִלָּל אֱלֹהֵי־הָהוּא
אֱלֹהֵיכֶם כַּדְּבַרְכֶם וְהָיָה כָּל־הַדְּבָר אֲשֶׁר־יַעֲנֶנָּה
יְהוָה אֲתֶכֶם אֶגִּיד לָכֶם לֹא־אֲמַנֶּע מִכֶּם דְּבָר:
ה וְהָמָּה אָמְרוּ אֶל־יִרְמְיָהוּ יְהִי יְהוָה בָּנוּ לְעַד אֲמַת
וְנֶאֱמָן אִם־לֹא כָּל־הַדְּבָר אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁלַחֲךָ יְהוָה
אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֵלֵינוּ בֶּן נַעֲשֶׂה: ו אִם־טוֹב וְאִם־רָע בְּקוֹל
יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֲשֶׁר אָנוּ אֲנַחְנוּ שְׁלָחִים אֶתְךָ אֵלָיו
נִשְׁמַע לְמַעַן אֲשֶׁר יִיטֹב־לָנוּ כִּי נִשְׁמַע בְּקוֹל יְהוָה
אֱלֹהֵינוּ: {פ}

JEREMIAH 42

¹ Then all the military leaders, in particular Johanan, the son of Kareah, and Azariah, the son of Hoshai, and all the people, from the least to the greatest, approached ² the prophet Jeremiah and said to him, "Please be good enough to listen to our supplication and intercede with Yahweh your God for us and for all this remnant – and how few of us are left out of many, your own eyes can see – ³ so that Yahweh your God may show us the way in which we are to walk and what we must do." ⁴ Then the prophet Jeremiah answered them, "Behold, I have heard you! I will indeed pray to Yahweh your God as you ask; and whatever answer Yahweh your God gives you, I will tell you, keeping nothing back from you." ⁵ They in their turn said to Jeremiah, "Let Yahweh be a true and faithful witness against us, if we do not act according to everything that Yahweh your God sends us through you. ⁶ Whether we like it or not, we shall obey the voice of Yahweh our God to whom we are sending you, in order that it may go well with us when we obey the voice of Yahweh our God."

JEREMIAH 42

- ¹ 'Azariah' follows the LXX and 43:2; the MT has 'Jezaniah', perhaps to be identified with the Jezaniah of 40:8.
- ² Jeremiah here (and compare 15:11, 2M 15:14) plays the part of intercessor, like Moses (Ex 32:11).
- ³ Note that the people refer to Yahweh as 'your God', as also does Jeremiah in his reply (v. 4).
- ⁴ Jeremiah's opening clause ('I have heard you') is a form of acknowledgement (the NRSV has 'very well' and NETB has 'agreed').
- ⁵ In place of 'act according to everything', here following the NRSV, the NJB has 'follow the instruction'.
- ⁶ Note that here the people refer to Yahweh as 'our God' (cf. #3). The *Kethib/Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

ז וַיְהִי מִקֵּץ עֶשְׂרֵת יָמִים וַיְהִי דְבַר־יְהוָה אֶל־
 יִרְמְיָהוּ: ^ח וַיִּקְרָא אֶל־יֹחָנָן בֶּן־קָרַח וְאֶל כָּל־שָׂרֵי
 הַחֵיָלִים אֲשֶׁר אִתּוֹ וְלִכְל־הָעָם לְמִקְטָן וְעַד־גָּדוֹל:
 ט וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵיהֶם כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
 אֲשֶׁר שְׁלַחְתֶּם אֹתִי אֵלָיו לְהַפִּיל תְּחִנָּתְכֶם לְפָנָיו:
 י אִם־שׁוֹב תֵּשְׁבוּ בְּאֶרֶץ הַזֹּאת וּבִנִּיתִי אֹתְכֶם וְלֹא
 אֶהְרַס וְנִטְעַתִּי אֹתְכֶם וְלֹא אֶתּוֹשׁ כִּי נַחֲמַתִּי אֶל־
 הָרְעָה אֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתִי לָכֶם: ^{יא} אֶל־תִּירְאוּ מִפְּנֵי מֶלֶךְ
 בָּבֶל אֲשֶׁר־אַתֶּם יֹרְאִים מִפְּנֵי אֶל־תִּירְאוּ מִמֶּנּוּ
 נְאֻם־יְהוָה כִּי־אַתֶּם אֲנִי לְהוֹשִׁיעַ אֹתְכֶם וּלְהַצִּיל
 אֹתְכֶם מִיָּדוֹ: ^{יב} וְאַתֶּן לָכֶם רַחֲמִים וְרַחַם אֹתְכֶם
 וְהִשִּׁיב אֹתְכֶם אֶל־אֲדַמְתְּכֶם: ^{יג} וְאִם־אֲמַרְיִם אַתֶּם
 לֹא נִשְׁבַּ בְּאֶרֶץ הַזֹּאת לְבַלְתִּי שְׁמַע בְּקוֹל יְהוָה
 אֱלֹהֵיכֶם: ^{יד} לֵאמֹר לֹא כִי אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם נִבְּוֵא אֲשֶׁר
 לֹא־נִרְאָה מִלְחָמָה וְקוֹל שׁוֹפָר לֹא נִשְׁמַע וּלְלַחֵם
 לֹא־נִרְעַב וְשֵׁם נִשְׁבַּ: ^{טו} וְעַתָּה לָכֵן שְׁמַעוּ דְבַר־

7 And it came to pass that, after ten days had passed, the word of Yahweh came to Jeremiah. 8 He then summoned Johanan, the son of Kareah, and all the commanders of the forces who were with him, and all the people from the least to the greatest, 9 and he said to them, “Yahweh, the God of Israel, to whom you deputed me to present your supplication before him, says this, 10 “If you will only remain in this country, then I shall build you up and not overthrow you; I shall plant you and not uproot you; for, I am sorry about the disaster that I have inflicted on you. 11 Do not be afraid of the king of Babylon, as you have been; do not be afraid of him, Yahweh declares, because I am with you to save you and rescue you from his clutches. 12 I will have compassion for you, and he will have mercy for you and let you return to your native soil. 13 However, if you continue to say, “We will not stay in this country,” if you disobey the voice of Yahweh your God, 14 and say, “No, Egypt is where we shall go, where we shall not see war or hear the sound of the trumpet, or go short of food; that is where we want to live,”

7 The NJB opens this verse with ‘ten days later’; here, we follow the NRSV.

8 The phrase, ‘from the least to the greatest’, is an expression using polar opposites as an all-inclusive designation of everyone without exception.

9 Their ‘petition’ was for Jeremiah to tell them where to go and what to do (v. 3).

10 The literal translation of ‘if you will only remain’, following the LXX and Tg (reading יִשְׁבּ), is ‘if you stay to remain’; the MT has ‘if you stay once more’ (שׁוֹב).

11 In place of ‘as you have been’, here following the NRSV, the NJB has ‘whom, you fear now’.

12 ‘I will have compassion for you’ follows NETB; the NJB has ‘I shall take pity on you’.

13 The NJB lacks ‘continue to’, here following the NRSV.

14 The trumpet was used to gather the troops and to sound the alarm for battle.

יְהוָה שְׂאֲרִית יְהוּדָה פֶּה־אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת אֱלֹהֵי
 יִשְׂרָאֵל אִם־אַתֶּם שׁוֹם תִּשְׁמוּן פְּנֵיכֶם לָבֹא מִצְרַיִם
 וּבְאַתֶּם לָגוּר שָׁם: ^ט וְהִיְתָה הַחֶרֶב אֲשֶׁר אַתֶּם
 יִרְאִים מִמֶּנָּה שָׁם תִּשְׁיֹג אֶתְכֶם בְּאַרְץ מִצְרַיִם
 וְהִרְעֵב אֲשֶׁר־אַתֶּם | דְּאֲגִים מִמֶּנּוּ שָׁם יִדְבֹק
 אַחֲרֵיכֶם מִצְרַיִם וְשָׁם תָּמֹתוּ: ^י וַיְהִי כָל־הָאֲנָשִׁים
 אֲשֶׁר־שָׁמוּ אֶת־פְּנֵיהֶם לָבֹא מִצְרַיִם לָגוּר שָׁם
 יָמוּתוּ בַחֶרֶב בְּרָעַב וּבַדָּבָר וְלֹא־יִהְיֶה לָהֶם שְׂרִיד
 וּפְלִיט מִפְּנֵי הָרָעָה אֲשֶׁר אָנִי מֵבִיא עֲלֵיהֶם: ^{י"א} כִּי
 כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל כַּאֲשֶׁר נִתְּדָה
 אֲפִי וַחֲמָתִי עַל־יֹשְׁבֵי יְרוּשָׁלַם בֵּן תִּתְּדָה חֲמָתִי
 עֲלֵיכֶם בְּבֹאֲכֶם מִצְרַיִם וְהִיִּיתֶם לְאֵלָה וּלְשִׁמָּה
 וּלְקַלְלָה וּלְחֶרֶפָה וְלֹא־תִרְאוּ עוֹד אֶת־הַמָּקוֹם
 הַזֶּה: ^{י"ב} דְּבַר יְהוָה עֲלֵיכֶם שְׂאֲרִית יְהוּדָה אֶל־
 תָּבֹאוּ מִצְרַיִם יָדַעַתְּ דַּעַתְּ דַּעַתְּ כִּי־הֵעִידֹתִי בְכֶם הַיּוֹם:
^{י"ג} כִּי הִתְעַתִּים הִתְעַתִּים בְּנַפְשׁוֹתֵיכֶם כִּי־אַתֶּם
 שְׁלַחְתֶּם אֹתִי אֶל־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם לֵאמֹר הַתְּפַלֵּל
 בְּעַדְנוּ אֶל־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְכִכֹּל אֲשֶׁר יֹאמַר יְהוָה

¹⁵ in that case, remnant of Judah, listen to Yahweh's word: Yahweh Sabaoth, the God of Israel, says this: If you are determined to go to Egypt, and if you do go and settle there, ¹⁶ then it shall come to pass that the sword that you fear will overtake you there in the land of Egypt; and the famine of which you are afraid shall follow close after you into Egypt, and there you shall die. ¹⁷ Yes, all the people who are determined to go to Egypt and settle there will die by the sword, by the famine and by the plague: not a single one of them will survive or escape the disaster I shall inflict on them. ¹⁸ Yes, Yahweh Sabaoth, the God of Israel, says this: Just as my anger and my wrath were poured out on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so will my fury be poured out on you if you go to Egypt: you will become an object of execration and horror, an example of those who have been cursed and that people use in pronouncing a curse; and you will never see this place again." ¹⁹ Remnant of Judah, Yahweh has told you, "Do not go into Egypt." Understand clearly that today I have given you a solemn warning. ²⁰ You are making a fatal mistake: for, you yourselves sent me to Yahweh your God and said, "Intercede for us with Yahweh our God;

¹⁵ The literal translation of 'if you are determined to go' is 'if you set your face to go'.

¹⁶ The NJB lacks the section, "and the famine that you dread shall follow close after you into Egypt," here following the NSRV & MT.

¹⁷ In place of 'plague', here following the NJB, the NRSV has 'pestilence' and NETB has 'disease'.

¹⁸ The threat here is that they should be seen in the same light as Sodom and Gomorrah.

¹⁹ Vv. 19-22 seem more appropriate placed after 43:3 (supposing a link, 'Jeremiah replied' and translating the first word of v. 4 as 'but', which would be more usual); however, no textual witness favours the transposition.

²⁰ The NJB, following the Ketiv (התעיתם), opens with, "You were not being sincere when you sent me;" here, we follow the NRSV & Qere (התעיתם).

אֱלֹהֵינוּ בֵּן הַגְּדֹלָנוּ וְעָשִׂינוּ: כֹּא וְאֶגֶד לָכֶם הַיּוֹם
וְלֹא שָׁמַעְתֶּם בְּקוֹל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם וּלְכֹל אֲשֶׁר-
שָׁלַחְנִי אֵלֵיכֶם: כִּב וְעַתָּה יָדַע תִּדְעוּ כִּי בַחֲרַב
בְּרָעַב וּבִדְבַר תַּמּוּתוֹ בַּמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר חָפַצְתֶּם לָבוֹא
לְגוֹר שָׁם: {ס}

tell us exactly what Yahweh our God says and we will do it.” ²¹ Today, I have told you, but you have not obeyed the voice of Yahweh your God or any part of the message he sent me to give you. ²² Understand this clearly, then: You will die by sword, by famine and by plague in the place where you want to go and settle.”

²¹ The use of the perfect here is perhaps to be related to the perfect expressing resolve or determination.

²² In place of ‘plague’, here following the *NJB*, the *NRSV* has ‘pestilence’ and *NETB* has ‘disease’.

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ירמיהו פרק מג

וַיְהִי כְּכֹלֹת יִרְמְיָהוּ לְדַבֵּר אֶל-כָּל-הָעָם אֶת-כָּל-
דְּבָרֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיהֶם אֲשֶׁר שָׁלְחוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיהֶם
אֲלֵיהֶם אֶת כָּל-הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה : {ס}

וַיֹּאמֶר עֲזַרְיָה בֶן-הוֹשֵׁעִיָּה וַיֹּחָנָן בֶּן-קִרְחַי וְכָל-
הָאֲנָשִׁים הַזֵּדִים אֹמְרִים אֶל-יִרְמְיָהוּ שֶׁקֶר אַתָּה
מְדַבֵּר לֹא שְׁלַחְךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ לֵאמֹר לֹא-תָבֹאוּ
מִצְרַיִם לְגֹר שָׁם: ^ג כִּי בְרוּךְ בֶּן-נְרִיָּה מִסִּית אֶתְךָ
בָּנוּ לְמַעַן תֵּת אֶתְנוּ בְיַד-הַכַּשְׂדִּים לְהַמִּית אֶתְנוּ
וּלְהַגְלוֹת אֶתְנוּ בָבֶל: ^ד וְלֹא-שָׁמַעַ יֹחָנָן בֶּן-קִרְחַי
וְכָל-שָׂרֵי הַחֲיָלִים וְכָל-הָעָם בְּקוֹל יְהוָה לְשַׁבֵּת
בְּאֶרֶץ יְהוּדָה: ^ה וַיִּקַּח יֹחָנָן בֶּן-קִרְחַי וְכָל-שָׂרֵי
הַחֲיָלִים אֶת כָּל-שְׂאֵרֵי יְהוּדָה אֲשֶׁר-שָׁבוּ מִכָּל-
הַגּוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר נִדְחוּ-שָׁם לְגֹר בְּאֶרֶץ יְהוּדָה: ^ו אֶת-
הַגְּבָרִים וְאֶת-הַנְּשִׂים וְאֶת-הַטַּף וְאֶת-בָּנוֹת הַמְּלָךְ:

¹ Jeremiah had finished telling all the people all the words of Yahweh their God, which Yahweh their God had sent him to tell them – all the words quoted above.

² Then Azariah son of Hoshaiah, and Johanan son of Kareah, and all those arrogant men, said to Jeremiah, “You are lying. Yahweh our God did not send you to say, “Do not go to Egypt and settle there.” ³ It was Baruch son of Neriah, who keeps inciting you against us, to hand us over to the Chaldeans so that they can put us to death or deport us to Babylon.” ⁴ So, neither Johanan son of Kareah nor any or the military leaders nor any of the people obeyed the voice of Yahweh by staying in the country of Judah. ⁵ Instead, Johanan son of Kareah and all the military leaders led off the entire remnant of Judah, those who had come back from all the nations where they had been driven to live in the country of Judah: ⁶ men, women, children, the royal princesses too, and

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- ¹ Apparently, the tension in the camp during the 10 days that followed allowed those who favoured the flight to prevail over the good intentions of those who wished to abide by Jeremiah’s oracle.
- ² See #42:1 for the possible identification of ‘Azariah’ with Jezaniah son of Hoshaiah and Jezaniah the son of the Maacathite.
- ³ It has been suggested that 42:19–22 should come between vv. 3 & 4, as Jeremiah’s response to Azariah and his colleagues, since these may indicate that the decision had already been made to go to Egypt.
- ⁴ The NRSV & NETB rearrange the negatives in this verse, reading, “So Johanan son of Kareah and all the commanders of the forces and all the people did not obey the voice ...” here, we follow the NJB.
- ⁵ This verse refers to the people who are mentioned in 40:11–12.
- ⁶ This verse refers to the group mentioned in 40:7 & 41:10.

וְאֵת כָּל־הַנְּפֹשׁ אֲשֶׁר הִנִּיחַ נְבוּזַרְאֲדָן רֹב־טַבָּחִים
 אֶת־גְּדַלְיָהוּ בֶן־אֲחִיקָם בֶּן־שַׁפָּן וְאֵת יִרְמְיָהוּ
 הַנְּבִיא וְאֶת־בָּרוּךְ בֶּן־נֶרְיָהוּ: ^ז וַיָּבֹאוּ אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם
 כִּי לֹא שָׁמְעוּ בְּקוֹל יְהוָה וַיָּבֹאוּ עַד־תַּחְפַּנְחָס: {ס}
^ח וַיְהִי דְבַר־יְהוָה אֶל־יִרְמְיָהוּ בְּתַחְפַּנְחָס לֵאמֹר:
^ט קַח בְּיָדְךָ אֲבָנִים גְּדוֹלוֹת וְטַמְנָתָם בַּמַּלְט בַּמַּלְבֵּן
 אֲשֶׁר בְּפֶתַח בַּיִת־פַּרְעֹה בְּתַחְפַּנְחָס לְעֵינֵי אֲנָשִׁים
 יְהוּדִים: ^י וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵיהֶם כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת
 אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הִנְנִי שֹׁלֵחַ וְלִקְחָתִי אֶת־נְבוּכַדְרֶאצַּר
 מֶלֶךְ־בָּבֶל עַבְדִּי וְשִׁמְתִי כִסְאוֹ מִמַּעַל לְאֲבָנִים
 הָאֵלֶּה אֲשֶׁר טַמְנָתִי וְנָטָה אֶת־שַׁפְרִירוֹ שִׁפְרוּרוֹ
 עֲלֵיהֶם: ^{יא} וּבָאָה וּבָא וְהָכָה אֶת־אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם

אֲשֶׁר לַמּוֹת לַמּוֹת
 וְאֲשֶׁר לַשְּׁבִי לַשְּׁבִי
 וְאֲשֶׁר לַחֶרֶב לַחֶרֶב:

^{יב} וְהִצַּתִּי אֵשׁ בְּבֵתֵי אֱלֹהֵי מִצְרַיִם וְשָׂרְפָם וְשָׂבַם
 וְעָטָה אֶת־אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם כַּאֲשֶׁר־יַעֲטֶה הַרְעָה אֶת־

every single person that Nebuzaradan commander of the guard had left with Gedaliah son of Ahikam, son of Shaphan, including the prophet Jeremiah and Baruch son of Neriah. ⁷ Thus, in disobedience to the voice of Yahweh, they reached Egypt and arrived at Tahpanhes.

⁸ At Tahpanhes, the word of Yahweh was addressed to Jeremiah as follows, ⁹ “Take some large stones in your hands and bury them in the cement on the terrace outside the entrance of Pharaoh’s palace in Tahpanhes, where the Judaeans can see you. ¹⁰ Then say to them, “Yahweh, God of Israel, says this: Look, I shall send for my servant Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, and he will place his throne on these stones I have buried, and spread his canopy above them. ¹¹ When he comes, he will defeat Egypt:

Those for the plague, to the plague;
 and those for captivity, to captivity;
 and those for the sword, to the sword!

¹² “He will set fire to the temples of the gods of Egypt; he will burn these gods or take them prisoner; like a shepherd wrapping his cloak round

⁷ ‘Tahpanhes’ was a frontier town, east of the Nile delta (see #2:16).

⁸ Literally translated, ‘as follows’ would be ‘saying’.

⁹ Jeremiah symbolically (see #18:1) lays the foundations for Nebuchadnezzar’s throne.

¹⁰ ‘He will place’ follows the LXX & Peshitta; the MT has ‘I will place’. In place of ‘canopy’, here following the Qere, (שַׁפְרִירוֹ), the Ketiv has שִׁפְרוּרוֹ, a word that occurs only here and whose precise meaning is uncertain.

¹¹ The Kethib/Qere difference here would benefit from an explanation.

¹² ‘He will set fire’ follows the LXX, Vg, and Peshitta; the MT has ‘I will set fire’.

בגדו ויצא משם בשלום: י' ושבֹר את־מצבות בית
שמש אשר בארץ מצרים ואת־בתי אלהי־מצרים
ישֹרף באשׁ: {פ} him, so he will wrap Egypt round him, and then leave without anyone
laying hands on him. ¹³ He will break the obelisks of the Temple of the
Sun in Egypt, and burn down the temples of the gods of Egypt.””

¹³ After 'Temple of the Sun in Egypt', the LXX adds 'which is at On' (Gn 41:45, 50, 46:20). The Egyptian name, 'On', appears in Greek as 'Heliopolis', the 'City of the Sun', now part of Cairo; there was a temple of Ra (the Sun) there.

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ירמיהו פרק מד

א* הַדְּבַר אֲשֶׁר הָיָה אֶל־יִרְמְיָהוּ אֶל כָּל־הַיְהוּדִים
הַיֹּשְׁבִים בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם הַיֹּשְׁבִים בְּמִגְדֹל
וּבְתַחְפְּנַחַס וּבְנֹף וּבְאֶרֶץ פְּתָרוֹס לֵאמֹר: ב כֹּה־
אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אַתֶּם רְאִיתֶם אֵת
כָּל־הָרָעָה אֲשֶׁר הִבֵּאתִי עַל־יְרוּשָׁלַם וְעַל כָּל־עָרֵי
יְהוּדָה וְהַנֶּגֶם חָרְבָה הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה וְאִין בְּהֶם יוֹשֵׁב:
ג מִפְּנֵי רָעַתְּם אֲשֶׁר עָשׂוּ לְהַכְעִסְנִי לְלַכֵּת לְקַטֹּר
לְעַבְד לְאֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים אֲשֶׁר לֹא יָדְעוּם הִמָּה
אַתֶּם וְאַבְתִּיכֶם: ד וְאֶשְׁלַח אֲלֵיכֶם אֶת־כָּל־עַבְדֵי
הַנְּבִיאִים הַשְּׂכִימִים וְשִׁלַּח לֵאמֹר אֲלֵנָּה תַעֲשׂוּ אֵת
דְּבַר־הַתַּעֲבָה הַזֹּאת אֲשֶׁר שָׁנֵאתִי: ה וְלֹא שָׁמְעוּ
וְלֹא־הָטוּ אֶת־אָזְנָם לְשׁוּב מִרָעַתְּם לְבַלְתִּי קַטֹּר
לְאֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים: ו וְתַתְּדַ חֲמַתִּי וְאִפִּי וְתַבְעַר בְּעָרֵי
יְהוּדָה וּבְחֻצוֹת יְרוּשָׁלַם וְתַהֲיִינָה לְחָרְבָה לְשִׁמְמָה
כַּיּוֹם הַזֶּה: {ס}

¹ The word that came to Jeremiah for all the Judaeans living in Egypt, those that is, living in Migdol, in Tahpanhes, in Noph and in the territory of Pathros. ² “Yahweh Sabaoth, the God of Israel, says this, “You yourselves have seen all the disaster that I have brought on Jerusalem and on all the towns of Judah. Look at them: today, they lie in ruins and are uninhabited. ³ This was because of the wicked deeds they committed to provoke my anger, by going and offering incense and serving other gods whom neither they, nor you, nor your ancestors knew anything about, ⁴ although I urgently and untiringly sent you all my servants the prophets to say: You must not do this loathsome thing, which I hate. ⁵ However, they would not listen or pay any attention, and turn from their wickedness and stop offering incense to other gods. ⁶ Therefore, my furious anger overflowed, burning down the towns of Judah and the streets of Jerusalem, which were reduced to ruins and wasteland, as they still are today.

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- ¹ ‘Migdol’ lies east of ‘Tahpanhes’ (43:7) and just north of modern Tell El-Heir; ‘Noph’ is the same as Memphis (see #2:16) and ‘Pathros’ stands for the Egyptian term, ‘Land of the South’, i.e. Upper Egypt.
- ² The NJB lacks the phrase ‘look at them’, here following the NRSV.
- ³ Compare 19:4 for the same thought and see also 7:9.
- ⁴ In place of ‘urgently and untiringly’, here following the NJB, the NRSV has ‘persistently’.
- ⁵ There is a deliberate shift in the pronouns used in vv. 2–5: ‘you’ refers to those in Egypt who are being addressed (v. 2) and those, present and past, to whom God sent the prophets (v. 4); ‘they’ refers to those of Judah who have suffered disaster (v. 2) because of their idolatry (vv. 3, 5).
- ⁶ The literal translation of ‘my furious anger’ is ‘my anger and my wrath’, but this is here interpreted as a hendiadys (following the NJB).

ז ועתה כה־אמר יהוה אלהי צבאות אלהי ישראל
 למה אתם עשים רעה גדולה אל־נפשתכם
 להכרית לכם איש־ואשה עולל ויונק מתוך יהודה
 לבלתי הותיר לכם שארית: ח להכעסני במעשי
 ידיכם לקטור לאלהים אחרים בארץ מצרים
 אשר־אתם באים לגור שם למען הכרית לכם
 ולמען היותכם לקללה ולחרפה בכל גוי הארץ:
 ט השכחתם את־דעות אבותיכם ואת־דעות
 מלכי יהודה ואת רעות נשיו ואת רעתכם ואת
 רעת נשיכם אשר עשו בארץ יהודה ובחצות
 ירושלם: י לא דכאו עד היום הזה ולא יראו ולא־
 הלכו בתורת־י ובחקתי אשר־נתתי לפניכם ולפני
 אבותיכם: {ס}

יא לכן כה־אמר יהוה צבאות אלהי ישראל הנני
 שם פני בכם לרעה ולהכרית את־כל־יהודה:
 יב ולקחתי את־שארית יהודה אשר־שמו פניהם

7 “Now, Yahweh God Sabaoth, the God of Israel, says this: Why bring complete disaster on yourselves by cutting yourself off from Judah – your men, women, children and babies in arms – so as to leave yourselves without a remnant, 8 by provoking my wrath by your actions, offering incense to other gods in Egypt where you have come to settle, as though bent on your own destruction and on becoming a curse and a laughing-stock for all the nations of the earth? 9 Have you forgotten the wicked deeds of your ancestors, of the kings of Judah and their wives, your own wicked deeds and those of your wives, committed in the country of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem? 10 To this day, they have felt neither contrition nor fear; they have not observed my Law or my statutes, which I prescribed for you, as for your ancestors.

11 “Therefore, Yahweh Sabaoth, the God of Israel, says this: Look, I am determined to bring disaster on you and to destroy Judah completely.

12 I will take the remnant of Judah who are determined to come to the

7 Once again, God questions the supposed wisdom of living in Egypt.

8 What is being threatened is not the total destruction of a remnant of Judah: Jeremiah recognises those who have been carried off to Babylon, as well as other places, as seeds for a new beginning (e.g. 24:5–6, 29:14, 30:3) but he denies here that any of those who have gone to Egypt and are continuing to practice idolatry will be among them.

9 The *NJB*, following the *LXX*, has ‘your princes’ in place of ‘their wives’, here following the *MT* (literally, ‘his wives’ – a distributive use of the singular suffix).

10 Note that the pronoun ‘they’ includes both the people just referred to and the current addressees.

11 Literally translated, this verse ends, “I am setting my face against you for disaster and to destroy all Judah.”

12 See also 24:9 for the threat at the end of this verse.

לְבוֹא אֶרֶץ-מִצְרַיִם לָגוּר שָׁם וְתָמוּ כָל בְּאֶרֶץ
 מִצְרַיִם יָפְלוּ בַחֲרֵב בְּרָעַב יִתָּמוּ מִקְטָן וְעַד-גְּדוֹל
 בַּחֲרֵב וּבְרָעַב יָמָתוּ וְהָיוּ לְאֵלֶּה לְשִׁמָּה וְלִקְלָלָה
 וּלְחִרְפָּה: ¹³ וּפְקַדְתִּי עַל הַיּוֹשְׁבִים בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם
 כַּאֲשֶׁר פְּקַדְתִּי עַל-יְרוּשָׁלַם בַּחֲרֵב בְּרָעַב וּבַדָּבָר:
¹⁴ וְלֹא יִהְיֶה פָּלִיט וְשָׂרִיד לְשֹׂאֲרֵי יְהוּדָה הַבְּאִים
 לָגוּר-שָׁם בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם וּלְשׁוּבוֹ אֶרֶץ יְהוּדָה
 אֲשֶׁר-הִמָּה מִנְּשָׂאִים אֶת-נַפְשָׁם לָשׁוּב לְשֶׁבֶת שָׁם
 כִּי לֹא-יָשׁוּבוּ כִּי אִם-פְּלִטִים: {פ}

¹⁵ וַיַּעֲנוּ אֶת-יְרֵמְיָהוּ כָּל-הָאֲנָשִׁים הַיְדָעִים כִּי-
 מִקְטָרוֹת נָשִׂיָהֶם לְאֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים וְכָל-הַנָּשִׁים
 הָעֹמְדוֹת קֵהֵל גְּדוֹל וְכָל-הָעָם הַיּוֹשְׁבִים בְּאֶרֶץ-
 מִצְרַיִם בְּפֶתְרוֹס לֵאמֹר: ¹⁶ הַדְּבַר אֲשֶׁר-דִּבַּרְתָּ
 אֵלֵינוּ בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה אֵינָנו שֹׁמְעִים אֵלֶיךָ: ¹⁷ כִּי עָשָׂה
 נַעֲשֶׂה אֶת-כָּל-הַדְּבָר אֲשֶׁר-יֵצֵא מִפִּינוּ לְקֹטֵר
 לְמַלְכַת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְהַסִּידָּלָה נִסְכִּים כַּאֲשֶׁר עָשִׂינוּ
 אֲנַחְנוּ וְאֲבֹתֵינוּ מִלְּכֵינוּ וְשָׂרֵינוּ בְּעָרֵי יְהוּדָה

land of Egypt and settle there, and in Egypt they shall perish; they shall fall by the sword or perish by famine, from least to greatest: by sword and famine they will die and be an object of execration and horror, a curse and a laughing-stock. ¹³ I will punish those who live in the land of Egypt just as I punished Jerusalem: by sword, famine, and plague. ¹⁴ Of the remnant of Judah that has come to settle in the land of Egypt, not a single one shall escape or survive to return to the country of Judah where they long to return and live; for none of them shall return, except a few fugitives.””

¹⁵ Then all the men who knew that their wives offered incense to other gods, and all the women who stood by, a great crowd, and all the people living in Pathros in Egypt answered Jeremiah: ¹⁶ “We will not listen to the word you have just spoken to us in Yahweh’s name, ¹⁷ but we will do all we have vowed: offering incense to the Queen of Heaven and pouring libations in her honour, as we used to do, we and our fathers, our kings and our chief men, in the towns of Judah and the streets of Jerusalem; we had food in plenty then, we lived well and we suffered

¹³ Throughout this section, the NJB omits ‘land of’ before ‘Egypt’; here, we follow the NRSV.

¹⁴ Another possible reading for this verse is: “None of the Judaeans who have come to live in the land of Egypt will escape or survive; none of them will escape or survive to return to the land of Judah where they long to return to live. Indeed [emphatic use of כִּי] none of them shall return except a few fugitives.” This is a good example of rhetorical hyperbole: a universal negative does not apply to all the particulars; God denies at the outset that any will escape, he says at the end that a few fugitives will return (the 2 words for fugitive are from the same root).

¹⁵ NETB reinterprets the phrase ‘in Pathros in Egypt’ as ‘in northern and southern Egypt’; here, we follow the MT, NJB & NRSV.

¹⁶ In place of ‘we will not listen’, the NJB has ‘we have no intention of listening’.

¹⁷ The ‘Queen of Heaven’ refers to the Babylonian-Assyrian goddess Ishtar (see #7:18); the cakes (v. 19) represented the naked goddess.

וּבַחֲצוֹת יְרוּשָׁלַם וַנִּשְׁבַּע־לָחֵם וְנָהִיָּה טוֹבִים וְרָעָה
 לֹא רָאִינוּ: י"ח וּמִן־אֲזַ חָדְלָנוּ לְקַטֵּר לַמַּלְכַת הַשָּׁמַיִם
 וְהִסַּדְדָּהּ לָהּ נִסְכִּים חֲסָרָנוּ כָּל וּבַחֲרָב וּבְרָעַב תָּמְנוּ:
 י"ט וְכִי־אֲנַחְנוּ מִקַּטְרִים לַמַּלְכַת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְלִהְסַדְדָּהּ לָהּ
 נִסְכִּים הַמְּבֻלְעָדִי אֲנִשְׁיָנוּ עֲשִׂינוּ לָהּ בְּוָנִים
 לְהַעֲצֹבָהּ וְהִסַּדְדָּהּ לָהּ נִסְכִּים: {ס} כ' וַיֹּאמֶר יְרֵמְיָהוּ
 אֶל־כָּל־הָעָם עַל־הַגְּבָרִים וְעַל־הַנְּשִׂאִים וְעַל־כָּל־
 הָעָם הָעֹנִים אֹתוֹ דָּבַר לֵאמֹר: כ"א הֲלוֹא אֶת־הַקַּטֵּר
 אֲשֶׁר קִטַּרְתֶּם בְּעָרֵי יְהוּדָה וּבַחֲצוֹת יְרוּשָׁלַם אֲתֶם
 וְאֲבוֹתֵיכֶם מִלְּכִיכֶם וּשְׂרִיכֶם וְעַם הָאָרֶץ אֲתֶם זָכַר
 יְהוָה וְתַעֲלֶה עַל־לְבוֹ: כ"ב וְלֹא־יִוְכַל יְהוָה עוֹד
 לַשְּׂאֵת מִפְּנֵי רָע מַעַלְלֵיכֶם מִפְּנֵי הַתּוֹעֵבֹת אֲשֶׁר
 עֲשִׂיתֶם וְתָהִי אֶרְצְכֶם לְחָרָבָה וְלִשְׂמָה וְלִקְלָלָה
 מֵאִן יוֹשֵׁב בְּהַיּוֹם הַזֶּה: כ"ג מִפְּנֵי אֲשֶׁר קִטַּרְתֶּם
 וְאֲשֶׁר חָטַאתֶם לַיהוָה וְלֹא שָׁמַעְתֶּם בְּקוֹל יְהוָה
 וּבַתְּרַתּוֹ וּבַחֲקֹתָיו וּבְעֵדוּתָיו לֹא הִלַּכְתֶּם עַל־כֵּן
 קָרָאת אֲתֶכֶם הָרָעָה הַזֹּאת בַּיּוֹם הַזֶּה: {ס}

no disaster.¹⁸ But, since we gave up offering incense to the Queen of Heaven and pouring libations in her honour, we have been destitute and have perished either by sword or by famine.¹⁹ And, when we offer incense to the Queen of Heaven and pour libations in her honour, do you think we make cakes for her with her features on them, and pour libations to her, without our husbands?²⁰ Then Jeremiah retorted, to all those people, men and women, all those people who were giving him this answer,²¹ “The incense you offered in the towns of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem, you, your fathers, your kings, your chief men and the people at large – was this not what Yahweh kept remembering? And did they not come to his mind?²² Yahweh could not bear the sight of your misdeeds and your loathsome practices any longer, with the result that your country has become the uninhabited ruin, the object of horror and cursing it is today?²³ Because you offered incense, because you sinned against Yahweh, refusing to listen to the voice of Yahweh or to observe his Law, his statutes, and his decrees – that is why this disaster has overtaken you, as is still evident today.”

¹⁸ What is being contrasted here is the relative peace and prosperity under the reign of Manasseh, who promoted all kinds of pagan cults including the worship of astral deities (2K 21:2-9), and the disasters that befell Judah after the reforms of Josiah, which included the removal of all the cult images and altars from Jerusalem and Judah (2K 23:4-15).

¹⁹ The women speak at this point (the NRSV, following the *Peshitta*, inserts the words ‘the women said’ at the start of this verse).

²⁰ NETB omits the 2nd instance of ‘all those people’, considering the appositional phrase redundant in contemporary English.

²¹ The NJB replaces the last question with a conjunctive clause linking to the next verse: “and found so repellent that.”

²² In place of ‘your misdeeds and your loathsome practices’, following the NJB, the NRSV has ‘your evil doings, the abominations that you committed’.

²³ The NJB lacks ‘as is still evident today’ (here following the NRSV) but has ‘present’ before ‘disaster’.

כד וַיֹּאמֶר יִרְמְיָהוּ אֶל־כָּל־הָעָם וְאֵל כָּל־הַנָּשִׁים
שָׁמְעוּ דְבַר־יְהוָה כָּל־יְהוּדָה אֲשֶׁר בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם:
כה כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה־צְבָאוֹת אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר
אַתֶּם וְנָשִׁיכֶם וְתַדְבַּרְנָה בְּפִיכֶם וּבִידֵיכֶם מִלְּאֲתֶם |
לֵאמֹר עֲשֵׂה נַעֲשֵׂה אֶת־נְדָרֵינוּ אֲשֶׁר נִדְרַנּוּ לְקַטֹּר
לְמַלְכַת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְלִהְסֹךְ לָהּ נְסֻכִים הַקִּים תְּקַיְמֶנָּה
אֶת־נְדָרֵיכֶם וְעֲשֵׂה תַעֲשִׂינָה אֶת־נְדָרֵיכֶם: {ס}

כו לָכֵן שָׁמְעוּ דְבַר־יְהוָה כָּל־יְהוּדָה הַיֹּשְׁבִים בְּאֶרֶץ
מִצְרַיִם הַנְּנִי נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי בְּשֵׁמִי הַגָּדוֹל אָמַר יְהוָה
אִם־יְהִיֶּה עוֹד שְׁמִי נִקְרָא | בְּפִי | כָּל־אִישׁ יְהוּדָה
אָמַר חִי־אֲדַנִּי יְהוָה בְּכָל־אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם: כז הַנְּנִי
שֶׁקֶד עָלֵיהֶם לְרָעָה וְלֹא לְטוֹבָה וְתָמוּ כָל־אִישׁ
יְהוּדָה אֲשֶׁר בְּאֶרֶץ־מִצְרַיִם בְּחָרֵב וּבְרָעַב עַד־
כח כָּלוּתָם: כח וּפְלִיטֵי חָרֵב יִשְׁבוּן מִן־אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם

²⁴ Further, Jeremiah said to all the people, and particularly to all the women, “Listen to the word of Yahweh, all you Judaeans in Egypt,
²⁵ Yahweh Sabaoth, the God of Israel, says this, “You and your wives, what your mouths promised, your hands have indeed performed! You said: We shall punctiliously fulfil the vows we have made and offer incense to the Queen of Heaven and pour libations in her honour. Very well, keep your vows; perform them punctiliously!

²⁶ Therefore, listen to the word of Yahweh, all you Judaeans living in Egypt: I swear by my great name, Yahweh says, that my name will no longer be uttered by any man of Judah throughout Egypt; no one will say: As Lord Yahweh lives. ²⁷ No, I am going to keep my eye on them for disaster, not for prosperity, and all the Judaeans in Egypt will perish either by the sword or by famine until they are wiped out. ²⁸ Yet, though few in number, those who escape the sword will return to the country

²⁴ The words ‘and particularly’ here translate a simple *vav* (ו) prefix.

²⁵ The text and referent here is uncertain because of the confusing picture that the alternation of pronouns presents in this verse: 3 of the main verbs are 2FP and 1 is 2MP; all the pronominal suffixes on the nouns are 2MP. The MT reads: “You [2MP] and your [2MP] wives have spoken [2FP, תַּדְבַּרְנָה] with your [2MP] mouth and you have fulfilled [2MP, מִלְּאֲתֶם] with your [2MP] hands, saying, ‘We will certainly carry out....’ Indeed fulfil [2FP, תְּקַיְמֶנָּה] your [2MP] vows and indeed carry out [2FP, תַעֲשִׂינָה] your [2MP] vows.” Older commentaries explain the feminine verbs as a matter of the women being the principle subject; most modern commentaries follow the LXX, which reads ‘you women’ (אַתְּנָה הַנָּשִׁים) in place of ‘you and your wives’ (אַתֶּם וְנָשִׁיכֶם). None, however, explain the use of the 2MP here: this is possibly a case where the masculine forms are used in the place of the feminine due to the dislike of Hebrew to use the feminine plural forms.

²⁶ The worshippers of Ishtar also made a show of invoking the name of Yahweh.

²⁷ Literally translated, this verse opens, “Behold, I am watching over them for evil/disaster/harm not for good/prosperity/blessing.” (Cf. 31:28.)

²⁸ The 1st half of this verse shows that the preceding ‘none’ and ‘all’ in vv. 26–27 are rhetorical hyperbole.

אֶרֶץ יְהוּדָה מִתֵּי מִסְפָּר וַיֵּדְעוּ כָּל־שְׂאֲרֵי־יְהוּדָה
הַבָּאִים לְאֶרֶץ־מִצְרַיִם לְגֹר שָׁם דְּבַר־מִי יָקוּם
מִמֶּנִּי וּמֵהֶם: כִּי זֹאת־לָכֶם הָאוֹת נְאֻם־יְהוָה כִּי־
פָּקַד אֲנִי עֲלֵיכֶם בַּמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה לְמַעַן תִּדְעוּ כִּי קוֹם
יִקְוּמוּ דְבָרַי עֲלֵיכֶם לְרַעָה: {פ}

לְכָה | אָמַר יְהוָה הִנְנִי נֹתֵן אֶת־פַּרְעֹה חֲפָרַע מֶלֶךְ־
מִצְרַיִם בְּיַד אֹיְבָיו וּבְיַד מְבַקְשֵׁי נַפְשׁוֹ כַּאֲשֶׁר נָתַתִּי
אֶת־צְדָקְיָהוּ מֶלֶךְ־יְהוּדָה בְּיַד נְבוּכַדְרֶאצַּר מֶלֶךְ־
בָּבֶל אֹיְבוֹ וּמְבַקֵּשׁ נַפְשׁוֹ: {ס}

of Judah from Egypt. Then, the entire remnant of Judah that has come and settled in Egypt will know whose word comes true, mine or theirs.

²⁹ Here is the sign for you, Yahweh declares, that I shall punish you in this place: so that you will know that the words with which I threaten you will come true:

³⁰ "Yahweh says this: Look, I shall hand Pharaoh Hophra, king of Egypt, over to his enemies and to those determined to kill him, just as I handed Zedekiah, king of Judah, over to his enemy Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, who was determined to kill him."

²⁹ The word 'sign' refers to an event that is a pre-omen or portent of something that will happen later (compare usage in 1S 14:10 & 2K 19:29).

³⁰ In the LXX, 'Hophra' is 'Apries' (589–569 BCE, see #37:7); he succeeded Necho and was later killed by Ahmosis II (Amasis), a former court official, co-regent for three years and founder of the 27th (Libyan) Dynasty. Jeremiah makes this short-term prophecy, offering its fulfilment as a sign (see #28:17), commending his prediction of a more distant event, namely invasion by Nebuchadnezzar in 568–567 BCE (see #43:12).

ירמיהו פרק מה

אֵלֶּה הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר יִרְמְיָהוּ הַנְּבִיא אֶל־בְּרוּךְ בֶּן־נְרִיָּה בְּכַתְּבוֹ אֶת־הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה עַל־סֵפֶר מִפִּי יִרְמְיָהוּ בַּשָּׁנָה הָרְבַעִית לַיהוֹיָקִים בֶּן־יֹאשִׁיָּהוּ מֶלֶךְ־יְהוּדָה לֵאמֹר: ^ב כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל עָלַיְךָ בְּרוּךְ: ^ג אָמַרְתָּ אוֹיֵנָא לִי כִי־יִסָּף יְהוָה יַגֹּן עָלַי מִכָּאֲבִי יִגְעָלִי בְּאַנְחָתִי וּמְנוּחָה לֹא מָצָאתִי: ^ד כֹּה | תֹּאמַר אֵלָיו כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה הִנֵּה אֲשֶׁר־בִּנִיתִי אֲנִי הָאֵל וְאֵת אֲשֶׁר־נָטַעְתִּי אֲנִי נָתַשׁ וְאֵת כָּל־הָאָרֶץ הִיא: ^ה וְאֵתָּה תִּבְקֶשׁ־לָךְ גְּדֹלוֹת אֶל־תִּבְקֶשׁ כִּי הִנְנִי מֵבִיא רָעָה עַל־כָּל־בָּשָׂר נְאֻם־יְהוָה וְנָתַתִּי לָךְ אֶת־נַפְשֶׁךָ לְשָׁלַל עַל כָּל־הַמְּקוֹמוֹת אֲשֶׁר תֵּלֶךְ־שָׁם: {פ}

JEREMIAH 45

¹ The word that came to the prophet Jeremiah addressed to Baruch son of Neriah, when he wrote these words down in a scroll at Jeremiah's dictation in the fourth year of Jehoiakim son of Josiah, king of Judah,
² "This is what Yahweh, the God of Israel, says about you, Baruch!
³ "You have been thinking: what disaster for me! Yahweh has added further grief to my troubles! I am worn out with groaning and find no relief!"
⁴ Say to him as follows, "Yahweh says this: Now I am knocking down what I have built and I am uprooting what I have planted, over the whole earth!
⁵ And you, do you seek great things for yourself? Do not ask, for I am going to bring disaster on all mankind, Yahweh declares, but you I shall allow to escape with your life, wherever you may go."

JEREMIAH 45

- ¹ This passage, preserving a prophecy addressed personally to Jeremiah's secretary, stands as it were for Baruch's signature; presumably, he was also the author of the bibliographical fragments in Chs 26–44. The date is 605 BCE (see 36:1).
- ² The passage is both a rebuke to Baruch and an encouragement that his life will be spared wherever he goes.
- ³ From the context, it appears that Baruch was feeling sorry for himself (v. 5) as well as feeling anguish for the suffering that the nation would need to undergo according to the predictions of Jeremiah that he was recording.
- ⁴ There is some debate whether אָרֶץ ('earth') here applies to the whole land of Israel (as *NJB* & *NRSV*) or to the whole earth (as *NETB*); however, the reference to 'all mankind' in v. 5, as well as 'wherever you may go' points to the whole earth as the referent.
- ⁵ The *NJB* replaces the opening question (here following the *NRSV*) with, "Yet, you ask for special treatment!"

ירמיהו פרק מו

אֲשֶׁר הָיָה דְבַר־יְהוָה אֶל־יְרֵמְיָהוּ הַנָּבִיא עַל־
הַגּוֹיִם: ^ב לְמַצְרַיִם עַל־חֵיל פְּרָעָה נְכוּ מִלֶּךְ מִצְרַיִם
אֲשֶׁר־הָיָה עַל־נְהַר־פְּרָת בְּכַרְכֶּמֶשׁ אֲשֶׁר הִפָּה
נְבוּכַדְרֶאצַּר מֶלֶךְ בָּבֶל בְּשָׁנַת הָרְבִיעִית לַיהוֹיָקִים
בְּיָאֲשִׁיאוֹ מִלֶּךְ יְהוּדָה:

ג עֲרֹכוּ מִגֶּן וְצִנֹּה

וּגְשׁוּ לַמִּלְחָמָה:

ד אֶסְרוּ הַסּוּסִים

וְעָלוּ הַפָּרָשִׁים

וְהִתְיַצְבוּ בְּכוֹבָעִים

מִרְקוֹ הָרִמָּחִים

לְבָשׁוּ הַסְרִיגָּת:

ה מַדּוּעַ רָאִיתִי

הַמָּה חֲתִים נֹסְגִים אַחֲזֹר־

JEREMIAH 46

¹ The words of Yahweh that were addresses to the prophet Jeremiah against the nations: ² Concerning Egypt, against the army of Pharaoh Necho, king of Egypt, which was at Carchemish on the River Euphrates when Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon defeated it, in the fourth year of Jehoiakim son of Josiah, king of Judah:

³ Prepare buckler and shield,
and advance to battle!

⁴ Harness the horses:
into the saddle, horsemen!
Take to your ranks! Put on your helmets!
Sharpen your spears
and put on your breastplates!

⁵ Why do I see them
retreating, panic-stricken?

JEREMIAH 46

- ¹ The MT places the 'Prophecies against the Nations' at the end of the book (Chs 46–51). In the LXX, however, they retain their original position and follow their introductory chapter (25), which seems to have been expanded in the light of subsequent events.
- ² 'Carchemish' is the modern Syrian township of Jerablus, northeast of Aleppo on the Euphrates.
- ³ The word here translated 'prepare' (עֲרֹכוּ) refers in various senses to arranging or setting things in order, such as altars in a row, dishes on a table, or soldiers in ranks; here, it may refer to the soldiers lining up, with ranks of soldiers holding at the ready the long oval or rectangular 'shield' (צִנֹּה), which protected the whole body, and the smaller round 'buckler' (מִגֶּן), which only protected the torso.
- ⁴ In place of 'breastplates', here following the NJB, the NRSV has 'coats of mail' and NETB has 'armour'.
- ⁵ The passage takes an unexpected turn here: after ironically summoning the Egyptian army to battle, God rhetorically expresses his surprise that they are so completely routed and defeated.

וּגְבוּרֵיהֶם יִפְתּוּ
 וּמְנוּס נָסוּ וְלֹא הִפְנוּ
 מִגּוֹר מִסְבִּיב נְאֻם־יְהוָה:
 אֶל־יָנוּס הַקָּל ו
 וְאֶל־יִמְלֹט הַגִּבּוֹר
 צָפוֹנָה עַל־יַד נְהַר־פָּרָת
 כָּשְׁלוּ וַנִּפְּלוּ:
 מִי־זָה כִּי־אָר יַעֲלֶה ז
 כַּנְּהַרֹּת יִתְגַּעְשׂוּ מִימּוֹ:
 מִצְרַיִם כִּי־אָר יַעֲלֶה ח
 וּכְנַהַרֹּת יִתְגַּעְשׂוּ מִיָּם
 וַיֹּאמֶר אֲעֲלֶה אֶכְסֶה־אֶרֶץ
 אֲבִידָה עִיר וַיִּשְׁבִּי בָּהּ:
 עָלוּ הַסּוּסִים וְהִתְהַלְּלוּ הָרֶכֶב ט
 וַיִּצְאוּ הַגִּבּוֹרִים
 כּוֹשׁ וּפּוּט תִּפְשִׂי מִגֶּן
 וְלִוְדִים תִּפְשִׂי דְרָכֵי קֶשֶׁת:
 וְהַיּוֹם הַהוּא לְאֲדֹנָי יִהְיֶה צַבָּאוֹת י
 יוֹם נִקְמָה לְהַנְקֵם מִצְרַיִם

Their heroes, beaten back,
 are fleeing headlong, with not a look behind.
 Terror on every side, says Yahweh!
 6 The swift cannot flee,
 nor can the warrior escape!
 Up in the north, on the River Euphrates,
 they have collapsed, have fallen.
 7 Who was it rose like the Nile,
 his streams foaming like a torrent?
 8 Egypt rose like the Nile,
 his waters foaming like a torrent.
 "I shall rise," he said, "and drown the earth;
 I shall sweep away towns and their inhabitants!"
 9 Charge, O horses and dash madly, O chariots!
 Let the warriors advance,
 men from Cush and Put with shield in hand,
 men from Lud who grasp and bend the bow!"
 10 For this is the day of Lord Yahweh Sabaoth,
 a day of vengeance when he takes revenge on his foes:

6 NETB has 'strongest' in place of 'warrior' (following the NJB & NRSV), assuming the adjectives with the article are functioning as superlatives.

7 The word translated 'streams' here refers to the streams of the Nile (cf. Ex 7:19 & 8:1 for parallel usage).

8 The hubris of the Egyptian Pharaoh is referred to in vv. 7-8 as he compares his might to that of the Nile.

9 The NJB and NRSV omit 'grasp and', probably a dittography.

10 Most commentators think the 2nd line is a reference to God exacting vengeance on Pharaoh Necho.

וְאָכְלָה חֶרֶב וְשָׁבְעָה
וְרוּתָה מִדָּמָם
כִּי זָבַח לַאֲדֹנָי יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת
בְּאֶרֶץ צָפוֹן אֶל־נְהַר־פָּרָת:

יא עָלִי גִלְעָד וּקְחֵי צֹרִי
בְּתוּלַת בֵּת־מִצְרַיִם
לְשׂוֹא הַרְבִּיתִי הַרְבִּית רַפְאוֹת
תַּעֲלֶה אֵין לָךְ:

יב שָׁמְעוּ גוֹיִם קְלוֹנֶיךָ
וְצוּחַתֶּךָ מִלְּאֵה הָאָרֶץ
כִּי־גִבּוֹר בְּגִבּוֹר כָּשְׁלוּ
יַחֲדָיו נָפְלוּ שְׁנֵיהֶם: {פ}

יג הַדָּבָר אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר יְהוָה אֶל־יִרְמְיָהוּ הַנְּבִיא לְבוֹא
נְבוּכַדְרֶאצַּר מֶלֶךְ בָּבֶל לְהַכּוֹת אֶת־אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם:

יד הִגִּידוּ בְּמִצְרַיִם וְהִשְׁמִיעוּ בְּמִגְדּוֹל
וְהִשְׁמִיעוּ בְּנֹף וּבְתַחְפַּנְחָס
אָמְרוּ הַתִּיצֵב וְהִכֵּן לָךְ
כִּי־אָכְלָה חֶרֶב סְבִיבֶיךָ:

טו מִדּוּעַ נִסְחַף אַבְיֵרֶיךָ

the sword will devour until gorged,
until drunk with their blood;
for, Lord Yahweh Sabaoth is holding a sacrificial feast
in the land of the north, on the River Euphrates.

11 Go up to Gilead and fetch balm,
virgin daughter of Egypt!
You multiply remedies in vain:
nothing can cure you!

12 The nations will hear of your shame,
your wailing fills the world,
for warrior has stumbled against warrior,
and both have fallen together.

13 The word that Yahweh spoke to the prophet Jeremiah when
Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon advanced to attack Egypt:

14 Publish it in Egypt and proclaim it in Migdol;
and proclaim it in Noph and Tahpanhes!
Say, “Stand your ground, be prepared;
for, the sword is devouring all round you!”

15 Why has Apis fled?

11 The *Kethib*/*Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

12 The verb translated ‘will hear’ (following *NETB*) is actually a prophetic perfect – ‘have heard’.

13 The invasion in question took place in 568–567 BCE, during the reign of Pharaoh Amasis (see #43:12).

14 ‘Migdol’, ‘Noph’ (= Memphis) and ‘Tahpanhes’ were all cities in Lower (Northern) Egypt – the first to fall to an invasion.

15 The 1st line follows the *LXX* (*διὰ τὴν ἔφυσεν ὁ Ἄπις*); the *MT* has, “Why has he been overthrown?” ‘Mighty One’ is singular in 65 Hebrew MSS and

לֹא עָמַד
 כִּי יְהוָה הִדְפּוֹ:
 הִרְבָּה בּוֹשֵׁל טו
 גַּם־נָפַל אִישׁ אֶל־רֵעֵהוּ
 וַיֹּאמְרוּ קוֹמָה |
 וּנְשָׁבָה אֶל־עַמָּנוּ וְאֶל־אֶרֶץ מוֹלְדֹתָנוּ
 מִפְּנֵי חֶרֶב הַיּוֹנָה:
 קִרְאוּ שֵׁם פֶּרְעֵה מֶלֶךְ־מִצְרַיִם שְׂאוֹן ז
 הַעֲבִיר הַמוֹעֵד:
 חַי־אֲנִי נְאֻם־הַמֶּלֶךְ יח
 יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת שְׁמוֹ
 כִּי כְתָבוֹר בְּהָרִים
 וּכְכֹרֶמֶל בַּיָּם יָבֹא:
 כָּלִי גוֹלָה עֲשֵׂי לְךָ ט
 יוֹשֶׁבֶת בְּת־מִצְרַיִם
 כִּי־נָף לְשִׁמָּה תִהְיֶה
 וּנְצֻתָה מֵאֵין יוֹשֵׁב: {ס}

Your Mighty One did not stand
 because Yahweh overturned him!
 16 He has caused many to fall!
 Falling over one another,
 they say, “Up, and back to our own people,
 to the country where we were born,
 away from the devastating sword!”
 17 They have given Pharaoh king of Egypt the nickname,
 ‘Much-noise-but-he-lets-the-chance-slip-by’!
 18 As I live, the King declares,
 Yahweh Sabaoth is his name,
 he is coming, a very Tabor among mountains,
 a Carmel high above the sea!
 19 Get your bundle ready for exile,
 fair inhabitant of Egypt!
 Noph will be reduced to a desert,
 desolate and uninhabited.

the LXX; the MT has the plural form. The Apis bull, the incarnation of the god Ptah, was the protector of Memphis; while alive, it was fed in a temple; once dead, it became an Osiris-Apis, or Osar-Api, whence the name Serapeum, the necropolis where it was embalmed and buried. As against this totem, the One True God was indeed the ‘Mighty One of Jacob’ (see Gn 49:24, Ps 132:2, Is 1:24, 49:26, 60:16).

16 The meaning of the 1st line (here following the NJB) is uncertain; the NRSV has, “Your multitude stumbled and fell!”

17 The literal translation of ‘given him the nickname’ is ‘they have called him by this name’ (as LXX) or ‘they have called there’ (as MT).

18 Mount Carmel is at the end of the Plain of Jezreel, projecting into the Mediterranean (Jos 19:26). Tabor, on the east end of the Jezreel Valley, is only about 540 m, and Carmel is about 510 m at its highest; but they are rugged and stand out dominantly over their surroundings.

19 ‘Noph’ was Memphis (see 44:1 and the #2:16).

<p>כ עגלה יפה־פיה מצרים קרוץ מצפון בא בא: כא גִּם־שְׂכָרֶיהָ בְּקִרְבָּהּ כְּעִגְלֵי מִרְבֵּק כִּי־גִם־הֵמָּה הִפְּנוּ גִסּוּ יַחְדָּיו לֹא עָמְדוּ כִּי יוֹם אִי־דָם בָּא עֲלֵיהֶם עַתַּת פְּקֻדָּתָם: כב קולה כנחש ילד כִּי־בַחִיל יִלְכוּ וּבְקִרְדָּמוֹת בָּאוּ לָהּ כְּחֹטְבֵי עֵצִים: כג כרתו יערָה נא־סִיְהוֹה כִּי לֹא יִחְקֹר כִּי רַבּוּ מֵאַרְבֵּה וְאֵין לָהֶם מִסְפָּר: כד הבישה בת־מצרים נְתַנָּה בְּיַד עַם־צָפוֹן:</p>	<p>20 Egypt is a beautiful heifer, but a gadfly from the north has settled on her.</p> <p>21 Even her mercenaries in her midst are like fattened calves: they too have turned and fled together, they did not stand; for their day of disaster has overtaken them, their time for being punished.</p> <p>22 Hear her hissing like a snake as they advance in force to fall on her with their axes, like woodcutters.</p> <p>23 They will fell her forest, Yahweh declares, though it is impenetrable, for they are more numerous than locusts, there is no counting them.</p> <p>24 Daughter Egypt shall be put to shame, handed over to a people from the north.</p>
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²⁰ The exact meaning of the word translated 'gadfly' is uncertain due to the fact that it occurs nowhere else in Hebrew literature.

²¹ Note the causal use of the particle כִּי in the 3rd line (NETB assumes the temporal use: 'when their day of disaster...').

²² 'Hissing' follows the LXX; the MT has 'advancing' (see the 2nd line).

²³ The meaning of this verse is uncertain: some see the reference to the forest as a metaphor for Egypt's population, while others see the reference to literal trees; and some see it as a continuation of the simile of the snake fleeing, the soldiers cutting down the trees because they cannot find it. However, the simile of v. 22^a has already been dropped in v. 22^{b-d}, hence, it is probably best to see this as a continuation of the simile in v. 22^{c-d} and see the reference to the Babylonian army coming against her, i.e., Egypt (the nation or people of Egypt), like woodcutters felling trees.

²⁴ The NJB has 'the daughter of Egypt' in place of 'Daughter Egypt', here following the NRSV.

כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה עֲבָאוֹת אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הִנְנִי פּוֹקֵד
 אֶל־אֲמוֹן מִזָּא וְעַל־פְּרַעֲה וְעַל־מִצְרַיִם וְעַל־אֱלֹהֵיהֶם
 וְעַל־מַלְכֵיהֶם וְעַל־פְּרַעֲה וְעַל הַבְּטָחִים בּוֹ:
 כִּי וּנְתַתִּים בְּיַד מְבַקְשֵׁי נַפְשָׁם וּבְיַד נְבוּכַדְרֶאֱצַּר
 מֶלֶךְ־בָּבֶל וּבְיַד־עַבְדָּיו וְאַחֲרֵי־כֵן תִּשְׁכַּן כִּי־מִי־קִדְּמָם
 נְאֻם־יְהוָה: {פ}

כִּי וְאַתָּה אֶל־תִּירָא עַבְדֵי יַעֲקֹב
 וְאַל־תַּחַת יִשְׂרָאֵל
 כִּי הִנְנִי מוֹשֶׁעֶךָ מֵרְחוֹק
 וְאַת־זֶרְעֶךָ מֵאֶרֶץ שָׁבִים
 וְשָׁב יַעֲקֹב וְשָׁקֵט וְשָׁאֲנָן
 וְאֵין מַחְרִיד:

כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה כִּי אֲתָךְ אֲנִי
 כִּי אֶעֱשֶׂה כָּל־הַגּוֹיִם
 אֲשֶׁר הִדַּחְתִּיךָ שָׁמָּה
 וְאַתָּךְ לֹא־אֶעֱשֶׂה כָּל־הַ
 וְיִסְרַתִּיךָ לְמִשְׁפָּט
 וְנִקָּה לֹא אֲנַקֶּךָ: {פ}

²⁵ Yahweh Sabaoth, the God of Israel, has said, “Look, I shall punish Amon of No, Pharaoh, Egypt, its gods, its kings, Pharaoh and those who put their trust in him. ²⁶ I shall hand him over to those who are determined to kill him, to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, to his generals. Afterwards, Egypt will be inhabited again as in the past, Yahweh declares.”

²⁷ But do not be afraid, my servant Jacob; do not be alarmed, Israel: for look, I shall rescue you from afar and your offspring from the land of captivity. Jacob will return and be at peace, secure, with no one to trouble him.

²⁸ Do not be afraid, my servant Jacob, Yahweh declares, for I am with you: I shall make an end of all the nations where I have driven you, but I shall not make an end of you. I shall discipline you only as you deserve, not leaving you entirely unpunished.

²⁵ ‘Amon’ was the ram-headed god of Thebes, the Egyptian name for which was ‘No’ (see Ezk 30:14–16, Na 3:8).

²⁶ For similar prophecies of recovery for nations punished by God, see 48:47, 49:6, 39, Is 19:21ff.

²⁷ Here, ‘Jacob’ and ‘Israel’ no longer mean the Northern Kingdom but, in the spirit of the second part of Isaiah, all Yahweh’s people.

²⁸ The translation ‘entirely unpunished’ (as NETB) is intended to reflect the emphatic construction of the infinitive absolute before the finite verb.

ירמיהו פרק מז

JEREMIAH 47

אֲשֶׁר הָיָה דְבַר־יְהוָה אֶל־יְרֵמְיָהוּ הַנְּבִיא אֶל־¹ This is that which came as the word of Yahweh to Jeremiah
פְּלִשְׁתִּים בְּטָרַם יָבֵה פְּרַעְהָ אֶת־עֲזָה: ² כֹּה אָמַר | Thus says
יְהוָה: Yahweh:

הִנֵּה־מַיִם עֹלִים מִצָּפוֹן

וְהָיוּ לְנַחַל שׁוֹטֵף

וַיִּשְׁטְפוּ אֶרֶץ וּמְלוֹאָהָ

עִיר וַיִּשְׁבִּי בָּהּ

וַיִּזְעֲקוּ הָאָדָם וְהַיֵּלֶל

כָּל יוֹשֵׁב הָאָרֶץ:

מִקּוֹל שַׁעֲטַת פְּרָסוֹת אַבְיָרָיו ³

מִרְעַשׁ לְרִכְבּוֹ הַמּוֹן גְּלִגְלָיו

לֹא־הִפְנוּ אָבוֹת אֶל־בָּנִים

מִרְפִּיזוֹן יָדָיִם:

עַל־הַיּוֹם ⁴

הַבָּא לְשָׂדוֹד אֶת־כָּל־פְּלִשְׁתִּים

לְהַכְרִית לְצַר וּלְצִידוֹן

Look, the waters are rising from the north
to become an overwhelming flood,
overwhelming the country and all in it,
the town and its inhabitants!

People cry for help, and there is wailing
from the country's inhabitants.

³ At the thunder of his charger's hoofs,
the crash of his chariots, the grinding of his wheels,
fathers forget about their children
and their hands fall limp,

⁴ for the day has come
for all the Philistines to be destroyed,
for Tyre and Sidon to be stripped

JEREMIAH 47

¹ This Pharaoh is either Necho, when Magdolos would correspond to Megiddo and Cadytis to Gaza, or Hophra who made war on Tyre and Sidon, possibly attacking their Philistine allies at the same time.

² The metaphor of enemy armies compared to overflowing water is seen also in Is 8:8-9 (Assyria) and 46:7-8 (Egypt); here, it refers to the 'foe from the north' (Jr 1:14, 4:6, &c.), which is specifically identified with Babylon in Jr 25.

³ The phrase 'their hands fall limp' is figurative of helplessness caused by terror.

⁴ The 'Isle of Caphtor' is Crete, the traditional homeland of the Philistines (Dt 2:23, Am 9:7). On the Philistine cities, see 25:20.

כָּל שָׂרִיד עֶזְרָה
 כִּי־שָׂדֵד יִהְיֶה אֶת־פְּלִשְׁתִּים
 שְׂאֵרִית אֵי כַפְתּוֹר:
 בָּאָה קָרַחַה אֶל־עֵזָה ה
 נְדַמְתָּה אֲשַׁקְלוֹן
 שְׂאֵרִית עַמְקָם
 עַד־מָתִי תִתְגַּדְּדִי:
 הוּי חָרַב לִיהוָה ו
 עַד־אָנָּה לֹא תִשְׁקָטִי
 הֲאִסְפִּי אֶל־תַּעֲרֹךְ
 הֲרַגְעִי וְדָמִי:
 אֵיךְ תִּשְׁקָטִי ז
 וַיְהוֶה צִוְּה־לָּהּ
 אֶל־אֲשַׁקְלוֹן וְאֶל־חֹוֹף
 הַיָּם שֵׁם יַעֲדָה: {פ}

to the last of their allies.

Yes, Yahweh is destroying the Philistines,
the remnant from the Isle of Caphtor.

5 Baldness has befallen Gaza
and Ashkelon is silenced.

You who remain in the valley,
how long will you gash yourselves?

6 Oh, sword of Yahweh,
how long before you rest?

Put yourself back into your scabbard,
stop, keep still!

7 Yet, how can it rest,
when Yahweh has given it an order,
Ashkelon and the seacoast,
the targets assigned to it?

⁵ For 'you who remain in the valley', a minor emendation would give the reading, as in the LXX, of 'of the Anakim' (עֲנָקִים for עַמְקָם, cf. Jos 11:22); the NRSV has 'remnant of their power'. A shaven head and self-inflicted wounds were signs of mourning (See Lv 21:5, Mi 1:16).

⁶ The passage is highly figurative: the 'sword of Yahweh', which is itself a figure of the destructive agency of the enemy armies, is here addressed as a person and is encouraged in rhetorical questions to 'rest', 'top' and 'keep still', all of which is designed to get Yahweh to call off the destruction against the Philistines.

⁷ 'It rest' follows the LXX, Peshitta and Vg (and see the remainder of the verse); the MT has 'you rest'.

ירמיהו פרק מח

לְמוֹאָב כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל

הוּי אֶל־נְבוֹ כִּי שִׁדְדָה
הַבִּישָׁה גִלְכָּדָה קִרְיַת־יָם
הַבִּישָׁה הַמְשֻׁגָּב וַחֲתָה:
אֵין עוֹד תְּהִלַּת מוֹאָב ב
בְּחֶשְׁבוֹן חֲשְׁבוּ עָלֶיהָ רָעָה
לָכוּ וְנִכְרִיתְנָהּ מִגּוֹי
גַם־מִדְּמֵן תִּדְמִי
אֲחֲרֶיךָ תִּלְךְ חָרָב:
קוֹל צַעֲקָה מִחֲרוֹנַיִם ג
שָׁד וְשִׁבְרֵי גְדוֹל:
נִשְׁבְּרָה מוֹאָב ד
הַשְּׁמִיעוּ זַעֲקָה צְעוּרִיהָ צְעִירֶיהָ:
כִּי מֵעֵלָה הַלְּחֹת הַלְּחִית ה
בְּבִכֵי יַעֲלֶה־בְּכִי

JEREMIAH 48

¹ Concerning Moab, thus says Yahweh, the God of Israel:

Wretched Nebo, for it has been ravaged,
Kiriathaim has been shamed and taken,
shame and destruction on the stronghold,
² the pride of Moab is no more!
At Heshbon, they plotted her downfall,
"Come, let us put an end to her as a nation!"
You too, inhabitants of Madmen, will be silenced,
the sword will be after you.
³ A cry of agony goes up from Horonaim,
"Devastation! Dire calamity."
⁴ Moab is destroyed,"
the agonised cries of her young ones ring out.
⁵ Up the slope of Luhith,
they go up weeping bitterly.

JEREMIAH 48

- ¹ It is difficult to identify the original nucleus of this prophecy, the text of which incorporates several biblical passages of earlier date: Nb 21:27–30, 24:17, Is 15–16. It may have been delivered shortly after 605 BCE (see 25:21), 593 BCE (see 27:3), or 587 BCE (see also Ezk 25:8–11).
- ² 'Heshbon' (חֶשְׁבוֹן, modern Hesban, 12 Km north of Medeba) forms a play on words with חֲשְׁבוּ, 'they plotted'; 'Madmen' (מִדְּמֵן, modern Khirbet Dimna, 12 Km north of Kerak) plays on תִּדְמִי, 'will be silenced'.
- ³ 'Horonaim' was apparently in the eastern part of the country, on the edge of the desert.
- ⁴ If, following the LXX, we read the last line as 'proclaim it as far away as Zoar' (south of the Dead Sea, see Gn 14:2, 8), it becomes clear that the terror caused by the invasion convulsed the country from end to end. The *Kethib*/*Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.
- ⁵ 'Luhith' is unidentified but seems to have been in the west. The *Kethib*/*Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

כִּי בְּמוֹרֵד חוֹרְנַיִם
 צָרִי צַעֲקַת־שֹׁבֵר שָׁמְעוּ:
 נִסּוּ מִלְטוֹ נַפְשֵׁכֶם
 וְתִהְיֶינָה כְּעֵרוֹעֵר בַּמִּדְבָּר:
 כִּי יַעַן בִּטְחַדְךָ בַּמַּעֲשֵׂיֶיךָ
 וּבְאִזְרוֹתֶיךָ גַּם־אֵת תִּלְכְּדִי
 וַיֵּצֵא כְּמוֹשׁ בְּגוֹלָה
 כַּהֲנִיּוֹ וְשָׂרָיו יַחַד יַחֲדָיו:
 וַיָּבֵא שָׂדֵד אֶל־כָּל־עִיר
 וְעִיר לֹא תִמְלֹט
 וְאֶבֶד הָעֵמֶק וְנִשְׁמַד הַמִּישֹׁר
 אֲשֶׁר אָמַר יְהוָה:
 תִּנּוּ־צִיץ לְמוֹאָב
 כִּי נִצָּא תֵצֵא
 וְעָרֶיהָ לְשִׁמָּה תִהְיֶינָה
 מֵאִין יוֹשֵׁב בָּהֶן:

On the road down to Horonaim
 is heard the shriek of disaster:

- 6 “Away, flee for your lives,
like a wild donkey into the desert!”
- 7 Yes, since you relied on your deeds and your wealth,
you will be captured too.
Chemosh will go into exile,
with all his priests and princes.
- 8 The despoiler will descend on every town,
not one will escape;
the Valley shall perish and the Plain shall be destroyed
as Yahweh has said.
- 9 Give Moab wings
so that she can fly away,
for her towns will be laid in ruins
where no one will ever live again.

10 אָרוּר עֹשֶׂה מְלֶאכֶת יְהוָה רְמִיָּה וְאָרוּר מִנְעַת חֶרֶבּוֹ
 מִדָּם: 10 Accursed is he who is slack doing Yahweh’s work! Accursed is he who
 deprives his sword of blood!

6 ‘Like a wild donkey’ (reading כְּעֵרוֹד) follows the LXX (Aquila); the MT has ‘like Aroer’ (כְּעֵרוֹעֵר).

7 The Kethib/Qere differences here would benefit from explanations.

8 The ‘Valley’ and the ‘Plain’ here probably refer to the towns and cities therein.

9 The word here translated as ‘wings’ (צִיץ) normally means ‘flower’; here, we may perhaps an unusual meaning of the word, unless it should be amended to read ‘plumage’. See Job 39:13, Ezk 17:3. The LXX reads ‘give Moab a tomb, for she has been devastated’.

10 The NJB puts this verse in parentheses – it is an editorial aside addressed to the Babylonian destroyers, to be diligent in destroying Moab.

יא שֶׁאֵינְךָ מִזְּעוּרָיו
 וְשֶׁקָטָה הוּא אֶל־שִׁמְרָיו
 וְלֹא־הוֹרֵק מִכֶּלִי אֶל־כֶּלִי
 וּבְגוּלָה לֹא הִלָּךְ
 עַל־כֵּן עָמַד טַעְמוֹ בּוֹ
 וְרִיחוֹ לֹא נִמְרָ: {ס}

11 From his youth, Moab lived at ease;
 he settled on his lees,
 never having been decanted,
 never having gone into exile:
 and so he kept his own flavour,
 his aroma was unchanged.

יב לָכֵן הִנֵּה־יָמַיִם בָּאִים נְאֻם־יְהוָה וְשִׁלַּחְתִּי־לּוֹ
 צְעִימִים וְצִעָהוּ וְכִלְיוּ יִרְיָקוּ וְנִבְלִיהֶם יִנְפְּצוּ: יג וּבֶשֶׁת
 מִזְּעוּרָיו מִכְּמוֹשׁ כְּאֲשֶׁר־בִּשְׁוֹ בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל מִבֵּית אֵל
 מִבְּטַחָם:

12 So, the days are coming, says Yahweh, when I shall send him
 decanters to decant him, to empty his pitchers and break his jars to bits.
 13 Moab will be ashamed of Chemosh then, as the House of Israel was
 ashamed of Bethel, their confidence.

יד אֵיךְ תֹּאמְרוּ גִבּוֹרִים אֲנַחְנוּ
 וְאֲנֹשֵׁי־חַיִל לְמַלְחָמָה:
 טו שִׁדְד מִזְּעוּרָיו וְעָרִיָּה עָלָה
 וּמִבְּחַר בְּחֹרָיו יִרְדּוּ לְטַבַּח
 נְאֻם־הַמֶּלֶךְ יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת שְׁמוֹ:
 טז קָרוֹב אִיד־מוֹאֵב
 לְבוֹא וְרַעְתּוֹ מְהֵרָה מְאֹד:

14 How can you say, “We are heroes,
 and mighty warriors?”
 15 Moab has been ravaged, his cities scaled,
 his finest young men go down to the slaughter,
 declares the King, whose name is Yahweh Sabaoth.
 16 The calamity of Moab is near at hand
 and his doom approaches swiftly.

11 Moab, a land of vineyards (see vv. 32–33), was famous for its wine. The picture is that of undisturbed complacency (cf. Zp 1:12): because Moab had never known the discipline of exile, she had remained as she always was.

12 ‘His jars’ follows the LXX (Aquila); the MT has ‘their jars’.

13 ‘Bethel’ was the name of an important sanctuary in northern Israel, which after the schism became the rival of Jerusalem (see 1K 12:29, Am 7:13), but also the name of a god in the heterodox religion of the Jewish colony at Elephantine.

14 For the 2nd line, here following the NRSV, the NJB reads, “sturdy fighting men.”

15 The NJB has ‘the flower of his youth’ in place of ‘his finest young men’, here following NETB.

16 For this verse, here following the NRSV, the NJB reads, “Moab’s ruin is coming soon; his downfall comes at top speed.”

<p>גָּדוּ לוֹ כָּל־סְבִיבָיו וְכָל יַדְעֵי שְׁמוֹ אָמְרוּ אֵיכָה נִשְׁבַּר מִטֵּה־עֹז מִקֵּל תְּפָאָרָה: יְהִי מִכְבוֹד יִשְׁבִי וְשָׁבִי בְצַמָּא יֵשֶׁבֶת בְּתַדִּיבּוֹן כִּי־שָׂדֵד מוֹאָב עָלָה בְךָ שָׁחַת מִבְצָרֶיךָ: אֶל־דָּרֶךְ עֲמָדִי וְצַפִּי יּוֹשֶׁבֶת עֲרוֹעֵר שְׁאַל־נָס וְנִמְלָטָה אָמְרִי מֵה־נִּהְיִיתָה: הִבִּישׁ מוֹאָב כִּי־חָתָה הִלִּילִי וְזַעֲקִי [הִלִּילוּ וְזַעֲקוּ] הִגִּידוּ בְּאֲרֹנוֹן כִּי שָׂדֵד מוֹאָב:</p>	<p>ז יח ט כ</p>	<p>17 Grieve for him, all you living near him, all you who knew his name. Say, “How that mighty rod is broken, that splendid sceptre!” 18 Come down from your glory and sit in thirst, daughter of Dibon, for the despoiler of Moab has advanced on you; he has destroyed your stronghold. 19 Stand by the roadside; keep watch, daughter of Aroer. Question fugitive and runaway; ask, “What has happened?” 20 “Moab has been shattered and shamed. Wail and shriek! Shout along the Arnon, Moab has been laid waste!”</p>
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כא וּמִשְׁפַּט בָּא אֶל־אֶרֶץ הַמִּישָׁר אֶל־חֲלוֹן וְאֶל־
יַחְזָה וְעַל־מוֹפֶעֶת מִיַּפְּעֵת: כב וְעַל־דִּיבּוֹן וְעַל־נְבוֹ 21 Judgement has also come upon the High Plain, upon Holon, upon
Jahzah and upon Mephaath; 22 upon Dibon, upon Nebo and upon Beth-

17 This verse refers to both the nearby nations and those who lived further away, who had heard of Moab’s power and might only by repute.
18 ‘Dibon’ is modern Diban, ~5 Km northwest of ‘Aroer’ (v. 19), modern Arair. The *Kethib/Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.
19 In the *LXX* and *Peshitta*, ‘runaway’ is masculine; in the *MT*, it is feminine.
20 The *Kethib/Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.
21 The *Kethib/Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.
22 Many of the towns mentioned in vv. 21–24 have not been identified but the whole point of the list is to emphasise the scale of the disaster.

וְעַל־בֵּית דְּבַלְתַּיִם: כִּי וְעַל קִרְיַתַּיִם וְעַל־בֵּית גַּמּוּל
וְעַל־בֵּית מְעוֹן: כִּי וְעַל־קְרִיּוֹת וְעַל־בְּצֻרָה וְעַל כָּל־
עָרֵי אֶרֶץ מוֹאָב הַרְחֻקוֹת וְהַקְּרִבּוֹת:

כֹּה נִגְדָּעָה קַרְן מוֹאָב

וּזְרָעוֹ נִשְׁבְּרָה נְאֻם יְהוָה:

כִּי הַשְׁכִּירָהוּ כִּי עַל־יְהוָה הִגְדִּיל וְסָפַק מוֹאָב
בְּקִיאָו וְהָיָה לְשֹׁחַק גַּם־הוּא: כִּי וְאַם לֹא הִשְׁחָק
הָיָה לְךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל אִם־בְּגַנְבִים נִמְצְאָה נִמְצָא כִּי־מַדִּי
דְּבַרְיֶךָ בּוֹ תִתְנַוֹּד:

כֹּה עֲזְבוּ עָרִים וְשִׁכְנוּ בְּסֻלְעַ

יִשְׁבֵי מוֹאָב

וְהָיוּ כִּיֹּנָה

תִּקְנֶן בְּעֵבְרֵי פִי־פַחַת:

כֹּט שָׁמַעְנוּ גְאוֹן־מוֹאָב

גְּאָה מְאֹד

Diblathaim; ²³ upon Kiriathaim, upon Beth-Gamul and upon Beth-
Meon; ²⁴ upon Kerioth, upon Bozrah, and upon all the towns of Moab,
both far and near.

²⁵ Moab's horn has been cut off
and his arm is broken, says Yahweh.

²⁶ Make him drunk, for he has set himself up against Yahweh; let Moab
wallow in his vomit; he shall become a laughing-stock. ²⁷ Israel was a
laughing-stock for you, though he was not caught among thieves; but
whenever you spoke of him you shook your head!

²⁸ Leave the towns and make the rocks your home,
inhabitants of Moab.
Be like the dove
that nests in the walls of the gaping gorge.

²⁹ We have heard about Moab's pride,
so very proud!

²³ 'Kiriathaim' was formerly held by Sihon; it was given by Moses to Reuben, who is said to have fortified it (Nb 32:77, Jos 13:19).

²⁴ 'Bozrah' was the capital city of Edom and the hometown of Jacob's brother, Esau.

²⁵ The LXX lacks 'Yahweh declares', possibly an addition.

²⁶ Most commentators relate the figure of drunkenness to the figure of drinking the cup of God's wrath spelled out in Ch. 25, where reference is made at one point to the nations drinking, staggering, vomiting, and falling (25:27).

²⁷ For this verse, here following the NRSV, the NJB reads, "Was Israel not a laughing-stock to you? Was he caught red-handed with the thieves, for you to shake your head whenever you mention him?"

²⁸ The point of the last 2 lines is the inaccessibility of the dove's nest.

²⁹ Since the 1s is used in the next verse, it is likely that the plural ('we') of this verse is the plural of majesty or the plural referring to the divine council in such passages as Gn 1:26, 3:22, 11:7 & Is 6:8.

<p>גְּבָהוּ וּגְאוּנוֹ וּגְאוֹתוֹ וְרֵם לְבוֹ: אֲנִי יֹדַעְתִּי נְאֻם־יְהוָה ל עֲבָרְתוֹ וְלֹא־כֵן בְּדָוִד לֹא־כֵן עָשׂוֹ: עַל־כֵּן עַל־מוֹאָב אֲלִילִי ל וְלְמוֹאָב כָּלָה אֲזַעֵק אֶל־אֲנָשֵׁי קִיר־חֶרֶשׁ יִהְיֶה: מִבְּלִי יַעֲזֹר אֲבִכָּה־לְךָ ל הַגִּפֶּן שִׁבְמָה נְטִישְׁתֶּיךָ עָבְרוּ יָם עַד יָם יַעֲזֹר נִגְעוּ עַל־קִיץְךָ וְעַל־בְּצִירְךָ שָׁדַד נָפַל: וְנֶאֱסַפָּה שְׂמֵחָה וְגִיל מִכְרָמֶיךָ ל וּמֵאֲרָץ מוֹאָב</p>	<p>What arrogance, what pride, what conceit, what a haughty heart! 30 I know all about his presumption, Yahweh declares; but his pride is ill-founded and his boastings are empty! 31 Therefore, I lament for Moab; for all Moab, I raise my cry and mourn for the people of Kir-Heres. 32 More than Jazer, I weep for you, vineyard of Sibmah: your shoots stretched beyond the sea; they reached all the way to Jazer. On your harvest and vintage, the despoiler has descended. 33 Gladness and joy have vanished from the orchards of Moab.</p>
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30 Literally, this verse reads, “I know, declares Yahweh, his arrogance and that it is not true; his boastings accomplish that which is not true.” Many English versions re-divide it and read something like, “I know his insolence ... his boastings are false; his deeds are false” (cf. NJB, NRSV, REB). But the word translated ‘deeds’ is a 3PL verb and can only have ‘boastings’ as its subject; the adjective כֵּן + the negative לֹא is repeated and applied to 2 different subjects, to emphasise that Moab’s arrogant boasts will prove untrue. There is debate about the referent of “I” in this verse: most see it as referring to Jeremiah but it may refer to God (there are other cases where God expresses his lament over the fate of a people – 14:1–6, 17–18).

31 ‘Kir-Heres’ (‘wall of potsherds’) is used here as a nickname for Kir-Moab, the ancient Moabite capital (modern Kerak).

32 ‘Jazer’ is probably Khirbet Yazzer, in the northern part of Moab. ‘Sibmah’ was between Heshbon (v. 2) and Nebo. The 4th line follows 2 Hebrew MSS and Is 16:8; the MT has ‘as far as the Sea of Jazer’.

33 For the 2nd line, the LXX reads simply ‘from the land of Moab’.

וַיִּזַן מִיִּקְבֵּים הַשִּׁבְתִּי
לֹא־יִדְרֹךְ הַיָּדָד
הַיָּדָד לֹא הַיָּדָד:

I have dried up the wine in the presses,
no one treads the grapes any more,
and the joyful shouting has ceased.

לִדְ מִזְעַקַת חֲשִׁבּוֹן עַד־אֶלְעָלָה עַד־יָהֶץ נִתְּנוּ קוֹלָם
מִצְעַר עַד־חֲרוֹנִים עִגְלַת שְׁלִישִׁיהָ כִּי גַם־מִי נִמְרִים
לְמִשְׁמֹת יֵהוּ: לֵה וְהַשִּׁבְתִּי לְמוֹאָב נְאֻם־יְהוָה
מִעֲלָה בָמָה וּמִקְטִיר לְאֱלֹהֵיוֹ: לוֹ עַל־כֵּן לְבִי לְמוֹאָב
כַּחֲלָלִים יֵהֱמָה וּלְבִי אֶל־אֲנָשֵׁי קִיר־חֶרֶשׁ כַּחֲלָלִים
יֵהֱמָה עַל־כֵּן יִתְרַת עֲשֵׂה אָבְדוֹ: לז כִּי כָל־רֹאשׁ
קָרְחָה וְכָל־זָקֵן גָּרְעָה עַל כָּל־יָדַיִם גְּדָדֹת וְעַל־
מִתְּנָיִם שֶׁק: לח עַל כָּל־גִּגְוֹת מוֹאָב וּבְרַחֲבֹתֶיהָ
כָּל־הָ מִסְפָּד כִּי־שִׁבְרֹתִי אֶת־מוֹאָב כְּכֹלִי אֵין־חֶפֶץ
בּוֹ נְאֻם־יְהוָה: לט אֵיךְ חָתָה הַיִּלְלוּ אֵיךְ הִפְנָה־עַרְףָּ
מוֹאָב בּוֹשׁ וְהָיָה מוֹאָב לְשִׁחַק וּלְמַחֲתָה לְכָל־
סְבִיבָיו: {ס}

³⁴ Heshbon and Elealeh cry out as far as Jahaz, from Zoar to Horonaim and Eglath-Selishiyah, for even the Waters of Nimrim have become desolate. ³⁵ And I shall bring an end, in Moab, Yahweh says, to those offering sacrifice on the high places or making offerings to their gods. ³⁶ That is why my heart sobs like a flute for Moab, sobs like a flute for the people of Kir-Heres, since the wealth he has acquired is lost. ³⁷ Yes, every head is shaved, every beard cut off, gashes are on every hand, sackcloth round every waist. ³⁸ On all the housetops of Moab and in all its squares, there is nothing but lamenting, for I have broken Moab like an unwanted pot, says Yahweh. ³⁹ How shattered she is! Wail! How Moab has turned her back in shame! Moab has become a laughing-stock, a thing of horror to all her neighbours.

מ כִּי־כֹה אָמַר יְהוָה
הִנֵּה כַּנְּשֹׁר יִדָּאָה

⁴⁰ For, thus Yahweh says:
Look, he will swoop down like an eagle,

³⁴ 'And Elealeh' is a conjectural translation (see Is 15:4); the MT has 'as far as Elealeh'.

³⁵ On the significance of the 'high places', see #7:31.

³⁶ 'Kir-Heres' (קִיר־חֶרֶשׁ, meaning 'City of the Sun') was the capital of Moab.

³⁷ The MT lacks the word 'every' before 'waist', here restored following a number of Hebrew MSS and versions.

³⁸ The literal translation of 'says Yahweh' is 'oracle of Yahweh'.

³⁹ The NJB refers to Moab with masculine pronouns; here, we follow the MT & NETB.

⁴⁰ Conquering nations are often identified with a swiftly flying eagle swooping down on its victims (cf. Dt 28:49).

וּפְרַשׁ כַּנְפָיו אֶל־מוֹאָב׃
 מֵא גִלְכַּדָּה הַקְרִיּוֹת
 וְהַמְצָדוֹת נִתְפָּשָׁה
 וְהָיָה לֵב גְּבוּרֵי מוֹאָב
 בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא כְּלֵב אִשָּׁה מְצַרָּה׃
 מֵב וְנִשְׁמַד מוֹאָב מֵעַם
 כִּי עַל־יְהוָה הִגְדִּיל׃
 מֵג פַּחַד וּפַחַת וּפֶחַח
 עַל־יָד יוֹשֵׁב מוֹאָב
 נֹאֲמַ־יְהוָה׃
 מֵד הַנִּס הַנֶּס מִפְּנֵי הַפַּחַד
 יִפֹּל אֶל־הַפַּחַת
 וְהָעֹלָה מִן־הַפַּחַת
 יִלְכַּד בַּפֶּחַח
 כִּי־אָבִיא אֵלֶיךָ אֶל־מוֹאָב שְׁנַת פְּקֻדָּתָם
 נֹאֲמַ־יְהוָה׃
 מֵה בְּצֵל חֶשְׁבּוֹן עֹמְדוֹ
 מִפָּח נָסִים

spreading his wings over Moab.
 41 The towns have been captured,
 the strongholds seized;
 and the heart of Moab's warriors, that day,
 will be like that of a woman in labour pains.
 42 Moab will be destroyed, no longer a people,
 for setting herself up against Yahweh.
 43 Terror, the pit, and the snare for you,
 inhabitant of Moab,
 says Yahweh.
 44 Anyone who escapes from terror will fall into the pit,
 and anyone who climbs out of the pit
 will be caught in the snare.
 Yes, I shall bring all this on Moab
 when the year comes for punishing them,
 says Yahweh.
 45 In the shelter of Heshbon, the fugitives
 have paused, exhausted,

41 Parallelism argues that *קְרִיּוֹת* be understood as the unattested FPL of the noun, *קְרִיָּה* ('town'), rather than the place name, 'Kerioth', of v. 24.

42 The NJB has a neuter pronoun in the 2nd line, and the NRSV has a masculine one; here, we follow the MT & NETB.

43 The assonance in the 1st line underscores the extensive trouble that is in store.

44 The *Kethib*/*Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation. 'All this' (in the 4th line) follows the LXX and *Peshitta*; the MT has 'on her'.

45 'Palace' (*מִבֵּית*) follows 3 Hebrew MSS; the MT has 'middle' (*מִבְּיֹן*). 'Sihon' was the Amorite king who had Heshbon as his capital city (Nb 21:27–28, Dt 2:26–37).

כִּי־אֵשׁ יֵצֵא מִחֶשְׁבֹּן
 וְלֹהֶבֶת מִבֵּין סִיחֹן
 וְתֹאכַל פְּאֵת מוֹאָב
 וְקִדְקַד בְּגֵי שְׂאוֹן:
 מו אוֹיֵלֶךְ מוֹאָב
 אֲבָד עַם־כְּמוֹשׁ
 כִּי־לָקַחוּ בְנֵיךָ בְּשָׁבִי
 וּבְנֹתֶיךָ בְּשַׁבְיָה:
 מז וְשַׁבְתִּי שְׁבוּת־מוֹאָב בְּאַחֲרֵית הַיָּמִים
 נְאֻם־יְהוָה
 עַד־הֵנָּה מִשְׁפֵּט מוֹאָב: {ס}

but fire will burst from Heshbon,
 a flame from the palace of Sihon,
 consuming the brows of Moab,
 the head of a turbulent brood.

⁴⁶ Disaster for you, Moab!

The people of Chemosh are lost,
 for your sons have been taken into exile
 and your daughters into captivity.

⁴⁷ Yet, I shall bring back Moab's captives in the final days,
 says Yahweh.

Thus far is the judgement on Moab.

⁴⁶ Vv. 45–46 are an apparent adaptation and reuse of a victory song in Nb 21:28–29 and a prophecy in Nb 24:17, which explains the reference to Sihon who was the Amorite king who captured Heshbon and proceeded from there to capture most of northern Moab (the area between Heshbon and the Arnon), referred to earlier in this prophecy. This prophecy appears to speak of the destruction of Moab beginning from the same place under the picture of a destructive fire that consumes all the people: the fire is a reference to the conflagrations of war in which the enemy captures the cities and sets them on fire and burns all the people in them. What Sihon once did and what Balaam prophesied would happen to Moab in the future are being reapplied to a new situation.

⁴⁷ The last line is a scribal note (cf. 51:64).

ירמיהו פרק מט

JEREMIAH 49

כָּה אָמַר יְהוָה הַבָּנִים אֵין לְיִשְׂרָאֵל אִם־יֹרֵשׁ אֵין לוֹ מִדּוּעַ יִרֶשׁ מֶלֶכֶם אֶת־גָּד וְעַמּוֹ בְּעָרָיו יָשׁוּב׃ לְכֵן הִנֵּה יָמִים בָּאִים נְאֻם־יְהוָה וְהִשְׁמַעְתִּי אֶל־רַבַּת בְּנֵי־עַמּוֹן תִּרְוַעַת מִלְחָמָה וְהִיתָה לְתֵל שְׂמָמָה וּבְנֵיהָ בָאֵשׁ תִּצְתָּנָה וְיִרֶשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת־יְרֵשׁוֹ אָמַר יְהוָה׃ הִלִּילִי חֶשְׁבּוֹן כִּי שִׁדְדָה־עֵי צַעֲקָנָה בְּנוֹת רַבָּה חִגְרְנָה שִׁקִּים סִפְדָּנָה וְהִתְשׁוּטְטָנָה בַּגְּדָרוֹת כִּי מֶלֶכֶם בְּגוֹלָה יֵלֶךְ כָּהֲנָיו וְשָׂרָיו יַחְדָּיו׃	<p>^א 1 To the Ammonites: Thus says Yahweh: Has Israel no sons? Has he no heir? Why should Milcom have inherited Gad and his people have settled in its town?</p> <p>^ב 2 Therefore, the days are coming, says Yahweh, when I will make Rabbah-of-the-Ammonites hear war cry ring out: she shall become a desolate mound and her villages shall be burnt down. Then, Israel shall inherit from his heirs, declares Yahweh.</p> <p>^ג 3 Wail, Heshbon, for Ar has been laid waste! Shriek, daughters of Rabbah! Wrap yourself in sackcloth, raise the dirge, and run back and forth among the sheep-pens; for, Milcom is going into exile, with all his priests and princes.</p>
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JEREMIAH 49

¹ Here, and in v. 3, we read 'Milcom' following the LXX, Peshitta, and 1K 11:5, 7, 33, 2K 23:13, rather than the MT's מֶלֶכֶם ('their king').

² The literal translation of 'villages' is 'daughters' (cf. Jg 1:27).

³ 'Heshbon', in Moab (see #48:1) was probably conquered by the Ammonites. 'Ar' (a conjectural translation) is in Transjordan; the MT has 'Ai', but this is in Cisjordan. The meaning of the 4th line is uncertain: here, we follow the NJB; the NRSV has, "and slash yourselves with whips."

ד מה־תִּתְהַלְלִי בְעַמְקֵי זָב עַמְקֶיךָ
 הַבַּת הַשׁוֹבְבָה
 הַבִּטְחָה בְּאַצְרֹתֶיהָ
 מִי יִבּוֹא אֵלַי:
 ה הַנְּנִי מִבֵּיא עֲלֶיךָ פֶּחַד
 נְאֻם־אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה צְבָאוֹת
 מִכָּל־סְבִיבֶיךָ
 וְנִדְחֶתֶם אִישׁ לִפְנָיו
 וְאִין מִקְבֵּץ לְנַדָּד:
 וְאַחֲרֵי־כֵן
 וְאָשִׁיב אֶת־שְׁבוֹת בְּנֵי־עַמּוֹן
 נְאֻם־יְהוָה: {פ}

4 How you used to glory in your Valley,
 rebellious daughter,
 confident in your resources,
 "Who will attack me?"
 5 Look, I shall bring terror on you,
 declares Lord Yahweh Sabaoth,
 from all directions;
 you shall be driven away, everyone for himself,
 with no one to rally the fugitives.
 6 But, in days to come,
 I will bring back the captive Ammonites,
 says Yahweh.

ז לְאֶדוֹם

ז כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת
 הַאִין עוֹד חִכְמָה בְּתִמָּן
 אֲבָדָה עֵצָה מִבְּנִים
 נִסְרַחָה חִכְמַתָּם:
 ח נָסוּ הַפְּנּוּ הָעַמִּיקוּ לְשֶׁבֶת
 יֹשְׁבֵי דֶדָן

7 To Edom:
 Thus says Yahweh says:
 Is there no wisdom left in Teman?
 Have the shrewd run out of common sense,
 has their wisdom vanished?
 8 Away: Take to your heels! Go into hiding,
 inhabitants of Dedan,

4 'In your Valley' is a conjectural translation; the MT has 'of valleys, your valley flows'. The principal valley in Ammon is that of the River Jabbok.

5 Literally translated, the 4th line reads, "You will be scattered each man (straight) before him."

6 The NJB places this verse in parentheses.

7 'Shrewd' follows the LXX; the MT has 'sons' (incorrect vowel arrangement). Edom was famous for its sages (1K 5:10-11, Job 2:11, Ba 3:11-23).

8 In Ezk 25:13, 'Teman' (possibly modern Tawilan, near Petra) and 'Dedan' seem to represent the extremities (north and south) of Edom.

כִּי אֵיךְ עֲשׂוּ הַבְּאֲתֵי עָלָיו
 עַת פִּקְדֹתָיו:
 אִם־בְּצֻרִים בָּאוּ לָךְ ט
 לֹא יִשְׁאָרוּ עוֹלָלוֹת
 אִם־גְּנָבִים בַּלַּיְלָה
 הִשְׁחִיתוּ דַּיִם:
 כִּי־אֲנִי חִשַּׁפְתִּי אֶת־עֲשׂו י
 גְּלִיתִי אֶת־מְסֻתָּרָיו
 וְנִחְבְּהָ לֹא יוּכַל
 שֶׁדֶד זָרְעוּ וְאָחִיו וּשְׂכֵנָיו וְאִינָנוּ:
 עֲזָבָה יִתְמִיךְ אֲנִי אֲחִיָּה א
 וְאֶלְמָנוֹתֶיךָ עָלַי תִּבְטָחוּ: {ס}

for I will bring the ruin of Esau upon him when I punish him.

9 If grape-pickers were to come to you, would they not leave gleanings? If thieves came by night, would they not steal only what they needed?

10 But I, for my part, have stripped Esau, have laid his hiding places bare: he can hide no longer.

His race, brothers and neighbours are destroyed; he is no more!

11 Leave your orphans, I shall support them, and let your widows rely on me!

יב כִּי־כֹה | אָמַר יְהוָה הֲיֵה אֲשֶׁר־אֵין מִשְׁפָּטָם
 לְשִׁתּוֹת הַכּוֹס שְׁתּוֹ יִשְׁתּוּ וְאַתָּה הוּא נֹקֵה תִּנְקָה
 לֹא תִנְקָה כִּי שְׁתָּה תִשְׁתָּה: יג כִּי בִי נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי נְאֻם־
 יְהוָה כִּי־לְשִׁמָּה לְחִרְפָּה לְחִרְבַּ וְלִקְלָלָה תִּהְיֶה
 בְּצָרָה וְכָל־עֲרִיָּה תִהְיֶינָה לְחִרְבוֹת עוֹלָם:

12 For, thus says Yahweh: “If those who do not deserve to drink the cup still have to drink it, shall you be the one to go unpunished? You shall not go unpunished; you must drink it. 13 For my own self I have sworn, declares Yahweh, that Bozrah will become an object of horror, a laughing-stock, a desert, a curse, and all its towns ruins forever.”

9 This verse is a variation of Ob 5.

10 NETB has ‘children’ in place of ‘race’, here following the NJB.

11 The verb in the 2nd line (תִּבְטָחוּ) is highly unusual: it is a 2MP form with a FP subject.

12 The reference here is to the cup of God’s wrath, which is connected with the punishment of war at the hands of the Babylonians referred to already in 25:15–29; ‘those who do not deserve to drink’ are the innocent victims of war who get swept away with the guilty. Edom was certainly not one of the innocent victims as is clear from this judgment speech.

13 ‘Bozrah’, then the capital of Edom (as opposed to the Bozrah in Moab, 48:24), is modern El-Buseirah, which is about 40 Km south of the Dead Sea.

יִד שְׁמוֹעָה שְׁמַעְתִּי מֵאֵת יְהוָה
וַצִּיר בְּגוֹיִם שְׁלוּחַ
הַתְּקַבֵּצוּ וּבֵאוּ עָלַיָּה
וְקוּמוּ לְמִלְחָמָה:

טו כִּי־הִנֵּה קָטָן נִתְתִּיד בְּגוֹיִם
בְּזוּי בְּאָדָם:

טז תִּפְלֹצֶתָּהּ הַשִּׂיא אֶתְךָ
זָדוֹן לִבְךָ

שְׂכָנֵי בַחְגוּי הַסֹּלֶעַ
תִּפְשִׂי מְרוֹם גְּבֻעָה

כִּי־תִגְבִּיֶה כְּנֶשֶׁר קִנְיָךְ
מִשָּׁם אוֹרִידְךָ נְאֻם־יְהוָה:

יז וְהִיְתָה אֲדוֹם לְשִׂמָּה כָּל עֹבֵר עָלֶיהָ יִשֹּׁם וַיִּשְׁרַק
עַל־כָּל־מְכוֹתָהּ: יח כִּמְהַפֵּכֶת סֹדִם וְעַמְרָה וּשְׂכַנֵּיהָ
אָמַר יְהוָה לֹא־יֵשֵׁב שָׁם אִישׁ וְלֹא־יִגֹּר בָּהּ בֶּן־
אָדָם:

יט הִנֵּה כְּאַרְיֵה יַעֲלֶה מִגְּאֹן הַיַּרְדֵּן
אֶל־נְוֵה אִיתָן

14 I have received a message from Yahweh;
a herald has been sent through the nations:
"Muster! March against this people!
Prepare for battle!"

15 For look, I will reduce you to the smallest of nations,
despised by men.

16 The terror you inspire, your proud heart,
has misled you.
You who line in the clefts of the Rock,
who cling to the top of the peak!
Though you make your nest as high as the eagle's,
I will bring you down from there, says Yahweh.

17 Edom will become an object of horror; all who pass by it will be
horrified and will hiss because of all its disasters. 18 As at the overthrow
of Sodom and Gomorrah and their nearby towns, Yahweh says, no one
shall live there, nor shall anyone settle in it.

19 Look, like a lion he climbs from the thickets of the Jordan
to the perennial pasture!

14 Vv. 14–16 comprise a variation of Ob 1–4.

15 Note the shift from the address of the messenger summoning the nations to prepare to do battle against Edom.

16 The 'Rock' of Edom, long identified with Petra, may have been further north, in the area of Bozrah. The word תִּפְלֹצֶתָּהּ ('terror') occurs only here.

17 The NJB ends this verse, "everyone going near will be appalled, and whistle at the sight of all her wounds;" here, we follow the NRSV.

18 The NJB ends this verse, "no one will live there any more, Yahweh says, no human beings settle there again;" here, we follow the NRSV.

19 An alternative reading of the 4th line is, "and I will single out the choicest of his rams." Vv. 19–21 are an editorial revision of 50:44–46.

כִּי־אֲרַגִּיעָה אֲרִיצְנֻן מֵעֲלֶיהָ
 וּמִי בַחֹר אֲלֶיהָ אֶפְקֹד
 כִּי מִי כְמוֹנִי
 וּמִי יַעֲיִדְנִי
 וּמִי־זֶה רֹעֶה
 אֲשֶׁר יַעֲמֵד לִפְנָי: {ס}

לָכֵן שָׁמְעוּ עֲצַת־יְהוָה ^כ
 אֲשֶׁר יַעַן אֶל־אֲדוֹם
 וּמַחְשְׁבוֹתָיו אֲשֶׁר חָשַׁב אֶל־יֹשְׁבֵי תִמָּן
 אִם־לֹא יִסְחָבוּם
 צְעִירֵי הַצֹּאן
 אִם־לֹא יֵשִׁים עֲלֵיהֶם נוֹהֵם:
 מִקּוֹל נִפְלֵם רַעְשָׁה הָאָרֶץ ^{כא}
 צְעָקָה בַיַּם־סוּף נִשְׁמַע קוֹלָהּ:
 הִנֵּה כְנֹשֵׁר יַעֲלֶה וַיִּדְאַה ^{כב}
 וַיִּפְרֹשׂ כַּנְּפָיו עַל־בְּצָרָה
 וְהָיָה לֵב גְּבוּרֵי אֲדוֹם
 בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא כְּלֵב אִשָּׁה מְצַרָה: {פ}

In a flash, I shall make them run away,
 and there appoint someone I shall choose.
 For who is there like me?
 Who can summon me?
 Name me the shepherd
 who can stand up to me.

- ²⁰ Therefore, now hear what Yahweh
 has planned against Edom,
 the schemes he has in mind against the inhabitants of Teman:
 they will certainly be dragged away
 like the smallest of the flock!
 Their pastures will certainly be sacked before their eyes!
- ²¹ The earth quakes at the sound of their downfall;
 the sound of it echoes to the Sea of Reeds.
- ²² Look, like an eagle, he will soar and hover,
 spreading his wings over Bozrah;
 and the heart of Edom's warriors, that day,
 will be like that of a woman in labour pains.

²⁰ 'Teman' (תִּמָּן) here appears to be a poetic equivalent for Edom, a common figure of speech in Hebrew poetry, where the part is put for the whole. The figure of the lion among the flock of sheep appears to be carried on here, where the people are referred to as a flock and their homeland is referred to as a sheepfold.

²¹ As in many other places, 'earth' here stands metonymically for the inhabitants of earth.

²² Compare 48:40-41 for a similar prophecy about Moab; the parallelism here suggests that 'Bozrah' (בְּצָרָה), like 'Teman' in v. 20, is a poetic equivalent for Edom.

כג לַדְּמֶשֶׁק 23 To Damascus:

בוֹשָׁה חֶמֶת וְאַרְפָּד
כִּי־שָׁמְעָה רָעָה שָׁמְעוּ נִמְגּוּ
בַיָּם דְּאָגָה
הַשֶּׁקֶט לֹא יוּכַל:

כד רָפְתָה דְּמֶשֶׁק הַפְּנִתָה לְנוֹס
וְרִטְט | הַחֲזִיקָה צָרָה
וַחֲבָלִים אֶחְזָתָה
כִּי־לֹדָה:

כה אֵיךְ לֹא־עֲזָבָה עִיר תְּהֵלָה תְּהֵלָת
קָרִית מְשׁוֹשֵׁי:

כו לָכֵן יִפְּלוּ בַחֹרֵיהָ בְּרַחֲבֹתֶיהָ
וְכָל־אֲנָשֵׁי הַמִּלְחָמָה יָדְמוּ בַיּוֹם הַהוּא
נְאֻם יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת:

כז וְהִצַּתִּי אֵשׁ בְּחֹמַת דְּמֶשֶׁק
וְאֶכְלָה אַרְמָנוֹת בֶּן־הַדָּד: {פ}

Hamath and Arpad are shamed,
for they have heard the bad news.
They are convulsed with anxiety
like the sea that cannot be calmed.

24 Damascus is aghast, she prepares for flight,
she is seized with panic;
anguish and sorrow have laid hold on her
as on a woman in labour.

25 How that famous city is deserted,
that city of my joy!

26 Therefore, her young men will fall,
and all her fighting men will perish, that day,
declares Yahweh Sabaoth.

27 I shall light a fire inside the walls of Damascus,
to devour the palaces of Ben-Hadad.

כח לְקֶדָר | וְלַמְּלָכוֹת חָצוֹר אֲשֶׁר הִכָּה נְבוּכַדְרֶאצַּר 28 To Kedar, and to the kingdoms of Hazor, which were conquered by
נְבוּכַדְרֶאצַּר מֶלֶךְ־בָּבֶל כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, Yahweh says this:

23 'Like the sea' is a conjectural translation (כַּיָּם); the MT has 'in the sea' (בַּיָּם).

24 The NJB has 'trembling' in place of 'panic', here following the NRSV.

25 The *Kethib/Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation. The translation takes לֹא ('not') as a misunderstanding of the emphatic ל.

26 The NJB formats this verse as prose; here, we follow the NRSV & NETB.

27 The palaces referred to here are those of Ben-Hadad III, son of Hazael and king in Damascus about 840 BCE (see 2K 13:24, Am 1:4).

28 The *Kethib/Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

קומו עלו אל־קֶדָר
 ושִׁדְדוּ אֶת־בְּנֵי־קֶדֶם:
 אֶהְלִיֶהֶם וְצֹאֲנֵם יִקְחוּ כט
 יִרְעוּתֵיהֶם וְכָל־כְּלֵיהֶם
 וְגַמְלֵיהֶם יִשְׂאוּ לָהֶם
 וְקִרְאוּ עֲלֵיהֶם מִגּוֹר מִסְבִּיב:
 נִסּוּ נְדוּ מְאֹד הֶעֱמִיקוּ לְשֶׁבֶת ל
 יִשְׁבִּי חֲצוֹר נְאֻם־יְהוָה
 כִּי־יַעַץ עֲלֵיכֶם נְבוּכַדְרֶאֶצַּר מֶלֶךְ־בָּבֶל
 עָצָה וַחֲשַׁב עֲלֵיהֶם עֲלֵיכֶם מַחֲשָׁבָה:
 קומו עלו אל־גּוֹי שְׁלִי יוֹשֵׁב לְבֶטַח לא
 נְאֻם־יְהוָה
 לֹא־דִלְתִים וְלֹא־בָרִיחַ לוֹ
 בְּדָד יִשְׁכְּנוּ:
 וְהָיוּ גַמְלֵיהֶם לְבָז לב
 וְהָמוֹן מִקְנֵיהֶם לְשָׁלַל
 וְזֵרְתִים לְכָל־רוּחַ
 קְצוּצֵי פֶאֶה
 וּמִכָּל־עֲבָרָיו אָבִיא אֶת־אֲיָדָם
 נְאֻם־יְהוָה:

Up! March on Kedar;
 destroy the sons of the east!

29 Let their tents and their flocks be captured,
 their tent-cloths and all their gear;

let their camels be seized

and the shout go up, "Terror on every side!"

30 Away: Get into hiding as fast as you can,

inhabitants of Hazor, declares Yahweh,

for Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon has planned against you,

he has a scheme in mind against you.

31 Up! March on a nation at its ease, living secure,

says Yahweh,

that has no gates, no bars,

which lives in a remote place!

32 Their camels will be the plunder,

their countless sheep the spoil.

I shall scatter them to the winds,

those with shaven temples,

and bring ruin on them from every side,

says Yahweh.

29 The expression, 'Terror on every side!', is a favourite theme in the book of Jeremiah.

30 The *Kethib*/*Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

31 The last 2 lines use synecdoche to refer to a people living without (the need for) defences.

32 The literal translation of 'those with shaven temples' is 'those who are cut off on the side of the head'.

וְהָיְתָה חָצוֹר לְמַעוֹן תַּנִּינִים לָג
 שָׁמָּה עַד־עוֹלָם
 לֹא־יֵשֵׁב שָׁם אִישׁ
 וְלֹא־יִגְוֹר בָּהּ בְּיָאֲדָם: {ס}

לְד אֲשֶׁר הָיָה דְבַר־יְהוָה אֶל־יִרְמְיָהוּ הַנָּבִיא אֶל־
 עֵלָם בְּרֵאשִׁית מַלְכוּת צְדַקְיָה מֶלֶךְ־יְהוּדָה
 לֵאמֹר: לֵה כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת

הַנְּנִי שֶׁבַר אֶת־קֶשֶׁת עֵלָם
 רֵאשִׁית גְּבוּרָתָם:

וְהִבֵּאתִי אֶל־עֵלָם אַרְבַּע רוּחוֹת לָז
 מֵאַרְבַּע קְצוֹת הַשָּׁמַיִם
 וְזָרְתִים לְכָל הָרְחוֹת הָאֵלֶּה
 וְלֹא־יִהְיֶה הַגֹּי

אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יָבֹא שָׁם נִדְחֵי עוֹלָם עֵלָם:
 וְהַחֲתַתִּי אֶת־עֵלָם לְפָנָי אִיְבֵיהֶם וְלְפָנָי לָז

מִבְּקֵשֵׁי נַפְשָׁם
 וְהִבֵּאתִי עֲלֵיהֶם |
 רָעָה אֶת־חֲרוֹן אַפִּי נְאֻם־יְהוָה

³³ Hazor will become the lair of jackals,
 desolate forever.
 No one will be there any more,
 no human being settle there again.

³⁴ The word of Yahweh that came to the prophet Jeremiah about Elam,
 at the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah king of Judah: ³⁵ Thus says
 Yahweh Sabaoth:

Look, I shall break Elam's bow,
 the source of his might.

³⁶ I shall bring four winds on Elam
 from the four corners of the sky,
 and I shall scatter them all to these winds:
 there will not be a single nation
 to which people expelled from Elam do not go.

³⁷ I shall make the Elamites tremble before their enemies,
 before those determined to kill them.
 I shall bring disaster on them,
 my burning anger, says Yahweh.

³³ Compare the 1st line with 9:11.

³⁴ As early as 597 BCE, Jeremiah may have foreseen the conquest of Elam by the Persians.

³⁵ The Elamites were renowned for their prowess as archers.

³⁶ The *Kethib*/*Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation. The '*winds*' must figuratively represent enemy forces that God will use to drive them out.

³⁷ The NRSV formats vv. 34–38 as prose; here, we follow the NJB.

וּשְׁלַחְתִּי אַחֲרֵיהֶם אֶת־הַחֶרֶב
עַד כְּלוֹתִי אוֹתָם:
וְשָׂמַתִּי כִסְאִי בְּעֵילָם לַח
וְהֶאֱבַדְתִּי מִשָּׁם מֶלֶךְ וְשָׂרִים
נְאֻם־יְהוָה:

I shall pursue them with the sword
until I have destroyed them all.

³⁸ I shall set up my throne in Elam,
uprooting its king and princes,
says Yahweh.

לֹט וְהָיָה | בְּאַחֲרֵית הַיָּמִים אֲשׁוּב אֲשִׁיב אֶת־שְׁבוֹת
שְׁבִית עֵילָם נְאֻם־יְהוָה: {פ} ³⁹ But it shall happen in the final days, that I shall bring Elam's captives
back, says Yahweh.

³⁸ Commentators are divided over whether this verse refers to a king sitting in judgment over his captured enemies or whether it refers to formally establishing his rule over the country: those who argue for the former idea point to the supposed parallels in 1:15 and 43:8-13; the parallelism in the verse here, however, argues that it refers to God taking over the reins of government by destroying their former leaders.

³⁹ The *Kethib/Qere* differences here would benefit from explanations.

ירמיהו פרק נ

JEREMIAH 50

- א הַדְּבָר אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר יְהוָה אֶל-בָּבֶל אֶל-אֶרֶץ כַּשְׂדִּים
בְּיַד יִרְמְיָהוּ הַנָּבִיא:
- ב הַגִּידוּ בַגּוֹיִם וְהַשְׁמִיעוּ וְשִׂאוּ-נֶס
הַשְׁמִיעוּ אֶל-תְּכַחְדּוּ
אִמְרוּ נְלַכְדָּה בָּבֶל הַבֵּישׁ בֵּל
חַת מְרֻדָּךְ
הַבִּישׁוּ עֲצָבֶיךָ
חַתוּ גְלוּלֶיךָ:
- ג כִּי עֹלָה עָלֶיךָ גּוֹי מִצָּפוֹן
הוֹאֵי-יִשְׁרָאֵל אֶת-אֶרְצָהּ לְשִׁמָּה
וְלֹא-יִהְיֶה יוֹשֵׁב
בָּהּ מֵאָדָם וְעַד-בְּהֵמָה נָדוּ הַלְכּוּ:
ד בַּיָּמִים הָהֵמָּה וּבַעֲתָהּ הַזֹּאת נֹאס־יְהוָה
יָבֹאוּ בְנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל הַמָּה וּבְנֵי-יְהוּדָה יַחְדָּו
הַלֹּוֹךְ וּבָכוּ לָלֶכֶת
וְאֶת-יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיהֶם יִבְקְשׁוּ:
- 1 The word that Yahweh spoke against Babylon, against the land of the Chaldaeans, through the prophet Jeremiah:
- 2 Declare it to the nations, proclaim it, declare the news, making no secret of it; say, "Babylon is captured, Bel disgraced and Marduk shattered. Her idols are disgraced and her Obscenities shattered."
- 3 For a nation from the north is marching on, to turn her country into a desert: no one will live there any more; human and animal have fled and gone.
- 4 In those days and at that time, declares Yahweh, the people of Israel will return – they and the people of Judah; they will come weeping in search of Yahweh their God.

JEREMIAH 50

- ¹ In the following prophecies, two dominant themes recur: the fall of Babylon and the return from Exile, both expected by Jeremiah, though not in the immediate future (see 27:7, 29:10 & 28).
- ² 'Bel' ('the Master', compare Baal) was the usual name for 'Marduk', the chief god of Babylon (see 51:44, Is 46:1, Ba 6:40, Dn 14).
- ³ 'A nation from the north' refers to Medo-Persia which, at the time of the conquest of Babylon, had conquered all the nations to the north, the northwest, and the northeast of Babylon forming a vast empire.
- ⁴ Here, as in v. 33 and 51:5, glossators seem to have been responsible for adding Judah alongside Israel (cf. similarly 31:31).

<p>ה</p> <p>צִיּוֹן יִשְׁאָלוּ דְרָךְ הִנֵּה פְנֵיהֶם בָּאוּ וְנָלוּ אֶל־יְהוָה בְּרִית עוֹלָם לֹא תִשְׁכַּח: ו</p> <p>צֹאן אֲבָדוֹת הִיָּה הֵינִי עַמִּי רְעִיָּהֶם הִתְעוּם הָרִים שׁוֹבְבִים שׁוֹבְבִים מִהָר אֶל־גְּבֻעָה הָלְכוּ שָׁכַחוּ רְבָצָם: ז</p> <p>כֹּל־מוֹצְאֵיהֶם אֲכָלוּם וְצָרִיָּהֶם אָמְרוּ לֹא נֹאשָׁם תַּחַת אֲשֶׁר חָטְאוּ לַיהוָה נְוֵה־צֶדֶק וּמִקְוֵה אֲבוֹתֵיהֶם יְהוָה: {ס}</p> <p>ח</p> <p>נָדוּ מִתּוֹךְ בָּבֶל וּמֵאֶרֶץ כַּשְׂדִּים יֵצְאוּ וְהָיוּ כְּעֵתוּדִים לִפְנֵי־צֹאן: ט</p> <p>כִּי הִנֵּה אֲנִי מֵעִיר וּמֵעֵלָה עַל־בָּבֶל קָהֳל־גוֹיִם גְּדֹלִים</p>	<p>5 They will ask the way to Zion and turn their faces towards her, "Come, let us bind ourselves to Yahweh by an everlasting covenant never to be forgotten!"</p> <p>6 Lost sheep, such were my people; their shepherds led them astray, the mountains misled them; from mountain to hill they went, forgetful of their fold.</p> <p>7 Whoever came across them devoured them; their enemies said, "We are not to blame, since they have sinned against Yahweh, the Home of Justice, against Yahweh, the Hope of their ancestors."</p> <p>8 Escape from Babylon; leave the country of the Chaldeans. Be like he-goats, leading the sheep!</p> <p>9 See, I shall raise up against Babylon a league of mighty nations,</p>
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5 'Let us bind ourselves' follows the Peshitta; the MT has 'and they will be bound'.

6 The Kethib/Qere differences here would benefit from explanations.

7 The expression here translated 'Home of Justice' occurs also in 31:23 in relation to Jerusalem in the future as 'the place where righteousness dwells'; here, however, it refers to the same entity as 'their resting place' in v. 6 and means 'true pasture' (cf. NRSV).

8 'Leave' follows the Qere (יֵצְאוּ) and Peshitta; the Ketiv has 'they will leave' (יֵצְאוּ).

9 Some of these 'mighty nations' are named in 51:27–28.

מֵאַרְצֵי צָפוֹן
וְעָרְכוּ לָהּ מִשָּׁם תִּלְכְּדוּ
חֲצִיזוֹ כְּגִבּוֹר מִשְׁכִּיל
לֹא יָשׁוּב רִיקָם:
וְהִיְתָה כְּשָׂדִים לְשָׁלַל י
כָּל־שָׁלְלִיָּהּ יִשְׂבְּעוּ נְאֻם־יְהוָה:
כִּי תִשְׂמַחִי תִשְׂמַחוּ כִּי תַעֲלֹזִי תַעֲלֹזוּ יא
שְׂסִי נִחַלְתִּי
כִּי תִפּוּשִׁי תִפּוּשׁוּ בְּעִגְלָה דָּשָׂה
וְתַצְהֲלִי וְתַצְהֲלוּ בְּאַבְרָיִם:
בּוֹשָׁה אִמְכֶם מְאֹד יב
חִפְרָה יוֹלְדֹתְכֶם
הִנֵּה אַחֲרִית גּוֹיִם
מִדְּבַר צִיָּה וְעֵרְבָה:
מִקְצָף יְהוָה לֹא תִשָּׁב יג
וְהִיְתָה שְׂמֵמָה כְּלָה
כָּל עֹבֵר עַל־בְּבֶל
יִשֹּׁם וַיִּשְׂרֹק עַל־כָּל־מַכּוֹתֶיהָ:
עָרְכוּ עַל־בְּבֶל | סְבִיב יד

from the land of the north.

They will take up position against her; she will be taken thence.

Their arrows, like an experienced soldier's,
never return in vain.

10 Chaldaea will be plundered

and all her plunderers will be satisfied, says Yahweh.

11 Rejoice! Have your triumph,

you plunderers of my heritage!

Be playful like a heifer let out to grass!

Neigh like stallions!

12 Nevertheless, your mother is covered with shame –

disgraced is the one who bore you;

she is the least of nations now –

a desert, a parched land, a wasteland.

13 Because of Yahweh's anger, she shall be uninhabited;

she will become a total solitude.

All who pass by Babylon will be appalled

and whistle at the sight of all her wounds.

14 Take position against Babylon; surround her,

10 The literal translation of 'Chaldaea' is 'the land of the Chaldaeans'.

11 The numerous *Kethib/Qere* differences here would benefit from explanations.

12 The word 'mother' and the parallel term 'the one who bore you' are used metaphorically for the land of Babylon; cf. Is 50:1 & Ho 2:2-4.

13 Compare 49:17.

14 The opening verb of the 3rd line should probably be read as ירו (with a few *Hebrew MSS*) rather than ירו (with the *MT* and majority of *Hebrew MSS*):

כָּל־דָּרְכֵי קִשְׁתֹּךָ
 יָדוּ אֵלֶיךָ אֶל־תַּחֲמְלוּ אֶל־חַץ
 כִּי לִיהוָה חָטְאָה:
 טו הָרִיעוּ עָלֶיךָ סְבִיב נִתְנָה יָדָהּ
 נָפְלוּ אֲשׁוּרֵי־הָאָרֶץ
 נִהְרָסוּ חוֹמוֹתֶיהָ
 כִּי נִקְמַת יְהוָה הִיא הַנִּקְמוּ בָּהּ
 כַּאֲשֶׁר עָשְׂתָה עִשׂוּלָהּ:
 טז כָּרְתוּ זֹרַעַ מִבְּבֶל
 וְתַפֵּשׂ מִגֶּל בְּעַת קֶצֶר מִפְּנֵי
 חֶרֶב הַיּוֹנָה
 אִישׁ אֶל־עַמּוֹ יִפְּנוּ
 וְאִישׁ לְאֶרְצוֹ יָנֹסוּ: {ס}
 זי שֶׁהָ פְּזוּרָה יִשְׂרָאֵל
 אֲרִיּוֹת הַדִּיחּוּ
 הָרֵאשׁוֹן אָכְלוּ מִלֶּךְ אֲשׁוּר וְזֶה הָאֲחֵרוֹן
 עֲצָמוֹ נְבוּכַדְרֶאֶצַּר מִלֶּךְ בָּבֶל: {פ}

all you who bend the bow.
 Shoot at her: do not spare your arrows,
 for she has sinned against Yahweh!
 15 Raise the war cry against her from all sides.
 She surrenders: her bastions fall!
 Her walls collapse!
 This is Yahweh's vengeance: Take revenge on her;
 treat her as she has treated others.
 16 Deprive Babylon of the man who sows,
 of the man who wields the sickle at harvest.
 Away from the devastating sword,
 let everyone return to his own people,
 let everyone return to his own country!
 17 Israel was a straying sheep
 pursued by lions.
 First, the king of Assyria devoured him and, latterly,
 Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon crunched his bones.

The latter does not otherwise occur in the Qal and only elsewhere in the Piel with a meaning 'cast'; the former is common in both the Qal and the Hiphil, with the meaning of shooting arrows; confusion between ט and טו is very common.

15 The *Kethib/Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

16 Not only is the city destroyed, but more damaging, in a way, is the destruction of food production.

17 If the prophecies that are referred to in 51:59–64 refer to all that is contained in 50–51 (as some believe), the 4th line would refer to the disasters of 605 and 598 BCE, and all the harassment that Israel experienced from Babylon up until the 4th year of Zedekiah (594 BCE); if, on the other hand, the prophecy related there refers to something less than this final form, the destruction of 587–6 BCE could be referred to as well.

- י"ח לִכְן כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הֲנִנִּי
פָּקַד אֶל־מֶלֶךְ בָּבֶל וְאֶל־אֶרֶצוֹ כַּאֲשֶׁר פָּקַדְתִּי אֶל־
מֶלֶךְ אַשּׁוּר:^ט
וְשִׁבְבֹתִי אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶל־נֹהוּ
וְרָעָה הַכְּרַמִּל וְהַבְּשָׁן
וּבְהַר אֶפְרַיִם וְהַגְּלָעַד
תִּשְׂבַּע נַפְשׁוֹ:
כ בַּיָּמִים הָהֵם וּבַעֲתָהּ הִיא נֹאֲם־יְהוָה
יִבְקֹשׁ אֶת־עֹן יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאִינְנוּ
וְאֶת־חַטָּאת יְהוּדָה וְלֹא תִמְצְאוּנָהּ
כִּי אֶסְלַח לְאֲשֶׁר אֲשָׂאִיר: {פ}
כא עַל־הָאָרֶץ מְרַתַּיִם עָלָה עָלֶיהָ
וְאֶל־יוֹשְׁבֵי פְקוֹד
חָרַב וְהִתְרַם אַחֲרֵיהֶם
נֹאֲם־יְהוָה
וַעֲשֵׂה כְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתִיךָ: {ס}
כב קוֹל מִלְחָמָה בְּאָרֶץ
וְשִׁבְר גְּדוֹל:
- 18 Therefore, Yahweh Sabaoth, God of Israel, says this: Look, I will punish the king of Babylon and his country as I punished the king of Assyria.
- 19 I will bring Israel back to his pastures to browse on Carmel and in Bashan, on the highlands of Ephraim and in Gilead, and he will be satisfied.
- 20 In those days and at that time, says Yahweh, no guilt will be found in Israel, no sin will be found in Judah, for I shall pardon the remnant that I leave.
- 21 March on the country of Merathaim; march on her and on the inhabitants of Pekod; slaughter and curse with destruction every last one of them, says Yahweh, do all that I have commanded you!
- 22 The din of battle fills the country, immense destruction.

18 The NJB has 'I shall punish' and the NRSV 'I am going to punish', but here we adopt the more assertive, 'I will'.

19 'Gilead' and 'Bashan', in Transjordan, were famous for their pasturage (see Nb 32, Am 4:1, Mi 7:14).

20 Literally translated, the 2nd & 3rd lines read, "the iniquity of Israel will be sought but there will be none and the sins of Judah but they will not be found" but the passive, 'will be sought', raises the question of who is seeking. The translation (as NETB) avoids the question by referring to the result.

21 'Every last one of them' follows the Tg (אַחֲרֵיהֶם, literally 'their last'); the MT has 'behind them' (אַחֲרֵיהֶם).

22 The verbs in vv. 22-25 are all descriptive of the present but all of this is really to take place in the future.

<p>אֵיךְ נִגְדַע וַיִּשְׁבֵּר כג פָּטִישׁ כָּל־הָאָרֶץ אֵיךְ הִיְתָה לְשֹׁמֵה בָבֶל בְּגוֹיִם: יִקְשְׁתִּי לָךְ וְגַם־נִלְכַדְתָּ בְּבָל כד וְאֵת לֹא יָדַעַתָּ נִמְצְאָתָה וְגַם־נִתְפָּשֶׁתָּ כִּי בִיהוָה הִתְגַּבְרִיתָ: פָּתַח יְהוָה אֶת־אֹצְרוֹ כה וַיּוֹצֵא אֶת־כָּלֵי זַעֲמוֹ כִּי־מִלְאכָהּ הִיא לֹאֲדֹנֶי יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת בְּאֶרֶץ כַּשְׂדִּים: בָּאוּ־לָהּ מִקֵּץ פְּתָחוּ מֵאֲבָסֶיהָ כו סָלוּהָ כְמוֹ־עֵרְמִים וְהַחְרִימוּהָ אֶל־תִּהְיֶה־לָּהּ שְׂאֲרִיתָ: חָרְבוּ כָל־פָּרִיָהּ יִרְדּוּ לַטֶּבַח כז הוּי עָלֵיהֶם כִּי־בָא יוֹמָם עֵת פְּקֻדָּתָם: {ס}</p>	<p>23 How the hammer of the world is cut down and broken! How Babylon has become a horror among the nations!</p> <p>24 I set a snare for you, Babylon; you were caught before you knew it. You have been found and overpowered for having defied Yahweh.</p> <p>25 Yahweh has opened his armoury and taken out the weapons of his fury, for Lord Yahweh Sabaoth has work to do in the country of the Chaldeans.</p> <p>26 Fall on her from every side, open all her granaries; pile her in heaps and curse her with destruction until nothing is left of her.</p> <p>27 Kill all her bulls; let them go down to the slaughter! Alas for them: their day has come, the time of their punishment.</p>
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23 The 'hammer' is a metaphor for Babylon, who was God's war club to shatter the nations and destroy kingdoms – just like Assyria is represented in Is 10:5 as a rod and a war club.

24 Note that God is speaking in here, hence the opening 1P pronoun.

25 The 'weapons' are the nations that God is bringing from the north against them (cf. #23); God will use other nations as weapons to execute his wrath against Babylon.

26 The meaning of the word here translated as 'from every side' (מִקֵּץ) is uncertain. The word usually means 'end' or 'extremity' but may on occasion mean 'whole' or 'totality' ('without exception' or 'from all directions').

27 Commentators are almost universally agreed that the reference to 'bulls' is figurative here for the princes and warriors.

כח קול נָסִים וּפְלִטִים
מֵאֶרֶץ בָּבֶל
לְהִגִּיד בְּצִיּוֹן
אֶת־נִקְמַת יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ
נִקְמַת הַיְכָלֹו:

28 Listen! Fugitives and runaways
from the country of Babylon
arrive in Zion and proclaim
the revenge of Yahweh your God,
revenge for his Temple!

כט הַשְּׁמִיעוּ אֶל־בָּבֶל | רַבִּים כָּל־דֹּרְכֵי קֶשֶׁת חֲנּוּ
עָלֶיהָ סָבִיב אֶל־יְהִי־[לָהּ] פְּלִיטָה שְׁלֹמוֹ־לָהּ
כַּפְּעֻלָּהּ כְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר עָשְׂתָה עִשׂוּ־לָהּ כִּי אֶל־יְהוָה
זָדָה אֶל־קְדוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל: לִלְכֹן יִפְּלוּ בַחֲוָרֶיהָ
בְּרַחֲבֹתֶיהָ וְכָל־אֲנָשֵׁי מִלְחָמָתָה יִדְּמוּ בַיּוֹם הַהוּא
נְאֻם־יְהוָה: {פ}

29 Call up the archers against Babylon! All you who bend the bow, invest
her on all sides; leave her no way of escape. Repay her as her deeds
deserve; treat her as she has treated others, for she was arrogant to
Yahweh, to the Holy One of Israel. 30 Therefore, in her squares, her
young men will fall, and all her fighting men will perish, that day,
declares Yahweh.

לא הַנְּגִי אֵלַיִךְ זָדוֹן
נְאֻם־אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה עֲבָאוֹת
כִּי בָא יוֹמֶךָ
עַתַּת פְּקֻדָּתִי־ךָ:
לב וְכָשֶׁל זָדוֹן וְנָפַל
וְאִין לֹו מִקִּים
וְהִצַּתִּי אֵשׁ בְּעָרָיו
וְאָכְלָה כָּל־סְבִיבֹתָיו: {ס}

31 My quarrel is with you, 'Arrogance',
says Lord Yahweh Sabaoth;
your day has come,
the time for me to punish you.

32 'Arrogance' shall stumble, she shall fall,
and no one shall lift her up:
I will set fire to her towns
and it shall devour all around it.

28 This verse is a parenthetical exclamation of the prophet in the midst of his report of what God said through him.

29 The *Ketiv* lacks לָהּ, here following the *Qere*.

30 The NRSV has 'soldiers' in place of 'fighting men', here following the NJB.

31 'Arrogance' ('hubris' in the LXX) is the sin of pride; cf. Gn 3, 11:1-9, Is 14:12-13, Ezk 28, Am 4.

32 The personification continues but now the stance is indirect (3rd person) rather than direct (2nd person).

לג כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת
 עֲשׂוּקִים בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל וּבְנֵי־יְהוּדָה יַחְדָּו
 וְכָל־שִׁבְיָהֶם הַחֲזִיקוּ בָם
 מֵאֲנֵי שְׁלָחַם:
 לד גְּאֻלָּם | חֲזַק יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת שְׁמוֹ
 רִיב יִרִיב אֶת־רִיבָם
 לְמַעַן הַרְגִיעַ אֶת־הָאָרֶץ
 וְהַרְגִיז לְיֹשְׁבֵי בָבֶל:
 לה חָרַב עַל־כַּשְׂדִּים
 נֹאֲס־יְהוָה
 וְאֶל־יֹשְׁבֵי בָבֶל
 וְאֶל־שָׂרֵיהָ וְאֶל־חַכְמֵיהָ:
 לו חָרַב אֶל־הַבְּדִים וְנֹאֲלוּ
 חָרַב אֶל־גְּבוּרֶיהָ וַחֲתָוּ:
 לו חָרַב אֶל־סוּסָיו וְאֶל־רֶכְבּוֹ
 וְאֶל־כָּל־הָעָרַב אֲשֶׁר בְּתוֹכָהּ

33 Thus says Yahweh Sabaoth:
 The people of Israel are oppressed and the people of Judah too,
 all their captors hold them fast
 and will not let them go.
 34 But their redeemer is strong: Yahweh Sabaoth is his name.
 He will take up their cause,
 to give our country rest,
 but make the inhabitants of Babylon tremble.
 35 A sword against the Chaldeans,
 says Yahweh,
 against the inhabitants of Babylon,
 against her princes and her sages!
 36 A sword against her diviners: may they lose their wits!
 A sword against her warriors: may they panic!
 37 A sword against her horses, her chariots
 and the conglomeration of people inside her:

³³ Literally translated, the 2nd line reads, “Oppressed are the people of Israel and the people of Judah together.”

³⁴ The term גְּאֻלָּם (*redeemer*) referred in Israelite family law to the nearest male relative who was responsible for securing the freedom of a relative who had been sold into slavery.

³⁵ The *‘sword’* here is metaphorical for destructive forces in the persons of the armies of the north (vv. 3, 9), which God is marshalling against Babylon and which he has addressed by way of command several times (e.g., vv. 14, 21, 26–27, 29); compare 46:14.

³⁶ The meaning and derivation of the word translated *‘diviners’* (בְּדִים) is uncertain; the same word appears in Is 44:25 and probably also in Ho 11:6 in conjunction with the sword consuming them *‘because of their counsel’*.

³⁷ In place of *‘her’*, the MT has *‘his’* (twice) in the 1st line, whereas the rest of the possessive pronouns throughout vv. 35–37 are *‘her’*; there is no explanation for this switch unless the 3MS refers as a distributive singular to the soldiers mentioned in the preceding verse.

וְהָיוּ לְנָשִׁים
חָרֵב אֶל-אֲצֻרֹתֶיהָ וּבְזָזוּ:
חָרֵב אֶל-מִימֶיהָ וַיִּבְשׁוּ לח
כִּי אֶרֶץ פְּסָלִים הִיא
וּבְאֵימִים יִתְהַלְלוּ:
לְכֹן יֵשְׁבוּ צִיִּים אֶת-אֵיִים לט
וַיֵּשְׁבוּ בָהּ בְּנֹת יַעֲנָה
וְלֹא-תֵשֵׁב עוֹד לְנֶצַח
וְלֹא תִשְׁכֹּן עַד-דָּוָר וְדָר:
כַּמֶּה־פָּכַת אֱלֹהִים אֶת-סֹדָם וְאֶת-עַמָּהָ מ
וְאֶת-שְׁכֻנֶיהָ נָאִם-יְהוָה
לֹא-יֵשֵׁב שָׁם אִישׁ
וְלֹא-יִגֹּר בָּהּ בֶּן-אָדָם:
הִנֵּה עַם בָּא מִצָּפוֹן מא
וְגֹזֵי גְדוֹל וּמְלָכִים רַבִּים
יַעֲרוּ מִירְכַּת־אֶרֶץ:
קִשְׁת וְכִידָן יַחֲזִיקוּ מב
אֲכַזְרֵי הַמָּה וְלֹא יִרְחֲמוּ

may they be like women!

A sword against her treasures: may they be plundered!

38 Drought on her waters: may they dry up,
for it is a country of images,
and they go mad over idols!

39 Hence, wild cats and jackals will live there,
and ostriches make their homes there.
She will never be inhabited again, forever,
but remain uninhabited age after age.

40 As when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah,
and their neighbouring towns, says Yahweh,
no one will live there any more,
no human being will settle there again.

41 Look, a people is coming from the north, a mighty nation;
from the far ends of the earth,
many kings are stirring.

42 They are armed with bow and spear;
they are cruel and pitiless;

38 Another reading for 'drought' is 'sword' (as in previous lines); the difference is only one vowel (חָרֵב for חָרֵב).

39 In the 1st line, the NRSV has 'in Babylon' in place of 'there', here following the NJB; the MT lacks either.

40 Compare 49:18, where the same prophecy is applied to Edom.

41 This prophecy reapplies to Babylon the threat of an enemy coming from the north, originally uttered against Judah (6:22–24) and the prophecy against Edom (49:19–21).

42 The word 'daughter' is a personification of the city of Babylon and its inhabitants.

קוֹלָם כַּיִם יַהֲמָה
 וְעַל־סוּסִים יִרְכָּבוּ
 עָרוּדִים כְּאִישׁ לְמַלְחָמָה
 עָלֶיךָ בַת־בָּבֶל:
 שָׁמַע מֶלֶךְ־בָּבֶל אֶת־שִׁמְעָם ^{מג}
 וּרְפוּ יָדָיו
 וְצָרָה הַחֲזִיקָתָהּ
 חֵיל כִּיּוֹלָדָה:
 הִנֵּה כְּאַרְיֵה יַעֲלֶה מִגְּאֹן הַיַּרְדֵּן ^{מד}
 אֶל־נֹגַהּ אִיתָן
 כִּי־אַרְגָּעָה אַרְוָצִים אַרְיָצִים מֵעֲלֶיהָ
 וּמִי בַחֹר אֶלֶיָּהּ אֶפְקֹד
 כִּי מִי כַמוֹנִי
 וּמִי יוֹעֲדֵנִי
 וּמִי־זֶה רֹעֶה
 אֲשֶׁר יַעֲמֵד לִפְנָי:
 לָכֵן שָׁמְעוּ עַצְת־יְהוָה ^{מה}
 אֲשֶׁר יַעַן אֶל־בָּבֶל
 וּמַחֲשָׁבוֹתָיו אֲשֶׁר חָשַׁב אֶל־אֶרֶץ כַּשְׂדִּים
 אִם־לֹא יִסְחָבוּם צַעֲרֵי הַצֹּאן

their noise is like the roaring of the sea;
 they ride horses,
 ready as one man to fight you,
 O daughter Babylon!

- 43 The king of Babylon heard the news!
 His hands fell limp
 and anguish seized him,
 pain like that of a woman in labour.
- 44 Look, like a lion he climbs the thickets of the Jordan
 to the perennial pasture!
 In a flash, I shall make them run away
 and there appoint someone I shall choose.
 For who is like me?
 Who can summon me?
 Who is the shepherd
 who can stand up to me?
- 45 Therefore, hear the plan that Yahweh
 has laid against Babylon,
 his intentions against the country of the Chaldeans:
 the little ones of the flock shall be dragged away!

43 Compare 6:22–24, where almost the same exact words as 50:41–43 are applied to the people of Judah.

44 The *Kethib*/*Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

45 For the last line, the *NJB* reads, “*Their pastures will be sacked before their eyes!*” The word, ‘*their*’, follows the *LXX*, *Peshitta* & *Tg* (cf. 49:20); the *MT* lacks the word.

אִם־לֹא יִשִׁים עֲלֵיהֶם נֹה:
מִקּוֹל נִתְפָּשָׂה בְּבָל נִרְעָשָׂה הָאָרֶץ
וַיִּזְעַקוּ בַּגּוֹיִם נִשְׁמָע: {ס}

Surely, their fold shall be appalled at their fate!

⁴⁶ The earth quakes at the sound of Babylon's capture
and the shouting echoes through the nations.

⁴⁶ This passage is virtually identical with 49:19–21 with the replacement of Babylon for Edom: as God used Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians to destroy Edom, so he would use Cyrus and the Medes and Persians and their allies to destroy Babylon (cf. 25:13, 14). As Nebuchadnezzar was God's servant to whom all would be subject (25:9; 27:6), so Cyrus is called in Isaiah 'his anointed one', i.e., his chosen king whom he will use to shatter other nations and set Israel free (Is 45:1–4).

ירמיהו פרק נא

כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה א
הַנְּגִיל מֵעִיר עַל-בָּבֶל וְאֶל-יֹשְׁבֵי לֵב קָמַי
רוּחַ מְשַׁחִית:
ב
וְשִׁלַּחְתִּי לְבָבֶל | זָרִים וְזָרוּהָ
וַיִּבְקְקוּ אֶת-אֶרֶצָהָ
כִּי-הָיוּ עָלֶיהָ מִסָּבִיב
בְּיוֹם רָעָה:
ג
אַל-יִדְרֹךְ (יִדְרֹךְ) הַדְּרֹךְ קִשְׁתּוֹ
וְאַל-יִתְעַל בְּסָרְיָנּוּ
וְאַל-תַּחְמְלוּ אֶל-בְּתָרֶיהָ
הַחֲרִימוּ כָל-עֲבָאָהּ:
ד
וּנְפְלוּ חַלְלִים בְּאֶרֶץ כַּשְׂדִּים
וּמִדְּקָרִים בְּחוּצוֹתֶיהָ:
ה
כִּי לֹא-אֶלְמָן יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיהוּדָה
מֵאַלְהֵיוּ מִיְהוָה עֲבָאוֹת
כִּי אֶרֶץ מְלֵאָה אֲשֶׁם

JEREMIAH 51

- 1 Thus says Yahweh:
Against Babylon and the inhabitants of Leb-Kamai,
I shall rouse a destructive wind.
- 2 I shall send foreigners to Babylon to winnow her
and leave her country bare,
for she will be beleaguered on all sides,
on the day of disaster.
- 3 Let no archer bend his bow!
Let no man swagger his breastplate!
Do not spare her young men!
Curse her whole army with destruction!
- 4 Let them fall in the country of the Chaldeans,
in the streets of Babylon, those run through by the sword.
- 5 For, Israel and Judah have not been forsaken
by their God, Yahweh Sabaoth,
although their country was full of sin

JEREMIAH 51

- 1 'Leb-Kamai' is a cryptogram for 'Kashdim' (Chaldeans). An alternative for 'a destructive wind' is 'the spirit of a destroyer'.
- 2 In place of 'foreigners' (as MT), the NJB & NRSV have 'winnowers' (as Aquila & Symmachus): the difference is just pointing, reading זָרִים for זָרִים.
- 3 The 2 negative commands of the first 2 lines ('al ... al') read with 15 Hebrew MSS and the LXX; the MT has 'towards ... towards' ('el ... el'); these are addressed to the besiegers. The *Ketiv* repeats יִדְרֹךְ ('bend'), a dittography omitted by the *Qere* and other versions.
- 4 Most English versions understand the *vav* (ו) consecutive + perfect as a future here ('they will fall'); however, it makes better sense in the light of the previous verse to understand this as an indirect 3rd person command (jussive) as NETB and NJPS do.
- 5 Vv. 5-19 all speak of God in the 3rd person; thus, the prophet, who is the spokesman for God (50:1), is speaking.

מְקֹדֵשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל: גָּסוּן מִתּוֹךְ בָּבֶל וּמִלְטוֹ אִישׁ נַפְשׁוֹ אֶל־תִּדְמוּ בְעוֹנָהּ כִּי עַתָּה נִקְמָה הִיא לַיהוָה גָּמוֹל הוּא מְשַׁלֵּם לָהּ: כּוֹס־זָהָב בָּבֶל בְּיַד־יְהוָה מְשַׁכְּרַת כָּל־הָאָרֶץ מֵיַיִנָּה שָׁתוּ גוֹיִם עַל־כֵּן יִתְהַלְּלוּ גוֹיִם: פָּתְאִים נִפְלְאָה בָּבֶל וַתִּשָּׁבֵר הִילִילוּ עָלֶיהָ קָחוּ צָרִי לְמַכְאוּבָּהּ אוּלֵי תִרְפָּא: רָפֵאנוּ אֶת־בָּבֶל וְלֹא נִרְפְּתָה עֲזָבוּהָ וְנִלְךְ אִישׁ לְאֶרְצוֹ כִּי־נִגַּע אֶל־הַשָּׁמַיִם מִשְׁפָּטָהּ וְנִשְׂא עַד־שָׁחֳקִים: הוֹצִיא יְהוָה אֶת־צַדִּיקְתֵּינוּ	ו ז ח ט י	against the Holy One of Israel. 6 Escape from Babylon – save your lives, each one of you; do not perish for her guilt, for now is the time for Yahweh’s vengeance: he will pay her reward! 7 Babylon was a golden cup in Yahweh’s hand; she made the whole world drunk; the nations drank her wine and then the nations went mad. 8 Babylon has suddenly fallen, is broken: wail for her! Fetch balm for her wounds – perhaps she can be cured! 9 “We tried to cure Babylon; she has got no better. Leave her alone and let us each go to his own country.” Yes, her sentence reaches to the sky, rises to the very clouds. 10 Yahweh has brought forth our vindication.
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6 Many think this verse is addressed to the people of Judah but it could have a broader context.
7 The figure of the cup of God’s wrath invoked in 25:15–29 is invoked again here and Babylon is identified as its agent.
8 The verbs in this verse and those following are in the ‘prophetic perfect’ tense – actions that, although still in the future, are as good as done.
9 The opening lines are generally assumed by commentators to be words of foreigners living in Babylon.
10 For the phrase here rendered, ‘brought forth our vindication’ (as NRSV), the NJB has ‘shown the uprightness of our cause’.

בָּאוּ וְנִסְפְּרָה בְּצִיּוֹן
אֶת־מַעֲשֵׂה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ: {ס}

יֵא הָבְרוּ הַחֲצִים
מִלְּאוּ הַשְּׁלֵטִים

הָעִיר יְהוָה אֶת־רוּחַ מַלְכֵי מְדֵי כִי־עַל־בָּבֶל מְזַמְתּוּ
לְהַשְׁחִיתָהּ כִּי־נִקְמַת יְהוָה הִיא נִקְמַת הַיְכָלוֹ:

יב אֶל־חֹמֹת בָּבֶל שְׂאוּ־נֹס
הַחֲזִיקוּ הַמְּשֹׁמֵר
הַקִּימוּ שְׁמָרִים
הָכִינוּ הָאֲרָבִים

כִּי גַם־זָמַם יְהוָה גַּם־עָשָׂה אֶת אֲשֶׁר־דִּבֶּר אֵל־
יֹשְׁבֵי בָבֶל:

יג שְׁכַנְתִּי שְׁכַנְתָּ עַל־מַיִם רַבִּים
רַבַּת אוֹצְרוֹת
בְּאֵ קֶצֶד
אַמַּת בְּצַעֲדָ:

יד נִשְׁבַּע יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת בְּנַפְשׁוֹ
כִּי אִם־מִלְּאֲתִיד אָדָם כִּי־לֶקֶד
וְעָנּוּ עָלֶיךָ הַיְדָד: {ס}

Come, let us tell Zion
what Yahweh our God has done.

11 Sharpen the arrows
and fill the quivers!

Yahweh has roused the spirit of the kings of the Medes, for he plans to
destroy Babylon; this is Yahweh's revenge, revenge for his Temple.

12 Against the walls of Babylon, raise the standard!
Strengthen the guard!
Post the sentries!
Take up concealed positions!

For, Yahweh has both planned and done what he promised he would to
the inhabitants of Babylon.

13 Enthroned beside abundant waters,
rich in treasures,
you now meet your end;
the thread of your life is cut.

14 By his own self, Yahweh Sabaoth has sworn:
I shall fill you with men as though with locusts
and, over you, they will raise the triumph-shout.

¹¹ The poem originally spoke of an 'enemy from the north' (50:3, 9, 41, 51:48); the prose gloss says more specifically the 'Medes'.

¹² The commands are here addressed to the kings of the Medes to fully blockade the city and prevent people from escaping from (cf. 2K 25:4).

¹³ The *Kethib*/*Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

¹⁴ The 'you' refers to Babylon, which has been alluded to in the preceding verses under descriptive titles.

<p>טו עֲשֵׂה אֶרֶץ בְּכֹחוֹ מְכִין תִּבְּל בְּחִכְמָתוֹ וּבְתַבּוּנָתוֹ נָטָה שָׁמַיִם: טז לְקוֹל תִּתּוֹ הַמּוֹן מֵיָם בְּשָׁמַיִם וַיַּעַל נְשָׁאִים מִקְצֵה-אֶרֶץ בְּרָקִים לְמָטָר עָשָׂה וַיִּזְצֹא רוּחַ מֵאֵצְרֹתָיו: זי נִבְעַר כָּל-אָדָם מִדַּעַת הַבֵּישׁ כָּל-צִרְף מִפֶּסֶל כִּי שֶׁקֶר נִסְכּוֹ וְלֹא-רוּחַ בָּם: יח הֵבֵל הֵמָּה מַעֲשֵׂה תַעֲתָעִים בְּעֵת פְּקֻדָּתָם יֵאָבְדוּ: טט לֹא-כִאֲלֵה חֶלֶק יַעֲקֹב כִּי-יוֹצֵר הַכֹּל הוּא וְשָׁבֵט נִחְלָתוֹ יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת שְׁמוֹ: {פ}</p>	<p>15 By his power, he made the earth, by his wisdom, set the world firm, by his discernment, spread out the heavens.</p> <p>16 When he thunders, there is a roaring of waters in heaven; he raises mist from the ends of the earth, makes the lightning flash for the downpour and brings the wind from his storehouse.</p> <p>17 At this, everyone stands stupefied, uncomprehending; every goldsmith blushes for his idols: his castings are but delusion, with no breath in them.</p> <p>18 They are futile, a laughable production; at the time of their punishment they shall perish.</p> <p>19 The Heritage of Jacob is not like these, for he is the maker of everything, and Israel is the tribe that is his heritage; Yahweh Sabaoth is his name.</p>
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15 This passage (vv. 15–19) underlines God’s power to carry out what he has sworn, in contrast to the impotence of the Babylonian idols who will be put to shame and be dismayed (50:2).

16 The NJB has ‘clouds’ in place of ‘mist’, here following the NRSV.

17 For the 1st line, here following the NJB, the NRSV reads, “Everyone is stupid and without knowledge;” and NETB has, “All idolaters will prove to be stupid and ignorant.”

18 For the 2nd line, here following the NRSV, the NJB reads, “when the time comes for them to be punished, they will vanish.”

19 The MT lacks ‘Israel’, here following the Tg, the LXX (*Lucian*) and a number of Hebrew MSS (and cf. 10:16).

<p>כ מַפְצֵ־אֶתֶּה לִי כְּלֵי מִלְחָמָה וְנִפְצַתִּי בְךָ גּוֹיִם וְהִשַׁחֲתִי בְךָ מַמְלָכוֹת: כא וְנִפְצַתִּי בְךָ סּוֹס וּרְכָבוֹ וְנִפְצַתִּי בְךָ רֶכֶב וּרְכָבוֹ: כב וְנִפְצַתִּי בְךָ אִישׁ וְאִשָּׁה וְנִפְצַתִּי בְךָ זָקֵן וְנָעָר וְנִפְצַתִּי בְךָ בְּחֹר וּבְתוּלָה: כג וְנִפְצַתִּי בְךָ רֹעֵה וְעֵדְרוֹ וְנִפְצַתִּי בְךָ אֹכֵר וְצִמְדּוֹ וְנִפְצַתִּי בְךָ פְּחוֹת וּסְגָנִים: כד וְשָׁלַמְתִּי לְבַבְּךָ וּלְכָל יוֹשְׁבֵי כְּשָׂדִים אֵת כָּל־ רַעְתֶּם אֲשֶׁר־עָשׂוּ בְצִיּוֹן לְעֵינֵיכֶם נְאֻם יְהוָה: {ס}</p>	<p>כה הַנְּנִי אֵלֶיךָ הַר הַמְּשַׁחֵת נְאֻם־יְהוָה הַמְּשַׁחֵת אֶת־כָּל־הָאָרֶץ</p>	<p>20 You were my mace, a weapon of war. With you, I crushed nations, struck kingdoms down.</p> <p>21 With you, I crushed horse and rider; with you, I crushed chariot and charioteer.</p> <p>22 With you, I crushed man and woman; with you, I crushed old man and boy; with you, I crushed young man and girl.</p> <p>23 With you, I crushed shepherd and flock; with you, I crushed ploughman and team; with you, I crushed governors and magistrates.</p> <p>24 I will repay Babylon and the inhabitants of Chaldea, before your eyes, for all the wrongs they have done in Zion, says Yahweh.</p> <p>25 I am setting myself against you, says Yahweh, mountain of destruction, destroyer of the world!</p>
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20 This oracle of the mace addresses the destroying enemy of Babylon.

21 The nouns throughout vv. 21–23 are collective singulars.

22 The NJB has ‘young’ in place of ‘boy’, here following the NRSV & NETB.

23 The 2 words translated ‘governors’ and ‘magistrates’ are Accadian loan words that often occur together (cf. Ezk 23:6, 12, 23).

24 The position of the phrase ‘before your eyes’ after ‘which they have done in Zion’ and the change in person from 2MS in vv. 20^b–23 to 2MP in ‘before your eyes’ argue that a change in referent/addressee occurs in this verse.

25 The figure here involves comparing Babylon to a destructive volcano that God makes burned-out, i.e., he will destroy her power to destroy.

וְנָטִיתִי אֶת־יָדִי עָלֶיךָ
וְגִלְגַּלְתִּיךָ מִן־הַסִּלְעִים
וְנָתַתִּיךָ לְהָר שָׂרְפָה:
וְלֹא־יִקַּחוּ מִמֶּךָ אֶבֶן לַפְּנֵה

וְאֶבֶן לְמוֹסְדוֹת
כִּי־שָׁמְמוֹת עוֹלָם תִּהְיֶה
נְאֻם־יְהוָה:

שְׂאו־נֹס בְּאֶרֶץ
תִּקְעוּ שׁוֹפָר בְּגוֹיִם
קִדְּשׁוּ עָלֶיהָ גוֹיִם

הַשְּׁמִיעוּ עָלֶיהָ מַמְלָכוֹת אֲרָרַט מִנִּי וְאַשְׁכְּנַז
פְּקִדּוֹ עָלֶיהָ
טַפְסֹר הַעֲלו־סוֹס כִּי־לֶקֶט סָמַר:

כִּחַ קִדְּשׁוּ עָלֶיהָ גוֹיִם אֶת־מַלְכֵי מְדֵי אֶת־פְּחוֹתֶיהָ
וְאֶת־כָּל־סַגְנֶיהָ וְאֶת כָּל־אֶרֶץ מְמַשְׁלָתָהּ:

כֵּט וְתִרְעַשׂ הָאָרֶץ וְתִחַל
כִּי קָמָה עַל־בָּבֶל מַחֲשָׁבוֹת יְהוָה
לְשׂוֹם אֶת־אֶרֶץ בָּבֶל לְשָׁמָה

I shall reach out my hand for you,
send you tumbling from the crags
and make you a burnt-out mountain.

26 No cornerstone will be taken from you again
and no foundation stone,
for you will be a desert forever,
says Yahweh.

27 Raise a standard in the land;
sound the trumpet among the nations,
prepare the nations for war on her;
summon kingdoms against her: Ararat, Minni, and Ashkenaz;
appoint a recruiting officer for her enemies:
bring up the cavalry, bristling like locusts.

28 Prepare the nations for war on her: the kings of the Medes, with their
governors, all their magistrates and every land under their rule.

29 The earth trembles and writhes;
for, Yahweh's plan against Babylon stands:
to make the country of Babylon a desolation,

26 Many feel that the figure of the burned-out mountain here continues, while others feel that the figure here shifts to a ruined city.

27 'Ararat' is Urartu, 'Minni' is round Lake Van and 'Ashkenaz' is the Scythians, all defeated by the Medes in the early 6th Century BCE.

28 The MT has a confusing switch of possessive pronouns in this verse, which has led to a number of different resolutions: the LXX renders the word 'kings' as singular and levels all the pronouns to 'his', paraphrasing the final clause and combining it with 'king of the Medes' to read 'and of all the earth'; the Vg levels them all to the 3MP, and this is followed by the present translation (following the NRSV & NETB).

29 The verbs in vv. 29-30 are all in the past tense in Hebrew: the actions are considered as good as done (the 'prophetic perfect').

מֵאֵין יוֹשֵׁב:
ל חָדְלוּ גִבּוֹרֵי בָבֶל לְהִלָּחֵם
יֵשְׁבוּ בַּמְצֻדוֹת נְשֹׂתָהּ גְבוּרָתָם
הָיוּ לְנָשִׁים
הָצִיתוּ מִשְׁפְּנֵתֶיהָ
נִשְׁבְּרוּ בְרִיחֶיהָ:
לא רֶץ לְקִרְאֵת־רֶץ יְרוּץ
וּמַגִּיד לְקִרְאֵת מַגִּיד
לְהַגִּיד לְמֶלֶךְ בָּבֶל
בִּי־נִלְכְּדָה עִירוֹ מִקְצָה:
לב וְהַמְעַבְרוֹת נִתְפָּשׁוּ
וְאֶת־הָאֲגָמִים שָׂרְפוּ בְּאֵשׁ
וְאֲנָשֵׁי הַמִּלְחָמָה נִבְהָלוּ: {ס}
לג כִּי כֹה אָמַר יְהוָה עֲבֹאוֹת אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
בַּת־בָּבֶל כְּגֶרֶן עֵת הַדְּרִיכָהּ

without inhabitant.

- 30 The warriors of Babylon have done with fighting:
they remain in their fortresses, their courage exhausted,
they are now like women.
Her houses are on fire
and her gates are shattered.
- 31 Courier will follow close on courier,
messenger on messenger,
to tell the king of Babylon
that his city has been taken from all sides.
- 32 The fords are occupied,
the marshes burnt with fire
and the fighting men seized with panic.
- 33 For, thus says Yahweh Sabaoth, the God of Israel:
Daughter Babylon is like a threshing-floor

30 The literal translation of 'gates' is 'bars'.

31 The verb in the 1st line is imperfect, viewing the action as in the future; the perfects that follow are dependent on that future.

32 The reference to 'fords' here is to the river crossings of the Euphrates that ran right through the city and the crossings at the ditches and canals; the 'marshes' refers to the low-lying areas around the city where reeds grew, and the burning of these would deprive any fugitives of places to hide and flush out any who had already escaped.

33 There are two figures involved here: one of the threshing floor being levelled and stamped down hard and smooth and the other of the harvest. At harvest time, the stalks of grain were cut down, gathered in sheaves, taken to the harvest floor where the grain was loosened from the husk by driving oxen and threshing sleds over them; the grain was then separated from the mixture of grain, straw and husks by repeatedly throwing it in the air and letting the wind blow away the lighter husks and ground-up straw. The figure of harvest is often used of judgment in the OT (e.g. Jl 4:13, Ho 6:11, and cf. Mi 4:12-13 & Jr 51:2).

עוֹד מְעֻט
 וּבָאָה עֵת־הַקְצִיר לָהּ:
 אֲכַלְנוּ אֶכְלָנִי הַמִּמְנוּ הַמִּמְנִי לָד
 נְבוּכַדְרֶאֱצַר מֶלֶךְ בָּבֶל
 הִצִּיגְנוּ הִצִּיגְנִי כְּלִי רֵיק
 בִּלְעֵנוּ בִּלְעֵנִי כַּתַּיִן מִלֵּא כָרְשׁוֹ מֵעַדְנִי
 הַדִּיחְנוּ הַדִּיחְנִי:
 לָהּ חֲמָסִי וּשְׂאֵרֵי עַל־בָּבֶל
 תֹּאמְרֵי יִשְׁבֶּת צִיּוֹן
 וְדַמִּי אֶל־יֹשְׁבֵי כְּשָׂדִים
 תֹּאמְרֵי יְרוּשָׁלַם: {ס}
 לָד לִכֵּן כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה
 הִנְנִי־רֹב אֶת־רִיבְךָ
 וְנִקְמָתִי אֶת־נִקְמַתְךָ
 וְהִחַרְבְּתִי אֶת־יָמָהּ
 וְהַבִּשְׁתִּי אֶת־מְקוֹרָהּ:
 לָד וְהִיְתָה בָבֶל | לְגִלִּים |

when it is being trodden:

a little while, and the time for harvesting will come.

34 He devoured me, consumed me,
 Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon,
 left me like an empty dish;
 like the Dragon, he has swallowed me whole,
 filled his belly with my delicacies and threw me out.

35 "On Babylon be the wounds I suffered,"
 the daughters of Zion will say.
 "On the inhabitants of Chaldaea be my blood,"
 Jerusalem will say.

36 Therefore, thus says Yahweh:
 Look, I am taking up your cause
 to make sure you are avenged.
 I will dry up her sea
 and make her springs run dry.

37 Babylon will become a heap of stones,

34 In place of 'delicacies' (following the MT & NRSV), the NJB has 'titbits'. Rearranging the vowels and re-dividing some of the words, one might also translate, 'he has driven me out of my Eden'; Jerusalem is the speaker. Throughout this verse, the *Ketiv* has pronominal suffixes as plural (הַדִּיחְנִי & בִּלְעֵנִי, הִצִּיגְנִי, הַמִּמְנִי, אֶכְלָנִי) (הַדִּיחְנוּ & בִּלְעֵנוּ, הִצִּיגְנוּ, הַמִּמְנוּ, אֲכַלְנוּ).

35 The literal translation of 'the wounds I suffered' is 'my violence, my broken flesh'.

36 The reference to 'her sea' is not clear; most interpreters understand it to be a figurative reference to the rivers and canals surrounding Babylon, but some feel it refers to the reservoir that the wife of Nebuchadnezzar, Queen Nictoris, had made.

37 The literal translation of 'scorn' is 'hissing'.

מְעוֹז־תַּנִּים שִׁמָּה וּשְׂרָקָה מֵאֵין יוֹשֵׁב:		the lair of jackals, a thing of horror and of scorn, with no inhabitant.
לח יַחְדּוֹ כַּכְּפָרִים יִשְׁאָגוּ נִעְרוּ כְּגֹרֵי אַרְיֹת:	38	Like lions, they roar together; they growl like lions' whelps.
לט בַּחֲמָם אֲשִׁית אֶת־מִשְׁתֵּיהֶם וְהִשְׁכַּרְתִּים לְמַעַן יַעֲלִזוּ וְיִשְׁנוּ שְׁנַת־עוֹלָם וְלֹא יִקְיצוּ נְאֻם יְהוָה:	39	Are they feverish? I will prepare them a drink and make them drink until they are tipsy and fall into an everlasting sleep, never to wake again, says Yahweh.
מ אֹרִידִם כְּכָרִים לְטְבוּחַ כְּאֵילִים עַם־עֲתוּדִים:	40	I will drag them away to the slaughterhouse like lambs, like rams and goats.
מא אֵיךְ נִלְכְּדָה שִׁשְׁדָּךְ וַתִּתְפַּשׂ תְּהִלַּת כָּל־הָאָרֶץ אֵיךְ הִיְתָה לְשִׁמָּה בְּבָל בְּגוֹיִם:	41	Has Sheshak been taken, been conquered, the pride of the whole world? How Babylon has become a thing of horror among the nations!
מב עֲלָה עַל־בְּבַל הַיָּם בְּהִמּוֹן גָּלְיוֹ נִכְסְתָה:	42	The sea has risen over Babylon: she sinks beneath its boisterous waves.
מג הִיוּ עָרֶיהָ לְשִׁמָּה	43	Her towns have become heaps of ruins,

38 Literally translated, the 1st line reads, “They all roar like lions;” (for the usage of יַחְדּוֹ meaning ‘all’, see Is 10:8, 18:6, & 41:20).

39 The central figure here is the cup of Yahweh’s wrath (cf. 25:15–29, esp. v. 26); here, the Babylonians have been made to drink so deeply of it that they fall into a drunken sleep from which they will never wake up (i.e., they die).

40 The tone here is highly ironic, in light of the fact that the Babylonians were earlier compared to lions and lion cubs (v. 38).

41 ‘Sheshak’ (שִׁשְׁדָּךְ) is a cryptogram for ‘Babel’ (בְּבָל, Babylon).

42 This verse is a poetic and figurative reference to the enemies of Babylon, the foe from the north (see 50:3, 9, 51:27–28), which has attacked Babylon in wave after wave.

43 In place of ‘heaps of ruins’, here following NETB, the NJB has ‘a wasteland’ and the NRSV has ‘an object of horror’.

אֶרֶץ צִיָּה וְעֵרְבָה
 אֶרֶץ לֹא־יֵשֵׁב בָּהֶן כָּל־אִישׁ
 וְלֹא־יַעֲבֹר בָּהֶן בֶּן־אָדָם׃
 מִד וּפְקֻדָּתִי עַל־בָּבֶל בְּבָבֶל
 וְהִצֵּאתִי אֶת־בִּלְעוּ מִפִּי
 וְלֹא־יִנְהָרוּ אֱלֹהֵי עוֹד גּוֹיִם
 גַּם־חֹמַת בָּבֶל נִפְלָה׃
 מֵה צֵאוּ מִתּוֹכָהּ עַמִּי
 וּמִלְטוּ אִישׁ אֶת־נַפְשׁוֹ
 מִחֲרוֹן אַף־יְהוָה׃

a parched land, a desert,
 a land in which nobody lives
 and where nobody goes.

44 I shall punish Bel in Babylon
 and make him disgorge what he has swallowed,
 In future, the nations will stream to him no more.
 The very walls of Babylon will fall.

45 Get out of her, my people;
 save your lives, each one of you,
 from the fierce anger of Yahweh.

מו וּפְנֵי־יִרְדָּ לְבַבְכֶם וְתִירְאוּ בִשְׁמוּעָה הַנִּשְׁמַעַת
 בְּאֶרֶץ וּבֵא בַשָּׁנָה הַשְּׁמוּעָה וְאַחֲרָיו בַּשָּׁנָה
 הַשְּׁמוּעָה וְחָמַס בְּאֶרֶץ וּמִשָּׁל עַל־מִשָּׁל׃

46 Do not be fainthearted! Do not take fright at rumours hawked round
 the country: one rumour spreads one year, next year another follows;
 violence rules on earth and one tyrant succeeds another.

מז לְכֵן הִנֵּה יָמִים בָּאִים
 וּפְקֻדָּתִי עַל־פְּסִילֵי בָבֶל
 וְכָל־אֶרֶצָהּ תִּבּוֹשׁ
 וְכָל־חַלְלֵיהָ יִפְלוּ בְּתוֹכָהּ׃
 מח וְרָנְנוּ עַל־בָּבֶל שָׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ

47 Assuredly, the days are coming
 when I shall punish the idols of Babylon.
 Her entire country will be humbled,
 with all her slaughtered lying on home soil.

48 Then, the heavens and the earth, and all within them

44 In antiquity, the fall of a nation was viewed as the defeat of its god(s) (see Is 37:12).

45 Compare 50:8-10 & 51:6, where the significance of saving oneself from the fierce anger of Yahweh is clarified.

46 Neither the NRSV nor NETB format this verse as prose (here following the NJB).

47 Literally translated, the 1st line reads, "that being so, look, days are approaching;" לְכֵן often introduces the effect of an action, which may be the case here, but it is more likely that לְכֵן here has an assertive force ('assuredly'), as in Is 26:14 and perhaps Jr 5:2.

48 To maintain poetic consistency, the order of the phrases in this verse has been changed from that of the Hebrew text.

וְכָל אֲשֶׁר בָּהֶם
 כִּי מִצְפּוֹן יְבוֹא־לָהּ הַשּׁוֹדְדִים
 נְאֻם־יְהוָה:
 גַּם־בָּבֶל לִנְפֹל חֲלִלֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל ^{מט}
 גַּם־לְבָבֶל נָפְלוּ
 חֲלִלֵי כָל־הָאָרֶץ:
 פְּלִטִים מִחֶרֶב ^ג
 הִלְכוּ אֶל־תַּעֲמֹדוֹ
 זָכְרוּ מִרְחוֹק אֶת־יְהוָה
 וִירוּשָׁלַם תִּעֲלֶה עַל־לִבְבְּכֶם:
 בְּשָׁנוֹ כִּי־שָׁמַעְנוּ חֲרָפָה ^{נא}
 כִּסְתָה כְלִמָּה פָּגִינוּ
 כִּי בָאוּ זָרִים
 עַל־מִקְדָּשֵׁי בַיִת יְהוָה: {פ}
 לִכֵּן הִנֵּה־יָמִים בָּאִים ^{נב}
 נְאֻם־יְהוָה
 וּפְקַדְתִּי עַל־פְּסִילֶיהָ
 וּבְכָל־אֲרָצָהּ יֶאֱנָק חֲלָל:

will shout for joy over Babylon,
 for the destroyers from the north are coming to her,
 says Yahweh.

49 As Babylon has caused the slaughtered of Israel to fall,
 so at Babylon shall fall
 men slaughtered all over the world.

50 You survivors of her sword
 leave her; do not wait!
 Remember Yahweh from afar;
 let Jerusalem come into your mind.

51 “We were ashamed when we heard of the outrage;
 we were covered in confusion
 because foreigners had entered
 the Temple of Yahweh’s holy places.”

52 Therefore, the days are surely coming,
 says Yahweh,
 when I shall punish her idols,
 and the wounded will groan throughout her country.

49 The juxtaposition of גַּם ... גַּם (often ‘both ... and’) here indicates correspondence: appropriately, Babylon will fall slain just as her victims, including God’s covenant people, did.

50 God’s exiled people are told to leave doomed Babylon (see v. 45).

51 The doubts raised by the destruction of the Temple (a problem that Ezekiel also considers) should be allayed by God’s assurance of certain punishment for Babylon, which desecrated the holy places.

52 Here, לִכֵּן introduces God’s response to the people’s lament (v. 51); it has the force of ‘yes, but’ or ‘that may be true’ (cf. Jg 11:8).

<p>כִּי־תַעֲלֶה בְּבַל הַשָּׁמַיִם נג וְכִי תִבְצָר מִרוֹם עֵזָה מֵאֵתֵי יָבֹאוּ שׂוֹדְדִים לָהּ נְאֻם־יְהוָה: {ס}</p>	<p>53 Were Babylon to scale the heavens or reinforce her towering citadel, destroyers would still come to her on my orders, says Yahweh.</p>
<p>קוֹל זַעֲקָה מִבָּבֶל נד וְשֹׁבֵר גְּדוֹל מֵאַרְץ כַּשְׂדִּים: כִּי־שׂוֹדֵד יְהוָה אֶת־בָּבֶל נה וְאָבַד מִמֶּנָּה קוֹל גְּדוֹל וְהָמוּ גְלִיָּהֶם כַּמַּיִם רַבִּים נִתְּנוּ שְׂאוֹן קוֹלָם:</p>	<p>54 Listen – a cry from Babylon! A great crashing from the country of the Chaldeans! 55 Yes, Yahweh is laying Babylon waste and silencing her monstrous din, whose waves used to roar like the ocean and their tumultuous voices rang out.</p>
<p>כִּי בָא עָלֶיהָ עַל־בָּבֶל שׂוֹדֵד נו וְנִלְכְּדוּ גִבּוֹרֶיהָ חֲתָתָהּ קִשְׁתוֹתָם כִּי אֵל גַּמְלוֹת יְהוָה שְׁלֵם יִשְׁלַם:</p>	<p>56 For the destroyer has fallen on Babylon, her warriors are captured and their bows are broken. Yes, Yahweh is a God of retribution; he never fails to repay.</p>
<p>וְהִשְׁכַּרְתִּי שָׂרֵיהָ וְחַכְמֵיהָ נז פְּחוֹתֶיהָ וְסֹגְנֵיהָ וְגִבּוֹרֶיהָ וְיִשְׁנּוּ שְׁנַת־עוֹלָם וְלֹא יִקְיִצּוּ</p>	<p>57 I shall make her princes and her sages drink, her governors, her magistrates, her warriors; they will fall into an everlasting sleep, never to wake again,</p>

53 Compare the 1st line with similar phrases in Dt 30:12, 2K 2:11 & Am 9:2.

54 For this verse, the NJB reads, “Listen to the din of shouting from Babylon, of immense destruction, from the country of the Chaldeans!”

55 The antecedent of the 3MP pronominal suffix in the 3rd line is not entirely clear; it probably refers back to the ‘destroyers’ (v. 53) as the agents of God’s judgment on Babylon.

56 The Piel form translated ‘are broken’ could probably be emended to Qal (‘will be broken’), as assumed by NETB.

57 On the terms translated ‘governors’ and ‘magistrates’, see #23.

נְאֻם־הַמֶּלֶךְ
 יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת שְׁמוֹ: {ס}
 כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת נח
 חֲמוֹת בָּבֶל הַרְחֹבָה עָרְעַר תִּתְעַרְעֵר
 וְשַׁעֲרֶיהָ הִגְבְּהִים
 בְּאֵשׁ יִצְתּוּ
 וַיִּגְעוּ עַמִּים בְּדִירֵיק
 וְלְאֻמִּים בְּדִי־אֵשׁ וַיֵּעֲפוּ: {ס}

declares the King,
 whose name is Yahweh Sabaoth.

58 Thus says Yahweh Sabaoth:
 The walls of Babylon the Great will be razed to the ground
 and her lofty gates
 will be burnt down.
 Thus, peoples toil for nothing
 and nations wear themselves out for the flames.

נט הַדְּבָר אֲשֶׁר־צִוָּה | יִרְמְיָהוּ הַנְּבִיא אֶת־שֶׁרְיָה בֶן־
 נְרִיָּה בֶן־מַחְסִיָּה בְּלַכְתּוֹ אֶת־צִדְקִיָּהוּ מֶלֶךְ־יְהוּדָה
 בְּבָל בְּשָׁנַת הָרִבְעִית לְמַלְכוֹ וְשֶׁרְיָה שָׂר מְנוּחָה:
 ס וַיִּכְתֹּב יִרְמְיָהוּ אֶת כָּל־הָרְעָה אֲשֶׁר־תָּבוֹא אֶל־
 בָּבֶל אֶל־סֵפֶר אֶחָד אֶת כָּל־הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה
 הַכְּתוּבִים אֶל־בָּבֶל: סא וַיֹּאמֶר יִרְמְיָהוּ אֶל־שֶׁרְיָה
 כְּבָאֵךְ בָּבֶל וְרָאִיתָ וְקִרְאתָ אֶת כָּל־הַדְּבָרִים
 הָאֵלֶּה: סב וְאָמַרְתָּ יְהוָה אֵתָּה דִּבַּרְתָּ אֶל־הַמָּקוֹם
 הַזֶּה לְהַכְרִיתוֹ לְבִלְתִּי הֵיטֵב־בוֹ יוֹשֵׁב לְמַאֲדָם וְעַד־
 בְּהֵמָה כִּי־שָׁמְמוֹת עוֹלָם תִּהְיֶה: סג וְהָיָה כְּכֹל־דָּ

59 This is the order that the prophet Jeremiah gave to Seraiah son of Neriah, son of Mahseiah, when Seraiah left for Babylon with Zedekiah king of Judah, in the fourth year of his reign. Seraiah was Lord Chamberlain. 60 Now, on one scroll, Jeremiah had written down all the disasters that would come upon Babylon, that is, all these words recorded here concerning Babylon. 61 Jeremiah then said to Seraiah, "When you reach Babylon, see to it that you read all these words aloud. 62 Then say, "O Yahweh, you yourself have threatened to destroy this place, so that no one will live here ever again, neither human nor animal, and it will be desolate forever." 63 Then, when you have finished reading

58 The last line follows the LXX; the MT has, "and the nations for fire, and they are weary."
 59 This symbolic gesture (see #18:1), which was to be kept secret, took place in about 593 BCE.
 60 NETB has 'judgements' in place of 'disasters', here following the MT, NJB & NRSV.
 61 The word 'aloud' is not in the MT; it has here been added (following the NJB) for clarity.
 62 In place of 'threatened', here following the NRSV, the NJB has 'promised' and NETB has 'announced'.
 63 The word 'River' is not in the MT and is here added for clarity (following NETB).

לְקַרְא אֶת־הַסֵּפֶר הַזֶּה תְּקַשֵּׁר עָלָיו אֶבֶן וְהַשְׁלַכְתָּו
אֶל־תּוֹךְ פְּרַת׃ ^{סד} וְאָמַרְתָּ כְּכֹה תִשְׁקַע בְּבֶל וְלֹא־
תִּקּוּם מִפְּנֵי הָרָעָה אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי מְבִיא עָלֶיהָ וַיִּעֲפוּ
עַד־הֵנָּה דְבָרַי יִרְמִיָּהוּ: {פ}

this sheet, tie a stone to it and throw it into the middle of the River Euphrates, ⁶⁴ with the words, "So shall Babylon sink, never to rise again from the disaster that I am going to bring on her."" Thus far are the words of Jeremiah.

⁶⁴ The final colophon, absent from the *LXX*, must have originally followed v. 58; it is preceded by the final verb of v. 58 'wear themselves out', repeated here accidentally.

ירמיהו פרק נב

א בן-עשרים ואחת שנה צדקיהו במלכו ואחת
עשרה שנה מלך בירושלם ושם אמו חמיטל
חמוטל בת-ירמיהו מלבנה: ב ויעש הרע בעיני
יהוה ככל אשר-עשה יהויקים: ג כן על-אף יהוה
היתה בירושלם ויהודה עד-השליכו אותם מעל
פניו וימרד צדקיהו במלך בבל: ד ויהי בשנה
התשעית למלכו בחדש העשירי בעשור לחדש
בא נבוכדנצר מלך-בבל הוא וכל-חילו על-
ירושלם ויחנו עליה ויבנו עליה דיק סביב:
ה ותבא העיר במצור עד עשתי עשרה שנה למלך
צדקיהו: ו בחדש הרביעי בתשעה לחדש ויחזק
הרעב בעיר ולא-היה לחם לעם הארץ: ז ותבקע

JEREMIAH 52

¹ Zedekiah was twenty-one years old when he began to reign and he reigned for eleven years in Jerusalem; and his mother's name was Hamutal, the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah. ² And he did that which was displeasing to Yahweh, just as Jehoiakim had done. ³ Indeed, Jerusalem and Judah so angered Yahweh that he expelled them from his presence. Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon. ⁴ And it happened that, in the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, on the tenth day of the month, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon advanced on Jerusalem with his entire army and they laid siege to it; they built earthworks all round it. ⁵ The city was besieged until the eleventh year of King Zedekiah. ⁶ By the ninth day of the fourth month, the famine was raging in the city and there was no food for the people; ⁷ so, a breach

JEREMIAH 52

This chapter is a repetition, with some complimentary material, of 2K 24:18–25:30, and is in part parallel with Jr 39:1–10; the three passages draw on the one source. It has been added to Jeremiah as Chs 36–39 were added to Isaiah. It shows how the prophet's threats came true and ends, like Second Kings, by offering a hope for the future, such as Jeremiah too had entertained.

- ¹ 'Libnah', a town belonging to the tribe of Judah (Jos 15:42), is probably modern Tell es-Safi, north of the Philistine town of Gath. The NJB follows the *Ketiv* in reading 'Hamital' (חמיטל) in place of 'Hamutal', here following the *Qere* (חמוטל) & NRSV.
- ² The literal translation of 'was displeasing to' is 'was evil in the eyes of'.
- ³ For the 1st sentence, here following the NRSV, the NJB reads, "That this should happen to Jerusalem and Judah was due to Yahweh's anger, resulting in his casting them away from his presence."
- ⁴ The date was the end of December 589 BCE.
- ⁵ The NJB has 'lay under siege' in place of 'was besieged', here following the NRSV.
- ⁶ The date was June-July 587 BCE.
- ⁷ After 'wall', the NJB adds 'the king' (cf. v. 8 and 39:4); here, we follow the MT & NRSV.

הָעִיר וְכָל־אֲנָשֵׁי הַמְּלַחְמָה יִבְרְחוּ וַיֵּצְאוּ מֵהָעִיר לַיְלָה דְרָךְ שְׁעַר בֵּין־הַחֲמַתִּים אֲשֶׁר עַל־גֵּן הַמֶּלֶךְ וְכַשְׂדִּים עַל־הָעִיר סָבִיב וַיֵּלְכוּ דְרָךְ הָעֲרָבָה׃^ח וַיִּרְדְּפוּ חֵיל־כַּשְׂדִּים אַחֲרֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ וַיִּשְׁיֶגּוּ אֶת־צַדְקִיָּהוּ בְּעֲרַבַת יַרְחוֹ וְכָל־חֵילוֹ נִפְצוּ מֵעַלְיוֹ׃^ט וַיִּתְּפְשׂוּ אֶת־הַמֶּלֶךְ וַיַּעֲלוּ אֹתוֹ אֶל־מִלְּךָ בְּבֶל רַבְלָתָהּ בְּאַרְץ חַמַּת וַיִּדְבֵּר אִתּוֹ מִשְׁפָּטִים׃^י וַיִּשְׁחַט מֶלֶךְ־בְּבֶל אֶת־בְּנֵי צַדְקִיָּהוּ לְעֵינָיו וְגַם אֶת־כָּל־שָׂרֵי יְהוּדָה שָׁחַט בְּרַבְלָתָהּ׃^{יא} וְאֶת־עֵינֵי צַדְקִיָּהוּ עֹזֵר וַיֹּאסְרֵהוּ בַּנְּחֹשְׁתִּים וַיִּבְאֵהוּ מִלְּךָ־בְּבֶל בְּבִלָּה וַיִּתְּנֵהוּ בְּבֵית בֵּית־הַפְּקָדֹת עַד־יוֹם מוֹתוֹ׃^{יב} וּבַחֹדֶשׁ הַחֲמִישִׁי בְּעָשׂוֹר לַחֹדֶשׁ הָיָא שְׁנַת תְּשַׁע־עֶשְׂרֵה שָׁנָה לַמֶּלֶךְ נְבוּכַדְרֶאֶצַּר מִלְּךָ־בְּבֶל בָּא נְבוּזַרְאֲדָן רַב־טַבָּחִים עֹמֵד לִפְנֵי מִלְּךָ־בְּבֶל בִּירוּשָׁלַם׃^{יג} וַיִּשְׂרֹף אֶת־בַּיִת־יְהוָה וְאֶת־בַּיִת הַגְּדוֹל שָׂרָף בְּאֵשׁ׃^{יד} וְאֶת־כָּל־חֲמוֹת יְרוּשָׁלַם סָבִיב נִתְּצוּ

was made in the city wall, and all the soldiers fled, leaving the city at night, by way of the gate between the two walls, near the king's garden - the Chaldeans had surrounded the city - and made their way towards the Arabah.⁸ The Chaldaean troops pursued the king and caught up with Zedekiah in the plains of Jericho, where all his troops deserted.⁹ Then, the Chaldeans captured the king and took him to the king of Babylon at Riblah in the territory of Hamath, where he passed sentence on him.¹⁰ He had Zedekiah's sons slaughtered before his eyes; he also had all the chief men of Judah put to death at Riblah.¹¹ He then put out Zedekiah's eyes and, loading him with chains, the king of Babylon carried him off to Babylon, where he kept him prisoner until his dying day.¹² In the fifth month, on the tenth day of the month - it was in the nineteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon - Nebuzaradan, commander of the guard, a member of the king of Babylon's staff, entered Jerusalem.¹³ He burnt down the Temple of Yahweh, the royal palace and all the houses in Jerusalem; he also burnt the house of every important person in Jerusalem.¹⁴ The Chaldaean

⁸ The 'plains of Jericho' are less than a day's march from Jerusalem.

⁹ 'Riblah' was a strategic town on the Orontes River in Syria, at a crossing of the major roads between Egypt and Mesopotamia. Pharaoh Necho received Jehoahaz there (2K 23:33) and Nebuchadnezzar had set up a base camp there.

¹⁰ Nebuchadnezzar's 'brutal' punishment served as a demonstration that he had completely vanquished the leadership of Judah.

¹¹ The *Kethib*/*Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

¹² The date was July-August 587 BCE.

¹³ The *NJB* omits the final clause (a gloss).

¹⁴ In place of 'the house of every important person', here following the *NJB*, the *NRSV* has 'every great house'.

כָּל־חֵיל כְּשָׂדִים אֲשֶׁר אֶת־רַב־טַבָּחִים: טו וּמַדְלֹת־
הָעָם וְאֶת־יֵתֶר הָעָם | הַנְּשֹׂאֲרִים בְּעִיר וְאֶת־
הַנְּפִלִים אֲשֶׁר נָפְלוּ אֶל־מֶלֶךְ בָּבֶל וְאֵת יֵתֶר הָאָמּוֹן
הַגְּלָה נְבוּזַרְאֲדָן רַב־טַבָּחִים: טז וּמַדְלֹת הָאָרֶץ
הַשְּׂאִיר נְבוּזַרְאֲדָן רַב־טַבָּחִים לְכַרְמִים וּלְיַגְבִּים:
יז וְאֶת־עַמּוּדֵי הַנְּחֹשֶׁת אֲשֶׁר לְבַיַּת־יְהוָה וְאֶת־
הַמְּכֹנֹת וְאֶת־יָם הַנְּחֹשֶׁת אֲשֶׁר בְּבַיַּת־יְהוָה שָׁבְרוּ
כְּשָׂדִים וַיִּשְׂאוּ אֶת־כָּל־נְחֹשֶׁת בָּבֶלָה: יח וְאֶת־
הַסְּרֹת וְאֶת־הַיָּעִים וְאֶת־הַמְּזֻמְרוֹת וְאֶת־הַמְּזֻרְקֹת
וְאֶת־הַכַּפּוֹת וְאֵת כָּל־כְּלֵי הַנְּחֹשֶׁת אֲשֶׁר־יִשְׂרְתּוּ
בָהֶם לְקָחוּ: יט וְאֶת־הַסְּפִים וְאֶת־הַמַּחְתּוֹת וְאֶת־
הַמְּזֻרְקוֹת וְאֶת־הַסִּירוֹת וְאֶת־הַמְּנֹרוֹת וְאֶת־
הַכַּפּוֹת וְאֶת־הַמְּנַקִּיּוֹת אֲשֶׁר זָהָב וְזָהָב וְאֲשֶׁר־כֶּסֶף
כֶּסֶף לְקַח רַב־טַבָּחִים: כ הָעַמּוּדִים | שְׁנַיִם הֵינִם
אֶחָד וְהַבֶּקֶר שְׁנַיִם־עָשָׂר נְחֹשֶׁת אֲשֶׁר־תַּחַת
הַמְּכֹנֹת אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה הַמֶּלֶךְ שְׁלֹמֹה לְבַיַּת יְהוָה לֹא־
הָיָה מְשָׁקֵל לְנְחֹשֶׁת כָּל־הַכְּלִים הָאֵלֶּה:
כא וְהָעַמּוּדִים שְׁמֹנֶה עָשָׂרָה אַמָּה קוֹמָה קוֹמָה

troops who accompanied the commander of the guard demolished all the walls surrounding Jerusalem. ¹⁵ Nebuzaradan commander of the guard deported some of the poor people and the remainder of the population left in the city, the deserters who had gone over to the king of Babylon, and the rest of the artisans. ¹⁶ However, Nebuzaradan commander of the guard left some of the poor country people behind as vineyard workers and ploughmen. ¹⁷ The Chaldeans broke up the bronze pillars from the Temple of Yahweh, the wheeled stands and the bronze Sea, which were in the Temple of Yahweh, and took all the bronze away to Babylon. ¹⁸ They also took the ash containers, the scoops, the knives, the sprinkling bowls, the incense bowls and all the bronze furnishings used in worship. ¹⁹ The commander of the guard also took the bowls, the censers, the ash containers, the lampstands, the goblets, and the saucers: everything that was made of gold and everything made of silver. ²⁰ As regards the two pillars, the one Sea, the twelve bronze oxen supporting the Sea, and the wheeled stands, which King Solomon had made for the Temple of Yahweh, there was no reckoning the weight of bronze in all these objects. ²¹ As regards the pillars, the height of one

¹⁵ The NJB places 'some of the poor people and' in parentheses; this phrase is missing from 39:5 and 2K 25:11, and perhaps comes from v. 16.

¹⁶ NETB replaces 'Nebuzaradan commander of the guard' (repeated from v. 15) with the simple pronoun, 'he'.

¹⁷ The 'pillars' here are the two free-standing bronze pillars at the entrance of the temple (Jachin and Boaz) described in 1K 7:15-22.

¹⁸ The 'scoops' were used to clean the altar and the 'knives' were for trimming the wicks of the lamps.

¹⁹ The 'censers' held the embers used for the incense offerings.

²⁰ 'The twelve ... Sea' does not occur in 2K 25:16; there, the bronze oxen had already been taken in the reign of Ahaz (2K 16:17).

²¹ The Kethib/Qere difference here would benefit from an explanation.

הַעֲמֹד הָאֶחָד וְחוּט שְׁתֵּים-עָשָׂרָה אַמָּה יִסְבְּנוּ
וְעִבּוּ אַרְבַּע אֶצְבָּעוֹת נְבוּב: ^{כב} וְכִתְּרַת עָלָיו
נְחֹשֶׁת וְקוֹמַת הַכִּתְּרַת הָאֶחָת חֲמִשׁ אַמּוֹת
וְשִׁבְכָה וְרִמּוֹנִים עַל-הַכּוֹתֶרֶת סָבִיב הַכֹּל נְחֹשֶׁת
וְכֹאֵלָה לַעֲמֹד הַשֵּׁנִי וְרִמּוֹנִים: ^{כג} וַיְהִי הָרִמּוֹנִים
תְּשַׁעִים וְשֵׁשׁ רֹוּחָה כָּל-הָרִמּוֹנִים מֵאָה עַל-
הַשִּׁבְכָה סָבִיב: {ס}

^{כד} וַיִּקַּח רַב-טַבָּחִים אֶת-שָׂרִיָּה כֹהֵן הָרֹאשׁ וְאֶת-
צְפַנְיָה כֹהֵן הַמְּשִׁנָּה וְאֶת-שְׁלֹשֶׁת שְׁמָרֵי הַסֶּף:
^{כה} וּמִן-הָעִיר לָקַח סָרִיס אֶחָד אֲשֶׁר-הָיָה פְּקִיד
עַל-אֲנָשֵׁי הַמְּלַחְמָה וְשִׁבְעָה אֲנָשִׁים מֵרְאֵי פְּנֵי-
הַמֶּלֶךְ אֲשֶׁר נִמְצְאוּ בָעִיר וְאֶת סֹפֵר שֵׁר הַצָּבָא
הַמְּצָבָא אֶת-עַם הָאָרֶץ וְשֵׁשִׁים אִישׁ מֵעַם הָאָרֶץ
הַנִּמְצָאִים בְּתוֹךְ הָעִיר: ^{כו} וַיִּקַּח אוֹתָם נְבוּזַרְאֲדָן
רַב-טַבָּחִים וַיִּלְךְ אוֹתָם אֶל-מֶלֶךְ בָּבֶל רַב־לְתָה:
^{כז} וַיִּכֶּה אוֹתָם מֶלֶךְ בָּבֶל וַיִּמָּתם בְּרַבְּלָה בְּאֶרֶץ
חֲמַת וַיִּגַּל יְהוּדָה מֵעַל אֲדָמָתוֹ: {ס}

pillar was eighteen cubits, its circumference was twelve cubits, it was four fingers thick and hollow inside; ²² and, on it, there stood a capital of bronze, the height of the one capital being five cubits; round the capital were filigree and pomegranates, all in bronze; the second pillar was the same, with the pomegranates. ²³ There were ninety-six pomegranates round the sides, making a hundred pomegranates round the filigree in all.

²⁴ The commander of the guard took prisoner Seraiah the Chief Priest, Zephaniah the priest next in rank and the three guardians of the threshold. ²⁵ In the city, he took prisoner an official who was in command of the fighting men, seven of the king's personal friends who were discovered in the city, the secretary to the army commander who drafted citizens for military service, and sixty men of distinction discovered in the city. ²⁶ Nebuzaradan commander of the guard took these men and brought them to the king of Babylon at Riblah, ²⁷ and, at Riblah, in the territory of Hamath, the king of Babylon had them put to death. Thus, Judah was deported from its country.

²² The 'cubit' was a measure of length (from the tip of the middle finger to the elbow on a man's arm) equal to about 45 cm.

²³ The meaning of the word here translated as 'round the sides' is uncertain; the word comes from the root meaning 'wind' or 'breath'; alternative translations are 'that hung free' or 'in relief' but the 'winds' can also mean 'sides' (Ezk 42:20 and cf. Ezk 37:9).

²⁴ It was the duty of 'the guardians of the threshold' to guard the entrance of the Temple, to keep people out that did not belong there, such as those who were foreigners or ritually unclean (see 2K 12:9 and compare Ps 118:19-20).

²⁵ The literal translation of 'citizens' is 'men, people of the land'.

²⁶ See #9 on Nebuchadnezzar's court at Riblah.

²⁷ The literal translation of 'had them put to death' is 'struck them down and killed them'.

כח זה העם אשר הגלה נבוכדראצר בשנת־שבע יהודים שלשת אלפים ועשרים ושלשה: כט בשנת שמונה עשרה לנבוכדראצר מירושלם נפש שמונה מאות שלשים ושנים: ל בשנת שלש ועשרים לנבוכדראצר הגלה נבוזראדן רב־טבחים יהודים נפש שבע מאות ארבעים וחמשה כל־נפש ארבעת אלפים ושש מאות: {ס}

לא ויהי בשלשים ושבע שנה לגלות יהויכן מלך־יהודה בשנים עשר חודש בעשרים וחמשה לחדש נשא אֵוִיל מֶרְדַּךְ מֶלֶךְ בָּבֶל בְּשַׁנַּת מַלְכָּתוֹ אֶת־רֹאשׁ יְהוִיכִן מֶלֶךְ־יְהוּדָה וַיֵּצֵא אֹתוֹ מִבַּיִת הַכְּלִיא הַכְּלוּא: לב וידבר אתו טבות ויתן את־כֶּסֶף מִמֶּעַל לְכֶסֶף מַלְכִים הַמְּלָכִים אֲשֶׁר אִתּוֹ בְּבָבֶל: לג ושנה את בגדי כלאו ואכל לחם לפניו תמיד כל־ימי חייו: לד וארחתו ארחת תמיד נתנה־לוֹ מֵאֵת מֶלֶךְ־בָּבֶל דְּבַר־יוֹם בְּיוֹמוֹ עַד־יוֹם מוֹתוֹ כֹּל יְמֵי חַיָּו: {ש}

²⁸ The number of people taken into exile by Nebuchadnezzar was as follows. In the seventh year: three thousand and twenty-three Judaeans; ²⁹ in the eighteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar, eight hundred and thirty-two persons were taken into exile from Jerusalem; ³⁰ in the twenty-third year of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuzaradan commander of the guard took into exile seven hundred and forty-five Judaeans: In all, four thousand six hundred persons.

³¹ And it came to pass that, in the thirty-seventh year of the exile of Jehoiachin, the king of Judah, in the twelfth month, on the twenty-fifth day of the month, Evil-Merodach king of Babylon, in the year he came to the throne, showed favour to Jehoiachin king of Judah and brought him out of prison. ³² He spoke kindly to him and allotted him a seat above those of the other kings who were with him in Babylon. ³³ Thus, Jehoiachin laid aside his prisoner's clothes and, for the rest of his life, he always ate at the king's table. ³⁴ For his allowance, a regular daily allowance was given him by the king of Babylon, as long as he lived, up to the day of his death.

²⁸ The list of vv. 28–30, peculiar to Jeremiah, seems to have been borrowed from a Babylonian source and seems to take into account only adults.

²⁹ This would be 587 BCE.

³⁰ This would be 582 BCE.

³¹ This occurred in 561 BCE. The *Kethib/Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

³² The *Kethib/Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

³³ The subject is unstated in the *MT*, but 'Jehoiachin' is clearly the subject of the following verb.

³⁴ The Book of Jeremiah ends with Jehoiachin's pardon, symbolising the end of the captivity.