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# ירמיהו • JEREMIAH

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## 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 דְּבַרֵּי יִרְמְיָהוּ בֶן־חִלְקִיָּהוּ מִן־הַכֹּהֲנִים אֲשֶׁר  
בַּעֲנָתוֹת בְּאֶרֶץ בְּנִימִן: ב אֲשֶׁר הָיָה דְּבַר־יְהוָה אֵלָיו  
בִּימֵי יֹאשִׁיָּהוּ בֶן־אָמֹן מֶלֶךְ יְהוּדָה בְּשָׁלֹשׁ־עֶשְׂרֵה  
שָׁנָה לְמָלְכוֹ: ג וַיְהִי בִימֵי יְהוֹיָכִים בֶּן־יֹאשִׁיָּהוּ מֶלֶךְ  
יְהוּדָה עַד־תֵּם עָשִׂיתִי עֲשֶׂרֶה שָׁנָה לְצַדִּיקָהוּ בֶן־  
יֹאשִׁיָּהוּ מֶלֶךְ יְהוּדָה עַד־גָּלוֹת יְרוּשָׁלַם בַּחֹדֶשׁ  
הַחֲמִישִׁי: {פ}

ד וַיְהִי דְּבַר־יְהוָה אֵלַי לֵאמֹר:

ה בְּטֶרֶם אֶצְרֶךְ אֶצְרֶךְ בִּבְטֶן יִדְעָתִיךְ

וּבְטֶרֶם תֵּצֵא מִרֶחֶם הַקִּדְשִׁיתִיךְ

נָבִיא לְגוֹיִם נִתְּתִיךְ:

ו וַאֲמַר אָהָה אֲדַנִּי יְהוָה הִנֵּה לֹא־יָדַעְתִּי דְּבַר כִּי־  
נָעַר אֲנִכִּי: {ס}

ז וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֵלַי

אַל־תֹּאמַר נָעַר אֲנִכִּי

<sup>1</sup> The words of Jeremiah son of Hilkiah, one of the priests living at Anathoth in the territory of Benjamin. <sup>2</sup> 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. <sup>3</sup> 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.

<sup>4</sup> The word of Yahweh came to me, saying:

<sup>5</sup> “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.”

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

<sup>7</sup> But Yahweh replied,  
“Do not say, “I am only a boy,”

## JEREMIAH 1

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

<sup>2</sup> Vv. 2–3 refer to a period from about 608 BCE to July 587; they do not therefore apply to Chs 40–44.

<sup>3</sup> An alternative system of reckoning puts the date here at August 586 BCE.

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

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

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

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

כִּי עַל־כָּל־אֲשֶׁר אֲשַׁלְּחֶךָ תֵּלֵךְ  
וְאֵת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר אֶצְוֶךָ תִּדְבֹּר:

ח אֲל־תִּירָא מִפְּנֵיהֶם  
כִּי־אֲתֶךָ אֲנִי לְהַצִּילָךְ  
נְאֻם־יְהוָה:

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

הִנֵּה נָתַתִּי דְבָרִי בְּפִיךָ:  
י רְאֵה הַפְּקֻדָּתִיךָ הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה  
עַל־הַגּוֹיִם וְעַל־הַמְּמַלְכוֹת  
לְנָתוֹשׁ וּלְנָתוּץ  
וּלְהַאֲבִיד וּלְהָרוֹס לְבָנוֹת וּלְנָטוֹעַ: {פ}

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."

"I will surely put my words into your mouth.

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."

יא וַיְהִי דְבַר־יְהוָה אֵלַי לֵאמֹר מֵה־אַתָּה רְאֵה 11 The word of Yahweh came to me, saying, "Jeremiah, what do you  
יְרֵמְיָהוּ וְאֹמַר מִקַּל שָׁקֵד אֲנִי רְאֵה: יב וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה see?" I answered, "I see a branch of an almond tree." 12 Then Yahweh  
אֵלַי הִיטַבְתָּ לְרֹאוֹת כִּי־שָׁקֵד אֲנִי עַל־דְּבָרִי said, "You have seen well; for, I am watching over my word to perform  
לְעֲשׂוֹתוֹ: {ס} יג וַיְהִי דְבַר־יְהוָה | אֵלַי שְׁנִית לֵאמֹר 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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 רֹאֶה וְאָמַר סִיר נִפְוֹחַ אֲנִי רֹאֶה וּפְנֵי  
 מִפְּנֵי צְפוֹנָה: <sup>יד</sup> וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֵלַי  
 מִצָּפוֹן תִּפְתָּח הָרָעָה  
 עַל כָּל־יֹשְׁבֵי הָאָרֶץ:  
 כִּי הִנְנִי קֹרָא <sup>טו</sup>  
 לְכָל־מְשֻׁפָּחוֹת מַמְלָכוֹת צְפוֹנָה  
 נְאֻם־יְהוָה  
 וּבָאוּ וַנִּתְּנוּ אִישׁ כִּסְאוֹ פֶתַח |  
 שַׁעְרֵי יְרוּשָׁלַם  
 וְעַל כָּל־חֹמֹתֶיהָ סָבִיב  
 וְעַל כָּל־עָרֵי יְהוּדָה:  
 וּדְבַרְתִּי מִשְׁפָּטִי אוֹתָם <sup>טז</sup>  
 עַל כָּל־רַעְתָם  
 אֲשֶׁר עָזְבוּנִי  
 וַיִּקְטְרוּ לֵאלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים  
 וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲווּ לַמַּעֲשֵׂי יְדֵיהֶם:  
 וְאַתָּה תֵאָזֵר מִתְּנִיד <sup>יז</sup>  
 וְקַמְתָּ וּדְבַרְתָּ אֲלֵיהֶם  
 אֵת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר אֲנִכִּי אֲצַוְךָ

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

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

<sup>15</sup> 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.

<sup>16</sup> 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.

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

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

<sup>15</sup> The pronoun, ‘they’, in the 4<sup>th</sup> 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).

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

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

אֶל־תַּחַת מַפְנֵיהֶם  
 פֶּן־אֲחַתְּךָ לִפְנֵיהֶם:  
 יח וְאֲנִי הִנֵּה נֹתֵתִיךָ הַיּוֹם  
 לְעִיר מְבֻצָּר וְלַעֲמֹוד בְּרִזָּל וְלַחֲמוֹת נְחֹשֶׁת  
 עַל־כָּל־הָאָרֶץ  
 לְמַלְכֵי יְהוּדָה לְשָׂרֶיהָ  
 לְכֹהֲנֶיהָ וְלָעָם הָאָרֶץ:  
 יט וְנִלְחֲמוּ אֵלֶיךָ  
 וְלֹא־יִוָּכְלוּ לָךְ  
 כִּי־אֲתָךְ אֲנִי נֹאמֵר יְהוָה  
 לְהַצִּילֶךָ: {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 1<sup>st</sup> 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

## JEREMIAH 2

- א וַיְהִי דְבַר־יְהוָה אֵלַי לֵאמֹר: ב הֲלֹךְ וְקִרְאתָ בְּאָזְנֵי יְרוּשָׁלַם לֵאמֹר כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה
- 1 The word of Yahweh came to me, saying, 2 “Go and shout this in Jerusalem’s ears: “Thus says Yahweh:
- זָכַרְתִּי לְךָ חֶסֶד נְעוּרַיִךְ  
אֶהְבֶּת כָּל־לִילְתֶיךָ  
לְכַתֵּךְ אַחֲרַי בַּמִּדְבָּר  
בְּאֶרֶץ לֹא זְרוּעָה:  
ג קָדֵשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל לַיהוָה  
רֵאשִׁית תְּבוּאָתָהּ  
כָּל־אֹכְלֶיהָ יִאשְׁמוּ  
ד רָעָה תִּבָּא אֲלֵיהֶם נֶאֱסִי־יְהוָה: {פ}
- 3 Israel was holy to Yahweh,  
the first fruits of his harvest;  
all who ate this incurred guilt,  
disaster befell them, says Yahweh.”
- ה אָמַר יְהוָה  
וְכָל־מִשְׁפְּחוֹת בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל:  
ז שָׁמְעוּ דְבַר־יְהוָה בֵּית יַעֲקֹב  
ח כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה  
ט מִה־מָּצְאוּ אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם בִּי עוֹל  
י כִּי רָחֲקוּ מֵעָלַי  
יא וַיֵּלְכוּ אַחֲרַי הַהֶבֶל וַיִּהְיֶה בָלֹן:
- 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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 אֵיהּ יְהוָה<sup>ו</sup>  
 הַמַּעֲלֶה אֶתָּנוּ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם  
 הַמּוֹלִיד אֶתָּנוּ בַּמִּדְבָּר  
 בְּאֶרֶץ עֲרֵבָה וְשׁוּחָה  
 בְּאֶרֶץ צִיָּה וְצִלְמוֹת  
 בְּאֶרֶץ לֹא-עֹבֵר בָּהּ אִישׁ  
 וְלֹא-יֹשֵׁב אָדָם שָׁם:  
 וְאָבִיָּא אֶתְכֶם אֶל-אֶרֶץ הַכַּרְמֶל<sup>ז</sup>  
 לֵאכֹל פְּרִיָּה וְטוֹבָה  
 וּתְבֹאוּ וּתְטַמְּאוּ אֶת-אֶרְצִי  
 וְנִחַלְתִּי שְׁמִתָּם לְתוֹעֵבָה:  
 הַכֹּהֲנִים לֹא אָמְרוּ אֵיהּ יְהוָה<sup>ח</sup>  
 וְתַפְשֵׁי הַתּוֹרָה לֹא יִדְעוּנִי  
 וְהָרְעִים פָּשְׁעוּ בִּי  
 וְהַנְּבִאִים נִבְּאוּ בַּבַּעַל  
 וְאַחֲרֵי לֹא-יֹעֵלוּ 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.

<sup>6</sup> 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.

<sup>7</sup> 'Plenty' translates the word כַּרְמֶל (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).

<sup>8</sup> '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 לִכְן עַד אָרִיב אֶתְכֶם  
 נְאֻם־יְהוָה  
 וְאֶת־בְּנֵי בְנֵיכֶם אָרִיב:  
 י כִּי עֲבְדוּ אֵי כְתִיִּים וְרָאוּ  
 וְקִדְר שְׁלַחוּ וְהִתְבּוֹנְנוּ מְאֹד  
 וְרָאוּ הֵן הִיְתָה כְּזֹאת:  
 יא הֵהִימִיר גּוֹי אֱלֹהִים  
 וְהִמָּה לֹא אֱלֹהִים  
 וְעַמִּי הִמִּיר כְּבוֹדוֹ  
 בְּלֹא יוֹעִיל:  
 יב שָׁמוּ שָׁמַיִם עַל־זֹאת  
 וְשָׁעְרוּ חֲרָבוּ מְאֹד  
 נְאֻם־יְהוָה:  
 יג כִּי־שָׁתִים רְעוֹת  
 עָשָׂה עַמִּי  
 אֶתִּי עֲזָבוּ מְקוֹר | 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,

<sup>9</sup> 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).

<sup>10</sup> 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.

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

<sup>12</sup> 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).

<sup>13</sup> 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־יֵלִיד בֵּית הוּא  
 מִדּוּעַ הָיָה לְבֹז:  
 טו עָלִיו יִשְׁאַגּוּ כְּפָרִים  
 נִתְּנוּ קוֹלָם  
 וַיִּשְׁתּוּ אֶרְצוֹ לִשְׁמָה  
 עָרָיו נִצְתָה נִצְתָה מִבְּלִי יֹשֵׁב:  
 טז גַּם־בְּנֵי־נֹף וְתַחֲפָנֶחֶס  
 יִרְעוּדָ קִדְקֹד:  
 יז הֲלוֹא־זֹאת תַּעֲשֶׂה־לָּךְ  
 עֲזַבְךָ אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ  
 בְּעֵת מוֹלֶכְךָ בַּדֶּרֶךְ:  
 יח וְעַתָּה מֵה־לָּךְ לְדֶרֶךְ מִצְרַיִם  
 לִשְׁתּוֹת מִי שְׁחֹר  
 וּמֵה־לָּךְ לְדֶרֶךְ אַשּׁוּר  
 לִשְׁתּוֹת 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 יִרְעוּדָ in place of the MT's יִרְעוּדָ ('have grazed on'), while the NJB has the conjectural 'have shaved'.

17 The literal translation of the 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 תִּסְרֹךְ רַעְתְּךָ  
 וּמִשְׁבוֹתֶיךָ תִּזְכָּח  
 וְדַעַי וְרָאִי כִּי־רַע וְמָר  
 עֲזַבְךָ אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ  
 וְלֹא פָחַדְתִּי אֵלֶיךָ  
 נְאֻם־אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת:  
 כ כִּי מֵעוֹלָם שָׁבַרְתִּי עֲלֶיךָ  
 נִתְקַתִּי מִזְסָרוֹתֶיךָ  
 וְתֹאמְרִי לֹא אֶעְבֹּד אֱעֻבֹר  
 כִּי עַל־כָּל־גִּבְעָה גְבַהָה  
 וְתַחַת כָּל־עֵץ רֵעֵן  
 אַתָּה צָעָה זֹנָה:  
 כא וְאַנְכִּי נִטְעַתִּיךָ שׁוֹרֵק  
 כָּל־הָזֶרַע אִמָּת  
 וְאִיךָ נִהְפַּכְתָּ לִּי  
 סוּרִי הַגֶּפֶן נִכְרִיָה:  
 כב כִּי אִם־תִּכְבֹּסִי בַנֶּתֶר  
 וְתִרְבִּי־לֶךְ בַּרִּית

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 5<sup>th</sup> 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 (אֶעְבֹּד); 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 סוּרִי הַגֶּפֶן into סוּרִיָּה גֶפֶן, and the recognition of a hapax legomenon, סוּרִיָּה, meaning 'degenerate'.

22 In place of 'soda', here following the NJB, the NRSV & NETB (the latter in a study note) have 'lye'.

נִכְתָּם עוֹנֶךָ לִפְנֵי  
 נֶאֱם אֲדֹנֵי יְהוָה:  
 כג אֵיךְ תֹּאמְרִי לֹא נִטְמַאתִי  
 אַחֲרֵי הַבָּעִלִּים לֹא הִלַּכְתִּי  
 רְאֵי דְרַכְךָ בְּגִיא דְעֵי מָה עָשִׂית  
 בְּכֶרֶךְ קֶלֶה מְשַׁרְכֶּת דְּרַכֶּיךָ:  
 כד פָּרָה | לִמָּד מִדְּבָר  
 בְּאוֹת נִפְשׁוּ נִפְשָׁה שְׂאֶפְהָ רוּחַ  
 תִּאֲנֶתָה מִי יִשְׁיבָנָה  
 כֹּל־מִבְקָשֶׁיהָ לֹא יִיעֲפוּ  
 בַּחֲדָשָׁה יִמְצְאוּנָה:  
 כה מִנְעִי רִגְלְךָ מִיַּחַף  
 וְגִרְנֶךָ וְגִרְוֹנְךָ מִצְמָאָה  
 וְתֹאמְרִי נֹאֵשׁ לֹא  
 כִּי־אֶהְבֶּתִי זָרִים וְאַחֲרֵיהֶם אֵלֶיךָ:  
 כו כְּבִשְׁת׃ גִּנֵּב כִּי יִמָּצֵא  
 בֶּן הַבֵּישׁוּ בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל  
 הֵמָּה מַלְכֵיהֶם שָׂרֵיהֶם  
 וְכֹהֲנֵיהֶם וְנָבִיאֵיהֶם:

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 אֲמָרִים לַעֵץ אָבִי אֶתָּה  
 וּלְאֶבֶן אֶת יִלְדָתִי יִלְדָתָנוּ  
 כִּי־פָנּוּ אֵלַי עָרָף  
 וְלֹא פָנִים  
 וּבָעֵת רָעָתָם יֹאמְרוּ  
 קוּמָה וְהוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ:  
 כח וְאִיהָ אֱלֹהֶיהָ אֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתָ לָּהּ  
 יִקְוֹמוּ אִם־יִוָּשִׁיעוּךָ בְּעֵת רָעָתָךְ  
 כִּי מִסַּפֵּר עָרִיךָ  
 הֵיוּ אֱלֹהֶיךָ יְהוּדָה: {ס}  
 כט לָמָּה תִּרְיִבוּ אֵלַי  
 כָּלכֶם פִּשְׁעֵתֶם בִּי  
 נֹאֲמִיָּהוּהָ:  
 ל לשׁוֹא הִכִּיתִי אֶת־בְּנֵיכֶם  
 מוֹסֵר לֹא לִקְחוֹ  
 אָכְלָה חֲרָבְכֶם נְבִיאֵיכֶם  
 כָּאֲרִיָּה מִשְׁחִית:

- 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.

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

28 At the end of this verse, the LXX (καὶ κατ' ἀριθμὸν διόδων τῆς Ἱερουσαλὴμ ἔθυσον τῇ 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).

לא הִדּוּר אַתֶּם רְאוּ דְבַר־יְהוָה  
 הַמְדַּבֵּר הָיִיתִי לְיִשְׂרָאֵל  
 אִם אֶרֶץ מִאֲפֵלִיָּה  
 מְדוּעַ אָמְרוּ עַמִּי  
 רָדְנוּ לֹא־נִבּוֹא עוֹד אֵלֶיךָ:  
 לב הַתְּשַׁכַּח בְּתוֹלָה עֲדִיָּה  
 כָּלָה קִשְׁרֶיהָ  
 וְעַמִּי שָׁכְחוּנִי  
 יָמִים אֵין מִסְפָּר:  
 לג מִה־תִּיטֵבִי דֶרֶכְךָ  
 לְבַקֵּשׁ אֲהַבָּה  
 לְכֵן גַּם אֶת־הָרָעוֹת  
 לִמְדַתִּי לִמְדַת אֶת־דְּרָכֶיךָ:  
 לד גַּם בְּכִנְפֶיךָ נִמְצְאוּ  
 דָם נַפְשׁוֹת אֲבִיוֹנִים נְקִיִּים  
 לֹא־בִמְחַתֶּרֶת מְצָאתִים  
 כִּי עַל־כָּל־אֱלֹהִים:  
 לה וְתֹאמְרִי כִּי נְקִיתִי אֲךָ  
 שֵׁב אִפּוֹ מִמֶּנִּי הִנְנִי נֹשֵׁפֵט אוֹתְךָ

- 31 Now, you of this generation listen to what Yahweh says:  
 Have I been a desert for Israel,  
 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

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

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' (following NETB) is an attempt to render the particle הִנְנִי (often translated 'behold') in a meaningful way in this context.

עֲלֹא־מֶרֶךְ לֹא חָטֵאתִי:  
 לִזְמַן מִהֲתִזְלִי מֵאֵד  
 לְשִׁנוֹת אֶת־דֶּרֶכְךָ  
 גַּם מִמִּצְרַיִם תִּבְשִׁי  
 כַּאֲשֶׁר־בָּשַׁת מֵאֲשׁוּר:  
 לִזְמַן מֵאֵת זֶה תִּצְאִי  
 וַיִּדִּיךָ עַל־רֹאשְׁךָ  
 כִּי־מָאֵס יְהוָה בְּמִבְטְחֶיךָ  
 וְלֹא תִצְלִיחִי לָהֶם:

for saying, "I have not sinned."

<sup>36</sup> How frivolously you undertake  
a change of course!

You will be disappointed by Egypt  
just as you were by Assyria.

<sup>37</sup> 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."

<sup>36</sup> '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?'

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

## ירמיהו פרק ג

א לֹא־מָר הֵן יִשְׁלַח אִישׁ אֶת־אִשְׁתּוֹ  
וְהִלְכָה מֵאִתּוֹ וְהִיתָה לְאִישׁ־אַחֵר  
הֲיָשׁוּב אֵלֶיהָ עוֹד  
הֲלוֹא חֲנוּף תַּחֲנֹף  
הָאָרֶץ הַהִיא  
וְאַתָּה זָנִית רַעִים רַבִּים  
וְשׁוּב אֵלַי  
נְאֻם־יְהוָה:  
ב שְׂאִי־עֵינֶיךָ עַל־שָׁפִילִים וּרְאִי  
אֵיפֹה לֹא שָׁגַלְתָּ שֹׁכֶבֶת  
עַל־דַּרְכֵּים יֹשֶׁבֶת לָהֶם  
כַּעֲרָבִי בַּמִּדְבָּר  
וּתַחֲנִיפִי אֶרֶץ בְּזוֹנוֹתֶיךָ וּבְרַעְתֶּךָ:  
ג וַיִּמְנְעוּ רַבִּבִּים  
וּמִלְקוֹשׁ לֹא הָיָה  
וַיִּמְצָח אִשָּׁה זֹנָה הָיָה לָךְ  
מֵאַנַּת הַכָּלָם:  
ד הֲלוֹא מֵעַתָּה קִרְאתִי קִרְאת לִי אָבִי

## JEREMIAH 3

- <sup>1</sup> “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.
- <sup>2</sup> 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:
- <sup>3</sup> 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.
- <sup>4</sup> From now on, do not cry out at me, “My father!

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### JEREMIAH 3

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



אֶלּוֹף נַעֲרִי אֶתָּה:  
ה הִינָּטָר לְעוֹלָם  
אִם־יִשְׁמֹר לִנְצַח  
הִנֵּה דְבַרְתָּ וּתַעֲשֵׂי הָרַעוֹת  
וּתוֹכֵל: {פ}

My beloved ever since I was young!

<sup>5</sup> Will he keep up his anger forever,  
maintain his wrath to the end?"  
You say this but still go on sinning,  
being so obstinate."

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֵלַי בְּיָמַי יַאֲשִׁיחוּ הַמִּלֶּךְ הָרְאִיתִי  
אֲשֶׁר עָשְׂתָה מְשֻׁבָּה יִשְׂרָאֵל הַלֵּכָה הִיא עַל־כָּל־  
הָר גִּבָּה וְאֶל־תַּחַת כָּל־עֵץ רֵעֵן וּתְזַנִּי־שָׁם: וַאֲמַר  
אַחֲרַי עָשׂוֹתָה אֶת־כָּל־אֵלֶּה אֵלַי תָּשׁוּב וְלֹא־שָׁבָה  
וּתְרָאָה וּתֵרָא בְּגוֹדָה אַחֻוֹתָהּ יְהוּדָה: וַאֲרָא כִּי  
עַל־כָּל־אֲדוֹת אֲשֶׁר נֶאֱפָה מְשֻׁבָּה יִשְׂרָאֵל  
שָׁלַחְתִּיהָ וְאַתָּן אֶת־סִפְּר כְּרִיתִיתִיהָ אֵלֶיהָ וְלֹא  
יָרָאָה בְּגִדָה יְהוּדָה אַחֻוֹתָהּ וּתְלֹךְ וּתְזֹן גַּם־הִיא:  
וְהָיָה מְקַל זְנוּתָהּ וּתְחַנֵּף אֶת־הָאָרֶץ וּתִנָּאֵף אֶת־  
הָאָבֶן וְאֶת־הָעֵץ: וְגַם־בְּכָל־זֹאת לֹא־שָׁבָה אֵלַי  
בְּגוֹדָה אַחֻוֹתָהּ יְהוּדָה בְּכָל־לֵבָהּ כִּי אִם־בְּשֹׁקֶר  
נֹאֲמִי־הָיָה: {ס}

<sup>6</sup> 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? <sup>7</sup> 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. <sup>8</sup> 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. <sup>9</sup> Because she took her whoredom so lightly, she polluted the country; she committed adultery with stones and pieces of wood. <sup>10</sup> Worse than all this, Judah, her faithless sister, has come back to me not in sincerity, but only in pretence, says Yahweh."

<sup>5</sup> Literally translated, the last 2 lines end, "... you do the evil and you are able."

<sup>6</sup> 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.

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

<sup>8</sup> '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).

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

<sup>10</sup> The literal translation of 'in sincerity' is 'with all her heart'.

י"א וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֵלַי צִדְקָה נִפְשָׁה מִשְׁבָּה יִשְׂרָאֵל  
מִבְּגָדָה יְהוּדָה: י"ב הֲלֹךְ וְקִרְאתָ אֶת־הַדְּבָרִים  
הָאֵלֶּה צָפוֹנָה

וְאָמַרְתָּ שׁוּבָה מִשְׁבָּה יִשְׂרָאֵל נְאֻם־יְהוָה  
לֹא־אֶפְּלֵל פָּנַי בָּכֶם  
כִּי־חֲסִיד אֲנִי נְאֻם־יְהוָה  
לֹא אֶטּוֹר לְעוֹלָם:

יג אֲךְ דַּעִי עוֹנֶךָ  
כִּי בִיהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ פָּשַׁעְתָּ  
וּתְפַזְרִי אֶת־דַּרְכֶיךָ לְזָרִים  
תַּחַת כָּל־עֵץ רִעֲזָן  
וּבְקוֹלִי לֹא־שָׁמַעְתָּם  
נְאֻם־יְהוָה:

יד שׁוּבוּ בָנִים שׁוֹבְבִים נְאֻם־יְהוָה כִּי אֲנֹכִי בַּעֲלֹתִי  
בָּכֶם וְלִקְחֹתִי אֶתְכֶם אֶחָד מֵעִיר וּשְׁנַיִם מִמִּשְׁפָּחָה  
וְהִבֵּאתִי אֶתְכֶם צִיּוֹן: טו וְנָתַתִּי לָכֶם רָעִים כָּל־בִּי  
וְרָעוּ אֶתְכֶם דָּעָה וְהִשְׁכִּיל: טז וְהָיָה כִּי תִרְבּוּ  
וּפְרִיתֶם בָּאָרֶץ בַּיָּמִים הָהֵמָּה 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־בּוֹ וְלֹא יִפְקְדוּ וְלֹא יַעֲשֶׂה עוֹד: <sup>י</sup> בָּעֵת הַהִיא  
 יִקְרָאוּ לִירוּשָׁלַם כְּסֵא יְהוָה וְנִקְווּ אֵלֶיהָ כָּל־הַגּוֹיִם  
 לְשֵׁם יְהוָה לִירוּשָׁלַם וְלֹא־יִלְכוּ עוֹד אַחֲרֵי שְׂרָרוֹת  
 לְבָם הָרָע: {ס} <sup>יח</sup> בַּיָּמִים הָהֵמָּה יִלְכוּ בֵּית־יְהוּדָה  
 עַל־בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיָּבֹאוּ יַחְדָּו מֵאֶרֶץ צָפוֹן עַל־הָאָרֶץ  
 אֲשֶׁר הִנַּחֲלֹתִי אֶת־אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם:

<sup>יט</sup> וְאֲנֹכִי אֶמְרָתִי  
 אֵיךְ אֲשִׁיתֶךָ בְּבָנִים  
 וְאֶתֶּן־לְךָ אֶרֶץ חֶמְדָּה  
 נַחֲלַת צָבִי צְבָאוֹת גּוֹיִם  
 וְאֶמַּר אָבִי תִקְרָאוּ תִקְרָאִי־לִי  
 וּמֵאַחֲרַי לֹא תָשׁוּבוּ תָשׁוּבִי:  
<sup>כ</sup> אֲכֵן בְּגָדָה אִשָּׁה מֵרַעָה  
 כֵּן בְּגָדְתֶם בִּי בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל  
 נֹאֲם־יְהוָה:  
<sup>כא</sup> קוֹל עַל־שִׁפְיִים נִשְׁמָע  
 בְּכִי תַחֲנוּנֵי בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל  
 כִּי הֵעוּ אֶת־דֶּרֶכָם

Covenant of Yahweh: It will not come to mind, they will not remember it or miss it, nor will another one be made! <sup>17</sup> 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. <sup>18</sup> 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.

<sup>19</sup> "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.  
<sup>20</sup> Instead, like a woman betraying her lover,  
 House of Israel, you have betrayed me,"  
 says Yahweh.  
<sup>21</sup> A noise is heard on the hilltops:  
 the weeping and entreaty of the Israelites;  
 for, they have gone wildly astray,

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

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

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

<sup>20</sup> NETB inverts the order of the 1<sup>st</sup> 2 lines.

<sup>21</sup> Their supplication is not made to God but to the pagan gods.

שָׁכְחוּ אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיהֶם:  
 כב שׁוּבוּ בָנִים שׁוֹבְבִים  
 אֲרַפָּה מִשׁוֹבְתֵיכֶם  
 הִנֵּנוּ אֲתָנוּ לָךְ  
 כִּי אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ:  
 כג אֲכֵן לִשְׁקֵר מִגִּבְעוֹת  
 הַמֶּזֶן הָרִים  
 אֲכֵן בִּיהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ  
 תְּשׁוּעַת יִשְׂרָאֵל:  
 כד וְהַבִּשְׁתׁ אָכְלָה אֶת־יְגִיעַ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ מִנְּעוּרֵינוּ  
 אֶת־צֹאֲנָם וְאֶת־בְּקָרָם  
 אֶת־בְּנֵיהֶם וְאֶת־בָּנוֹתֵיהֶם:  
 כה נִשְׁכְּבָה בְּבִשְׁתָּנוּ  
 וְתִכְסֹנוּ כָּל־מִתָּנוּ  
 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’ (רפָּה) to refer to spiritual healing and forgiveness see Ho 14:4.

23 The first 2 lines follow the LXX (ὅτι πτωχὸς εἰς ψευδὸς ἤσαν οἱ βοῦνοι καὶ ἡ δύναμις τῶν ὀρέων) 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 | נֶאֱמַר-יְהוָה אֵלַי תָּשׁוּב  
וְאִם-תִּסָּר שְׁקוּצִיךָ מִפָּנַי וְלֹא תִנּוּד:  
ב וְנִשְׁבַּעְתָּ חַי-יְהוָה בְּאֵמֶת בְּמִשְׁפָּט וּבִצְדָקָה  
וְהִתְבָּרְכוּ בּוֹ גּוֹיִם וְבוֹ יִתְהַלְלוּ: {ס}  
ג כִּי-כֹה | אָמַר יְהוָה  
לְאִישׁ יְהוּדָה וְלִירוּשָׁלַם  
גִּירוּ לָכֶם גֵּיר  
וְאַל-תִּזְרְעוּ אֶל-קִצִּים:  
ד הִמְלֹו לַיהוָה וְהִסְרוּ עֲרֻלוֹת לְבַבְכֶּם  
אִישׁ יְהוּדָה וְיֹשְׁבֵי יְרוּשָׁלַם  
פֶּן-תֵּצֵא כָאֵשׁ חֲמָתִי  
וּבַעֲרָה וְאֵין מִכְבֶּה מִפָּנַי  
רַע מַעֲלָלֵיכֶם:  
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:  
 1 שאו-נס ציונה  
 העיזו אל-תעמדו  
 כי רעה אנכי מביא מצפון  
 ושבר גדול:  
 2 עלה אריה מסבכו  
 ומשחית גוים  
 נסע יצא ממקמו  
 לשום ארצך לשמה  
 עריך תצינה מאין יושב:  
 3 על-זאת חגרו שקים  
 ספדו והילילו  
 כי לא-שב חרון אפי-יהוה ממנו: {פ}  
 4 והיה ביום-ההוא נאם-יהוה  
 יאבד לב-המלך ולב השרים  
 ונשמו הפהנים  
 והנבאים יתמהו: {ס}

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.”

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 3<sup>rd</sup> line, but the translation does not need to assume a shift in speaker.

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



י ואמר אהה | אדני יהוה אכן השא השאת לעם  
הזה ולירושלם לאמר שלום יהיה לכם ונגעה  
חרב עד-הנפש: <sup>א</sup> בעת ההיא יאמר לעם-הזה  
ולירושלם רוח צח שפיל במדבר דרך בת-עמי  
לוא לזרות ולוא להבר: <sup>ב</sup> רוח מלא מאלה יבוא  
לי עתה גם-אני אדבר משפטים אותם:

<sup>ג</sup> הנה | כעננים יעלה  
וכסופה מרכבותיו  
קלו מנשרים סוסיו  
אזי לנו כי שדדנו:  
<sup>ד</sup> בבסי מרעה לבד ירושלם  
למען תושעי  
עד-מתי תלין בקרבך  
מחשבות אונך:  
<sup>טו</sup> כי קול מגיד מדן  
ומשמיע און מהר אפרים:

<sup>10</sup> 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! <sup>11</sup> 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: <sup>12</sup> a wind too strong for that. Now I myself shall pass sentence on them!"

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

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

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

<sup>10</sup> 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).

<sup>11</sup> 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.

<sup>12</sup> The literal translation of 'pass sentence on' is 'speak judgements against'.

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

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

<sup>15</sup> '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).



טז הַזְכִּירוּ לַגּוֹיִם  
 הַגָּה הַשְּׁמִיעוּ עַל־יְרוּשָׁלַם  
 נֹצְרִים בָּאִים מֵאַרְץ הַמֶּרְחָק  
 וַיִּתְּנוּ עַל־עַרְי יְהוּדָה קוֹלָם:  
 יז כְּשֹׁמְרֵי שְׂדֵי הָיוּ עָלֶיהָ מִסָּבִיב  
 כִּי־אֲתִי מִרְחָתָהּ נֹאֵם־יְהוָה:  
 יח דְּרַכָּךְ וּמַעַלְלֶיךָ  
 עָשׂוּ אֱלֹה לָךְ  
 זֹאת רָעִיתְךָ כִּי מָר  
 כִּי נִגַּע עַד־לִבְךָ: {פ}  
 ט מַעֲי | מַעֲי | אוֹחִילָהּ אַחֻלָּה קִירוֹת לִבִּי  
 הִמָּה־לִּי לִבִּי  
 לֹא אֲחַרֵּשׁ  
 כִּי קוֹל שׁוֹפָר שָׁמַעְתִּי שָׁמַעְתָּ נַפְשִׁי  
 תְּרוּעַת מִלְחָמָה:  
 כ נֶשֶׁבַר עַל־שֶׁבַר נִקְרָא  
 כִּי שָׂדֶדָה כָּל־הָאָרֶץ  
 פָּתְאֻם שָׂדֶדְדוּ אֹהֲלֵי  
 רָגַע יְרִיעֹתֶי:

- 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.  
 17 They surround her like watchmen round a field  
 because she has rebelled against me," says Yahweh.  
 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!"  
 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.  
 20 Ruin on ruin is the news:  
 the whole land is laid waste,  
 our tents are suddenly destroyed,  
 our curtains in a moment.

16 In place of 'besiegers', here following the MT (נֹצְרִים) & 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' (3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> lines) is 'my'.

כא עֲדֹמְתִי אֶרְאֶה־נֶס  
אֲשַׁמְעָה קוֹל שׁוֹפָר: {פ}

כב כִּי | אֲוִיל עַמִּי  
אוֹתִי לֹא יָדְעוּ  
בְּנִים סְכָלִים הֵמָּה  
וְלֹא נְבוֹנִים הֵמָּה  
חֲכָמִים הֵמָּה לַהֲרֹעַ  
וְלַהֲיָטִיב לֹא יָדְעוּ:

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

כד רָאִיתִי הַהָרִים וְהִנֵּה רֹעִשִׁים  
וְכָל־הַגְּבָעוֹת הַתְּקַלְקְלוּ:

כה רָאִיתִי וְהִנֵּה אֵין הָאָדָם  
וְכָל־עוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם נָדְדוּ:

כו רָאִיתִי וְהִנֵּה הַכְּרָמִל הַמִּדְבָּר  
וְכָל־עָרָיו נִתְּצוּ מִפְּנֵי יְהוָה  
מִפְּנֵי חֲרוֹן אַפּוֹ: {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

וְכֹלָה לֹא אֶעֱשֶׂה:

כח עַל־זֹאת תֵּאָבֵל הָאָרֶץ

וְקִדְרוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם מִמַּעַל

עַל כִּי־דִבַּרְתִּי זַמְתִּי

וְלֹא נִחַמְתִּי וְלֹא־אָשׁוּב מִמֶּנָּה:

כט מִקּוֹל פָּרֶשׁ וְרֹמָה קָשָׁת

בִּרְחַת כָּל־הָעִיר

בָּאוּ בַּעֲבִים וּבְכַפִּים עָלוּ

כָּל־הָעִיר עֲזוּבָה

וְאִין־יֹשֵׁב בָּהֶן אִישׁ:

ל וְאַתָּה וְאַתָּה שָׂדוּד מִה־תַּעֲשִׂי כִי־תִלְבָּשִׂי שָׁנִי כִי־

תַּעֲדִי עֲדִי־זָהָב כִּי־תִקְרָעִי בַּפּוֹךְ עֵינֶיךָ לְשׂוֹא

תַּתִּיפִי מֵאֲסוּבֶךָ עֲגָבִים נִפְשָׁךְ יִבְקָשׁוּ: לא כִּי קוֹל

כְּחוֹלָה שָׁמַעְתִּי צָרָה כְּמִבְכִּיָּה קוֹל בַּת־צִיּוֹן

תַּתִּיפָּח תִּפְרָשׁ כַּפֶּיהָ אוֹיֵנָּה לִי כִי־עִיפָה נִפְשִׁי

לְהִרְגָם: {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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 שׁוּטְטוּ בַּחוּצוֹת יְרוּשָׁלַם  
וּרְאוּ-נָא וּדְעוּ וּבְקִשׁוּ בִּרְחוּבוֹתֶיהָ  
אִם-תִּמְצְאוּ אִישׁ  
אִם-יֵשׁ עֹשֶׂה מִשְׁפָּט מְבַקֵּשׁ אֱמוּנָה  
וְאֶסְלַח לָהּ:  
ב וְאִם חִי-יְהוָה יֹאמְרוּ  
לִכֵּן לִשְׁקֹר יִשְׁבְּעוּ:  
ג יְהוָה עֵינֶיךָ הֲלוֹא לְאֱמוּנָה  
הִפִּיתָה אֶתְּם וְלֹא-חָלָו  
כְּלִיתֶם מֵאֲנִי קַחַת מוֹסֵר  
חִזְקוּ פְּנֵיהֶם מִסָּלַע  
מֵאֲנִי לָשׁוּב:  
ד וְאֲנִי אֶמְרָתִי  
אֶדְדִּלֵּים הֵם  
נֹאֲלֹו כִּי לֹא יֵדְעוּ דֶּרֶךְ  
יְהוָה מִשְׁפָּט אֱלֹהֵיהֶם:  
ה אֵלֶכָה-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

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### 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 (חָלָו) 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'.

וּאֲדַבֶּרָה אוֹתָם  
כִּי הֵמָּה יִדְעוּ דֶּרֶךְ יְהוָה  
מִשְׁפָּט אֱלֹהֵיהֶם  
אֲךָ הֵמָּה יַחֲדוּ שִׁבְרוּ עַל  
נִתְקוּ מוֹסְרוֹת:  
עַל-כֵּן הִכָּם אֲרִיָּה מִיַּעַר <sup>ו</sup>  
זֶאֱב עֲרֵבוֹת יִשְׁדָּדִים  
נֹמֵר שֶׁקֶל עַל-עֲרִיָּהֶם  
כָּל-הַיּוֹצֵא מִהֶנָּה יִטָּרֵף  
כִּי רַבּוּ פְּשָׁעֵיהֶם  
עֲצָמוּ מִשְׁבוֹתֵיהֶם:  
אֵי לִזְאוֹת אֶסְלֹחַ אֶסְלַח-לָךְ <sup>ז</sup>  
בְּנִיךָ עֲזָבוּנִי  
וַיִּשְׁבְּעוּ בִּלְאֵ אֱלֹהִים  
וַאֲשַׁבֵּעַ אוֹתָם וַיִּנְאַפוּ  
וּבֵית זוֹנָה יִתְגוֹדְדוּ:  
סוֹסִים מִיִּזְנִים מְשֻׁכִּים הֵיוּ <sup>ח</sup>  
אִישׁ אֶל-אִשְׁתִּי רָעָהוּ יַצְהִלּוּ:  
הֲעַל-אֵלֶּה לֹא-אֶפְקֹד <sup>ט</sup>

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.

- <sup>6</sup> 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.  
<sup>7</sup> 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.  
<sup>8</sup> They are well fed, roving stallions,  
each neighing for his neighbour's wife.  
<sup>9</sup> Shall I fail to punish this,

<sup>6</sup> 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).  
<sup>7</sup> The *Kethib*/*Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.  
<sup>8</sup> The meaning of the words here translated as 'well-fed' and 'roving' (as NJB) are uncertain; the NRSV & NETB have 'lusty' and 'well-fed'.  
<sup>9</sup> For the 1<sup>st</sup> line, here following the NJB, the NRSV reads, "Shall I not punish them for these things?"

נֹאמֵי־יְהוָה  
 וְאִם בְּגוֹי אֲשֶׁר־כָּזָה  
 לֹא תִתְנַקֵּם נַפְשִׁי: {ס}  
 י עָלוּ בְּשָׂרוֹתֶיהָ וּשְׁחָתוּ  
 וְכָלָה אֶל־תַּעֲשׂוּ  
 הַסִּירוּ נְטִישׁוֹתֶיהָ  
 כִּי לֹא לַיהוָה הֵמָּה:  
 יא כִּי בָגֹד בָּגְדוּ בִּי  
 בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל וּבֵית יְהוּדָה  
 נֹאמֵי־יְהוָה:  
 יב כָּחֲשׁוּ בַיהוָה  
 וַיֹּאמְרוּ לֹא־הוּא  
 וְלֹא־תָבוֹא עָלֵינוּ רָעָה  
 וְחָרֵב וְרָעָב לֹא נִרְאָה:  
 ג וְהַנְּבִיאִים יִהְיוּ לְרוּחַ  
 וְהַדְּבָר אֵין בָּהֶם  
 כָּה 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.

יד לִכְן כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי צְבָאוֹת  
 יֵעַן דִּבַּרְתֶּם אֶת־הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה  
 הַנִּגִּי נָתַן דִּבְרִי בְּפִיךָ לֹאֵשׁ  
 וְהָעָם הַזֶּה עֵצִים וְאֹכְלֹתָם:  
 טו הַנִּגִּי מְבִיא עֲלֵיכֶם גּוֹי מִמֶּרְחֶק  
 בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל נֶאֱמַר־יְהוָה  
 גּוֹי | אֵיתָן הוּא גּוֹי מְעוֹלָם הוּא  
 גּוֹי לֹא־תִדְעַ לְשׁוֹנוֹ  
 וְלֹא תִשְׁמַע מִה־יִּדְבָּר:  
 טז אֲשַׁפְּתוּ כִּקְבֹּר פְּתוּחַ  
 כָּל־סָבִיבִים:  
 ז' וְאָכְלוּ קִצְיֹרְךָ וְלַחֲמֹךָ  
 יֹאכְלוּ בָנֶיךָ וּבָנוֹתֶיךָ  
 יֹאכְלוּ צֹאנְךָ וּבְקָרְךָ  
 יֹאכְלוּ גִפְנֶיךָ וְתֵאֲנִתְךָ  
 יִרְשֹׁשׁ עָרֶיךָ מִבְּצֻרֶיךָ  
 אֲשֶׁר אַתָּה בֹטָח בְּהִנָּה בַּחֲרָב:

יח וְגַם בַּיָּמִים הָהֵם נֶאֱמַר־יְהוָה לֹא־אֶעֱשֶׂה אֶתְכֶם  
 כָּלָה: יט וְהָיָה כִּי תֹאמְרוּ תַחַת מֶה עָשָׂה יְהוָה

- 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!"  
 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' (2<sup>nd</sup> line).

15 The literal translation of 'Yahweh declares' 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־אֱלֹהַ וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵיהֶם כַּאֲשֶׁר  
עֲזַבְתֶּם אוֹתִי וַתַּעֲבֹדוּ אֱלֹהֵי נֹכַח בְּאַרְצְכֶם בֶּן  
תַּעֲבֹדוּ זָרִים בְּאַרֶץ לֹא לָכֶם: {פ}

ב הִגִּידוּ זֹאת בְּבֵית יַעֲקֹב  
וְהִשְׁמִיעוּהָ בִיהוּדָה לֵאמֹר:  
כא שְׁמַעוּ־נָא זֹאת  
עַם סָכַל וְאֵין לֵב  
עֵינַיִם לָהֶם וְלֹא יֵרְאוּ  
אָזְנִים לָהֶם וְלֹא יִשְׁמָעוּ:  
כב הֲאוֹתִי לֹא־תִירָאוּ נְאֻם־יְהוָה  
אִם מִפְּנֵי לֹא תַחֲלִילוּ  
אֲשֶׁר־שָׁמַתִּי חוֹל גְּבוּל לַיָּם  
חֹק־עוֹלָם וְלֹא  
יַעֲבֹרְנָהוּ וַיִּתְּנָעֲשׂוּ וְלֹא  
יִזְכְּלוּ וְהָמוּ גָלוּ וְלֹא יַעֲבֹרְנָהוּ:  
כג וְלַעַם הַזֶּה הִיא  
לֵב סוֹרֵר וּמוֹרָה  
סָרוּ וַיִּלְכוּ:

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."

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 ולוא־אָמְרוּ בַלְבָּבָם  
 נִירָא נָא אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ  
 הַנָּתֵן גֶּשֶׁם וִירֵה יוֹרֵה וּמִלְקוֹשׁ בְּעֵתוֹ  
 שְׁבַעַת חֳקוֹת קָצִיר יִשְׁמְרֵלָנוּ:  
 כה עוֹנוֹתֵיכֶם הִטּוּ־אֵלֶּה  
 וַחֲטָאוֹתֵיכֶם מָנְעוּ הַטּוֹב מִכֶּם:  
 כו כִּי־נִמְצְאוּ בְעַמִּי רָשָׁעִים  
 יִשּׁוּר כְּשֶׁךְ יִקּוּשִׁים  
 הֶצִיבוּ מִשְׁחִית אַנְשִׁים יִלְכְּדוּ:  
 כז כְּכֶלֶב מָלֵא עוֹף  
 כֵּן בְּתֵיהֶם מְלֵאִים מְרָמָה  
 עַל־כֵּן גָּדְלוּ וַיַּעֲשִׂירוּ:  
 כח שִׁמְנּוּ עֲשֵׂתוֹ  
 גַּם עָבְרוּ דְבַר־רָע  
 דִּין לֹא־דָנוּ  
 דִּין יְתוֹם וַיַּצְלִיחוּ  
 וּמִשְׁפָּט אֲבוֹנִים 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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 הֶעֱלֵא־לָהּ לֹא־אֶפְקֹד נֶאֱמַר־יְהוָה  
 אִם בְּגוֹי אֲשֶׁר־כָּזָה לֹא  
 תִתְנַקֵּם נַפְשִׁי: {ס}  
 ל שָׁמָּה וְשַׁעֲרוֹתֶיהָ  
 נִהְיָתָה בְּאֶרֶץ:  
 לא הַנְּבִאִים נִבְּאוּ בְשֶׁקֶר  
 וְהַכֹּהֲנִים יָרְדּוּ עַל־יְדֵיהֶם  
 וְעַמִּי אָהָבוּ כֵּן  
 וּמָה־תַּעֲשׂוּ לְאַחֲרִיתָהּ:

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 יָרְדּוּ (as used in Jg 14:9) rather than 'govern' for their hands – i.e. for their own advantage.

## ירמיהו פרק ו

א הָעֲזוּ | בְּנֵי בְנִימָן  
מִקֶּרֶב יְרוּשָׁלַם  
וּבְתִקְוֶ֣ת תִּקְעוּ שׁוֹפָר  
וְעַל־בֵּית הַכֶּרֶם שְׂאוּ מִשְׁאֵת  
כִּי רָעָה נִשְׁקָפָה מִצָּפוֹן  
וְשִׁבְרָה גְדוֹלָה:  
ב הַנּוֹה וְהַמֵּעֲנֶנָּה  
דְּמִיתִי בַת־צִיּוֹן:  
ג אֵלֶיהָ יָבֹאוּ רָעִים וְעֲדָרֵיהֶם  
תִּקְעוּ עָלֶיהָ אֹהֲלִים סָבִיב  
רָעוּ אִישׁ אֶת־יָדוֹ:  
ד קִדְּשׁוּ עָלֶיהָ מִלְחָמָה  
קוּמוּ וְנַעֲלָה בַצְהָרִים  
אֲזִי לָנוּ כִּי־פָנָה הַיּוֹם  
כִּי יִנָּטוּ צִלְלֵי־עָרֶב:  
ה קוּמוּ וְנַעֲלָה בַלַּיְלָה  
וְנִשְׁחִיתָהּ אֲרָמְנוֹתֶיהָ: {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 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.

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### JEREMIAH 6

- <sup>1</sup> '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.
- <sup>2</sup> 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' (נְאוֹה).
- <sup>3</sup> 'Shepherds with their flocks' is a metaphor for 'kings with their armies' (cf. 1:15, 12:10).
- <sup>4</sup> The literal translation of the 1<sup>st</sup> line (the NRSV lacks 'holy') is, "Sanctify the war against her." (War in those days was considered a sacred duty.)
- <sup>5</sup> In place of 'to arms', here following the NJB, the NRSV has 'up' (a more literal translation).

<p> כִּי כֹה אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת  כָּרְתוּ עֵצֶה  וְשָׁפְכוּ עַל־יְרוּשָׁלַם סֶלֶלָה  הִיא הָעִיר הַפְּקֹד  כִּלְהָ עָשָׂק בְּקִרְבָּהּ:  כִּהְקִיר בּוֹר בֵּיר מִמֶּיָּהּ  כֵּן הִקְרָה רַעְתָּהּ  חֲמָס וְשׂוֹד יִשְׁמַע בָּהּ עַל־פָּנַי  תָּמִיד חֲלִי וּמַכָּה:  הוֹסְרִי יְרוּשָׁלַם  פֶּן־תִּקַּע נַפְשִׁי מִמֶּדֶךְ  פֶּן־אֲשִׁימְךָ שְׂמָמָה  אֶרֶץ לֹא נוֹשְׁבָה: {פ}  כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת  עוֹלָל יַעֲלֹלוּ כַּגֶּפֶן שְׂאֲרִית יִשְׂרָאֵל  הַשֹּׁבֵל יִדְדָךְ  כְּבוֹצֵר עַל־סִלְסְלוֹת: </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.  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.  8 Reform, Jerusalem,  or I shall abandon you in disgust  and reduce you to a desert,  a land without people."  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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- <sup>6</sup> 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 ψευδής), which presupposes הַשָּׂקָר הוּא עִיר הַפְּקֹד instead of הִיא הָעִיר הַפְּקֹד. 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).
- <sup>7</sup> In place of 'well', here following the Qere, (בֵּיר), the Ketiv has 'cistern' (בוֹר).
- <sup>8</sup> The literal translation of the 2<sup>nd</sup> line is 'lest my soul becomes disgusted with you'.
- <sup>9</sup> Here, as in 8:3, the expression at the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> 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).

עַל־מִי אֲדַבֶּרָה וְאֶעֱיֹדָה י  
 וַיִּשְׁמְעוּ הִנֵּה עֲרֻלָּה אֲזָנָם  
 וְלֹא יוּכְלוּ לְהִקְשִׁיב  
 הִנֵּה דְבַר־יְהוָה  
 הִיא לָהֶם לְחִרְפָּה  
 לֹא יַחְפְּצוּ־בּוֹ:  
 וְאַתָּה חֲמַת יְהוָה | מְלֵאתִי יא  
 נִלְאִיתִי הַכִּיל  
 שִׁפְךָ עַל־עוֹלָל בַּחוּץ  
 וְעַל סוּד בַּחוּרִים יַחֲדוֹ  
 כִּי־גַם־אִישׁ עִם־אִשָּׁה יִלְכְּדוּ  
 זָקֵן עִם־מְלֵא יָמִים:  
 וְנִסְבּוּ בְתֵיהֶם לְאַחֲרִים יב  
 שְׂדוֹת וְנָשִׁים יַחֲדוּ  
 כִּי־אֶטָּה אֶת־יָדִי עַל־יֹשְׁבֵי הָאָרֶץ  
 נֹאמַר־יְהוָה:  
 כִּי מִקְטָנָם וְעַד־גְּדוֹלָם יג  
 כֻּלּוֹ בּוֹצֵעַ בָּצַע  
 וּמִנְבִּיא וְעַד־כֹּהֵן  
 כֻּלּוֹ עֹשֶׂה שָׁקֶר:

- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 13 For, from the least to the greatest,  
they are all greedy for gain;  
prophet no less than priest,  
all of them practise fraud.

<sup>10</sup> In place of 'uncircumcised' (here following the MT & NJB), the NRSV has 'closed'.

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

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

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

יִרְפְּאוּ אֶת־שִׁבְר עַמִּי  
עַל־נִקְלָה לֵאמֹר שָׁלוֹם | שָׁלוֹם  
וְאִין שָׁלוֹם:

טו הִבִּישׁוּ כִי תוֹעֲבָה עָשׂוּ  
גַם־בּוֹשׁ לֹא־יִבּוֹשׁוּ  
גַם־הַכָּלִים לֹא יִדְעוּ  
לִכֵּן יִפְּלוּ בִּנְפִלִים בְּעַת־פְּקֻדֹתַיִם יִפְּשְׁלוּ  
אָמַר יְהוָה: {ס}

טז כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה עֲמְדוּ עַל־דַּרְכִּים וּרְאוּ וּשְׁאַלּוּ  
לְנִתְבוֹת עוֹלָם אֵיזָה דֶּרֶךְ הַטּוֹב וּלְכוּ־בָּהּ וּמָצְאוּ  
מְרֻגָּע לְנַפְשְׁכֶם וַיֹּאמְרוּ לֹא נִלְדָּה:  
ז וְהִקְמַתִי עָלֵיכֶם צָפִים  
הַקְשִׁיבוּ לְקוֹל שׁוֹפָר  
וַיֹּאמְרוּ לֹא נִקְשִׁיב:  
יח לִכֵּן שָׁמְעוּ הַגּוֹיִם  
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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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־הָעָם הַזֶּה  
 פְּרֵי מַחֲשֻׁבוֹתָם  
 כִּי עַל־דְּבַרִּי לֹא הִקְשִׁיבוּ  
 וְתוֹרָתִי וַיִּמָּאֲסוּ־בָהּ:  
 כ לְמַה־זֶּה לִּי לְבוֹנָה מִשְׁבָּא תָּבוֹא  
 וְקִנְיָה הַטּוֹב מֵאֶרֶץ מֶרְחָק  
 עֲלֹזֹתֵיכֶם לֹא לְרָצוֹן  
 וְזִבְחֵיכֶם לֹא־עָרְבוּ לִי:  
 כא לָכֵן כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה  
 הִנְנִי נֹתֵן אֶל־הָעָם הַזֶּה מְכַשְׁלִים  
 וְכִשְׁלוּ בָם אֲבוֹת וּבָנִים יַחְדָּו  
 שָׁכֵן וָרֵעוֹ יֵאָבְדוּ וְאָבְדוּ: {פ}  
 כב כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה  
 הִנֵּה עָם בָּא מֵאֶרֶץ צָפוֹן  
 וְגוֹי גָדוֹל יַעֲזֹר מִיִּרְכַּת־אֶרֶץ:  
 כג קָשָׁת וְכִידּוֹן יַחֲזִיקוּ  
 אֲכִזָּרִי הוּא וְלֹא יִרְחָמוּ  
 קוֹלָם כִּי־ס יִהְיֶה

- 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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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  
עֲלִידָה בַת־צִיּוֹן:  
כד שָׁמְעֵנוּ אֶת־שִׁמְעוֹ  
רָפוּ יָדֵינוּ  
צָרָה הִחְזָקְתָּנוּ  
חֵיל כִּיּוֹלָדָה:  
כה אֶל־תֵּצְאוּ תִצְאֵי הַשָּׂדֶה  
וּבַדֶּרֶךְ אֶל־תֵּלְכוּ תִלְכִּי  
כִּי חָרֵב לְאֵיב  
מִגֹּזֵר מִסְבִּיב:  
כו בַּת־עַמִּי חֲגִר־שֶׁקַּל  
וְהִתְפַּלְשִׁי בָאֵפֶר  
אֲבֵל יָחִיד עָשִׂי לָךְ  
מִסִּפְּד תִּמְרוּרִים  
כִּי פֶתְאֹם  
יָבֹא הַשֹּׁדָד עָלֵינוּ:  
כז בַּחֲזוֹן נִתְּתִיךָ בְּעַמִּי מְבַצֵּר  
וְתִדְעַע וּבַחֲנֻת אֶת־דֶּרֶכָם:

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 (בַּחֲזוֹן) is the same as in 1:18 and can also be translated as 'fortress'.

כח כָּלֶם סָרִי סוֹרְרִים  
 הַלְכֵי רָכִיל נְחֹשֶׁת וּבְרֹזָל  
 כט כָּלֶם מְשַׁחֲתִים הֵמָּה:  
 נָחַר מִפֶּחַ מֵאֲשֶׁתָם [מֵאֵשׁ תָּם] עֲפָרָת  
 לִשְׂוֹא צָרָף צָרוּף  
 וְרַעִים לֹא נִתְקַוּ:  
 ל כֶּסֶף נִמְאָס קָרְאוּ 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 2<sup>nd</sup> line is '(they are) bronze and iron'.

29 The simile of the latter part of the 1<sup>st</sup> 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

<sup>א</sup> הַדְּבַר אֲשֶׁר הָיָה אֶל־יִרְמְיָהוּ מֵאֵת יְהוָה לֵאמֹר:  
<sup>ב</sup> עֲמֹד בַּשַּׁעַר בֵּית יְהוָה וְקִרְאתָ שָׁם אֶת־הַדְּבַר  
הַזֶּה וְאָמַרְתָּ שְׁמֹעוּ דְּבַר־יְהוָה כָּל־יְהוּדָה הַבָּאִים  
בַּשַּׁעֲרִים הָאֵלֶּה לְהִשְׁתַּחֲוֹת לַיהוָה: {ס}  
<sup>ג</sup> כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הִיטִיבוּ  
דְּרִכֵּיכֶם וּמַעַלְלֵיכֶם וְאִשְׁכְּנָה אֶתְכֶם בַּמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה:  
<sup>ד</sup> אַל־תִּבְטְחוּ לָכֶם אֶל־דִּבְרֵי הַשָּׁקֶר לֵאמֹר הֵיכַל  
יְהוָה הֵיכַל יְהוָה הֵיכַל יְהוָה הִמָּה: <sup>ה</sup> כִּי אִם־הִיטִיב  
תִּיטִיבוּ אֶת־דְּרִכֵּיכֶם וְאֶת־מַעַלְלֵיכֶם אִם־עָשׂוּ  
תַעֲשׂוּ מִשְׁפָּט בֵּין אִישׁ וּבֵין רֵעֵהוּ: <sup>ו</sup> גֵּר יִתּוֹם  
וְאַלְמָנָה לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ וְדָם נָקִי אַל־תִּשְׁפְּכוּ בַּמָּקוֹם  
הַזֶּה וְאַחֲרֵי אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים לֹא תִלְכוּ לָרַע לָכֶם:  
<sup>ז</sup> וְשִׁפְנֹתִי אֶתְכֶם בַּמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה בְּאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר נָתַתִּי  
לְאַבֹּתֵיכֶם לְמִן־עוֹלָם וְעַד־עוֹלָם: <sup>ח</sup> הִנֵּה אֲתֶם  
בֹּטְחִים לָכֶם עַל־דִּבְרֵי הַשָּׁקֶר לְבַלְתִּי הוֹעִיל:

## JEREMIAH 7

<sup>1</sup> The word that came to Jeremiah from Yahweh, saying, <sup>2</sup> “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.  
<sup>3</sup> “Yahweh Sabaoth, the God of Israel, says this: Amend your behaviour and your actions and I will let you dwell in this place. <sup>4</sup> Do not put your faith in delusive words, such as, “This is the sanctuary of Yahweh, the sanctuary of Yahweh, the sanctuary of Yahweh! <sup>5</sup> No! But, if you thoroughly amend your behaviour and your actions, if you thoroughly execute justice between a man and his neighbour, <sup>6</sup> 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, <sup>7</sup> then I shall allow you dwell in this place, in the country I gave forever to your fathers of old. <sup>8</sup> But just look at you, putting your faith in delusive, worthless words! <sup>9</sup> Steal, would you,

### JEREMIAH 7

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

<sup>ט</sup> הַגִּנּוּב | רָצַח וְנָאֵף וְהִשָּׁבַע לַשֶּׁקֶר וּקְטַר לְבַעַל  
וְהִלֵּךְ אַחֲרֵי אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יָדַעְתֶּם:  
<sup>י</sup> וּבֵאתֶם וַעֲמַדְתֶּם לִפְנֵי בַּיִת הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר נִקְרָא־  
שְׁמִי עָלָיו וְאַמַּרְתֶּם נִצַּלְנוּ לְמַעַן עֲשׂוֹת אֵת כָּל־  
הַתּוֹעֲבוֹת הָאֵלֶּה: <sup>יא</sup> הַמַּעֲרַת פְּרָצִים הִיא הַבַּיִת  
הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר־נִקְרָא שְׁמִי עָלָיו בְּעֵינֵיכֶם גַּם אֲנֹכִי הִנֵּה  
רְאִיתִי נְאֻם־יְהוָה: <sup>יב</sup> כִּי לְכוּ־נָא אֶל־מְקוֹמִי אֲשֶׁר  
בְּשִׁילֹו אֲשֶׁר שָׁכַנְתִּי שְׁמִי שָׁם בְּרֹאשׁוֹנָה וְרָאוּ אֵת  
אֲשֶׁר־עָשִׂיתִי לוֹ מִפְּנֵי רַעַת עַמִּי יִשְׂרָאֵל: <sup>יג</sup> וְעַתָּה  
יַעַן עֲשׂוֹתְכֶם אֶת־כָּל־הַמַּעֲשִׂים הָאֵלֶּה נְאֻם־יְהוָה  
וְאִדְבַּר אֵלֵיכֶם הַשֶּׁבַע וְדִבַּר וְלֹא שָׁמַעְתֶּם וְאִקְרָא  
אֶתְכֶם וְלֹא עֲנִיתֶם: <sup>יד</sup> וְעָשִׂיתִי לַבַּיִת | אֲשֶׁר נִקְרָא־  
שְׁמִי עָלָיו אֲשֶׁר אַתֶּם בֹּטְחִים בּוֹ וּלְמָקוֹם אֲשֶׁר־  
נָתַתִּי לָכֶם וּלְאַבּוֹתֵיכֶם כַּאֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתִי לְשִׁלֹו:  
<sup>טו</sup> וְהִשְׁלַכְתִּי אֶתְכֶם מֵעַל פָּנָי כַּאֲשֶׁר הִשְׁלַכְתִּי אֶת־  
כָּל־אֲחֵיכֶם אֵת כָּל־זֶרַע אֲפְרַיִם: {פ}  
<sup>טז</sup> 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?  
<sup>10</sup> 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! <sup>11</sup> 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. <sup>12</sup> 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! <sup>13</sup> 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, <sup>14</sup> 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, <sup>15</sup> and I shall drive you out of my sight, just as I drove out all your kinsfolk, even the whole seed of Ephraim."  
<sup>16</sup> "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

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

<sup>11</sup> Jesus quotes part of this verse in Mt 21:13.

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

<sup>13</sup> '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).

<sup>14</sup> 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."

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

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

אָתָּךְ: ייִ האַיִנְךָ רֹאֶה מָה הֵמָּה עֹשִׂים בְּעָרֵי יְהוּדָה  
וּבַחֲצוֹת יְרוּשָׁלַם: ייִ הַבָּנִים מְלַקְטִים עֵצִים  
וְהָאֲבוֹת מִבְּעָרִים אֶת־הָאֵשׁ וְהַנְּשִׁים לָשׁוֹת בָּצֶק  
לַעֲשׂוֹת כּוֹנִים לְמַלְכַּת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְהַסֶּדֶךְ נֹסְכִים  
לְאֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים לְמַעַן הַכְּעִסְנִי: ייִ הָאֲתִי הֵם  
מִכְּעָסִים נֶאֱמַר־יְהוָה הֲלוֹא אַתֶּם לְמַעַן בָּשַׂת  
פְּנֵיהֶם: כִּי לֵכֶן כֹּה־אָמַר אֲדֹנִי יְהוָה הִנֵּה אֲפִי  
וְחַמְתִּי נִתְּכַת אֶל־הַמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה עַל־הָאָדָם וְעַל־  
הַבְּהֵמָה וְעַל־עֵץ הַשָּׂדֶה וְעַל־פְּרִי הָאֲדָמָה וּבַעֲרָה  
וְלֹא תִכְבֶּה: {פ}

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

listen to you. <sup>17</sup> Can you not see what they are doing in the towns of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem? <sup>18</sup> 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. <sup>19</sup> Is it really me they provoke, Yahweh demands; or is it not, in fact, themselves, to their own confusion? <sup>20</sup> 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.”

<sup>21</sup> “Yahweh Sabaoth, the God of Israel, says this, “Add your high-offerings to your sacrifices and eat all the meat. <sup>22</sup> 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. <sup>23</sup> The one command I gave

<sup>17</sup> This verse is a rhetorical question and expects a positive answer.

<sup>18</sup> 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 (מְלִכָּה instead of מַלְכָּה) 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 (στρατιᾷ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ). The other ancient and modern versions generally, however, accept it as a biform for the word ‘queen’.

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

<sup>20</sup> 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.

<sup>21</sup> 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.

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

<sup>23</sup> 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-הַדֶּרֶךְ אֲשֶׁר אֲצַוֶּה אֶתְכֶם לַמַּעַן  
 יֵיטֵב לָכֶם: <sup>כד</sup> וְלֹא שְׁמְעוּ וְלֹא-הָטוּ אֶת-אָזְנָם וַיִּלְכוּ  
 בְּמַעֲצוֹת בְּשָׂרָוֹת לִבָּם הֲרַע וַיְהִיו לְאַחֲזֹר וְלֹא  
 לִפְנֵימִים: <sup>כה</sup> לְמֶן-הַיּוֹם אֲשֶׁר יֵצְאוּ אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם מֵאֶרֶץ  
 מִצְרַיִם עַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה וְאֲשַׁלַּח אֲלֵיכֶם אֶת-כָּל-  
 עֲבָדֵי הַנְּבִיאִים יוֹם הַשָּׁכֶם וְשִׁלַּח: <sup>כו</sup> וְלֹא שְׁמְעוּ  
 אֵלַי וְלֹא הָטוּ אֶת-אָזְנָם וַיִּקְשׁוּ אֶת-עַרְפָּם הֲרַעוּ  
 מֵאֲבוֹתָם: <sup>כז</sup> וְדַבַּרְתָּ אֲלֵיהֶם אֶת-כָּל-הַדְּבָרִים  
 הָאֵלֶּה וְלֹא יִשְׁמְעוּ אֵלַיךְ וְקִרְאתָ אֲלֵיהֶם וְלֹא  
 יַעֲנוּכָה: <sup>כח</sup> וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵיהֶם זֶה הַגּוֹי אֲשֶׁר לֹא-  
 שְׁמָעוּ בְּקוֹל יְהוָה אֱלֹהָיו וְלֹא לָקְחוּ מוֹסֵר אֲבָדָה  
 הָאֱמוּנָה וְנִכְרַתָּה מִפִּיהֶם: {ס}

<sup>כט</sup> גְּזִי נִזְרְךָ וְהַשְׁלִיכִי  
 וְשֹׂאֵי עַל-שָׁפִים קִינָה  
 כִּי מָאֵס יְהוָה  
 וַיִּטֵּשׁ אֶת-דֹּר עֲבָרָתוֹ:

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. <sup>24</sup> 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. <sup>25</sup> 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. <sup>26</sup> Yet, they have not listened to me, have not paid attention; they have deliberately resisted, behaving worse than their ancestors. <sup>27</sup> Therefore, you will tell them all this, but they will not listen to you; you will call them, but they will not answer you.” <sup>28</sup> 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.

<sup>29</sup> 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!”

<sup>24</sup> In place of ‘looked backwards rather than forwards’, here following the MT & NRSV, the NJB has ‘got worse rather than better’.

<sup>25</sup> ‘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’).

<sup>26</sup> The literal translation of ‘deliberately resisted’ is ‘stiffened their necks’.

<sup>27</sup> NETB ends this verse, here following the NJB, with, “you will call to them but they will not respond to you.”

<sup>28</sup> Alternative readings for ‘sincerity’ (here following the NJB) are ‘truth’ (as NRSV) and ‘faithfulness’ (as NETB).

<sup>29</sup> Cutting one’s hair was traditional sign of mourning (16:5, Mi 1:16, Job 1:20).



לִּכְיִעֲשׂוּ בְנֵי־יְהוּדָה הָרַע בְּעֵינַי נֹאֲמ־יְהוָה שְׁמוֹ  
שְׁקוּצֵיהֶם בְּבֵית אֲשֶׁר־נִקְרָא־שְׁמִי עָלָיו לְטִמְאוֹ:  
לֵאמֹר וּבָנוּ בָמֹת הַתֶּפֶת אֲשֶׁל בְּגֵיא בֶן־הֲנֹם לְשָׂרֵף  
אֶת־בְּנֵיהֶם וְאֶת־בָּנֹתֵיהֶם בָּאֵשׁ אֲשֶׁל לֹא צִוִּיתִי  
וְלֹא עָלְתָה עַל־לִבִּי: {פ}

לֵב לִכְן הִנֵּה־יָמִים בָּאִים נֹאֲמ־יְהוָה וְלֹא־יֵאמָר עוֹד  
הַתֶּפֶת וְגֵיא בֶן־הֲנֹם כִּי אֲסַגֵּיא הַהֲרָגָה וְקִבְרוֹ  
בַּתֶּפֶת מֵאֵין מָקוֹם: לֵאמֹר וְהִיתָה נִבְלַת הָעַם הַזֶּה  
לְמֶאֱכָל לְעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וּלְבֵהֶמַת הָאָרֶץ וְאֵין  
מִמְחִיד: לֵאמֹר וְהִשְׁבַּתִּי מֵעַרְי יְהוּדָה וּמִחֲצוֹת  
יְרוּשָׁלַם קוֹל שִׁשׁוֹן וְקוֹל שִׁמְחָה קוֹל חֲתָן וְקוֹל  
כֹּלָה כִּי לַחֲרָבָה תִּהְיֶה הָאָרֶץ:

<sup>30</sup> “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, <sup>31</sup> 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.

<sup>32</sup> “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. <sup>33</sup> 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. <sup>34</sup> 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.”

<sup>30</sup> 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).

<sup>31</sup> In place of ‘high places’ (here following the MT and NJB), the NRSV, following the LXX (τὸν βομὸν) 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.

<sup>32</sup> 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.”

<sup>33</sup> The prospect of corpses as carrion was frightful.

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

## JEREMIAH 8

## ירמיהו פרק ח

- <sup>א</sup> בַּעַת הַהִיא נֹאֲם־יְהוָה וַיֵּצֵאוּ יוֹצִאוּ אֶת־עַצְמוֹת מַלְכֵי־יְהוּדָה וְאֶת־עַצְמוֹת־שָׂרָיו וְאֶת־עַצְמוֹת הַכֹּהֲנִים וְאֶת עַצְמוֹת הַנְּבִיאִים וְאֶת עַצְמוֹת יוֹשְׁבֵי־יְרוּשָׁלַם מִקְבְּרֵיהֶם: <sup>ב</sup> וְשִׁטְחוּם לְשֶׁמֶשׁ וּלְיָרֵחַ וּלְכָל צֶבֶא הַשָּׁמַיִם אֲשֶׁר אָהָבוּם וְאֲשֶׁר עֲבָדוּם וְאֲשֶׁר הָלְכוּ אַחֲרֵיהֶם וְאֲשֶׁר דָּרְשׁוּם וְאֲשֶׁר הִשְׁתַּחֲוּ לָהֶם לֹא יֵאָסְפוּ וְלֹא יִקְבְּרוּ לְדָמֶן עַל־פְּנֵי הָאֲדָמָה יְהִיוּ: <sup>ג</sup> וְנִבְחַר מוֹת מַחִיִּים לְכָל הַשְּׂאֲרִית הַנִּשְׁאָרִים מִן־הַמְּשֻׁפָּחָה הָרָעָה הַזֹּאת בְּכָל־הַמְּקוֹמֹת הַנִּשְׁאָרִים אֲשֶׁר הִדַּחְתִּים שָׁם נֹאֲם יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת: {ס}
- <sup>ד</sup> וְאִמְרַת אֱלֹהִים כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה הִיפְּלוּ וְלֹא יָקוּמוּ אִם־יָשׁוּב וְלֹא יָשׁוּב: מְדוּעַ שׁוֹבְבָה הָעַם הַזֶּה
- <sup>1</sup> “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; <sup>2</sup> 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. <sup>3</sup> 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.
- <sup>4</sup> “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?
- <sup>5</sup> Why does this people persist in acts of infidelity,

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- <sup>1</sup> Here, Jeremiah uses biting irony. The *Kethib*/*Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.
- <sup>2</sup> In place of ‘the sun and the moon and the whole array of heaven’, here following the MT and 4QJer<sup>a</sup>, 4QJer<sup>c</sup> 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).
- <sup>3</sup> The translation follows the MT & NRSV (reading the seemingly repetitive use of הַשְּׂאֲרִית & הַנִּשְׁאָרִים); 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.
- <sup>4</sup> This section (8:4–10:25) is a collection of prophecies delivered early in the reign of Jehoiakim, about 605 BCE.
- <sup>5</sup> The text of the 1<sup>st</sup> 2 lines is often emended, changing שׁוֹבְבָה הָעַם to שׁוֹבֵב הָעַם and omitting יְרוּשָׁלַם (‘Jerusalem’); this is due to the anomaly of

יְרוּשָׁלַם מְשִׁבָּה נִצָּחַת  
 הִחֲזִיקוּ בְּתִרְמָת  
 מֵאֲנוּ לָשׁוּב:  
 הַקְשִׁבְתִּי וְאִשְׁמַע <sup>ו</sup>  
 לֹא־כֵן יִדְבְּרוּ  
 אֵין אִישׁ נָחַם עַל־רַעְתּוֹ  
 לֵאמֹר מָה עָשִׂיתִי  
 כָּלֵה שָׁב בִּמְרֻצּוֹתָם בְּמִרוּצָתָם  
 כְּסוֹס שׁוֹטֵף בַּמִּלְחָמָה:  
 גַּם־חֲסִידָה בַּשָּׁמַיִם <sup>ז</sup>  
 יִדְעָה מוֹעֲדֶיהָ  
 וְתֹר וְסוֹס וְסִיל וְעֶגְלוֹר  
 שִׁמְרוּ אֶת־עֵת בְּאֵנָה  
 וְעַמִּי לֹא יִדְעוּ  
 אֶת מִשְׁפַּט יְהוָה:  
 אֵיכָה תֹאמְרוּ חֲכָמִים אֲנַחְנוּ <sup>ח</sup>  
 וְתוֹרַת יְהוָה אֵתְנוּ

why does Jerusalem persist in continuous infidelity?

They cling to illusion;

they refuse to turn back.

<sup>6</sup> 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.

<sup>7</sup> 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!"

<sup>8</sup> 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.

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

<sup>7</sup> 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.

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

אֲכַל הַגָּה לַשֶּׁקֶר עָשָׂה  
עָט שֶׁקֶר סִפְרִים:  
הִבְשׁוּ חֲכָמִים ט  
חֲתוּ וּלְבָדוּ  
הַגָּה בְּדִבְרֵי־הוָה מֵאֲסוּ  
וְחֲכָמַת מֶה לָּהֶם:  
לִכֵּן אֶתֶּן אֶת־נִשְׁיָהֶם לְאַחֲרִים י  
שְׂדוֹתֵיהֶם לְיֹזְרָשִׁים  
כִּי מִקְטָן וְעַד־גָּדוֹל  
כֻּלָּה בִצְעַע בִצְעַע  
מִנְּבִיא וְעַד־כֹּהֵן  
כֻּלָּה עָשָׂה שֶׁקֶר:  
וַיִּרְפוּ אֶת־שֹׁבֵר בֵּת־עַמִּי יא  
עַל־נִקְלָה לֵאמֹר  
שָׁלוֹם | שָׁלוֹם  
וְאִין שָׁלוֹם:  
הִבְשׁוּ כִי תוֹעֵבָה עָשׂוּ יב  
גַּם־בּוֹשׁ לֹא־יִבְשׁוּ  
וְהַכֹּלָם לֹא יָדְעוּ

Look how it has been falsified  
by the lying pen of the scribes!

9 The wise are put to shame,  
alarmed, caught out,  
because they have rejected Yahweh's word.  
What price their wisdom now?

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.

11 Without concern, they dress  
the wound of the daughter of my people, saying,  
"Peace, peace,"  
but there is no peace.

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,

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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 3<sup>rd</sup> line is, "So, they shall fall among the fallen."

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

אֶסֶף אֲסִיפָם נְאֻם־יְהוָה יג  
אִין עֲנָבִים בַּגָּפֶן וְאִין תְּאֵנִים בַּתְּאֵנָה  
וְהָעֵלֶה נָבֵל וְאֶתֵּן לָהֶם יַעֲבְרוּם:  
עַל־מָה יד

אֲנַחֲנוּ יוֹשְׁבִים  
הָאֶסָּפוּ וְנִבּוֹא אֶל־עָרֵי הַמְּבָצָר  
וְנִדְמָה־שָׁם  
כִּי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ  
הִדְמָנוּ וַיִּשְׁקֵנוּ מִי־רָאשׁ  
כִּי חָטְאוּנוּ לַיהוָה:

קוֹה לְשָׁלוֹם וְאִין טוֹב טו  
לְעֵת מְרֻפָּה וְהִנֵּה בְעֵתָהּ:

מִדָּן נִשְׁמַע נִחְרַת סוּסָיו טז  
מִקּוֹל מִצְהָלוֹת אַבִּירָיו  
רָעֵשָׁה כָּל־הָאָרֶץ  
וַיִּבּוֹאוּ וַיֹּאכְלוּ אֶרֶץ וּמְלוֹאָהּ  
עִיר וַיֹּשְׁבֵי בָּהּ: {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 1<sup>st</sup> expression as a noun clause, which is the subject of the following verb.

14 For the 2<sup>nd</sup> line, the same Hebrew word means 'to mobilise' and 'to put an end to'. The 4<sup>th</sup> 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 נֹחָשִׁים צָפְעָנִים אֲשֶׁר אֵין־לָהֶם לַחַשׁ וְנִשְׁכּוּ 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 דָוִי:	יח	18	There is no cure for my grief and my heart fails me.
הִנֵּה־קוֹל שׁוֹעֵת בַּת־עַמִּי מֵאֶרֶץ מְרַחֲקִים הִיהוָה אֵין בְּצִיּוֹן אִם־מֶלֶכָּהּ אֵין בָּהּ מִדּוֹעַ הַכְּעֶסוֹנִי בַּפִּסְלִיָּהּ בַּהֲבִלִי נִכְרָ:	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?
עֶבֶר קָצִיר כָּלָה קִיץ וְאַנְחָנוּ לֹא נִשְׁעָנוּ:	כ	20	"Harvest is over, summer at an end, and we have not been saved!"
עַל־שֹׁבֵר בַּת־עַמִּי הַשִּׁבְרָתִי קִדְרָתִי שְׁמָה הַחֲזָקָתִנִּי:	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?

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

<sup>18</sup> 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' ὀδυνης) has, "Incurable sorrow overtakes me."

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

<sup>20</sup> Judah may perhaps have been suffering a drought (Ch. 14).

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

<sup>22</sup> 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  
אֲרֶכֶת בַּת־עַמִּי: {ס}  
כג מִי־יִתֵּן רֹאשִׁי מַיִם  
וְעֵינַי מְקוֹר דְּמָעָה  
וְאֶבְכֶּה יוֹמָם וּלְיָלָה  
אֶת חֲלָלֵי בַת־עַמִּי: {ס}

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

<sup>23</sup> 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?

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<sup>23</sup> 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

## JEREMIAH 9

א	מִי־יִתְּנֵנִי בַּמִּדְבָּר מְלוֹן אֲרָחִים וְאֶעְזְבָה אֶת־עַמִּי וְאֶלְכָה מֵאַתָּם כִּי כָל־מְנַאֲפִים עֲצָרְתָּ בְּגָדִים:	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.
ב	וַיִּדְּרֻכוּ אֶת־לְשׁוֹנָם קִשְׁתָּם שֶׁקֶר וְלֹא לֵאמֹנָה גָּבְרוּ בָאָרֶץ כִּי מִרְעָה אֶל־רְעָה   יֵצְאוּ וְאֵתִי לֹא־יִדְעוּ נְאֻם־יְהוָה:	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.
ג	אִישׁ מִרְעָהוּ הִשְׁמִירוּ וְעַל־כָּל־אָח אֶל־תִּבְטָחוּ כִּי כָל־אָח עֶקֶב יַעֲקֹב וְכָל־רֵעַ רֵכִיל יִהְיֶה:	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.
ד	וְאִישׁ בְּרֵעֵהוּ יִהְיֶה לֹא וְאֵמֶת לֹא יִדְבֹּרוּ	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.

- <sup>1</sup> 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).
- <sup>2</sup> 'Not truth ... holds sway' follows the *LXX* (οὐ πίστις ἐνίσχυσται) and *NJB*; the *MT* has 'and they are not strong for truth'.
- <sup>3</sup> The literal translation for 'but to supplant' is 'supplanting supplants' (עֶקֶב יַעֲקֹב), a pun on the name Jacob.
- <sup>4</sup> The literal translation of the last line is, "they weary themselves with iniquity."

	לְמַדּוּ לְשׁוֹנָם דְּבַר־שָׁקֶר הַעֲוָה נִלְאוּ:		they have trained their tongues to lie and devote all their energies to doing wrong.
ה	שְׁבַתְךָ בְּתוֹךְ מְרִמָּה בְּמְרִמָּה מֵאֲנִי דַעַת־אוֹתִי נֹאם־יְהוָה: {ס}	5	You live in a world of bad faith! Out of bad faith, they refuse to know me, says Yahweh.
ו	לִכֵּן כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת הִנְנִי צוֹרֶפֶס וּבַחֲנֻתִים כִּי־אֵיךְ אֶעֱשֶׂה מִפְּנֵי בַת־עַמִּי:	6	Therefore, Yahweh Sabaoth declares, now I shall purge them and test them, no other way to treat my sinful people!
ז	חָץ שׁוֹחֵט שְׁחוּט לְשׁוֹנָם מְרִמָּה דְּבַר בְּפִיו שָׁלוֹם אֶת־רֵעֵהוּ יְדַבֵּר וּבִקְרָבוֹ יִשִּׁים אֲרָבוֹ:	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.
ח	הֲעַל־אַלֶּה לֹא־אֶפְקֹד־בָּם נֹאם־יְהוָה אִם בְּגוֹי אֲשֶׁר־כִּזָּה לֹא תִתְנַקֵּם נַפְשִׁי: {ס}	8	Shall I fail to punish them for this, says Yahweh, or on such a nation fail to exact vengeance?
ט	עַל־הָהָרִים אֶשָּׂא בְּכִי וְנָהִי וְעַל־נְאוֹת מִדְבָּר קִינָה	9	I raise the wail and lament for the mountain, the dirge for the desert pastures;

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

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

<sup>7</sup> In place of 'sharpened', here following the Qere (שְׁחוּט), the Ketiv has 'deadly' (שׁוֹחֵט); most English translations follow the Ketiv.

<sup>8</sup> The rhetorical question here functions as an emphatic declaration.

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

כִּי נִצְתּוּ מִבְּלִי-אִישׁ עֵבֶר  
 וְלֹא שָׁמְעוּ קוֹל מִקְנֶה  
 מִעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וְעַד-בְּהֵמָה  
 נָדְדוּ הַלְכוּ:  
 וְנָתַתִּי אֶת-יְרוּשָׁלַם לְגִלִּים  
 מִעוֹן תַּנִּים  
 וְאֶת-עָרֵי יְהוּדָה אֶתֵּן שְׁמָמָה  
 מִבְּלִי 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.  
<sup>10</sup> I shall make Jerusalem a heap of ruins,  
 a lair for jackals,  
 and I shall make the towns of Judah a desolation,  
 without inhabitant.

יֵא מִי־הָאִישׁ הַחֲכָם וַיְבִין אֶת-זֹאת וְאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר פִּי־  
 יְהוָה אֵלָיו וַיִּגְדֶּה עַל-מָה אֲבִדָה הָאָרֶץ נִצְתָה  
 כַּמִּדְבָּר מִבְּלִי עֵבֶר: {ס}

<sup>11</sup> 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?

יב וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה עַל-עֲזֹבְכֶם אֶת-תּוֹרָתִי אֲשֶׁר נָתַתִּי  
 לְפָנֵיהֶם וְלֹא-שָׁמְעוּ בְּקוֹלִי וְלֹא-הִלְכוּ בָּהּ: י וַיִּלְכוּ  
 אַחֲרֵי שְׂרָרוֹת לִבָּם וְאַחֲרֵי הַבְּעָלִים אֲשֶׁר לְמַדּוּם  
 אֲבוֹתָם: {פ}

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

יד לָכֵן כֹּה-אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הִנְנִי  
 מֵאַכִּילֶם אֶת-הָעֵם הַזֶּה לַעֲנָה וְהַשְׁקִיתִים מִי־  
 רָאשׁ: טו וְהִפְצוֹתִים בְּגוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר לֹא יָדְעוּ הֵמָּה

<sup>14</sup> Therefore, Yahweh Sabaoth, the God of Israel, says this, "Now I shall give them, this people, wormwood to eat and poisoned water to drink.  
<sup>15</sup> I shall scatter them among nations unknown to their ancestors or to

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

<sup>11</sup> Literally translated, the first sentence reads, "Who is the wise man that he may understand this?"

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

<sup>13</sup> Here, 'the Baals' refers either to the pagan gods or to their images.

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

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

וְאֲבוֹתָם וְשִׁלַּחְתִּי 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  
 הַתְּבוֹנְנִי וְקִרְאוּ לַמְּקוֹנְנוֹת וּתְבוּאֵינָה  
 וְאַל־הַחֲכָמוֹת שְׁלָחוּ וּתְבוּאָנָה:  
 יז וּתְמַהֲרָנָה וּתְשִׁנָּה עָלֵינוּ נָהִי  
 וּתְרַדְנָה עֵינֵינוּ דְמָעָה  
 וְעַפְעָפֵינוּ יָזְלוּ־מַיִם:  
 יח כִּי קוֹל נָהִי נִשְׁמָע מִצִּיּוֹן  
 אֵיד שִׁדְדָנוּ  
 בְּשָׁנוּ מְאֹד כִּי־עֲזַבְנוּ אֶרֶץ  
 כִּי הִשְׁלִיכוּ מִשְׁכְּנוֹתֵינוּ: {ס}  
 יט כִּי־שָׁמְעָנָה נָשִׁים דְּבַר־יְהוָה  
 וְתִקַּח אָזְנְכֶם דְּבַר־פִּי  
 וְלַמְדָּנָה בְּנוֹתֵיכֶם נָהִי  
 וְאִשָּׁה רַעוּתָה קִינָה:  
 כ כִּי־עָלָה מָוֶת בַּחֲלוֹנֵינוּ  
 בָּא בְּאַרְמְנוֹתֵינוּ

16 Yahweh Sabaoth says this,  
 "Prepare to call for the mourning women!  
 Send for those who are best at it!  
 17 Let them quickly raise the lament over us!  
 Let our eyes rain tears,  
 or eyelids run with weeping!  
 18 A lament makes itself heard in Zion,  
 "What ruin is ours!  
 We are utterly shamed because we have left the land;  
 they have knocked down our homes!"  
 19 Now listen, you women, to Yahweh's word,  
 let your ears take in the word his own mouth speaks.  
 Teach your daughters how to wail  
 and teach your neighbours this lament:  
 20 "Death has climbed in at our windows;  
 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 מִרְחֻבּוֹת:  
 כֹּא דִבֶּר כֹּה נְאֻם־יְהוָה  
 וְנִפְלָה נְבִלַת הָאָדָם  
 כְּדָמֶן עַל־פְּנֵי הַשָּׂדֶה  
 וּכְעֵמִיר מֵאַחֲרֵי הַקֶּצֶר  
 וְאֵין מֹאסֵף: {ס}

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

<sup>21</sup> 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.”

כֹּב כֹּה | אָמַר יְהוָה אֲלִי־תִהְיֶה חָכְם בְּחִכְמָתוֹ וְאֵל־  
 יִתְהַלֵּל הַגִּבּוֹר בְּגִבּוּרָתוֹ אֲלִי־תִהְיֶה עֹשִׁיר בְּעֹשָׁרוֹ:  
 כֹּג כִּי אִם־בִּזְאֵת יִתְהַלֵּל הַמֵּתִהַלֵּל הַשֶּׁכֶּל וְיִדַּע  
 אוֹתִי כִי אֲנִי יְהוָה עֹשֶׂה חֶסֶד מִשְׁפָּט וְצִדְקָה  
 בְּאַרְצָךְ כִּי־בְאֵלָה חִפְצָתִי נְאֻם־יְהוָה: {ס}  
 כֹּד הִנֵּה יָמִים בָּאִים נְאֻם־יְהוָה וּפִקְדוֹתַי עַל־כָּל־מוֹל  
 בְּעֶרְלָה: כֹּה עַל־מִצְרַיִם וְעַל־יְהוּדָה וְעַל־אֲדוֹם וְעַל־  
 בְּנֵי עַמּוֹן וְעַל־מוֹאָב וְעַל כָּל־קְצוּצֵי פֶאֶה הַיֹּשְׁבִים  
 בַּמִּדְבָּר כִּי כָל־הַגּוֹיִם עֶרְלִים וְכָל־בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל  
 עֶרְלֵי־לֵב: {פ}

<sup>22</sup> Yahweh says this, “Let the sage not boast of wisdom, nor the valiant of valour, nor the wealthy of riches! <sup>23</sup> 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.

<sup>24</sup> “Look, the days are coming, says Yahweh, when I shall punish all who are circumcised only in the flesh: <sup>25</sup> 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.”

<sup>21</sup> The verb דִּבֶּר (*‘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.

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

<sup>23</sup> ‘Faithful love’ translates the Hebrew word חֶסֶד (see #Ho 2:21).

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

<sup>25</sup> 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

- <sup>א</sup> שִׁמְעוּ אֶת־הַדְּבָר אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר יְהוָה עֲלֵיכֶם בֵּית  
יִשְׂרָאֵל: <sup>ב</sup> כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה
- <sup>1</sup> Listen to the word that Yahweh addresses to you, O House of Israel.  
<sup>2</sup> thus says Yahweh:
- אֲל־דֶּרֶךְ הַגּוֹיִם אֲל־תִּלְמָדוּ  
וּמֵאֲתוֹת הַשָּׁמַיִם אֲל־תִּתַּחַתּוּ  
כִּי־יִחַתּוּ הַגּוֹיִם מִהֶמָּה:  
<sup>ג</sup> כִּי־חֲקוֹת הָעַמִּים הֶבֶל הוּא  
כִּי־עֵץ מִיעַר כָּרְתּוּ  
מַעֲשֵׂה יַד־חָרָשׁ בַּמַּעֲצָד:  
<sup>ד</sup> בַּכֶּסֶף וּבַזָּהָב יִפְּהוּ  
בַּמַּסְמְרוֹת וּבַמַּקְבּוֹת יַחֲזִקוּם  
וְלֹא יִפִּיק:  
<sup>ה</sup> כְּתֹמֵר מִקְשָׁה הֶמָּה וְלֹא יִדְּבָרוּ  
נִשּׁוּא יִנְשׂוּא כִּי לֹא יִצְעָדוּ  
אֲל־תִּירָאוּ מֵהֶם כִּי־לֹא יַעֲוּ  
וְגַם־הֵיטִיב אֵין אוֹתָם: {פ}
- “Do not learn the ways of the nations  
or take alarm at the heavenly signs,  
alarmed though the nations may be at them.  
<sup>3</sup> 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,  
<sup>4</sup> then embellished with silver and gold,  
then fastened it with hammer and nails  
to keep it from moving.  
<sup>5</sup> 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

- <sup>1</sup> 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<sup>a</sup>/4QJer<sup>b</sup>*, in which the order is different; v. 11 is an Aramaic gloss on v. 12. Vv. 12–16 are repeated in 51:15–19.
- <sup>2</sup> For this use of the word דֶּרֶךְ (*“ways”*), cf. 12:16 & Is 2:6.
- <sup>3</sup> 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).
- <sup>4</sup> The pronoun translated *‘it’* in the 2<sup>nd</sup> line is plural, referring to the parts.
- <sup>5</sup> The NRSV has *‘their idols’* in place of *‘they’*.

מֵאִין כְּמוֹךָ יְהוָה	ו	6	There is no one like you, Yahweh,
גָּדוֹל אַתָּה וְגָדוֹל שְׁמֹךָ בְּגִבּוֹרָה:			so great you are, so great your mighty name.
מִי לֹא יִרְאֶךָ מֶלֶךְ הַגּוֹיִם	ז	7	Who would not revere you, King of nations?
כִּי לָךְ יֵאָתָה			Yes, this is your due.
כִּי בְּכָל-חֲכָמֵי הַגּוֹיִם וּבְכָל-מְלָכֹתָם			Among all the wise ones of the nations and all their kings
מֵאִין כְּמוֹךָ:			there is no one like you.
וּבִאֲחַת יִבְעֲרוּ וַיִּכְסְלוּ	ח	8	All of them are stupid:
מוֹסֵר הַבַּלִּים עֵץ הוּא:			the Futile Ones' teaching is but wood,
כֶּסֶף מְרֻקָּע מִתַּרְשִׁישׁ יוֹבֵא	ט	9	silver leaf imported from Tarshish
וְזָהָב מֵאוּפָז			and gold from Uphaz,
מַעֲשֵׂה חֲרָשׁ וַיְדִי צוּרָף			the work of carver or goldsmith;
תְּכֵלֶת וְאַרְגָּמָן לְבוּשָׁם			then dressed up in violet and purple,
מַעֲשֵׂה חֲכָמִים כָּלָם:			all the work of skilled men.
וַיְהוֹה אֱלֹהִים אֱמֶת	י	10	But Yahweh is the true God.
הוּא-אֱלֹהִים חַיִּים וּמֶלֶךְ עוֹלָם			He is the living God, the everlasting King.

- 
- <sup>6</sup> The form that introduces this verse has raised debate: מֵאִין 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 אִין, 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 מֵאִין ('whence'), which scarcely fits the context, or the suggestion that the מ is a dittography of the final consonant from the preceding word.
- <sup>7</sup> The literal translation of 'kings' is 'kingdoms': this is a case of substituting the abstract for the concrete.
- <sup>8</sup> The meaning of the Hebrew word here translated 'wood' is uncertain.
- <sup>9</sup> 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).
- <sup>10</sup> 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 תִרְעַשׁ הָאָרֶץ  
וְלֹא־יִכָּלוּ גוֹיִם זַעְמוֹ: {פ}

יֵא כְדָנָה תֵּאמְרוּן לַהֹם אֱלֹהִיָּא דִי־שְׁמִיָּא וְאַרְקָא  
לֹא עֲבָדוּ יֵאבְדוּ מֵאַרְעָא וּמִן־תַּחֲוֹת שְׁמִיָּא  
אֱלֹהֵ: {ס}

יב עָשָׂה אֶרֶץ בְּכֹחוֹ  
מִכֵּין תִּבְלָ בְּחָכְמָתוֹ  
וּבְתַבּוּנָתוֹ נָטָה שָׁמַיִם:

יג לְקוֹל תִּתּוֹ הַמּוֹן מַיִם  
בְּשָׁמַיִם וַיַּעֲלֶה נִשְׁאִים  
מִקְצָה אֶרֶץ הָאָרֶץ

בְּרָקִים לְמַטֵּר עָשָׂה  
וַיּוֹצֵא רוּחַ מֵאֲצֻרְתּוֹ:  
יד נִבְעֵר כָּל־אָדָם מִדַּעַת

הַבֵּישׁ כָּל־צוֹרֵף מִפָּסֶל  
כִּי שֶׁקֶר נִסְכּוֹ  
וְלֹא־רוּחַ בָּם:

טו הֵבֵל 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.”

טז	בַּעַת פְּקֻדָּתָם יֵאָבְדוּ: לֹא-כֵאלֹה חֵלֶק יַעֲקֹב כִּי-יוֹצֵר הַכֹּל הוּא וְיִשְׂרָאֵל שִׁבְט נַחֲלָתוֹ יְהוָה עֲבָאוֹת שְׁמוֹ: {ס}	at the time of their punishment, they shall perish.
יז	אֶסְפִּי מֵאֶרֶץ כְּנַעַתָּךְ יִשְׁבְּתִי יִשְׁבֶּת בְּמִצּוֹר: {ס}	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.
יח	כִּי-כֹה אָמַר יְהוָה הִנְנִי קוֹלֵעַ אֶת-יוֹשְׁבֵי הָאָרֶץ בַּפֶּעַם הַזֹּאת וְהִצַּרְתִּי לָהֶם לְמַעַן יִמָּצְאוּ: {ס}	17 Pick up your pack from the ground, you the besieged!
יט	אֲזִי לִי עַל-שִׁבְרִי נַחֲלָה מִכַּתִּי וְאֲנִי אֶמְרָתִי אֲדָּזָה חֲלִי וְאֶשְׁאַנּוּ: אֶהְיֶה שֹׁדָד וְכָל-מִיתְרֵי נִתְקָו בְּנֵי יִצְאָנִי וְאִינָם	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!"
כ		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;

16 For the 1<sup>st</sup> 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 a conjectural translation following the NJB; the MT has 'find' (the NRSV has 'feel it'). A change in the vowels would give the translation 'for them to be found' – i.e. caught by their enemies (cf. LXX – εὗρεθῆναι).

19 This verse is a lament of the personified nation.

20 This passage could refer to the exiles of 605 BCE & 597 BCE, or more probably be anticipatory of the exile of 588 BCE, since the 'tent', (i.e., the city) is pictured as torn down.

אִין־נִטָּה עוֹד אֶהְיֶה  
 וּמִקֵּים יִרְעוּתִי:  
 כִּי נִבְעֲרוּ הָרָעִים      כא  
 וְאֶת־יְהוָה לֹא דָרְשׁוּ  
 עַל־כֵּן לֹא הִשְׁכִּילוּ  
 וְכָל־מִרְעִיתָם נִפְּוָצָה: {פ}  
 כֹּזֵל שְׁמוּעָה הִנֵּה בָאָה      כב  
 וְרַעַשׁ גָּדוֹל מֵאֶרֶץ צָפוֹן  
 לְשׁוֹם אֶת־עָרֵי יְהוּדָה שְׁמָמָה  
 מִעוֹן תַּנִּים: {ס}  
 כִּי יָדַעְתִּי יְהוָה      כג  
 כִּי לֹא לָאָדָם דֶּרֶכּוֹ  
 לֹא־לְאִישׁ הַלֶּךְ  
 וְהָכִין אֶת־צִעְדּוֹ:  
 כִּד      כד  
 יִסְרְנִי יְהוָה אֶךְ־בְּמִשְׁפָּט  
 אֶל־בְּאַפָּךְ פֶּן־תִּמְעַטְנִי:  
 כה      כה  
 שִׁפְךָ חֲמָתְךָ עַל־הַגּוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יִדְעוּךָ  
 וְעַל מְשֻׁפְּחוֹת אֲשֶׁר בְּשִׁמְךָ לֹא קָרְאוּ  
 כִּי־אָכְלוּ אֶת־יַעֲקֹב

no one is left to put my tent up again  
or to hang the side-cloths.

- 21 For the shepherds are stupid:  
they do not search for Yahweh.  
So they have not prospered  
and their whole flock is scattered.
- 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!
- 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.
- 24 Correct me, Yahweh, but with moderation,  
not in your anger, or you will reduce me to nothing.
- 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,

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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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).

וַאֲכָלְהוּ וַיִּכְלֶהוּ  
וַאֲתַנּוּהוּ הַשָּׁמוֹ: {פ}

have devoured and made an end of him  
and reduced his home to desolation.

## ירמיהו פרק יא

א הַדְּבַר אֲשֶׁר הָיָה אֶל־יִרְמְיָהוּ מֵאֵת יְהוָה לֵאמֹר:  
ב שִׁמְעוּ אֶת־דְּבָרֵי הַבְּרִית הַזֹּאת וְדַבַּרְתֶּם אֶל־  
אִישׁ יְהוּדָה וְעַל־יֹשְׁבֵי יְרוּשָׁלַם: ג וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵיהֶם  
כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אָרוּר הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר  
לֹא יִשְׁמָע אֶת־דְּבָרֵי הַבְּרִית הַזֹּאת: ד אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתִי  
אֶת־אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם בַּיּוֹם הוֹצִיאִי־אוֹתָם מֵאֶרֶץ־מִצְרַיִם  
מִכּוּר הַבְּרָזִל לֵאמֹר שִׁמְעוּ בְּקוֹלִי וְעַשִּׂיתֶם אוֹתָם  
כָּל אֲשֶׁר־אֶצְוֶה אֶתְכֶם וְהִיִּיתֶם לִי לְעָם וְאֲנֹכִי  
אֶהְיֶה לָכֶם לֵאלֹהִים: ה לִמְעַן הָקִים אֶת־הַשְּׁבוּעָה  
אֲשֶׁר־נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי לְאֲבוֹתֵיכֶם לֵתֵת לָהֶם אֶרֶץ זָבֶת  
חֶלֶב וְדָבַשׁ בַּיּוֹם הַזֶּה וְאָעַן וְאָמַר אָמֵן | יְהוָה: {פ}

## JEREMIAH 11

<sup>1</sup> This is the word that came to Jeremiah from Yahweh, saying <sup>2</sup> “Hear the terms of this covenant and tell them to the people of Judah and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. <sup>3</sup> 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, <sup>4</sup> 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, <sup>5</sup> 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

- <sup>1</sup> 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.
- <sup>2</sup> 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.
- <sup>3</sup> ‘*This covenant*’ is further qualified in v. 4 with a relative clause.
- <sup>4</sup> 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.
- <sup>5</sup> 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־  
 דְּבָרֵי הַבְּרִית הַזֹּאת וַעֲשִׂיתֶם אוֹתָם: <sup>ז</sup> כִּי הָעַד  
 הָעַדְתִּי בְּאַבֹתֵיכֶם בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא הָעֲלֹתִי אוֹתָם מֵאֶרֶץ  
 מִצְרַיִם וְעַד־הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה הַשֶּׁכֶם וְהָעַד לֵאמֹר שְׁמְעוּ  
 בְּקוֹלִי: <sup>ח</sup> וְלֹא שְׁמָעוּ וְלֹא־הָטוּ אֶת־אָזְנָם וַיִּלְכּוּ  
 אִישׁ בְּשׁוּרֵירוֹת לִבָּם הָרַע וְאָבִיא עֲלֵיהֶם אֶת־כָּל־  
 דְּבָרֵי הַבְּרִית־הַזֹּאת אֲשֶׁר־צִוִּיתִי לַעֲשׂוֹת וְלֹא  
 עָשׂוּ: {ס}

ט וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֵלַי נִמְצָא־קִשְׁר בְּאִישׁ יְהוּדָה  
 וּבִישְׁבֵי יְרוּשָׁלַם: יִשְׁבּוּ עַל־עֹנֹת אָבוֹתָם  
 הָרָאשִׁימִים אֲשֶׁר מָאֲנוּ לִשְׁמוֹעַ אֶת־דְּבָרֵי וְהִמָּה  
 הָלְכוּ אַחֲרֵי אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים לְעַבְדָם הִפְרוּ בֵּית־  
 יִשְׂרָאֵל וּבֵית יְהוּדָה אֶת־בְּרִיתִי אֲשֶׁר כָּרַתִּי אֶת־  
 אָבוֹתָם: {ס}

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

<sup>6</sup> 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. <sup>7</sup> 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. <sup>8</sup> 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.”

<sup>9</sup> Yahweh said to me, “Plainly, there is conspiracy among the people of Judah and the citizens of Jerusalem. <sup>10</sup> 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.

<sup>11</sup> 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

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

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

<sup>8</sup> There is an interesting polarity that is being exploited by two different nuances implicit in the use of דְּבָרֵי (‘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.

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

<sup>10</sup> Another reading for ‘reverted to’ is ‘repeated’.

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

אֲשַׁמַּע אֲלֵיהֶם: יִבְהֹלְכוּ עָרֵי יְהוּדָה וְיֹשְׁבֵי  
 יְרוּשָׁלַם וְזָעְקוּ אֶל־הָאֱלֹהִים אֲשֶׁר הֵם מְקַטְרִים  
 לָהֶם וְהוֹשָׁע לֹא־יִוָּשִׁיעוּ לָהֶם בְּעַת רָעָתָם: יִבְי  
 מִסֶּפֶר עָרֶיהָ הֵיוּ אֱלֹהֶיהָ יְהוּדָה וּמִסֶּפֶר חֲצוֹת  
 יְרוּשָׁלַם שְׁמַתָּם מִזְבְּחוֹת לַבִּשְׁת מִזְבְּחוֹת לְקָטֹר  
 לַבַּעַל: {ס} וְאַתָּה אֶל־תִּתְפַּלֵּל בְּעַד־הָעָם הַזֶּה  
 וְאַל־תִּשָּׂא בְעַדָם רִנָּה וּתְפִלָּה כִּי אֲנִי שֹׁמֵעַ  
 בְּעַת קְרָאִם אֵלַי בְּעַד רָעָתָם: {ס}

טו מָה לִּידֵיךָ בְּבֵיתִי עֲשׂוֹתָה הַמִּזְמָתָה הַרְבִּים  
 וּבִשְׂר־קֹדֶשׁ יַעֲבִרוּ מֵעַלֶיךָ כִּי רָעַתְכִי אֲזַ תַּעֲלֹזִי:  
 טז זֵית רַעֲנָן יִפֶּה פְרִי־תֹאֵר קָרָא יְהוָה שְׁמֶךָ לְקוֹל  
 הַמוֹלָה גְּדֹלָה הֲצִית אֵשׁ עָלֶיהָ וְרָעוּ דְלִיּוֹתֶיהָ:  
 יז וַיְהִי־הָאֵשׁ הַנּוֹטֶעֶ אוֹתָךְ דִּבֶּר עָלֶיךָ רָעָה  
 בְּגִלְל רָעַת בֵּית־יִשְׂרָאֵל וּבֵית יְהוּדָה אֲשֶׁר עָשׂוּ  
 לָהֶם לְהַכְעִסְנִי לְקָטֹר לַבַּעַל: {פ}

יח וַיְהִי־הָאֵשׁ הַנּוֹטֶעֶ וַאֲדַעָה  
 אֲזַ הִרְאִיתָנִי מַעֲלֵיהֶם:

not listen to them.<sup>12</sup> 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!<sup>13</sup> “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!<sup>14</sup> “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.”

<sup>15</sup> “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? <sup>16</sup> “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.” <sup>17</sup> 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.

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

<sup>12</sup> 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’).

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

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

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

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

<sup>17</sup> This is the continuation of vv. 1–14.

<sup>18</sup> 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.



ט ואֲנִי כְּכֶבֶשׂ אֱלוֹף יוֹבֵל לְטִבּוֹחַ  
 וְלֹא־יָדַעְתִּי כִּי־עָלִין חֲשָׁבוּ מַחְשָׁבוֹת  
 נִשְׁחִיתָה עֵץ בְּלַחְמוֹ  
 וְנִכְרַתְנוּ מֵאֶרֶץ חַיִּים  
 וְשִׁמוֹ לֹא־יִזְכָּר עוֹד:  
 כ וַיְהִיָּה צְבָאוֹת שֹׁפֵט צָדִיק  
 בַּחֲן כְּלִיּוֹת וְלֵב  
 אֶרְאֶה נִקְמַתְךָ מֵהֵם  
 כִּי אֵלֶיךָ גָּלִיתִי אֶת־דְּרִיבִי: {ס}

כא לָכֵן כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה עַל־אֲנָשֵׁי עֲנֹתוֹת הַמִּבְקָשִׁים  
 אֶת־נִפְשֶׁךָ לֵאמֹר לֹא תִנָּבֵא בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה וְלֹא תָמוּת  
 בְּיָדֵנוּ: {פ}

כב לָכֵן כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת הַנְּגִי פֶקֶד עֲלֵיהֶם  
 הַבַּחֲוִירִים יָמָתוּ בַחֶרֶב בְּנֵיהֶם וּבָנוֹתֵיהֶם יָמָתוּ  
 בָּרָעָב: כג וְשִׂאֲרֵית לֹא תִהְיֶה לָּהֶם כִּי־אֲבִיָּא רָעָה  
 אֶל־אֲנָשֵׁי עֲנֹתוֹת שְׁנַת פְּקֻדָּתָם: {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.

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,”

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.

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 (בְּלַחְוֹ); 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

א צִדִּיק אַתָּה יְהוָה  
כִּי אֲרִיב אֵלֶיךָ  
אֲדַבֵּר אִתְּךָ  
מִדּוֹעַ דֶּרֶךְ רָשָׁעִים צִלְחָה  
שָׁלוֹ כָּל-בְּגָדֵי בָגָד:  
ב נִטְעַתֶם גַּם-שָׁרְשׁוֹ  
יִלְכוּ גַם-עֵשׂוֹ פֶּרִי  
קָרוֹב אַתָּה בְּפִיהֶם  
וְרָחוֹק מִכְּלִיּוֹתֵיהֶם:  
ג וְאַתָּה יְהוָה יֹדַעְתָּנִי  
תִּרְאֵנִי וּבַחֲנֹת לִבִּי אֶתְּךָ  
הַתִּקַּם כְּצֹאן לְטַבְחָה  
וְהִקְדַּשְׁם לְיוֹם הַרְגָּה: {פ}  
ד עַד-מָתִי תֹאבֵל הָאָרֶץ  
וְעֵשֶׂב כָּל-הַשָּׂדֶה יִיבֹשׁ  
מִרְעֵת יִשְׁבִּי-בָּהּ  
סִפְתָּה בְּהֵמוֹת וְעוֹף כִּי אָמְרוּ  
לֹא יִרְאֶה אֶת-אַחֲרֵיתָנוּ:

## 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."

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### 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 1<sup>st</sup> part of this verse.

ה כִּי אֶת־רַגְלִים | רָצְתָה וַיִּלְאוּךָ  
 וְאִיךָ תִּתְחַרֶּה אֶת־הַסּוּסִים  
 וּבְאַרֶץ שָׁלוֹם אֶתָּה בּוֹטָח  
 וְאִיךָ תַעֲשֶׂה בְּגֵאוֹן הַיַּרְדֵּן:  
 ו כִּי גַם־אֶחָיְךָ וּבֵית־אָבִיךָ  
 גַּם־הֵמָּה בָּגְדוּ בָךְ  
 גַּם־הֵמָּה קָרְאוּ אַחֲרֶיךָ מֵלֹא  
 אֶל־תֶּאֱמֹן בָּם  
 כִּי־יִדְבְּרוּ אֵלֶיךָ טוֹבוֹת: {ס}  
 ז עָזַבְתִּי אֶת־בֵּיתִי נְטָשְׁתִּי  
 אֶת־נַחֲלָתִי  
 נָתַתִּי אֶת־יָדָדוֹת נַפְשִׁי  
 בְּכַף אִיְבִיָּה:  
 ח הִיתָה־לִּי נַחֲלָתִי  
 כְּאַרְיֵה בַיַּעַר  
 נִתְּנָה עָלַי בְּקוֹלָהּ  
 עַל־כֵּן שָׂנְאָתִי:  
 ט הֵעִיט צְבוּעַ נַחֲלָתִי לִּי

- 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,

- 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.

הָעֵיט סָבִיב עָלֶיהָ  
לָכֹן אִסְפוּ כָּל־חַיַּת הַשָּׂדֶה  
יִתְּיוּ לֵאכֹלָה:  
רָעִים רַבִּים שָׁחֲתוּ כְרָמִי י  
בִּסָּסוּ אֶת־חֲלֻקְתִּי  
נָתְנוּ אֶת־חֲלֻקַּת חֲמֻדָּתִי  
לְמַדְבָּר שְׁמָמָה:  
שָׁמָּה לְשִׁמְמָה אֲבִלָה עָלַי שְׁמָמָה יא  
נִשְׁמָה כָּל־הָאָרֶץ  
כִּי אֵין אִישׁ  
שֵׁם עַל־לֵב:  
עַל־כָּל־שָׁפִים בַּמִּדְבָּר יב  
בָּאוּ שִׁדְדִים  
כִּי חָרַב לַיהוָה אֲכָלָה  
מִקְצֵה־אֶרֶץ וְעַד־קְצֵה הָאֶרֶץ  
אֵין שָׁלוֹם לְכָל־בָּשָׂר: {ס}  
זָרְעוּ חֲטִים וְקָצִים קָצְרוּ יג  
נָחֲלוּ לֹא יוֹעִלוּ

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 3<sup>rd</sup> line. An alternative translation for 'heights' is 'trails'.

13 'Their harvests' is a conjectural translation; the MT has 'your harvests': because the verb form (וַיִּשְׂאוּ) 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

וּבִשּׁוֹ מִתְּבוּאַתֵּיכֶם  
מִחֲרוֹן אַף־יְהוָה: {פ}

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

יְהוָה אָמַר יְהוָה עַל־כָּל־שֹׁכְנֵי הָרָעִים הַנִּגְעִים  
בְּנַחֲלָה אֲשֶׁר־הִנַּחֲלָתִי אֶת־עַמִּי אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל הַנִּגְנִי  
נִתְּשָׁם מֵעַל אֲדָמָתָם וְאֶת־בֵּית יְהוּדָה אֶתּוֹשׁ  
מִתּוֹכָם: <sup>טו</sup> וְהָיָה אַחֲרַי נִתְּשִׁי אוֹתָם אֲשׁוּב  
וְרַחֲמֵתִים וְהִשְׁבֵּתִים אִישׁ לְנַחֲלָתוֹ וְאִישׁ לְאֶרְצוֹ:  
<sup>טז</sup> וְהָיָה אִם־לָמַד יִלְמְדוּ אֶת־דֶּרֶכִי עַמִּי לְהִשְׁבֹּעַ  
בִּשְׁמִי חִי־יְהוָה כַּאֲשֶׁר לָמְדוּ אֶת־עַמִּי לְהִשְׁבֹּעַ  
בִּבְעֵל וְנִבְנְנוּ בְּתוֹךְ עַמִּי: י' וְאִם לֹא יִשְׁמְעוּ וְנִתְּשָׁתִי  
אֶת־הַגּוֹי הַהוּא נִתּוֹשׁ וְאֶבֶד נֶאֱס־יְהוָה: {ס}

<sup>14</sup> 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. <sup>15</sup> Yet, having uprooted them, I shall again take pity on them and bring them back to their heritage and their land, <sup>16</sup> 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. <sup>17</sup> But I will completely uproot and destroy any of those nations that will not pay heed, declares Yahweh."

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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.

<sup>14</sup> 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).

<sup>15</sup> 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'.

<sup>16</sup> Here, the word 'ways' has the nuance of religious practices.

<sup>17</sup> 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 כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה אֵלַי הֲלוֹךְ וְקִנִּיתָ לָךְ אֲזוּר פְּשָׁתִים  
וּשְׂמַתּוּ עַל־מִתְּנִיךָ וּבִמִּים לֹא תִבְאֶהוּ: ב וְאָקְנָה  
אֶת־הָאֲזוּר כַּדְּבַר יְהוָה וְאָשֵׁם עַל־מִתְּנִי: {פ}  
ג וַיְהִי דְבַר־יְהוָה אֵלַי שֵׁנִית לֵאמֹר: ד קַח אֶת־  
הָאֲזוּר אֲשֶׁר קִנִּיתָ אֲשֶׁר עַל־מִתְּנִיךָ וְקוּם לֵךְ  
פְּרָתָה וּטְמִנְהוּ שָׁם בְּנָקִיק הַסֵּלַע: ה וְאַלֶּךְ  
וְאִטְמַנְהוּ בַּפְּרָת כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אוֹתִי: ו וַיְהִי  
מִקֵּץ יָמִים רַבִּים וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֵלַי קוּם לֵךְ פְּרָתָה  
וְקַח מִשָּׁם אֶת־הָאֲזוּר אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתִיךָ לְטַמְנוֹ־שָׁם:  
ז וְאַלֶּךְ פְּרָתָה וְאַחְפֹּר וְאָקַח אֶת־הָאֲזוּר מִן־  
הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר־טַמְנִיתוּ שָׁמָּה וְהִנֵּה נִשְׁחָת הָאֲזוּר  
לֹא יִצְלַח לְכָל: {פ}

## JEREMIAH 13

<sup>1</sup> 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." <sup>2</sup> So, according to the word of Yahweh, I bought a waistcloth and put it round my waist.  
<sup>3</sup> And the word of Yahweh came to me a second time, saying, <sup>4</sup> "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." <sup>5</sup> So, I went and hid it by the Euphrates as Yahweh had commanded me.  
<sup>6</sup> 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." <sup>7</sup> 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

- <sup>1</sup> 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.
- <sup>2</sup> 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.
- <sup>3</sup> The NJB lacks the word 'saying', here following the MT & NRSV.
- <sup>4</sup> There has been a great deal of debate about whether פְּרָתָה 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 פְּרָתָה refers to the Euphrates here.
- <sup>5</sup> 'By the Euphrates' here follows 4QJer<sup>a</sup>, reading בַּפְּרָת in place of the MT's בְּפָרָת.
- <sup>6</sup> In place of 'take from there', here following the MT & NRSV, the NJB has 'fetch' and NETB has 'get'.
- <sup>7</sup> The NJB has 'searched' in place of 'dug', here following the MT, NRSV & NETB.



ח וַיְהִי דְבַר־יְהוָה אֵלַי לֵאמֹר: ט כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה כָּכָה אֲשַׁחֲיִית אֶת־גִּאֲוֹן יְהוּדָה וְאֶת־גִּאֲוֹן יְרוּשָׁלַם הָרֶב: י הָעָם הַזֶּה הָרַע הַמְּאֲנִים לִשְׁמוֹעַ אֶת־דִּבְרֵי הַהֲלָכִים בְּשִׁרְרוֹת לִבָּם וַיֵּלְכוּ אַחֲרֵי אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים לְעַבְדָם וּלְהִשְׁתַּחֲוֹת לָהֶם וַיְהִי כְּאֶזּוֹר הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יִצְלַח לְכָל: {ס}

יא כִּי כַּאֲשֶׁר יִדְבֶּק הָאֶזּוֹר אֶל־מִתְנֵי־אִישׁ בֵּן הַדְּבָקָתִי אֵלַי אֶת־כָּל־בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאֶת־כָּל־בֵּית יְהוּדָה נְאֻם־יְהוָה לְהִיּוֹת לִי לְעָם וּלְשֵׁם וּלְתִהְיֶה וּלְתִפְאֶרֶת וּלֹא שָׁמְעוּ: יב וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵיהֶם אֶת־הַדְּבָר הַזֶּה {ס} כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל כָּל־

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’ (גִּאֲוֹן) 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 נִשְׁחָת (‘ruined’, v. 7) and אֲשַׁחֲיִית. 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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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. 12a) 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’.



גַּבֵּל יִמְלֵא יַיִן וְאָמְרוּ אֵלֶיךָ הִידֹעַ לֹא נִדְעַ כִּי כָל־  
גַּבֵּל 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  
נָאִם־יְהוָה לֹא־אֲחַמּוֹל וְלֹא־אֲחֻס׃ וְלֹא אֲרַחֵם  
מִהַשְׁחִיתָם:

טו שִׁמְעוּ וְהִאֲזִינוּ אֶל־תְּגִבָּהּ  
כִּי יְהוָה דֹּבֵר:  
טז תִּנְנוּ לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם כְּבוֹד בְּטֶרֶם יַחֲשֹׁךְ  
וּבְטֶרֶם יִתְגַּבּוּ רַגְלֵיכֶם עַל־הָרֵי נֶשֶׁף  
וְקוֹיְתָם לְאוֹר וְשָׁמָּה לְצִלְמוֹת  
יִשִּׁית וְשִׁית לְעֶרְפָּל:  
ז ואִם לֹא תִשְׁמָעוּהָ  
בְּמִסְתָּרִים תִּבְכֶּה נַפְשִׁי מִפְּנֵי גֹה  
וְדַמְעַתְּ תִדְמַעַ 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?" <sup>13</sup> 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. <sup>14</sup> 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.""

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

<sup>16</sup> 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.

<sup>17</sup> 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.

<sup>13</sup> '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).

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

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

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

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

יח	אִמֹר לַמֶּלֶךְ וּלְגִבִּירָה הַשְׁפִּילוּ שִׁבּוֹ כִּי יֵרֵד מִרְאשׁוֹתֵיכֶם עֲטֹת תִּפְאֲרֹתְכֶם: ט עָרֵי הַנֶּגֶב סָגְרוּ וְאִין פֶּתַח הַגָּלִית יְהוּדָה כָּלָה הַגָּלִית שְׁלֹמִים: {ס}	18 Tell the king and queen mother, "Surrender your thrones, since your glorious crowns have fallen from your heads.
יט	כ	19 The towns of the Negeb are shut off with no one to give access to them. All Judah has been deported, deported wholesale."
כ	כא	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?
		21 What will you say when they set as head over you, those whom you have trained

18 The 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 מִרְאשׁוֹתֵיכֶם ('place at the head') to מִרְאשֵׁיכֶם ('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 (שאי), followed by the LXX (Ἀνάλαβε), in place of the plural שאו, here following the Qere; 'These' follows the Qere (וראו) and LXX (which adds 'Jerusalem' – τῆς); the Ketiv has a singular pronoun (וראי).

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  
 הַלֹּא חֲבָלִים יִאֲחֹזוּךָ  
 כִּמּוֹ אִשָּׁת לִדָּה:  
 כב וְכִי תֹאמַרְי בְּלִבְבְּךָ  
 מִדּוּעַ קִרְאַנִי אֱלֹהִים  
 בָּרַב עֲוֹנֶךָ נִגְלֹו שׁוּלְיֶךָ  
 נַחֲמָסוּ עֲקֵבֶיךָ:  
 כג הִיִּהְפֶּךָ כּוֹשֵׁי עוֹרוֹ  
 וְנֹמֵר חֲבֵרְבֵרְתִּי  
 גַם־אַתָּם תּוֹכְלוּ לְהִיטִיב  
 לְמַדִּי הָרַע:  
 כד וְאַפִּיצֶם כְּקַשׁ־עוֹבֵר  
 לְרוּחַ מִדְּבָר:  
 כה זֶה גּוֹרְלְךָ מִנֶּת־מִדֶּיךָ מֵאֵתִי  
 נְאֻם־יְהוָה  
 אֲשֶׁר שָׁכַחְתָּ אוֹתִי  
 וַתִּבְטַחַי בַּשָּׁקָר:

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 1<sup>st</sup> line, NETB reads, "This is your fate, the destiny to which I have appointed you."

כו וְגַם־אֲנִי חֲשַׁפְתִּי שׁוּלְיֶךָ עַל־פָּנֶיךָ  
 וְנִרְאָה קְלוּנָךְ:  
 כז נֶאֱפִיךָ וּמִצָּה־לֹוֹתֶיךָ זִמַּת זָנוּתֶךָ  
 עַל־גְּבֻעוֹת 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 דְּבַר־יְהוָה אֶל־יִרְמְיָהוּ עַל־דְּבַר־יְהוָה הַבָּצָרוֹת: 1 The word of Yahweh that came to Jeremiah on the occasion of the drought:

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| ב | אֲבֵלָה יְהוּדָה<br>וְשַׁעְרֶיהָ אִמְלָלוּ קִדְרוּ לְאָרֶץ<br>וְצוֹחַת יְרוּשָׁלַם עֲלָתָה:<br>ג  | 2 “Judah is in mourning,<br>her gates are pining, sinking to the ground;<br>a cry goes up from Jerusalem.<br>3  |
| ג | וְאֲדָרִיָּהֶם שָׁלְחוּ צַעֲוִרֵיהֶם צַעֲרִיָּהֶם לַמַּיִם<br>בָּאוּ עַל־גִּבֵּי־מַיִם לֹא־מָצְאוּ מַיִם<br>שָׁבוּ כְּלִיָּהֶם רִיקִם<br>בָּשׂוּ וְהִכְלִמוּ וְחָפּוּ רֹאשָׁם:<br>ד | 3 The nobles send their servants for water,<br>they come to the water-tanks, find no water,<br>and return with their pitchers empty.<br>Dismayed and bewildered, they cover their heads.<br>4 |
| ד | בְּעִבּוֹר הָאֲדָמָה חֲתָה<br>כִּי לֹא־הָיָה גֶשֶׁם בָּאָרֶץ<br>בָּשׂוּ אֶכְרִים<br>חָפּוּ רֹאשָׁם:<br>ה  | 4 Because the soil is all cracked,<br>since the country has had no rain,<br>the farmers are dismayed<br>and they cover their heads.<br>5  |
| ה | כִּי גַם־אִילַת בִּשְׁדָּה יִלְדָּה וְעִזּוֹב<br>כִּי לֹא־הָיָה דָּשָׁא:<br>ו   | 5 Even the doe in the field abandons her new-born fawn<br>because there is no grass.<br>6   |
| ו | וּפְרָאִים עֹמְדֵי עַל־שִׁפְיָם   | 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.”

שָׁאֲפוּ רוּחַ כְּתַנִּים  
 כָּלוּ עֵינֵיהֶם כִּי־אֵין עֵשֶׂב:  
 אִם־עוֹלָמָנוּ עָנוּ בָנוּ ז  
 יְהוָה עֲשֵׂה לְמַעַן שְׁמֶךָ  
 כִּי־רַבּוּ מִשׁוֹבְתֵינוּ  
 לָךְ חַטָּאִים:  
 מִקְוֵה יִשְׂרָאֵל ח  
 מוֹשִׁיעוּ בְּעַת צָרָה  
 לָמָּה תִּהְיֶה כְּגַר בְּאֶרֶץ  
 וּכְאֶרֶח נָטָה לָלוֹן:  
 לָמָּה תִּהְיֶה כְּאִישׁ נִדְהָם ט  
 כְּגִבּוֹר לֹא־יֻכַּל לְהוֹשִׁיעַ  
 וְאַתָּה בְּקִרְבָּנוּ יְהוָה  
 וְשִׁמְךָ עָלֵינוּ נִקְרָא אֶל־תִּנְחֲנוּ: {ס}  
 כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה לָעַם הַזֶּה י  
 כִּן אֶהְבּוּ לָנוּעַ רַגְלֵיהֶם  
 לֹא חָשְׁכוּ  
 וַיִּהְיֶה לֹא רָצִים

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 7<sup>th</sup> 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 2<sup>nd</sup> line. ‘Truly’ follows the NRSV & NETB.

עֲתָה יִזְכֹּר עֲוֹנָם  
וַיִּפְקֹד חַטָּאתָם: {פ}

now he will remember their iniquity  
and punish their sins.

י' וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֵלַי אֶל-תִּתְּפֹלֶל בְּעַד-הָעָם הַזֶּה  
לְטוֹבָה: י' כִּי יֵצְמוּ אִיגְנֵי שִׁמְעַל אֶל-רִנָּתָם וְכִי יַעֲלוּ  
עֲלָהּ וּמִנְחָה אִיגְנֵי רֹעֶם כִּי בַחֲרֹב וּבִרְעָב וּבִדְבַר  
אֲנֹכִי מִכֹּלָּה אוֹתָם: {ס}

<sup>11</sup> Yahweh then said to me, “Do not intercede for the welfare of this people. <sup>12</sup> 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' וַאֲמַר אֵהָא | אֲדַנִּי יְהוָה הִנֵּה הַנְּבִאִים אֹמְרִים  
לָהֶם לֹא-תֵרְאוּ חֶרֶב וְרָעָב לֹא-יְהִיָּה לָכֶם כִּי-שָׁלוֹם  
אֵמֶת אֶתֶּן לָכֶם בַּמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה: {ס}

<sup>13</sup> “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' וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֵלַי שֶׁקֶר הַנְּבִאִים נְבִאִים בְּשִׁמִּי לֹא  
שָׁלַחְתִּים וְלֹא צִוִּיתִים וְלֹא דִבַּרְתִּי אֲלֵיהֶם חֲזוֹן  
שֶׁקֶר וְקֶסֶם וְאִלּוּל וְתַרְמוּת [וְאִלּוּל וְתַרְמוּת] לָבֶם  
הֵמָּה מִתְּנַבְּאִים לָכֶם: {ס}

<sup>14</sup> 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 בְּשִׁמִּי  
וְאֲנִי לֹא-שָׁלַחְתִּים וְהֵמָּה אֹמְרִים חֶרֶב וְרָעָב לֹא  
יְהִיָּה בָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת בַּחֲרֹב וּבִרְעָב יִתָּמוּ הַנְּבִאִים

<sup>15</sup> Therefore, Yahweh says this: “Ad 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

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

<sup>12</sup> ‘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.

<sup>13</sup> ‘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.

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

<sup>15</sup> 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 בַּחצוֹת יְרוּשָׁלַם מִפְּנֵי הָרֶעֶב וְהַחֶרֶב  
וְאִין מִקְבֵּר לָהֶמָּה הָמָּה נִשְׁיָהֻם וּבְנֵיהֻם וּבָנֹתֵיהֻם  
וְשִׁפְכֹתֵי עֲלֵיהֻם אֶת־רַעְתָּם: <sup>יז</sup> וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵיהֶם  
אֶת־הַדְּבָר הַזֶּה תִּרְדְּנָה עֵינֵי דַמְעָה לַיְלָה וַיּוֹמֶם  
וְאֶל־תִּדְמִינָה כִּי שֹׁבֵר גָּדוֹל נִשְׁבְּרָה בְּתוֹלַת בֵּית־  
עַמִּי מִכָּה נִחְלָה מְאֹד: <sup>יח</sup> אִם־יֵצְאֲתִי הַשָּׂדֶה וְהִנֵּה  
חֲלָל־חֶרֶב וְאִם בְּאֶתִי הָעִיר וְהִנֵּה תַחֲלוּאֵי רָעֵב  
כִּי־גַם־נִבְיָא גַם־כֹּהֵן סָחֲרוּ אֶל־אֶרֶץ וְלֹא  
יֵדְעוּ: {ס}

<sup>יט</sup> הַמָּאֵס מְאֹסָתָ אֶת־יְהוּדָה  
אִם־בְּצִיּוֹן גָּעִלָה נַפְשְׁךָ  
מִדּוּעַ הִכִּיתָנוּ וְאִין לָנוּ מִרְפָּא  
קוֹה לְשָׁלוֹם וְאִין טוֹב  
וְלַעֲת מִרְפָּא וְהִנֵּה בָעֲתָה:  
<sup>כ</sup> יֵדְעֵנוּ יְהוָה רִשְׁעָנוּ  
עוֹן אֲבוֹתֵינוּ  
כִּי חָטָאנוּ לָךְ:

and famine. <sup>16</sup> 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. <sup>17</sup> 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. <sup>18</sup> 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."

<sup>19</sup> 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!  
<sup>20</sup> Yahweh, we acknowledge our wickedness,  
our ancestors' guilt:  
we have indeed sinned against you.

<sup>16</sup> 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.

<sup>17</sup> The opening clause is an editorial link, clumsily introducing what follows.

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

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

<sup>20</sup> The 3<sup>rd</sup> line has another example of the intensive use of the particle כִּי.

אֶל־תִּנְאַץ לְמַעַן שְׁמֶךָ כֹּא  
 אֶל־תִּנְבֹּל כְּסֵא כְבוֹדֶךָ  
 זְכֹר אֶל־תִּפְּרַר בְּרִיתֶךָ אִתָּנוּ:  
 הֲיֵשׁ בַּהֲבִלֵי הַגּוֹיִם מְגֹשְׁמִים כֹּב  
 וְאִם־הַשָּׁמַיִם יִתְּנוּ רֶבֶבִים  
 הֲלֹא אַתָּה־הוּא יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ  
 וְנִקְוָה־לָּךְ כִּי־אַתָּה עֹשֶׂת 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 2<sup>nd</sup> line refers to Zion.

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

## ירמיהו פרק טו

א וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֵלַי אִם-יַעֲמֹד מֹשֶׁה וְשַׁמּוּאֵל לִפְנֵי  
אֵין נִפְשִׁי אֶל-הָעָם הַזֶּה שְׁלַח מֵעַל-פָּנַי וַיֵּצְאוּ:  
ב וְהָיָה כִּי-יֹאמְרוּ אֵלֶיךָ אָנָּה נֵצֵא וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵיהֶם  
כֹּה-אָמַר יְהוָה

אֲשֶׁר לַמָּוֶת לַמָּוֶת  
וְאֲשֶׁר לַחֶרֶב לַחֶרֶב  
וְאֲשֶׁר לָרָעָב לָרָעָב  
וְאֲשֶׁר לַשְּׁבִי לַשְּׁבִי:

ג וּפְקַדְתִּי עֲלֵיהֶם אַרְבַּע מִשְׁפָּחוֹת נֹאֲסֵי-יְהוָה אֶת-  
הַחֶרֶב לַהֲרֹג וְאֶת-הַכְּלָבִים לִסְחָב וְאֶת-עוֹף  
הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת-בְּהֵמַת הָאָרֶץ לֵאכֹל וְלִהְשָׁחִית:  
ד וְנָתַתִּים לְזוּעָה לְזוּעָה לְכָל מַמְלָכוֹת הָאָרֶץ בְּגִלְל  
מִנִּישָׁה בֶן-יְחִזְקִיָּהוּ מֶלֶךְ יְהוּדָה עַל אֲשֶׁר-עָשָׂה  
בִּירוּשָׁלַם:

ה כִּי מִי־יַחְמֹל עָלֶיךָ  
יְרוּשָׁלַם וּמִי יִגֹּד לָךְ

## JEREMIAH 15

<sup>1</sup> Then Yahweh said to me, "Even if Moses and Samuel pleaded before me, I could not sympathise with this people! Driver them out of my sight; away with them!" <sup>2</sup> 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!

<sup>3</sup> "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. <sup>4</sup> 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."

<sup>5</sup> Who will pity you, Jerusalem,  
who will grieve for you,

## JEREMIAH 15

- <sup>1</sup> 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).  
<sup>2</sup> 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'.  
<sup>3</sup> More literally translated, this verse opens, "I will appoint over them four guilds."  
<sup>4</sup> The Kethib/Qere difference here would benefit from an explanation.  
<sup>5</sup> This poem was probably pronounced just before the siege of 596 BCE.

וּמִי יִסּוּר  
 לְשֹׂאֵל לְשִׁלְמוֹ לָדָּ:  
 אֶת־נִטְשֹׁתַי אֶת־יָנְאִם־יְהוָה  
 אַחֲזֹר תִּלְכִּי  
 וְאֵת אֶת־יָדַי עָלֶיךָ וְאֶשְׁחִיתֶךָ  
 נִלְאַיתִי הַנָּחֵם:  
 וְאֶזְרַם בַּמִּזְרָה  
 בְּשַׁעְרֵי הָאָרֶץ  
 שִׁבְלֹתַי אֲבַדְתִּי אֶת־עַמִּי  
 מִדְּרָכֵיהֶם לֹא־שָׁבוּ:  
 עֲצֻמוֹתַי אֶלְמָנוֹתַי מִחֹל יָמִים  
 הִבֵּאתִי לָהֶם עַל־אֵם בַּחֹר שִׁדָּד בַּצְהָרִים  
 הִפְלַתִי עָלֶיהָ פֶּתָאֵם  
 עִיר וּבְהִלּוֹת:  
 אִמִּלָּה יִלְדֵת הַשְּׁבִעָה  
 נִפְחָה נִפְשָׁה בָּאָה בָּא שְׁמֶשָׁה בְּעַד יוֹמָם  
 בּוֹשָׁה וְחִפְרָה  
 וּשְׂאֵרֵיהֶם לַחֲרֹב אֶתֶּן לִפְנֵי אֹיְבֵיהֶם  
 נֹאם־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.

אֲוִי-לִי אִמִּי  
 כִּי יִלְדָתְנִי אִישׁ רִיב וְאִישׁ מָדוֹן  
 לְכָל-הָאָרֶץ  
 לֹא-נָשִׁיתִי וְלֹא-נָשׁוּבִי כָּלָה מִקְלָלוֹנִי: {ס}  
 אָמַר יְהוָה אִם-לֹא שְׂרוּתְךָ שִׁרִיתִיךָ לְטוֹב  
 אִם-לְרָע | הִפְגַּעְתִּי בְּךָ  
 בַּעַת רָעָה וּבַעַת צָרָה אֶת-הָאֵיִב:  
 הִירֵעַ בְּרֹזֶל | בְּרֹזֶל מִצָּפוֹן וּנְחָשֶׁת:  
 חִילָּךְ וְאוֹצְרוֹתֶיךָ לָבוֹז אֶתֶּן  
 לֹא בִמְחִיר  
 וּבְכָל-חַטָּאוֹתֶיךָ  
 וּבְכָל-גְּבוּלוֹיֶיךָ:  
 וְהִעֲבַרְתִּי אֶת-אֵיבֶיךָ  
 בָּאָרֶץ לֹא יָדַעְתָּ

- 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.
- 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.
- 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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 ט and כ.

כִּי־אֵשׁ קִדְחָהּ בְּאַפִּי  
עַלְיֶיכֶם תִּוְקַד: {ס}

טו אַתָּה יָדַעְתָּ יְהוָה  
זְכֹרְנִי וּפְקֹדֹנִי וְהִנָּקֶם לִי מִרְדְּפֵי

אֶל־לְאָרֶץ אַפָּךָ תִּקְחֵנִי  
דַּע שְׂאֵתִי עָלֶיךָ חֲרָפָה:

טז נִמְצְאוּ דְבָרֶיךָ וְאִכְלָם  
וַיְהִי דְבָרֶיךָ דְּבָרָךְ לִי

לְשִׁשׁוֹן וּלְשִׁמְחַת לִבִּי  
כִּי־נִקְרָא שְׁמֶךָ עָלַי

יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי צְבָאוֹת: {ס}

יז לֹא־יִשְׁבַּתִּי בְּסוּד־מְשַׁחֲקִים וְאֶעֱלֶז  
מִפְנֵי יָדְךָ בִּדְדִי יִשְׁבַּתִּי

כִּי־זַעַם מְלֹאֲתָנִי:

יח לָמָּה הִיא כְּאֵבִי נֹצֵחַ  
וּמִכָּתִי אֲנוּשָׁה

מֵאֲנָה הִרְפָּא

הִיוּ תַּהֲיֶיהָ 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 which fill with water after the spring rains but often dry up in the summer.

יט לֵכֵן כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה  
 אִם־תָּשׁוּב וְאִשְׁיבָךְ לִפְנֵי תַעֲמֹד  
 וְאִם־תּוֹצִיא יָקָר מְזוּלָל  
 כְּפִי תִהְיֶה  
 יֵשְׁבוּ הֵמָּה אֵלַיךְ  
 וְאַתָּה לֹא־תָשׁוּב אֲלֵיהֶם:  
 כ וּנְתַתִּיךָ לָעָם הַזֶּה  
 לְחֹמַת נְחֹשֶׁת בְּצוּרָה  
 וְנִלְחָמוּ אֵלַיךְ  
 וְלֹא־יִכְלּוּ לָךְ  
 כִּי־אַתָּה אָנֹכִי לְהוֹשִׁיעַךְ וּלְהַצִּילָךְ  
 נֹאֲמִי־יְהוָה:  
 כא וְהַצַּלְתִּיךָ מִיַּד רָעִים  
 וּפְדֹתִיךָ 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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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'.



## JEREMIAH 16

## ירמיהו פרק טז

א וַיְהִי דְבַר־יְהוָה אֵלַי לֵאמֹר: <sup>ב</sup> לֹא־תִקַּח לָךְ אִשָּׁה  
וְלֹא־יִהְיוּ לָךְ בָּנִים וּבָנוֹת בַּמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה: {ס}  
ג כִּי־כֵהָן אָמַר יְהוָה עַל־הַבָּנִים וְעַל־הַבָּנוֹת  
הַיִּלּוּדִים בַּמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה וְעַל־אִמֹּתָם הַיִּלְדוֹת אוֹתָם  
וְעַל־אֲבוֹתָם הַמּוֹלְדִים אוֹתָם בָּאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת:  
ד מִמוֹתַי תַּחֲלָאִים יָמָתוּ לֹא יִסְפְּדוּ וְלֹא יִקְבְּרוּ  
לְדָמֶן עַל־פְּנֵי הָאָדָמָה יִהְיוּ וּבַחֲרָב וּבִרְעָב יָכֻלוּ  
וְהָיְתָה גְבוֹלָתָם לְמֶאֱכָל לְעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וּלְבִהֵמַת  
הָאָרֶץ: {ס}

ה כִּי־כֵהָן אָמַר יְהוָה אֶל־תָּבוֹא בֵּית מְרוֹחַ וְאֶל־  
תֵּלֶךְ לְסִפּוֹד וְאֶל־תִּגַּד לָהֶם כִּי־אֶסְפְּתִי אֶת־שְׁלוֹמִי  
מֵאֵת הָעָם הַזֶּה נֹאס־יְהוָה אֶת־הַחֶסֶד וְאֶת־  
הַרַחֲמִים: ו' וּמָתוּ גְדֹלִים וְקִטְנִים בָּאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת לֹא  
יִקְבְּרוּ וְלֹא־יִסְפְּדוּ לָהֶם וְלֹא יִתְגַּדְּדוּ וְלֹא יִקְרַח  
לָהֶם: ז' וְלֹא־יִפְרְסוּ לָהֶם עַל־אֲבָל לִנְחָמוֹ עַל־מָוֶת  
וְלֹא־יִשְׁקוּ אוֹתָם כּוֹס תְּנַחֲמוֹמִים עַל־אֲבִיו וְעַל־

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

<sup>3</sup> 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, <sup>4</sup> "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."

<sup>5</sup> "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. <sup>6</sup> 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. <sup>7</sup> 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

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

<sup>2</sup> NETB has 'here in this land' in place of 'in this place', here following the NJB & NRSV.

<sup>3</sup> The NJB & NRSV have the more traditional 'beget' in place of 'sire'.

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

<sup>5</sup> Israel's faithlessness has nullified God's obligation for covenant loyalty.

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

<sup>7</sup> 'Bread' follows the LXX (ἄρτος); the MT has 'for them'. The NJB, following the Vg, has 'the mourner' in place of 'mourning'.

אָמַר: <sup>ח</sup> וּבֵית־מִשְׁתֶּה לֹא־תָבוֹא לָשֶׁבֶת אוֹתָם  
לֵאכֹל וּלְשָׁתוֹת: {פ}

<sup>ט</sup> כִּי כֹה אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הִנְנִי  
מִשְׁבִּית מִן־הַמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה לְעֵינֵיכֶם וּבִימֵיכֶם קוֹל  
שִׁשׁוֹן וְקוֹל שְׂמִיחָה קוֹל חֲתָן וְקוֹל כְּלָה: <sup>י</sup> וְהָיָה כִּי  
תִּגִּיד לָעָם הַזֶּה אֶת כָּל־הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה וְאָמְרוּ  
אֵלֶיךָ עַל־מָה דִּבֶּר יְהוָה עָלֵינוּ אֶת כָּל־הָרָעָה  
הַגְּדוֹלָה הַזֹּאת וּמָה עֲוֹנֵנוּ וּמָה חַטָּאתֵנוּ אֲשֶׁר  
חָטָאנוּ לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ: <sup>יא</sup> וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵיהֶם עַל־  
אֲשֶׁר־עָזְבוּ אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם אוֹתִי נְאֻם־יְהוָה וַיֵּלְכוּ אַחֲרֵי  
אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים וַיַּעֲבֹדוּם וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲווּ לָהֶם וְאֹתִי עָזְבוּ  
וְאֶת־תּוֹרָתִי לֹא שָׁמְרוּ: <sup>יב</sup> וְאַתֶּם הִרְעַתֶּם לַעֲשׂוֹת  
מֵאֲבוֹתֵיכֶם וְהִנֵּכֶם הַלְכִים אִישׁ אַחֲרֵי שְׂרָרוֹת  
לְבוֹהָרֶע לְבַלְתִּי שְׁמַע אֵלַי: <sup>יג</sup> וְהִטַּלְתִּי אֶתְכֶם  
מֵעַל הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת עַל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר לֹא יִדְעַתֶּם  
אֶתֶם וְאֲבוֹתֵיכֶם וַעֲבַדְתֶּם־שָׁם אֶת־אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים  
יוֹמָם וּלְיָלָה אֲשֶׁר לֹא־אֶתֶן לָכֶם חֲנִינָה: {פ}

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

<sup>9</sup> 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. <sup>10</sup> “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?” <sup>11</sup> then you are to answer them: “It is because your ancestors abandoned me, says Yahweh, and followed other gods, and served and worshipped them. They abandoned me and did not keep my Law; <sup>12</sup> 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. <sup>13</sup> 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.”

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

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

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

<sup>11</sup> The literal translation of ‘ancestors’ is ‘fathers’.

<sup>12</sup> For the argumentation here, compare 7:23–26.

<sup>13</sup> ‘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<sup>ד</sup> לִכְן הֵנָּה יָמִים בָּאִים נֹאמְרֵהוּ וְלֹא יֹאמַר עוֹד  
חִי־יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר הֵעֲלָה אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵאֶרֶץ  
מִצְרַיִם: טו כִּי אִם־חִי־יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר הֵעֲלָה אֶת־בְּנֵי  
יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵאֶרֶץ צָפוֹן וּמִכָּל הָאֲרָצוֹת אֲשֶׁר הִדִּיחָם  
שָׁמָּה וְהִשְׁבֵּתִים עַל־אֲדָמָתָם אֲשֶׁר נָתַתִּי  
לְאֲבוֹתָם: {פ}

טז הִנְנִי שֹׁלֵחַ לְדוֹגִים לְדִיגִים רַבִּים נֹאמְרֵהוּ  
וְדִיגִים וְאַחֲרֵי־כֵן אֲשַׁלַּח לְרַבִּים צִידִים וְצִדּוֹם מֵעַל  
כָּל־הָר וּמֵעַל כָּל־גִּבְעָה וּמִנְקִיקֵי הַסְּלָעִים: יז כִּי  
עֵינַי עַל־כָּל־דֶּרֶכֶיהֶם לֹא נִסְתָּרוּ מִלְּפָנַי וְלֹא־נִצְפָן  
עוֹנָם מִנֶּגֶד עֵינַי: יח וְשִׁלַּמְתִּי רֵאשׁוֹנָה מִשְׁנֵה עוֹנָם  
וְחַטָּאתָם עַל חֵלָם אֶת־אֲרָצִי בְּנִבְלַת שְׁקוּצֵיהֶם  
וְתוֹעֲבוֹתֵיהֶם מִלְאוּ אֶת־נַחֲלָתִי: {פ}

יט יְהוָה עֲזִי וּמַעֲזִי  
וּמְנוּסֵי בְיוֹם צָרָה  
אֵלֶיךָ גּוֹיִם יָבֹאוּ מֵאִפְסֵי־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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 אֲדָם־שֶׁקֶר נָחֲלוּ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ  
הַבֵּל וְאֵין־בָּם מוֹעִיל:  
הִיעֲשֶׂה־לּוֹ אָדָם אֱלֹהִים כ  
וְהָמָּה לֹא אֱלֹהִים:

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

<sup>20</sup> Can anyone human make his own gods?  
These are not gods at all!"

כֹּא לְכֵן הִנְנִי מוֹדִיעֶם בְּפַעַם הַזֹּאת אוֹדִיעֶם אֶת־יָדִי  
וְאֶת־גְּבוּרָתִי וַיֵּדְעוּ כִּי־שְׁמִי יְהוָה: {ס} <sup>21</sup> "Now listen, I will make them acknowledge my hand and my might;  
and then they will know that Yahweh is my name."

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<sup>20</sup> For the 2<sup>nd</sup> line, compare 2:11 and a similar construction in 2K 19:18

<sup>21</sup> 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?

## JEREMIAH 17

## 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 ושמטתה ובך מנחלתך אשר נתתי לך  
והעבדתיך את-איביך בארץ אשר לא-ידעת כי-  
אש קדחתם באפי עד-עולם תוקד: {ס}

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

<sup>1</sup> “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, <sup>2</sup> while their children remember their altars and their sacred poles by the green trees on the high hills. <sup>3</sup> 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. <sup>4</sup> 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.”

<sup>5</sup> Yahweh says this:

“Accursed be anyone who trusts in human beings,  
who relies on human strength  
and whose heart turns from Yahweh.

<sup>6</sup> 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.

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<sup>1</sup> Vv. 1–4 are not present in the LXX. ‘Their altars’ follows the Vg (*ararum eorum*); the MT has ‘the altars’.

<sup>2</sup> ‘Scared poles’ translates ‘Asherim’ (see #Ex 34:13 and #Jg 2:13).

<sup>3</sup> In the MT, ‘your high places’ precedes ‘because of the sin of’, here transposed.

<sup>4</sup> The literal (conjectural) translation of ‘relinquish’ is ‘relax your hand’ (לְבַדֶּךָ); the MT has ‘relax and by you’ (וּבְךָ). The NRSV, following 2 Hebrew MSS and Theodotion, ends this verse with, “for in my anger, a fire is kindled that shall burn forever.”

<sup>5</sup> 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).

<sup>6</sup> The word translated ‘shrub’ occurs only here and in 48:6; it has been identified as a kind of juniper.

ז בְּרוּךְ הַגִּבֹּר אֲשֶׁר יִבְטַח בַּיהוָה  
 וְהָיָה יְהוָה מִבְּטָחוֹ:  
 ח וְהָיָה כְּעֵץ | שְׁתוּל עַל-מַיִם  
 וְעַל-יּוֹבֵל יִשְׁלַח שְׁרָשָׁיו  
 וְלֹא יִרָא יִרְאָה כִּי-יָבֹא חֹם  
 וְהָיָה עָלָיו רֵעֵן  
 וּבְשָׁנָה בַצָּרָה לֹא יִדָּאג  
 וְלֹא יִמָּישׁ מַעֲשׂוֹת פְּרִי:  
 ט עֵקֶב הַלֵּב מִכָּל  
 וְאָנֶשׁ הוּא  
 מִי יֵדְעֵנוּ:  
 י אֲנִי יְהוָה חֹקֵר לֵב  
 בַּחֲן כְּלִיּוֹת  
 וְלֹתֵת לְאִישׁ כְּדַרְכּוֹ  
 כִּפְרִי מַעֲלָלָיו: {ס}  
 יא קִרְא דָּגֵל וְלֹא יִלָּד  
 עֹשֶׂה עֹשֶׂר וְלֹא בִמְשָׁפֵט  
 בַּחֲצֵי יָמוֹ יַעֲזֹבֵנוּ  
 וּבְאַחֲרֵיתוֹ יִהְיֶה נָבֵל:

- 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.”

7 NETB substitutes the divine name (twice in this verse) for the 1<sup>st</sup> 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).



יב כִּסֵּא כְבוֹד מְרוֹם מֵרֵאשִׁיט  
 מְקוֹם מִקְדָּשָׁנוּ:  
 יג מְקוֹה יִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוָה  
 כָּל-עֲזֹבֶיךָ יִבְשׁוּ  
 יסוּרֵי וְסוּרֵי בָאָרֶץ יִכָּתְבוּ  
 כִּי עָזְבוּ מְקוֹר מַי־חַיִּים אֶת-יְהוָה: {פ}  
 יד רַפְּאֵנִי יְהוָה וְאֲרָפָא  
 הוֹשִׁיעֵנִי וְאֹשֶׁעָה  
 כִּי תִהְלֹתִי אִתָּה:  
 טו הִנֵּה-הֵמָּה אֹמְרִים אֵלַי  
 אִיָּה דְבַר-יְהוָה יָבֹוא נָא:  
 טז וְאֲנִי לֹא-אַצְטִי | מִרָעָה אַחֲרֶיךָ  
 וַיּוֹם אֲנוֹשׁ לֹא הִתְאַוִּיתִי אִתָּה יִדְעָתָה  
 מוֹצֵא שְׂפָתַי נֹכַח פְּנֶיךָ הָיָה:  
 ז אֲלֹתֶי-הֵי-לִי לְמַחֲתָה  
 מַחֲסִי-אִתָּה בַּיּוֹם רָעָה:  
 ח יִבְשׁוּ רִדְפֵי וְאֵל-אֲבִשָּׁה אֲנִי

- 12 A glorious throne, sublime from the beginning,  
such is our Holy Place.
- 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.
- 14 Heal me, Yahweh, and I shall be healed;  
save me, and I shall be saved,  
for you are my praise.
- 15 Look, they keep saying to me,  
"Where is Yahweh's word? Let it come true then!"
- 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.
- 17 Do not cause me dismay,  
you, my refuge in time of disaster.
- 18 Let my persecutors be confounded, not me;

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 (מִרָעָה) the MT reads, 'shepherd' (מִרְעָה).

17 For the nuance 'dismay' (translating מַחֲתָה) 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.



יִחַתּוּ הֵמָּה וְאַל־אֶחָתָהּ אָנִי  
הַבִּיא עֲלֵיהֶם יוֹם רָעָה  
וּמִשְׁנָה שְׁבָרוֹן שְׁבָרָם: {ס}

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

י<sup>ט</sup> כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה אֵלֵי הַלֵּךְ וְעַמְדָּתָ בְּשַׁעַר בְּנֵי־  
הָעָם עִם אֲשֶׁר יָבֹאוּ בּוֹ מֶלְכֵי יְהוּדָה וְאֲשֶׁר יֵצְאוּ  
בּוֹ וּבְכָל שַׁעְרֵי יְרוּשָׁלַם: <sup>כ</sup> וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵיהֶם שְׁמְעוּ  
דְּבַר־יְהוָה מֶלְכֵי יְהוּדָה וְכָל־יְהוּדָה וְכָל יֹשְׁבֵי  
יְרוּשָׁלַם הַבָּאִים בְּשַׁעְרֵים הָאֵלֶּה: <sup>כא</sup> כֹּה אָמַר  
יְהוָה הִשְׁמְרוּ בְּנִפְשׁוֹתֵיכֶם וְאַל־תִּשְׂאוּ מִשָּׂא בְיוֹם  
הַשַּׁבָּת וְהִבֵּאתֶם בְּשַׁעְרֵי יְרוּשָׁלַם: <sup>כב</sup> וְלֹא־תוֹצִיאוּ  
מִשָּׂא מִבֵּיתֵיכֶם בְּיוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת וְכָל־מְלָאכָה לֹא  
תַעֲשׂוּ וְקִדַּשְׁתֶּם אֶת־יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת כְּאֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתִי אֶת־  
אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם: <sup>כג</sup> וְלֹא שְׁמְעוּ וְלֹא הָטוּ אֶת־אָזְנָם וַיִּקְשׁוּ  
אֶת־עַרְפָּם לִבְלֹתִי שׁוֹמֵעַ שְׁמוֹעַ וּלְבַלְתִּי קַחַת  
מוֹסֵר: <sup>כד</sup> וְהָיָה אִם־שָׁמַעַתְּ שְׁמִיעוֹן אֵלַי נֶאֱמַר־יְהוָה

<sup>19</sup> 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. <sup>20</sup> 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. <sup>21</sup> 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. <sup>22</sup> 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. <sup>23</sup> They would not hear, would not pay attention; they deliberately refused to listen or accept instruction. <sup>24</sup> 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

<sup>19</sup> 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.

<sup>20</sup> 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.

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

<sup>22</sup> 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.

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

<sup>24</sup> The MT has ‘oracle of Yahweh’ in place of ‘But Yahweh says’.

לְבַלְתִּי הָבִיֵּא מִשָּׂא בְשַׁעְרֵי הָעִיר הַזֹּאת בַּיּוֹם  
 הַשַּׁבָּת וּלְקַדֵּשׁ אֶת־יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת לְבַלְתִּי עֲשׂוֹת־בָּהּ  
 כָּל־מְלָאכָה: <sup>כ</sup>וּבָאוּ בְשַׁעְרֵי הָעִיר הַזֹּאת מְלָכִים  
 וְשָׂרִים יֹשְׁבִים עַל־כֶּסֶּא דָּוִד רֹכְבִּים בְּרֶכֶב  
 וּבִסּוּסִים הֵמָּה וְשָׂרֵיהֶם אִישׁ יְהוּדָה וְיֹשְׁבֵי  
 יְרוּשָׁלַם וְיֹשְׁבֵי הָעִיר־הַזֹּאת לְעוֹלָם: <sup>כ</sup>וּבָאוּ  
 מִעֲרֵי־יְהוּדָה וּמִסְבִּיבוֹת יְרוּשָׁלַם וּמֵאֶרֶץ בְּנֵי־מִן  
 וּמִן־הַשְּׁפֵלָה וּמִן־הָהָר וּמִן־הַנֶּגֶב מִבָּאִים עֹלָה  
 וְזֶבַח וּמִנְחָה וּלְבֹנָה וּמִבְּאֵי תוֹדָה בֵּית יְהוָה:  
<sup>כ</sup>וְאִם־לֹא תִשְׁמָעוּ אֵלַי לְקַדֵּשׁ אֶת־יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת  
 וּלְבַלְתִּי שְׂאת מִשָּׂא וּבָא בְשַׁעְרֵי יְרוּשָׁלַם בַּיּוֹם  
 הַשַּׁבָּת וְהָצַתִּי אֵשׁ בְּשַׁעְרֶיהָ וְאָכְלָה אֲרָמְנוֹת  
 יְרוּשָׁלַם וְלֹא תִכָּבֶּה: {פ}

holy and do no work on that day, <sup>25</sup> 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. <sup>26</sup> 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. <sup>27</sup> 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.""

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

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

<sup>27</sup> Even bringing offerings for the Temple into the city was prohibited on the Sabbath!

## JEREMIAH 18

## ירמיהו פרק יח

א הדבר אשר היה אל־יִרְמְיָהוּ מֵאֵת יְהוָה לֵאמֹר:  
ב קום וִירְדָּתָּ בֵּית הַיּוֹצֵר וְשָׁמָּה אֲשַׁמְיַעְךָ אֶת־  
דְּבָרִי: ג וְאֶרְדָּ בֵּית הַיּוֹצֵר וְהִנֵּהוּ [וְהִנֵּה־הוּא] עֹשֶׂה  
מִלְאָכָה עַל־הָאֲבָנִים: ד וְנִשְׁחַת הַכְּלִי אֲשֶׁר הוּא  
עֹשֶׂה בַחֲמֶר בְּיַד הַיּוֹצֵר וְשָׁב וַיַּעֲשֶׂהוּ כְּלִי אֲחֵר  
כַּאֲשֶׁר יִשָּׁר בְּעֵינֵי הַיּוֹצֵר לַעֲשׂוֹת: {ס}  
ה וַיְהִי דְבַר־יְהוָה אֵלַי לֵאמֹר: ו הַיּוֹצֵר הַזֶּה לֹא־  
אוֹכֵל לַעֲשׂוֹת לָכֶם בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל נֶאֱסִי־הוּא הִנֵּה  
כַחֲמֶר בְּיַד הַיּוֹצֵר כִּן־אַתֶּם בְּיַדִּי בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל: {ס}  
ז רַגַע אֲדַבֵּר עַל־גּוֹי וְעַל־מַמְלָכָה לְנִתּוֹשׁ וּלְנִתּוֹץ  
וּלְהָאֲבִיד: ח וְשָׁב הַגּוֹי הַהוּא מִרְעַתוֹ אֲשֶׁר דִּבַּרְתִּי  
עָלָיו וְנִחַמְתִּי עַל־הִרְעָה אֲשֶׁר חֲשַׁבְתִּי לַעֲשׂוֹת  
לָיו: {ס}

<sup>1</sup> The word that came to Jeremiah from Yahweh as follows, <sup>2</sup> “Make your way down to the potter’s house, and there I shall tell you what I have to say.” <sup>3</sup> So, I went down to the potter’s house; and there he was, working at the wheel. <sup>4</sup> 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.  
<sup>5</sup> Then the word of Yahweh came to me as follows, <sup>6</sup> “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.  
<sup>7</sup> “Sometimes, I announce that I shall uproot, break down and destroy a certain nation or kingdom <sup>8</sup> 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

- <sup>1</sup> The time of this enacted parable is before 598 BCE, since the great disaster has not yet taken place (see v. 12).  
<sup>2</sup> Literally translated, this verse opens, “Get up and go down;” the 1<sup>st</sup> verb is not literal but is idiomatic for the initiation of an action.  
<sup>3</sup> The literal translation of ‘wheel’ is ‘two wheels’; the mechanism consisted of two circular plates mounted on a vertical spindle.  
<sup>4</sup> In place of ‘as may happen with clay’ (בַּחֲמֶר), following some MSS, the MT has ‘with clay’ (בְּחִמְרָא); the phrase is not present in the LXX.  
<sup>5</sup> The literal translation of ‘as follows’ is simply ‘saying’.  
<sup>6</sup> 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.  
<sup>7</sup> 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.  
<sup>8</sup> 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 לְבַנוֹת וּלְנִטּוֹעַ:  
 י וַעֲשֵׂה הָרֵעָה הָרַע בְּעֵינַי לְבַלְתִּי שְׁמַע בְּקוֹלִי  
 וְנִחַמְתִּי עַל־הַטּוֹבָה אֲשֶׁר אָמַרְתִּי לְהִיטִיב  
 אוֹתוֹ: {ס}

יא וַעֲתָה אֲמַר־נָא אֶל־אִישׁ־יְהוּדָה וְעַל־יוֹשְׁבֵי  
 יְרוּשָׁלַם לֵאמֹר כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה הִנֵּה אֲנֹכִי יוֹצֵר  
 עֲלֵיכֶם רָעָה וְחָשַׁב עֲלֵיכֶם מַחֲשָׁבָה שׁוּבוּ נָא אִישׁ  
 מִדְּרָכּוֹ הָרָעָה וְהִיטִיבוּ דַרְכֵיכֶם וּמַעַלְלֵיכֶם:  
 יב וְאָמְרוּ נֹאֲשׁ כִּי־אַחֲרֵי מַחֲשַׁבוֹתֵינוּ נֵלֶךְ וְאִישׁ  
 שְׁרָרוֹת לְבוֹהֲרַע נַעֲשֶׂה: {פ}

יג לִכֵּן כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה  
 שְׁאֲלוּ־נָא בְּגוֹיִם  
 מִי שָׁמַע כֹּאֲלֶה  
 שְׁעָרָתָ עָשְׂתָה מֵאֵד  
 בְּתוֹלַת יִשְׂרָאֵל:

יד הֲיַעֲזֹב מִצֹּר שְׂדֵי שֶׁלֶג לְבַנּוֹן  
 אִם־יִנָּתְשׁוּ מִיַּם זָרִים קָרִים נוֹזְלִים:

9 “And sometimes, I announce that I shall build up and plant a certain nation or kingdom<sup>10</sup> 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.”<sup>12</sup> 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?

<sup>9</sup> 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).

<sup>10</sup> On the use of the word ‘revoke’, see #8.

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

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

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

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

טו כִּי־שָׁכַחְנִי עַמִּי  
 לִשְׁוֹא יִקְטְרוּ  
 ויִכְשְׁלוּם בְּדַרְכֵיהֶם  
 שְׁבִילֵי עוֹלָם לִלְכֹת נְתִיבוֹת  
 דֶּרֶךְ לֹא סְלוּלָה:  
 טז לְשׁוֹם אֶרֶץ לְשֹׁמֵה  
 שְׁרוּקַת שְׁרִיקוֹת עוֹלָם  
 כָּל עוֹבֵר עָלֶיהָ  
 יִשֹּׁם ויִגִּיד בְּרֹאשׁוֹ:  
 יז כְּרוּחַ־קִּדִּים אֲפִיעֶם  
 לִפְנֵי אוֹיֵב  
 עֲרֹף וְלֹא־פָנִים אֶרְאֶם  
 בְּיוֹם אִידָם: {ס}

יח וַיֹּאמְרוּ לָכֹו וְנַחֲשֶׁבֶה עַל־יִרְמְיָהוּ מַחֲשָׁבוֹת כִּי  
 לֹא־תֵאבֹד תּוֹרָה מִפֶּהוּ וְעֵצָה מִחֻכְם וְדָבָר מִנְּבִיא  
 לָכֹו וְנִבְּהוּ בַלְשׁוֹן וְאֶל־נִקְשִׁיבָה אֶל־כָּל־דִּבְרָיו:  
 יט הַקְשִׁיבָה יְהוָה אֵלַי  
 וּשְׁמַע לְקוֹל יְרִיבִי:

- 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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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.

ב הַיִּשְׁלֵם תַּחַת־טוֹבָה רָעָה  
 כִּי־כָרוּ שׁוֹחָה לְנַפְשִׁי  
 זָכַר | עַמְּדִי לִפְנֶיךָ  
 לְדַבֵּר עֲלֵיהֶם טוֹבָה  
 לְהָשִׁיב אֶת־חַמַּתְךָ מֵהֶם:  
 כֹּא לְכֹן תֵּן אֶת־בְּנֵיהֶם לָרָעָב  
 וְהַגֵּרם עַל־יַד־חֶרֶב  
 וְתַהֲלִינָה נְשֵׁיהֶם שְׂפִלוֹת וְאַלְמָנוֹת  
 וְאַנְשֵׁיהֶם יִהְיוּ הֶרְגֵי מוֹת  
 בַּחוּרֵיהֶם מִכִּי־חֶרֶב בְּמִלְחָמָה:  
 כב תִּשְׁמַע זַעֲקָה מִבְּתֵיהֶם  
 כִּי־תָבִיא עֲלֵיהֶם גְּדוּד פְּתָאִם  
 כִּי־כָרוּ שִׂיחָה שׁוֹחָה לְלַכְדָּנִי  
 וּפְחִים טָמְנוּ לְרַגְלִי:  
 כג וְאַתָּה יְיָהוָה יָדַעְתָּ אֶת־כָּל־עֲצָתָם עָלַי  
 לְמוֹת אֶל־תִּכְפֹּר עַל־עוֹנָם  
 וְחַטָּאתָם מִלִּפְנֶיךָ אֶל־תִּמְחֶה  
 וְהָיוּ וַיִּהְיוּ מִכְשָׁלִים לִפְנֶיךָ  
 בָּעֵת אַפָּךְ עֲשֵׂה בָהֶם: {ס}

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.  
 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.  
 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.  
 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!

<sup>20</sup> 'Digging a pit' is a common metaphor for plotting to kill someone.

<sup>21</sup> 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.

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

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



## ירמיהו פרק יט

<sup>א</sup> כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה הֵלֵךְ וּקְנִיתָ בִּקְבֶּקֶב יוֹצֵר חֶרֶשׁ  
וּמִזְקָנֵי הָעָם וּמִזְקָנֵי הַכֹּהֲנִים: <sup>ב</sup> וַיֵּצֵאתָ אֶל־גֵּיא בֶן־  
הַנֶּחֱשִׁים אֲשֶׁר פָּתַח שַׁעַר הַחֲרוֹסוֹת הַחֲרָסִית וּקְרֵאתָ  
שָׁם אֶת־הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר־אֲדַבֵּר אֵלֶיךָ: <sup>ג</sup> וְאָמַרְתָּ  
שִׁמְעוּ דְּבַר־יְהוָה מֶלֶכִּי יְהוּדָה וְיֹשְׁבֵי יְרוּשָׁלַם כֹּה־  
אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הִנְנִי מֵבִיא רָעָה  
עַל־הַמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר כָּל־שִׁמְעָה תִּצְלָנָה אֲזִנּוֹ:  
<sup>ד</sup> יַעֲזֹב אֲשֶׁר עֲזָבְנִי וַיִּנְכְּרוּ אֶת־הַמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה  
וַיִּקְטְרוּ־בּוֹ לֵאלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יָדְעוּם הֵמָּה  
וְאֲבוֹתֵיהֶם וּמֶלֶכִּי יְהוּדָה וּמִלְּאֻ אֶת־הַמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה  
דָּם נָקִים: <sup>ה</sup> וּבָנֻהוּ אֶת־בָּמֹת הַבָּעַל לְשִׁרְף אֶת־  
בְּנֵיהֶם בָּאֵשׁ עֹלֹת לַבָּעַל אֲשֶׁר לֹא־צִוִּיתִי וְלֹא  
דִּבַּרְתִּי וְלֹא עָלְתָה עַל־לִבִּי: {פ}

<sup>ו</sup> וְלִכֹּן הִנֵּה־יָמִים בָּאִים נֹאֲס־יְהוָה וְלֹא־יִקְרָא  
לַמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה עוֹד הַתִּפְתָּ וַיִּגֵּיא בֶן־הַנֶּחֱשִׁים כִּי אִם־גֵּיא

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<sup>1</sup> 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. <sup>2</sup> Go out to the Valley of Ben-Hinnom, just outside the Gate of the Potsherds. There proclaim the words I shall say to you. <sup>3</sup> 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. <sup>4</sup> 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; <sup>5</sup> 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.

<sup>6</sup> "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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- <sup>1</sup> 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.
- <sup>2</sup> The Kethib/Qere difference here would benefit from an explanation.
- <sup>3</sup> 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).
- <sup>4</sup> In place of 'made this city foreign', here following the MT, the NRSV has 'have profaned this place'.
- <sup>5</sup> The 'thing never ordered' refers not to the qualification 'to Baal' but to burning the sons in the fire.
- <sup>6</sup> See 7:31-32 for an almost word for word repetition of vv. 5-6.



הַהֲרָגָה: <sup>ז</sup>וּבְקָתִי אֶת־עֲצַת יְהוּדָה וִירוּשָׁלַם  
בְּמָקוֹם הַזֶּה וְהַפְלֵתִים בַּחֲרָב לִפְנֵי אֹיְבֵיהֶם וּבִיד  
מִבְקָשֵׁי נַפְשָׁם וְנָתַתִּי אֶת־נִבְלָתָם לְמֵאֲכָל לַעוֹף  
הַשָּׁמַיִם וּלְבִהֶמַת הָאָרֶץ: <sup>ח</sup>וְשָׂמְתִי אֶת־הָעִיר  
הַזֹּאת לְשִׁמָּה וּלְשָׂרָקָה כָּל עֹבֵר עָלֶיהָ יִשֹּׁם וְיִשָּׂרָק  
עַל־כָּל־מַכְתָּהָ: <sup>ט</sup>וְהֵאֲכִלְתִּים אֶת־בָּשָׂר בְּנֵיהֶם  
וְאֵת בָּשָׂר בְּנֵיתֵיהֶם וְאִישׁ בְּשַׂר־רֵעֵהוּ יֹאכְלוּ  
בְּמִצּוֹר וּבְמִצּוֹק אֲשֶׁר יֵצִיקוּ לָהֶם אֹיְבֵיהֶם וּמִבְקָשֵׁי  
נַפְשָׁם: <sup>י</sup>וְשִׁבְרַת הַבִּקְבָּק לְעֵינֵי הָאֲנָשִׁים הַהֲלֹכִים  
אוֹתָהּ: <sup>יא</sup>וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵיהֶם כֹּה־אָמַר | יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת  
כֹּכָה אֲשַׁבֵּר אֶת־הָעָם הַזֶּה וְאֶת־הָעִיר הַזֹּאת  
כַּאֲשֶׁר יִשְׁבֹּר אֶת־כָּלִי הַיּוֹצֵר אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יוֹכֵל  
לְהִרְפָּה עוֹד וּבִתְתָּפֶת יִקְבְּרוּ מֵאִין מָקוֹם לְקִבּוּר:  
<sup>יב</sup>כִּן־אֶעֱשֶׂה לְמָקוֹם הַזֶּה נֹאֲס־יְהוָה וּלְיוֹשְׁבָיו  
וּלְתֵת אֶת־הָעִיר הַזֹּאת כְּתִתָּהּ: <sup>יג</sup>וְהָיוּ בִּתְּי

the Valley of Slaughter. <sup>7</sup> 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. <sup>8</sup> 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. <sup>9</sup> 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.” <sup>10</sup> You must break the jug in front of the men who are with you, <sup>11</sup> 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. <sup>12</sup> That is how I shall treat this place, says Yahweh, and its inhabitants, by making this city like Topheth. <sup>13</sup> And

<sup>7</sup> There is a play on words between ‘to empty’ (בְּקָתִי) and ‘jug’ (בִּקְבָּק) in vv. 1 & 10.

<sup>8</sup> 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.

<sup>9</sup> 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.

<sup>10</sup> See the note on the word ‘jug’ (בִּקְבָּק) in #7.

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

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

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

יְרוּשָׁלַם וּבְתֵי מַלְכֵי יְהוּדָה בְּמִקְוֹם הַתִּפְתָּה  
הַטְּמְאִים לְכָל הַבָּתִּים אֲשֶׁר קִטְּרוּ עַל-גִּגְתֵיהֶם  
לְכָל צָבָא הַשָּׁמַיִם וְהַסֵּד נִסְכִּים לֵאלֹהִים  
אַחֲרִים: {פ}

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.””

יָ וַיָּבֹא יִרְמְיָהוּ מִהַתִּפְתָּה אֲשֶׁר שְׁלָחוּ יְהוָה שָׁם  
לְהַנְבִּיא וַיַּעֲמֵד בַּחֲצַר בֵּית-יְהוָה וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל-כָּל-  
הָעָם: {ס}

<sup>14</sup> 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:

טו כֹּה-אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הִנְנִי מֵבִי  
אֶל-הָעִיר הַזֹּאת וְעַל-כָּל-עֲרִיָּהּ אֶת כָּל-הָרָעָה  
אֲשֶׁר דִּבַּרְתִּי עָלֶיהָ כִּי הִקְשׁוּ אֶת-עַרְפָּם לְבַלְתִּי  
שְׁמוֹעַ אֶת-דִּבְרֵי:

<sup>15</sup> “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.””

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<sup>14</sup> Literally translated, this verse opens, “And Jeremiah entered from Topheth.”

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

## ירמיהו פרק ב

א וישמע פֶּשְׁחור בֶּן־אֹמֶר הַכֹּהֵן וְהוּא־פֶּקִיד נֶגִיד בְּבֵית יְהוָה אֶת־יִרְמְיָהוּ נָבִיא אֶת־הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה:  
ב ויכה פֶּשְׁחור אֶת יִרְמְיָהוּ הַנָּבִיא ויִתֵּן אֹתוֹ עַל־  
הַמַּהֲפָכֶת אֲשֶׁר בַּשַּׁעַר בְּנִימָן הָעֶלְיוֹן אֲשֶׁר בְּבֵית יְהוָה:  
ג ויהי מַמְחָרָת ויצא פֶּשְׁחור אֶת־יִרְמְיָהוּ מִן־הַמַּהֲפָכֶת ויאמר אֵלָיו יִרְמְיָהוּ לֹא פֶּשְׁחור קָרָא יְהוָה שְׁמֹךְ כִּי אִם־מָגוֹר מִסָּבִיב: {ס}

ד כִּי כֹה אָמַר יְהוָה הַנֶּנִּי נִתְּנָךְ לַמָּגוֹר לָךְ וּלְכָל־  
אֹהֲבֶיךָ וְנָפְלוּ בַּחֶרֶב אִיְבֵיהֶם וְעִינֶיךָ רְאוּת וְאֶת־  
כָּל־יְהוּדָה אֲתָן בְּיַד מֶלֶךְ־בָּבֶל וְהִגְלָם בְּבִלְהָ וְהִכָּם בַּחֶרֶב:  
ה וְנָתַתִּי אֶת־כָּל־חֶסֶן הָעִיר הַזֹּאת וְאֶת־כָּל־יִגְיָעָה וְאֶת־כָּל־יִקְרָה וְאֶת כָּל־אוֹצְרוֹת מַלְכֵי יְהוּדָה אֲתָן בְּיַד אִיְבֵיהֶם וּבְזוֹם וּלְקָחוֹם וְהִבִּיאוֹם בְּבִלְהָ: וְאֵתָּה פֶּשְׁחור וְכָל־יֹשְׁבֵי בֵיתְךָ תֵּלְכוּ

## JEREMIAH 20

<sup>1</sup> Now, the priest Pashhur son of Immer, who was the chief of security in the Temple of Yahweh, heard Jeremiah making this prophecy. <sup>2</sup> 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. <sup>3</sup> 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.

<sup>4</sup> “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. <sup>5</sup> 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. <sup>6</sup> And you, Pashhur, and your whole household, will go into

### JEREMIAH 20

- <sup>1</sup> ‘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’.
- <sup>2</sup> Pashhur publicly punished Jeremiah to forestall a repetition of this frightful pronouncement.
- <sup>3</sup> 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).
- <sup>4</sup> 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.
- <sup>5</sup> The literal translation of ‘plunder them’ is ‘take them as plunder’.
- <sup>6</sup> The literal translation of ‘you whole household’ is ‘all who live in your house’.

בַּשְּׁבִי וּבַבֶּל תָּבוֹא וְשָׁם תָּמוּת וְשָׁם תִּקְבָּר אֶתְּהָ  
וְכָל־אֶהְיֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר־נִבֵּאתָ לָהֶם בְּשָׁקֶר: {פ}

ז פָּתִיתָנִי יְהוָה וְאַפָּת

חִזַּקְתָּנִי וְתוֹכַל

הֵיִיתִי לְשִׁחוּךְ כָּל־הַיּוֹם

כָּל־הַיּוֹם לֵעָג לִי:

ח כִּי־מִדֵּי אֲדַבֵּר אֲזַעֵק

חֲמָס וְשׂוֹד אֶקְרָא

כִּי־הָיָה דְּבַר־יְהוָה לִי לְחִרְפָּה וּלְקֶלֶס

כָּל־הַיּוֹם:

ט וְאִמַּרְתִּי לֹא־אֲזַכְּרֶנּוּ

וְלֹא־אֲדַבֵּר עוֹד בְּשִׁמּוֹ

וְהָיָה בְּלִבִּי כָאֵשׁ בֹּעֶרֶת

עָצָר בְּעַצְמוֹתַי

וְנִלְאַיתִי כָּל־כֶּלֶל

וְלֹא אֹכֵל:

י כִּי שָׁמַעְתִּי דְּבַת רַבִּים

מְגֹזֵר מִסָּבִיב

הִגִּידוּ וְנִגִּידֶנּוּ

כָּל אֶנְוֹשׁ שְׁלָמִי שָׁמְרֵי צַלְעֵי

captivity; you will go to Babylon; there you will die and there be buried,  
you and your friends to whom you have prophesied lies.””

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.

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.

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.

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,

7 Imagery of seduction and struggle characterises Yahweh’s ascendancy over the prophet.

8 For the 3<sup>rd</sup> 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).

אולי יפתה ונוכלה לו  
 ונקחה נקמתנו ממנו:  
 ויהנה אותי כגבור עריץ <sup>יא</sup>  
 על-בן רדפי יבשלו ולא יכלו  
 בשו מאד כי-לא השפילו  
 כלמת עולם לא תשכח:  
 ויהנה צבאות בתן צדיק <sup>יב</sup>  
 ראה כליות ולב  
 אראה נקמתך מהם  
 כי אליך גליתי את-ריבני: {ס}  
 שירו ליהוה <sup>יג</sup>  
 הללו את-יהוה  
 כי הציל את-נפש אביון  
 מיד מרעים: {ס}  
 ארור היום אשר ילדתי בו <sup>יד</sup>  
 יום אשר-ילדתני אמי אליהי ברוך:  
 ארור האיש אשר בשר את-אבי לאמר <sup>טו</sup>  
 ילד-לך בן זכר שמח שמחהו:

"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 1<sup>st</sup> 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*' (אביון, 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 וְהָיָה הָאִישׁ הַהוּא  
 כְּעָרִים אֲשֶׁר־הִפֹּךְ יְהוָה וְלֹא נָחַם  
 וְשָׁמַע זַעקָהּ בַּבֹּקֶר  
 וּתְרוּעָה בַּעֲת צַהֲרָיִם:  
 זי אֲשֶׁר לֹא־מוֹתַתְנִי מִרַּחֵם  
 וַתְּהִי־לִי אִמִּי קִבְרִי  
 וְרַחֲמָהּ הָרַת עוֹלָם:  
 יח לָמָּה זֶה מִרַּחֵם יֵצְאתִי  
 לִרְאוֹת עֵמָל וַיִּגְזֹן  
 וַיִּכְלוּ בְּבִשְׁת 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."

## JEREMIAH 21

## ירמיהו פרק כא

אֵלֶּיּוֹ הַמֶּלֶךְ צִדְקִיָּהוּ אֶת־פָּשְׁחוּר בֶּן־מַלְכִּיָּה וְאֶת־  
צִפְנְיָה בֶּן־מַעֲשִׂיָּה הַכֹּהֵן לֵאמֹר: בִּדְרָשְׁנָא בַּעֲדֵנוּ  
אֶת־יְהוָה כִּי נִבְּוֹכַדְרֶאצַּר מֶלֶךְ־בָּבֶל נֶלְחַם עֲלֵינוּ  
אוּלִּי יַעֲשֶׂה יְהוָה אוֹתָנוּ כְּכָל־נִפְלְאוֹתָיו וַיַּעֲלֶה  
מֵעֵלֵינוּ: וַיֹּאמֶר יִרְמְיָהוּ אֲלֵיהֶם כֹּה תֹאמַרְןָ אֶל־  
צִדְקִיָּהוּ: {ס}

ד כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הִנְנִי מִסֵּב אֶת־כָּל־  
הַמִּלְחָמָה אֲשֶׁר בְּיָדְכֶם אֲשֶׁר אַתֶּם נֶלְחָמִים בָּם  
אֶת־מֶלֶךְ בָּבֶל וְאֶת־הַכַּשְׂדִּים הַצָּרִים עֲלֵיכֶם מִחוּץ  
לְחוֹמָה וְאֶסְפְּתִי אוֹתָם אֶל־תּוֹךְ הָעִיר הַזֹּאת:  
ה וְנִלְחַמְתִּי אֲנִי אִתְּכֶם בַּיָּד נְטוּיָה וּבְזְרוּעַ חֲזָקָה  
וּבְאֵף וּבִחְמָה וּבְקֶצֶף גָּדוֹל: וְהִכֵּיתִי אֶת־יוֹשְׁבֵי  
הָעִיר הַזֹּאת וְאֶת־הָאָדָם וְאֶת־הַבְּהֵמָה בְּדֶבֶר גָּדוֹל

<sup>1</sup> 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, <sup>2</sup> “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.” <sup>3</sup> Jeremiah said to them, “Take this answer to Zedekiah:

<sup>4</sup> “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. <sup>5</sup> I shall fight against you myself with outstretched hand and mighty arm, in anger, in fury and in great wrath. <sup>6</sup> And I shall strike down the inhabitants of this city, both human and animal; they will die of a great

## JEREMIAH 21

- <sup>1</sup> 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.
- <sup>2</sup> The verb translated ‘consult’ is often used of seeking information through a prophet (e.g., 2K 1:16, 8:8); but, it is obvious from the following that they were not seeking information but help.
- <sup>3</sup> The NRSV includes the last part of this verse as part of v. 4; here, we follow the MT & NJB.
- <sup>4</sup> The ‘Chaldeans’ were a group of people in the country south of Babylon from which Nebuchadnezzar came.
- <sup>5</sup> 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.
- <sup>6</sup> The NRSV has ‘pestilence’ in place of ‘plague’, here following the NJB.



יָמָתוּ: <sup>ז</sup>וְאַחֲרֵי־כֵן נֹאמְרָהּ אֶתֵּן אֶת־צַדְקִיָּהוּ  
מֶלֶךְ־יְהוּדָה וְאֶת־עַבְדָּיו וְאֶת־הָעָם וְאֶת־  
הַנְּשֹׂאִים בְּעִיר הַזֹּאת מִן־הַדֶּבֶר מִן־הַחֶרֶב וּמִן־  
הָרָעָב בְּיַד נְבוּכַדְרֶאצַּר מֶלֶךְ־בָּבֶל וּבְיַד אִיְבֵיהֶם  
וּבְיַד מְבַקְשֵׁי נַפְשָׁם וְהָכֵם לְפִי־חֶרֶב לֹא־יָחוּס  
עֲלֵיהֶם וְלֹא יַחְמֹל וְלֹא יִרְחָם: <sup>ח</sup>וְאֶל־הָעָם הַזֶּה  
תֹּאמַר כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה הִנְנִי נֹתֵן לְפָנֶיכֶם אֶת־דֶּרֶךְ  
הַחַיִּים וְאֶת־דֶּרֶךְ הַמָּוֶת: <sup>ט</sup>הַיֹּשֵׁב בְּעִיר הַזֹּאת  
יָמוּת בַּחֶרֶב וּבָרָעָב וּבַדֶּבֶר וְהַיֹּצֵא וְנָפַל עַל־  
הַכְּשָׁדִים הַצָּרִים עֲלֵיכֶם יַחִיה וְחָיָה וְהִתְהַלֵּךְ  
נַפְשׁוֹ לְשָׁלוֹל: <sup>י</sup>כִּי שָׁמַתִּי פָנַי בְּעִיר הַזֹּאת לְרָעָה  
וְלֹא לְטוֹבָה נֹאמְרָהּ בְּיַד־מֶלֶךְ בָּבֶל תִּנָּתֵן  
וְשָׂרְפָהּ בָּאֵשׁ: {ס}

<sup>יא</sup>וּלְבֵית מֶלֶךְ יְהוּדָה שָׁמְעוּ דְבַר־יְהוָה: <sup>יב</sup>בֵּית דָּוִד  
כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה

דִּינוּ לַבֹּקֶר מִשְׁפָּט  
וְהַצִּילוּ גְזוֹל מִיַּד עוֹשֵׁק  
כִּי־תֵצֵא כָאֵשׁ חֲמָתִי

plague. <sup>7</sup> 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.” <sup>8</sup> 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. <sup>9</sup> 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. <sup>10</sup> 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.””

<sup>11</sup> To the royal house of Judah: Listen to the word of Yahweh, <sup>12</sup> 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,

<sup>7</sup> A more literal translation of the opening ‘then’ is ‘and afterward’.

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

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

<sup>10</sup> 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.

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

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

וּבִעֲרָהּ וְאֵין מְכַבֵּה  
 מִפְּנֵי רָע מַעַלְלֵיהֶם מֵעַלְלֵיכֶם:  
 הִנְנִי אֵלַיִךְ יֹשֶׁבֶת הָעֵמֶק יג  
 צֹר הַמִּישׁוֹר נְאֻם־יְהוָה  
 הָאֹמְרִים מִי־יַחַת עָלֵינוּ  
 וּמִי יָבוֹא בְּמַעֲוֹנוֹתֵינוּ:  
 וּפָקַדְתִּי עָלֵיכֶם כְּפָרִי מֵעַלְלֵיכֶם יד  
 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

<sup>א</sup> כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה רֵד בֵּית-מֶלֶךְ יְהוּדָה וְדַבֵּרְתָּ שָׁם  
אֶת-הַדְּבָר הַזֶּה: <sup>ב</sup> וְאָמַרְתָּ שְׁמַע דְּבַר-יְהוָה מֶלֶךְ  
יְהוּדָה הַיֹּשֵׁב עַל-כִּסֵּא דָוִד אַתָּה וְעַבְדֶּיךָ וְעַמֶּיךָ  
הַבָּאִים בְּשַׁעְרֵי הָאֵלֶּה: <sup>ג</sup> כֹּה | אָמַר יְהוָה עֲשׂוּ  
מִשְׁפָּט וְצִדְקָה וְהִצִּילוּ גְזוּל מִיַּד עֹשֹׁק וְגֵר יִתּוֹם  
וְאַלמָנָה אֲלֹתָנוּ אֲלֹתֶחֱמָסוּ וְדָם נָקִי אֲלֹתִשְׁפֹּכוּ  
בַּמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה: <sup>ד</sup> כִּי אִם-עֲשׂוּ תַעֲשׂוּ אֶת-הַדְּבָר הַזֶּה  
וּבָאוּ בְּשַׁעְרֵי הַבַּיִת הַזֶּה מְלָכִים יֹשְׁבִים לְדָוִד עַל-  
כִּסְאוֹ לְכָבִים בָּרֶכֶב וּבַסּוּסִים הוּא וְעַבְדּוֹ וְעַמּוֹ:  
<sup>ה</sup> וְאִם לֹא תִשְׁמָעוּ אֶת-הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה בִּי  
נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי נְאֻם-יְהוָה כִּי-לַחֲרָבָה יִהְיֶה הַבַּיִת  
הַזֶּה: {פ}

<sup>ו</sup> יְכִיכָה | אָמַר יְהוָה עַל-בֵּית מֶלֶךְ יְהוּדָה  
גִּלְעָד אַתָּה לִי  
רֹאשׁ הַלְּבָנוֹן

## JEREMIAH 22

<sup>1</sup> Yahweh said this, “Go down to the palace of the king of Judah and there say this word, <sup>2</sup> “Hear the word of Yahweh, king of Judah now occupying the throne of David, you, your officials and your people who enter these gates. <sup>3</sup> 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. <sup>4</sup> 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. <sup>5</sup> However, if you do not listen to these words, then I swear by myself, says Yahweh, this palace shall become a ruin!

<sup>6</sup> “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

<sup>1</sup> Jeremiah is told to ‘go down’ from the Temple, which stood above the palace (cf. 26:10, 36:12).

<sup>2</sup> The NJB has ‘go through’ in place of ‘enter’, here following the NRSV.

<sup>3</sup> 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).

<sup>4</sup> If the people repent, their destruction will be averted and the Davidic dynasty preserved.

<sup>5</sup> Since Yahweh is incomparably great, he could swear by no higher authority than himself or his own great name.

<sup>6</sup> 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 מִדְּבָר  
עָרִים לֹא נוֹשְׁבָה נוֹשְׁבוֹ:  
וְקִדַּשְׁתִּי עֲלֶיךָ מְשַׁחֲתִים  
אִישׁ וְכָלִיו  
וְכָרְתוּ מִבְּחַר אֲרָזֶיךָ  
וְהִפִּילוּ עַל־הָאֵשׁ:

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

אֶל־תִּבְכּוּ לָמָת  
וְאֶל־תִּגְדּוּ לוֹ  
בָּכּוּ בְּכֹל לַהֲלֹךְ  
כִּי לֹא יָשׁוּב עוֹד  
וְרָאָה אֶת־אֶרֶץ מוֹלָדְתּוֹ:

כִּי כֹה אָמַר־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי שְׁלֹם בֶּן־יֹאשִׁיָּהוּ מֶלֶךְ  
יְהוּדָה הַמֶּלֶךְ תַּחַת יֹאשִׁיָּהוּ אָבִיו אֲשֶׁר יָצָא מִן־  
הַמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה לֹא־יָשׁוּב שָׁם עוֹד: יב כִּי בַּמָּקוֹם

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.

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.””

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.

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 1<sup>st</sup> 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־  
יֵרָאֶה עוֹד: {ס} to which he has been taken captive; and he will never see this country again.

- יג הוּי בָּנָה בֵּיתוֹ בְּלֹא־צֶדֶק  
וְעֲלִיּוֹתָיו בְּלֹא מִשְׁפָּט  
בְּרָעָהוּ יַעֲבֹד חַנָּם  
וּפָעֵלוֹ לֹא יִתֶּן־לוֹ:  
יד הָאֹמֵר אֲבִנָּה־לִּי בֵּית מְדוֹת  
וְעֲלִיּוֹת מְרוֹחִים  
וְקָרַע לוֹ  
חֲלוֹנֵי וְסָפּוֹן בָּאָרֶז וּמִשׁוֹחַ בַּשָּׁשֶׁר:  
טו הַתְּמַלֵּךְ כִּי אָתָּה מִתַּחֲרָה בָּאָרֶז  
אֲבִיד הָלֹא אָכַל וְשָׁתָה  
וַעֲשָׂה מִשְׁפָּט וְצִדְקָה  
אִז טוֹב לוֹ:  
טז דֵּן דִּין־עֲנִי וְאֶבְיוֹן  
אִז טוֹב  
הֲלֹא־הִיא הַדַּעַת אֹתִי  
נֹאס־יְהוָה:
- 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.

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 חֲלוֹנֵי וְסָפּוֹן instead of חֲלוֹנֵי וְסָפּוֹן, i.e., the plural noun with 3<sup>rd</sup> singular suffix rather than the 1<sup>st</sup> 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 2<sup>nd</sup> line implies that things went well for *everyone* (in Judah).

<p>כִּי אֵין עֵינַיִךְ וְלִבְךָ  כִּי אִם-עַל-בִּצְעֶךָ  וְעַל דַּם-הַנָּקִי לְשָׁפוֹךְ  וְעַל-הָעֶשֶׂק וְעַל-הַמְרוּצָה לַעֲשׂוֹת: {ס}</p> <p>יח לָכֵן כֹּה-אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי-יְהוֹיָקִים בֶּן-יֹאשִׁיָּהוּ מֶלֶךְ-יְהוּדָה</p> <p>לֹא-יִסְפְּדוּ לוֹ  הוּא אָחִי וְהוּא אָחוֹת  לֹא-יִסְפְּדוּ לוֹ  הוּא אֲדוֹן וְהוּא הֹדָה:  קְבוּרַת חֲמוֹר יִקָּבֵר  סָחוּב וְהִשְׁלָךְ  מֵהַלְאָה לְשַׁעְרֵי יְרוּשָׁלַם: {ס}</p> <p>ב עָלֵי הַלְבָנוֹן וְצִעֲקִי  וּבְבָשָׁן תִּגִּי קוֹלְךָ  וְצִעֲקִי מֵעֲבָרִים כִּי נִשְׁבְּרוּ  כָל-מְאֵהְבֶיךָ:</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>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!”</p> <p>19 He will have a donkey’s funeral  – dragged away and thrown  out of the gates of Jerusalem.”</p> <p>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>
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<sup>17</sup> The NJB has ‘your own interests’ in place of ‘dishonest gain’, here following the NRSV.

<sup>18</sup> 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.

<sup>19</sup> A similar judgment against this ungodly king is pronounced by Jeremiah in 36:30.

<sup>20</sup> 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 דְּרָכְךָ מִנְעוּרֶיךָ

כִּי לֹא-שָׁמַעַתָּ בְּקוֹלִי:

כב כָּל-רֹעֶיךָ תִּרְעַה-רוּחַ

וּמֵאֲהַבֶיךָ בְּשָׁבִי יִלְכוּ

כִּי אַז תִּבְשִׁי וְנִכְלַמְתָּ

מִכָּל רָעָתְךָ:

כג יֵשְׁבֶתִי יִשְׁבֶּתָּ בַּלְבָּנוֹן

מִקְנַנְתִּי מִקְנָנֹת בְּאֲרָזִים

מִה־נִּחְנַתָּ בְּבֹא-לְךָ חֲבָלִים

חֵיל כִּילְדָה:

כד כִּי-חַי־אָנִי נֹאס־יְהוָה כִּי אִם-יְהִיָּה כְּנִיָּהּ בֶּן־

יְהוֹיָקִים מֶלֶךְ יְהוּדָה חוֹתֶם עַל־יָד יְמִינִי כִּי מִשֹּׁם

אֶתְקַנֶּךָ: כה וְנִתַּתִּיךָ בְּיַד מִבְקָשֵׁי נַפְשֶׁךָ וּבְיַד אֲשֶׁר-

אֶתָּה יָגוּר מִפְּנֵיהֶם וּבְיַד נְבוּכַדְרֶאצַּר מֶלֶךְ-בָּבֶל

וּבְיַד הַכַּשְׂדִּים: כו וְהִטַּלְתִּי אֹתְךָ וְאֶת-אִמְךָ אֲשֶׁר

<sup>21</sup> 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.

<sup>22</sup> 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.

<sup>23</sup> O inhabitant of Lebanon,  
nested among the cedars,  
how you will groan when the anguish overtakes you,  
pain as of a woman in labour!

<sup>24</sup> "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! <sup>25</sup> 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. <sup>26</sup> I will hurl you and the

<sup>21</sup> For the nuance 'security' (as NETB) for תִּיְדְבְשָׁלוֹ, rather than 'prosperity', as many (e.g. the NJB & NRSV) translate, see Ps 122:7 and 30:6.

<sup>22</sup> 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'.

<sup>23</sup> '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.

<sup>24</sup> 'Coniah' is another name for Jehoiakim (elsewhere in this book called 'Jeconiah').

<sup>25</sup> The NJB omits the phrase 'into the hands of' (twice in this verse), here following the MT & NRSV.

<sup>26</sup> The verb here translated 'I will hurl' is very forceful: it is used for Saul throwing a spear at David (1S 18:11).



יִלְדְּתָךְ עַל הָאָרֶץ אַחֶרֶת אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יִלְדְּתָם שָׁם  
וְשָׁם תָּמוּתוּ: כִּי וְעַל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר־הֵם מְנַשְּׂאִים  
אֶת־נַפְשָׁם לָשׁוּב שָׁם שָׁמָּה לֹא יָשׁוּבוּ: {פ}

כח הָעֶצֶב נִבְזָה נָפוּץ  
הָאִישׁ הַזֶּה כְּנִיָּהוּ  
אֶסְכָּלִי אֵין חֶפֶץ בּוֹ  
מִדּוּעַ הוּטְלוֹ  
הוּא וְזָרְעוֹ וְהַשְׁלָכּוֹ  
עַל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יָדְעוּ:

כט אֶרֶץ אֶרֶץ אֶרֶץ  
שְׁמַעִי דְּבַר־יְהוָה:  
ל כה | אָמַר יְהוָה  
כְּתֹבׁוּ אֶת־הָאִישׁ הַזֶּה עֲרִירִי גֵבֶר  
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. <sup>27</sup> They shall not return to the country to which they desperately long to return."

- <sup>28</sup> 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?
- <sup>29</sup> O land, land, land:  
listen to the word of Yahweh!
- <sup>30</sup> 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."

<sup>27</sup> Note the sudden shift from the 2<sup>nd</sup> plural to the 3<sup>rd</sup> plural.

<sup>28</sup> 'Despised' follows the NRSV; the NJB has 'shoddy'.

<sup>29</sup> 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?

<sup>30</sup> The 2<sup>nd</sup> line refers to the recording in the royal registers. Zerubbabel, Jehoiachin's grandson, was governor of Judah only after the Exile.

## JEREMIAH 23

## ירמיהו פרק כג

- <sup>א</sup> הִנֵּה רֹעִים מְאַבְדִּים וּמְפָצִים אֶת־צֹאן מְרִעִיתִי נְאֻם־יְהוָה: {ס}
- <sup>ב</sup> לֵכֶן כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל עַל־הָרָעִים הָרָעִים אֲתֵּם־עָמִי אַתֶּם הַפָּצַתֶם אֶת־צֹאנִי וַתִּדְחֻם וְלֹא פָקַדְתֶּם אֹתָם הִנְנִי פֹקֵד עֲלֵיכֶם אֶת־רָע מַעֲלֵלֵיכֶם נְאֻם־יְהוָה: <sup>ג</sup> וְאֲנִי אֶקְבֹּץ אֶת־שְׂאֲרֵית צֹאנִי מִכָּל הָאֲרָצוֹת אֲשֶׁר־הִדְחִיתִי אֹתָם שָׁם וְהִשְׁבֹּתִי אֶתְהֵן עַל־נוֹהֶן וּפְרוּ וּרְבוּ: <sup>ד</sup> וְהִקְמַתִי עֲלֵיהֶם רֹעִים וּרְעוּם וְלֹא־יִירָאוּ עוֹד וְלֹא־יִחַתּוּ וְלֹא יִפְקְדוּ נְאֻם־יְהוָה: {ס}
- <sup>ה</sup> הִנֵּה יָמִים בָּאִים נְאֻם־יְהוָה וְהִקְמַתִי לְדָוִד צֶמַח צְדִיק וּמִלֹּךְ מִלֹּךְ וְהִשְׁכִּיל וַעֲשֵׂה מִשְׁפָּט וְצִדְקָה בָּאָרֶץ: <sup>ו</sup> בְּיָמָיו תִּשְׁעַת יְהוּדָה וְיִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁכֹּן לְבֶטֶח וְהָשֵׁמוּ אֶשְׁר־יִקְרָאוּ יְהוָה | צְדִקְנוּ: {פ}
- <sup>1</sup> “Woe to the shepherds who lose and scatter the sheep of my pasture, says Yahweh.
- <sup>2</sup> 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! <sup>3</sup> 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. <sup>4</sup> 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!
- <sup>5</sup> “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. <sup>6</sup> 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

- <sup>1</sup> 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).
- <sup>2</sup> 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).
- <sup>3</sup> The NJB ends this verse with, “they will be faithful and increase in numbers;” here, we follow the NRSV (and MT).
- <sup>4</sup> 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).
- <sup>5</sup> ‘Branch’ was later to become a proper noun and Messianic title (Zc 3:8, 6:12).
- <sup>6</sup> 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 לֹכֵן הֵנָּה יָמִים בָּאִים נֹאֲמ־יְהוָה וְלֹא־יֵאמְרוּ עוֹד  
חִי־יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר הֶעֱלָה אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵאֶרֶץ  
מִצְרַיִם: <sup>ח</sup> כִּי אִם־חִי־יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר הֶעֱלָה וְאֲשֶׁר  
הֵבִיא אֶת־זֶרַע בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵאֶרֶץ צִפּוֹנָה וּמִכָּל  
הָאֲרָצוֹת אֲשֶׁר הִדְחָתִים שָׁם וַיָּשֻׁבוּ עַל־  
אֲדָמָתָם: {פ}

ט לִנְבָאִים נִשְׁבַּר לִבִּי בְּקִרְבִּי  
רָחַפוּ כָּל־עֲצָמוֹתַי  
הִלִּיתִי כְּאִישׁ שָׁכּוֹר  
וַיִּגְבֹּר עָבְרוּ יַיִן  
מִפְּנֵי יְהוָה  
וּמִפְּנֵי דְבָרֵי קֹדֶשׁ:  
י כִּי מִנְאֲפִים מְלֵאָה הָאָרֶץ  
כִּי־מִפְּנֵי אֱלֹה אַבְלָה הָאָרֶץ  
יִבְשׁוּ נְאוֹת מִדְבָּר  
וְתִהְיֶי מְרוֹצָתָם רָעָה  
וַיִּגְבוֹרְתָם לֹא־כֵן:  
יא כִּי־גַם־נְבִיא גַם־כֹּהֵן חֲנָפוּ  
גַם־בְּבֵיתִי מִצָּאתִי רָעָתָם

<sup>7</sup> “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,” <sup>8</sup> 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.””

<sup>9</sup> 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:

<sup>10</sup> “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.

<sup>11</sup> Yes, even prophet and priest are godless;  
I have detected their wickedness in my own House,

<sup>7</sup> The NJB lacks ‘the land of’ before ‘Egypt’; here, we follow the MT & NRSV.

<sup>8</sup> ‘He had driven them’ follows the LXX (ἐξῆλθεν αὐτοὺς, reading הִדְחָתִים); the MT has ‘I had driven them’ (הִדְחָתִים).

<sup>9</sup> The title (as in 21:11) is of a complete booklet, its text overloaded (vv. 9–40).

<sup>10</sup> ‘Because of a curse’ follows the MT (מְלֵאָה) rather than the LXX and Peshitta, which have ‘because of these’.

<sup>11</sup> The particle כִּי that begins this verse is parallel to the one at the beginning of the preceding verse.

נֹאמֵי־יְהוָה:  
 יב לְכֹן יִהְיֶה דֶרֶכָם לָהֶם  
 כְּחֻלְלֵקוֹת בְּאִפְלָה  
 יִדְחוּ וְנָפְלוּ בָהּ  
 כִּי־אֵבִיא עֲלֵיהֶם רָעָה שְׁנַת פְּקֻדָּתָם  
 נֹאמֵי־יְהוָה:  
 יג וּבְנִבְיְאֵי שִׁמְרוֹן  
 רָאִיתִי תִפְלָה  
 הַנִּבְּאוּ בַּבַּעַל  
 וַיִּתְּעוּ אֶת־עַמִּי אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל:  
 יד וּבְנִבְאֵי יְרוּשָׁלַם רָאִיתִי שַׁעְרוֹתָהּ  
 נֹאזֹף וְהֹלֵךְ בְּשֹׁקֵר וְחִזְקוֹ יְדֵי מְרָעִים  
 לְבַלְתִּי־שָׁבוּ אִישׁ מִרְעָתוֹ  
 הַיּוֹלֵי כָל־סֶדֶם  
 וַיִּשְׁבִּיָהּ כַּעֲמֹרָה: {פ}  
 טו לְכֹן כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת עַל־הַנִּבְּאִים  
 הַנְּנִי מֵאֲכִיל אוֹתָם לַעֲנָה  
 וְהִשְׁקֵתִים מִי־רָאשׁ  
 כִּי מֵאֵת נְבִיְאֵי יְרוּשָׁלַם  
 יֵצְאָה חֲנֻפָּה לְכָל־הָאָרֶץ: {פ}

says Yahweh.

- 12 So, there 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־דִּבְרֵי הַנְּבִיאִים הַנִּבְּאִים לָכֶם  
מִהַבְּלִים הֵמָּה אֶתְכֶם  
חֲזֹן לִבָּם יִדְּבֹרוּ  
לֹא מִפִּי יְהוָה:  
יז אֹמְרִים אָמֹר לְמִנְאַצִּי  
דִּבֶּר יְהוָה שָׁלוֹם יִהְיֶה לָכֶם  
וְכָל הַלֵּךְ בְּשִׁרְרוֹת לְבוֹ  
אָמְרוּ לֹא־תָבוֹא עֲלֵיכֶם רָעָה:  
יח כִּי מִי עָמַל בְּסוֹד יְהוָה  
וַיֵּרָא וַיִּשְׁמַע אֶת־דִּבְרֹו  
מִי־הַקָּשִׁיב דְּבָרֵי דִבְרֹו וַיִּשְׁמַע: {ס}  
יט הִנֵּה | סַעֲרַת יְהוָה  
חֲמָה יִצָּאָה וְסַעַר מִתְחַוֵּלֵל  
עַל רֹאשׁ רְשָׁעִים יִחֹל:  
כ לֹא יָשׁוּב אֶף־יְהוָה  
עַד־עֲשֹׂתוֹ וְעַד־הַקִּיּמוֹ מְזֻמוֹת לְבוֹ  
בְּאַחֲרֵית הַיָּמִים תִּתְּבוֹנְנוּ 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 (ἀπωθοιμένοις 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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 נִבְּאוּ:

כב וְאִם־עָמְדוּ בְּסוּדִי

וַיִּשְׁמְעוּ דְּבָרִי אֶת־עַמִּי

וַיִּשְׁבוּ מִדֶּרֶךְ הָרָע

וּמִרָעָה מֵעֲלִילָהֶם: {ס}

כג הֲאֵלֹהִי מִקְרֹב אֲנִי נֹאֲמִיָּהוָה וְלֹא אֵלֹהִי מֵרֶחֶק:

כד אִם־יִסְתֵּר אִישׁ בַּמִּסְתָּרִים וְאֲנִי לֹא־אֶרְאֶנּוּ

נֹאֲמִיָּהוָה הֲלֹא אֶת־הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת־הָאָרֶץ אֲנִי

מִלֵּא נֹאֲמִיָּהוָה: כה שָׁמַעְתִּי אֵת אֲשֶׁר־אָמְרוּ

הַנְּבִיאִים הַנְּבִיאִים בְּשִׁמִּי שֶׁקֶר לֵאמֹר חֲלַמְתִּי

חֲלַמְתִּי: כו עַד־מָתִי הִישׁ בְּלִבּ הַנְּבִיאִים נִבְּאִי

הַשֶּׁקֶר וּנְבִיאֵי תִרְמַת לִבָּם: כז הַחֲשָׁבִים לַהֲשִׁכִּיחַ

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!

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 (הֵי) 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<sup>a</sup>.

24 The 2<sup>nd</sup>, 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 OT, the 'name' reflected the person's character (cf. Gn 27:36, 1S 25:25) or his reputation (Gn 11:4, 2S 8:13).



אֶת־עַמִּי שְׁמִי בַחֲלוּמָתָם אֲשֶׁר יִסְפְּרוּ אִישׁ לְרֵעֵהוּ  
כְּאֲשֶׁר שָׁכְחוּ אֲבוֹתָם אֶת־שְׁמִי בְּבַעַל: כח הַנְּבִיא  
אֲשֶׁר־אָתּוֹ חֲלוֹם יִסְפֹּר חֲלוֹם וְאֲשֶׁר דִּבְרִי אָתּוֹ  
יְדַבֵּר דִּבְרִי אֱמֶת מִה־לִּתְּבֹן אֶת־הַבֵּר נְאֻם־יְהוָה:  
כט הֲלוֹא כֹה דִּבְרִי כְּאֵשׁ נְאֻם־יְהוָה וּכְפִטִּישׁ יַפְצֹץ  
סֵלַע: {ס}

ל לִכְן הִנְנִי עַל־הַנְּבִאִים נְאֻם־יְהוָה מִגִּנְבֵי דִבְרִי  
אִישׁ מֵאֵת רֵעֵהוּ: לא הִנְנִי עַל־הַנְּבִיאִים נְאֻם־יְהוָה  
הַלִּקְחִים לְשׁוֹנָם וַיִּנְאֲמוּ נְאֻם: לב הִנְנִי עַל־נְבִאֵי  
חֲלֻמוֹת שֶׁקֶר נְאֻם־יְהוָה וַיִּסְפְּרוּם וַיִּתְּנוּ אֶת־עַמִּי  
בְּשִׁקְרֵיהֶם וּבַפְּחֲזוֹתָם וְאֲנֹכִי לֹא־שִׁלַּחְתִּים וְלֹא  
צִוִּיתִים וְהוֹעִיל לֹא־יוֹעִילוֹ לְעַם־הַזֶּה נְאֻם־יְהוָה:  
לג וְכִי־יִשְׁאַלְךָ הָעָם הַזֶּה אוֹ־הַנְּבִיא אוֹ־כֹהֵן לֵאמֹר  
מִה־מַּשָּׂא יְהוָה וְאִמְרָת אֱלֹהִים אֶת־מַה־מַּשָּׂא  
וְנִטְשֵׁתִי אֶתְכֶם נְאֻם־יְהוָה: לד וְהַנְּבִיא וְהַכֹּהֵן וְהָעָם

each other, to make my people forget my name, just as their fathers forgot my name in favour of Baal. <sup>28</sup> 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? <sup>29</sup> Is my word not like fire, Yahweh says; is it not like a hammer shattering a rock?

<sup>30</sup> “See, therefore, I have a quarrel with the prophets, says Yahweh, who steal my words from one another. <sup>31</sup> I have a quarrel with the prophets, says Yahweh, who wag their tongues to utter prophecies. <sup>32</sup> 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. <sup>33</sup> 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

<sup>28</sup> 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).

<sup>29</sup> The rhetorical question(s) here expect(s) a positive answer.

<sup>30</sup> The last clause is understood to mean that the false prophets ‘steal’ words from one another and claim they are from Yahweh.

<sup>31</sup> The word translated ‘*wag their tongues*’ is used only here in the OT.

<sup>32</sup> 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.

<sup>33</sup> ‘*You are the burden*’ follows the LXX (Τμεις ἐστε τὸ λῆμμα); the MT has ‘*what burden*’ (faulty provision of vowels and word division, thus reading אֶת־מַה־מַּשָּׂא in place of אֶתְכֶם 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 יֹאמַר מִשָּׂא יְהוָה וּפְקַדְתִּי עַל־הָאִישׁ הַהוּא  
וְעַל־בֵּיתוֹ: <sup>ל</sup>כֹּה תֹאמְרוּ אִישׁ עַל־רֵעֵהוּ וְאִישׁ אֶל־  
אָחִיו מִה־עַנָּה יְהוָה וּמִה־דְבַר יְהוָה: <sup>לו</sup>וּמִשָּׂא יְהוָה  
לֹא תִזְכְּרוּ־עוֹד כִּי הַמִּשָּׂא יִהְיֶה לְאִישׁ דְּבָרוֹ  
וְהַפִּכְתֶּם אֶת־דְּבָרִי אֱלֹהִים חַיִּים יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת  
אֱלֹהֵינוּ: <sup>לז</sup>כֹּה תֹאמַר אֶל־הַנְּבִיא מִה־עַנְדְּ יְהוָה  
וּמִה־דְבַר יְהוָה: <sup>לח</sup>וְאִם־מִשָּׂא יְהוָה תֹּאמְרוּ לָכֵן  
כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה יַעַן אֲמַרְכֶם אֶת־הַדְּבַר הַזֶּה מִשָּׂא  
יְהוָה וְאֶשְׁלַח אֲלֵיכֶם לְאֹמֶר לֹא תֹאמְרוּ מִשָּׂא  
יְהוָה: <sup>לט</sup>לָכֵן הִנְנִי וְנִשְׁתִּי אֶתְכֶם נָשָׂא וְנִשְׁתִּי  
אֶתְכֶם וְאֶת־הָעִיר אֲשֶׁר נָתַתִּי לָכֶם וְלֹאֲבוֹתֵיכֶם  
מִעַל פָּנַי: <sup>מ</sup>וְנָתַתִּי עֲלֵיכֶם חֲרַפַּת עוֹלָם וּכְלָמוֹת  
עוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר לֹא תִשְׁכַּח: {פ}

Yahweh!" <sup>34</sup> "As for the prophet, the priest, or anyone else who says, "Yahweh's burden," I shall punish that man and his household too. <sup>35</sup> This is what you must say to one another, among yourselves, "What answer has Yahweh given" or "what has Yahweh said?" <sup>36</sup> 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. <sup>37</sup> This is the way to speak to a prophet: "What answer has Yahweh given" or "what has Yahweh said?" <sup>38</sup> But, if you say "Yahweh's burden," says Yahweh, when I have warned you to stop saying, "Yahweh's burden," <sup>39</sup> 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. <sup>40</sup> And I will bring upon you everlasting disgrace and perpetual shame, which shall not be forgotten."

<sup>34</sup> The remainder of this chapter is a later commentary on v. 33, concentrating on the phrase, "Yahweh's burden;" it is unlike Jeremiah.

<sup>35</sup> This second 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.

<sup>36</sup> 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.

<sup>37</sup> The prophet alluded to is Jeremiah, who is being indirect in his reference to himself.

<sup>38</sup> The NJB omits the phrase 'says Yahweh'.

<sup>39</sup> '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').

<sup>40</sup> For this verse, here following the NRSV, the NJB reads, "I shall bring down everlasting shame on you, everlasting and unforgettable disgrace."

## JEREMIAH 24

## ירמיהו פרק כד

<sup>א</sup> הִרְאֵנִי יְהוָה וְהִנֵּה שְׁנֵי דוּדָאֵי תְּאֵנִים מוֹעֲדִים לִפְנֵי הֵיכַל יְהוָה אַחֲרֵי הַגָּלוּת נְבוּכַדְרֶאצַּר מֶלֶךְ-בָּבֶל אֶת-יְכֹנְיָהוּ בֶן-יְהוֹיָקִים מֶלֶךְ-יְהוּדָה וְאֶת-שָׂרֵי יְהוּדָה וְאֶת-הַחֲרָשׁ וְאֶת-הַמְּסַגֵּר מִירוּשָׁלַם וַיְבֹאם בָּבֶל: <sup>ב</sup> הַדּוּד אֶחָד תְּאֵנִים טְבוֹת מְאֹד כְּתֹאנֵי הַפְּכָרוֹת וְהַדּוּד אֶחָד תְּאֵנִים רָעוֹת מְאֹד אֲשֶׁר לֹא-תֹאכְלֵנָה מִרָע: {פ}

<sup>ג</sup> וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֵלַי מִה-אַתָּה רֹאֶה יִרְמְיָהוּ וְאָמַר תְּאֵנִים הַתְּאֵנִים הַטְּבוֹת טְבוֹת מְאֹד וְהַרְעוֹת רָעוֹת מְאֹד אֲשֶׁר לֹא-תֹאכְלֵנָה מִרָע: {פ}

<sup>ד</sup> וַיְהִי דְבַר-יְהוָה אֵלַי לֵאמֹר: <sup>ה</sup> כֹּה-אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל כְּתֹאנִים הַטְּבוֹת הָאֵלֶּה כִּן-אֶפְיָר אֶת-גָּלוּת יְהוּדָה אֲשֶׁר שְׁלַחְתִּי מִן-הַמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה אֶרֶץ כַּשְׁדִּים לְטוֹבָה: <sup>ו</sup> וְשִׁמְתִּי עֵינַי עֲלֵיהֶם לְטוֹבָה וְהִשְׁבַּתִּים עַל-הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת וּבְנִיתִים וְלֹא אֶהְרֵס וְנִטְעַתִּים וְלֹא אֶתּוֹשׁ: <sup>ז</sup> וְנָתַתִּי לָהֶם לֵב לְדַעַת אֹתִי

<sup>1</sup> 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. <sup>2</sup> One basket contained excellent figs, like those that ripen first; the other contained very bad figs, so bad they were inedible.

<sup>3</sup> 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."

<sup>4</sup> Then the word of Yahweh came to me, <sup>5</sup> "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. <sup>6</sup> 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. <sup>7</sup> I shall give them a heart

## JEREMIAH 24

<sup>1</sup> 'Set out' follows the NJB & LXX (κείμενους); the MT has 'appointed'. The country people used to bring the first fruits of their crops to the Temple.

<sup>2</sup> On the 'excellent figs', see Is 28:4 & Ho 9:10.

<sup>3</sup> For the 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> instances of 'figs', the NJB & NETB substitute 'ones'; here, we follow the NRSV.

<sup>4</sup> Another rendering of 'came to me' (as NRSV & NETB) is 'was addressed to me' (as NJB).

<sup>5</sup> The 'land of the Chaldeans' is Babylon.

<sup>6</sup> Compare the word usage here with 1:10.

<sup>7</sup> The NJB has 'acknowledge' in place of 'know', here following the NRSV.

כִּי אֲנִי יְהוָה וְהָיוּ לִי לְעָם וְאֲנִי אֶהְיֶה לָהֶם  
לֵאלֹהִים כִּי־יָשׁוּבוּ אֵלַי בְּכָל־לֵבָם: {ס}

ח וְכִתְּאֲנִים הָרַעוֹת אֲשֶׁר לֹא־תֹאכְלֶנָּה מִרַע כִּי־  
כֹה אָמַר יְהוָה בֶּן אֲמֹן אֶת־צִדְקִיָּהוּ מֶלֶךְ־יְהוּדָה  
וְאֶת־שָׂרָיו וְאֶת שְׂאֵרֵי יְרוּשָׁלַם הַנִּשְׁאָרִים  
בָּאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת וְהַיֹּשְׁבִים בָּאָרֶץ מִצֻּרִים: ט וְנִתְּתִים  
לְזוּעָה לְזוּעָה לְרָעָה לְכָל מַמְלָכוֹת הָאָרֶץ לְחִרְפָּה  
וּלְמָשָׁל לְשִׁנְיָה וּלְקִלְלָה בְּכָל־הַמְּקוֹמוֹת אֲשֶׁר־  
אֲדִיחֶם שָׁם: י וְשִׁלַּחְתִּי בָם אֶת־הַחֶרֶב אֶת־הָרָעָב  
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.

<sup>8</sup> 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. <sup>9</sup> 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. <sup>10</sup> 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.””

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<sup>8</sup> The last clause refers perhaps to those who shared the captivity of Jehoahaz (2K 23:34) or perhaps Israelite refugees in Egypt.

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

<sup>10</sup> The literal translation of ‘ancestors’ is ‘fathers’.

## ירמיהו פרק כה

א הַדְּבָר אֲשֶׁר-הָיָה עַל-יְרֵמְיָהוּ עַל-כָּל-עַם יְהוּדָה  
בּשָׁנָה הָרְבַּעִית לַיהוֹיָקִים בֶּן-יֹאשִׁיָּהוּ מֶלֶךְ יְהוּדָה  
הִיא הַשָּׁנָה הָרְאשִׁית לְנְבוּכַדְרֶאצַּר מֶלֶךְ בָּבֶל:  
ב אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר יְרֵמְיָהוּ הַנָּבִיא עַל-כָּל-עַם יְהוּדָה וְאֵל  
כָּל-יֹשְׁבֵי יְרוּשָׁלַם לֵאמֹר: ג מִן-שָׁלֹשׁ עֶשְׂרֵה שָׁנָה  
לִיִּאשִׁיָּהוּ בֶן-אָמוֹן מֶלֶךְ יְהוּדָה וְעַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה זֶה  
שָׁלֹשׁ וְעֶשְׂרִים שָׁנָה הָיָה דְּבַר-יְהוָה אֵלַי וְאִדְּבַר  
אֵלֵיכֶם אֲשֶׁכֶּם וְדִבֶּר וְלֹא שָׁמַעְתֶּם: ד וְשַׁלַּח יְהוָה  
אֵלֵיכֶם אֶת-כָּל-עֲבָדָיו הַנָּבִיאִים הַשְּׂכֵם וְשַׁלַּח וְלֹא  
שָׁמַעְתֶּם וְלֹא-הִטִּיתֶם אֶת-אָזְנוֹכֶם לִשְׁמָע: ה לֵאמֹר  
שׁוּבוּ-נָא אִישׁ מִדֶּרֶכּוֹ הָרָעָה וּמִרָעָה מַעַלְלֵיכֶם  
וּשְׁבוּ עַל-הָאָדָמָה אֲשֶׁר נָתַן יְהוָה לָכֶם  
וְלֹא-בֹתֵיכֶם לְמַן-עוֹלָם וְעַד-עוֹלָם: ו וְאַל-תִּלְכּוּ

## JEREMIAH 25

<sup>1</sup> 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. <sup>2</sup> The prophet Jeremiah proclaimed it before all the people of Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem. <sup>3</sup> "For twenty-three years, from the thirteenth year of Josiah son of Amon, king of Judah, 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. <sup>4</sup> Furthermore, Yahweh has persistently sent you all his servants the prophets but you have not listened or paid attention. <sup>5</sup> 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. <sup>6</sup> Do not follow other gods to serve and worship them; do not provoke me with

### JEREMIAH 25

- <sup>1</sup> 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.
- <sup>2</sup> In the NRSV, this verse forms part of the same sentence as v.1 (" , which the prophet ..."); here, we follow the NJB (and NETB).
- <sup>3</sup> The 13<sup>th</sup> year of Josiah was 627 BCE.
- <sup>4</sup> 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');
- <sup>5</sup> The pronouns in this verse ('you' and 'your') are all 3MP.
- <sup>6</sup> 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 אֲחֵרִים לְעַבְדָּם וּלְהַשְׁתַּחֲוֹת לָהֶם  
וְלֹא־תִכְעִסוּ אוֹתִי בַּמַּעֲשֵׂה יְדֵיכֶם וְלֹא אֶרַע לָכֶם:  
וְלֹא־שִׁמַּעְתֶּם אֵלַי נְאֻם־יְהוָה לְמַעַן הִכְעִסוּנִי  
הַכְעִסְנִי בַּמַּעֲשֵׂה יְדֵיכֶם לָרַע לָכֶם: {פ}

ח לָכֵן כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת יֵעָן אֲשֶׁר לֹא־  
שִׁמַּעְתֶּם אֶת־דְּבָרִי: ט הִנְנִי שֹׁלַח וְלִקְחָתִי אֶת־כָּל־  
מִשְׁפָּחוֹת צָפוֹן נְאֻם־יְהוָה וְאֶל־נְבוּכַדְרֶאצַּר מֶלֶךְ־  
בָּבֶל עֲבַדְי וְהַבְּאֵתִים עַל־הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת וְעַל־יֹשְׁבֶיהָ  
וְעַל כָּל־הַגּוֹיִם הָאֵלֶּה סָבִיב וְהַחֲרַמְתִּים וְשִׁמַּתִּים  
לְשִׁמָּה וּלְשַׁרְקָה וּלְחֲרָבוֹת עוֹלָם: י וְהֶאֱבַדְתִּי מֵהֶם  
קוֹל שִׁשׁוֹן וְקוֹל שִׁמְחָה קוֹל חֲתָן וְקוֹל כַּלָּה קוֹל  
רָחִים וְאוֹזֵן נָר: יא וְהִיתָה כָּל־הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת לְחֲרָבָה  
לְשִׁמָּה וְעַבְדּוֹ הַגּוֹיִם הָאֵלֶּה אֶת־מֶלֶךְ בָּבֶל שְׁבַעִים  
שָׁנָה: יב וְהָיָה כְּמִלְאוֹת שְׁבַעִים שָׁנָה אֶפְקֹד עַל־  
מֶלֶךְ־בָּבֶל וְעַל־הַגּוֹי הַהוּא נְאֻם־יְהוָה אֶת־עוֹנָם  
וְעַל־אֶרֶץ כַּשְׂדִּים וְשִׁמַּתִּי אֹתוֹ לְשִׁמְמוֹת עוֹלָם:  
יג וְהַבְּאוֹתִי וְהַבְּאֵתִי עַל־הָאָרֶץ הַהִיא אֶת־כָּל־

the work of your own hands, and then I shall not harm you.<sup>7</sup> 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.”

<sup>8</sup> “Thus, Yahweh Sabaoth says: “You have not listened to my words,<sup>9</sup> 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.<sup>10</sup> 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;<sup>11</sup> 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.<sup>12</sup> 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.<sup>13</sup> I will bring upon that land all the words that I have uttered

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

<sup>8</sup> The name, ‘Yahweh Sabaoth’ (יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת), is traditionally translated ‘The LORD of Hosts’.

<sup>9</sup> 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).

<sup>10</sup> Compare 7:24 & 16:9 for this same dire prediction limited to Judah and Jerusalem.

<sup>11</sup> ‘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.

<sup>12</sup> Compare Is 13:19–22 & Jr 50:39–40.

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



דְּבָרֵי אֲשֶׁר־דִּבַּרְתִּי עָלֶיךָ אֵת כָּל־הַכְּתוּב בַּסֵּפֶר  
הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר־נִבֵּא יִרְמִיָּהוּ עַל־כָּל־הַגּוֹיִם: <sup>יד</sup> כִּי עֲבָדוּ־  
בָּם גַּם־הֵמָּה גּוֹיִם רַבִּים וּמַלְכִּים גְּדוֹלִים וְשִׁלְמַתִּי  
לָהֶם כַּפָּעִלָם וּכְמַעֲשֵׂה יְדֵיהֶם: {פ}

<sup>טו</sup> כִּי כֹה אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֵלַי קֹחַ אֶת־  
כּוֹס הַיַּיִן הַחֲמָה הַזֹּאת מִיָּדִי וְהִשְׁקִיתָהּ אֹתוֹ אֶת־  
כָּל־הַגּוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר אֲנִכִּי שִׁלַּח אוֹתָךְ אֲלֵיהֶם: <sup>טז</sup> וְשָׁתוּ  
וְהִתְגַּעְשׂוּ וְהִתְהַלְּלוּ מִפְּנֵי הַחֶרֶב אֲשֶׁר אֲנִכִּי שִׁלַּח  
בֵּינָתָם: <sup>יז</sup> וְאָקַח אֶת־הַכּוֹס מִיַּד יְהוָה וְאַשְׁקָה אֶת־  
כָּל־הַגּוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר־שִׁלַּחְנִי יְהוָה אֲלֵיהֶם: <sup>יח</sup> אֶת־  
יְרוּשָׁלַם וְאֶת־עָרֵי יְהוּדָה וְאֶת־מַלְכִּיהָ אֶת־שָׂרֶיהָ  
לִתְּתָם אֹתָם לַחֲרָבָה לְשָׂמָה לְשָׂרָקָה וּלְקַלְלָהּ כִּיּוֹם  
הַזֶּה: <sup>יט</sup> אֶת־פָּרָעָה מֶלֶךְ־מִצְרַיִם וְאֶת־עַבְדָּיו וְאֶת־

against it, everything written in this book, which Jeremiah proclaimed against all the nations.” <sup>14</sup> “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.””

<sup>15</sup> 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; <sup>16</sup> and they shall drink and they shall stagger, and go out of their minds, because of the sword that I am sending among them.” <sup>17</sup> And so, I took the cup from Yahweh’s hand and made all the nations to whom Yahweh sent me drink from it: <sup>18</sup> 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; <sup>19</sup> Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, and his officials, and his

<sup>14</sup> ‘Are to be enslaved’ assumes the ‘prophetic perfect’ (i.e. the actions are as good as done); the literal translation is ‘were enslaved’.

<sup>15</sup> 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.

<sup>16</sup> 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).

<sup>17</sup> 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).

<sup>18</sup> 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).

<sup>19</sup> See also 46:2–28 for the judgment against Egypt.

שָׂרָיו וְאֶת־כָּל־עַמּוֹ: <sup>כ</sup> וְאֶת כָּל־הָעָרֵב וְאֶת כָּל־  
מַלְכֵי אֶרֶץ הָעוֹץ וְאֶת כָּל־מַלְכֵי אֶרֶץ פְּלִשְׁתִּים  
וְאֶת־אַשְׁקְלוֹן וְאֶת־עֶזְה וְאֶת־עֶקְרוֹן וְאֶת שְׂאֲרֵית  
אַשְׁדּוֹד: <sup>כא</sup> אֶת־אֲדוֹם וְאֶת־מוֹאָב וְאֶת־בְּנֵי עַמּוֹן:  
<sup>כב</sup> וְאֶת כָּל־מַלְכֵי־צֹר וְאֶת כָּל־מַלְכֵי צִידוֹן וְאֶת  
מַלְכֵי הָאֵי אֲשֶׁר בְּעֵבֶר הַיָּם: <sup>כג</sup> וְאֶת־דָּדָן וְאֶת־  
תִּימָא וְאֶת־בּוֹז וְאֶת כָּל־קְצוּצֵי פֶּאֶה: <sup>כד</sup> וְאֶת כָּל־  
מַלְכֵי עֲרָב וְאֶת כָּל־מַלְכֵי הָעָרֵב הַשֹּׁכֵנִים בַּמִּדְבָּר:  
<sup>כה</sup> וְאֶת כָּל־מַלְכֵי זִמְרִי וְאֶת כָּל־מַלְכֵי עֵילָם וְאֶת  
כָּל־מַלְכֵי מִדְיָ: <sup>כו</sup> וְאֶת כָּל־מַלְכֵי הַצִּפּוֹן הַקְּרָבִים  
וְהַרְחֻקִּים אִישׁ אֶל־אָחִיו וְאֶת כָּל־הַמַּמְלָכוֹת  
הָאֶרֶץ אֲשֶׁר עַל־פְּנֵי הָאֲדָמָה וּמִלֶּךְ שֶׁשָּׁךְ יִשְׁתֶּה  
אַחֲרֵיהֶם: <sup>כז</sup> וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵיהֶם {פ}

chief men, and all his people, <sup>20</sup> 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; <sup>21</sup> the people of Edom and Moab and the Ammonites; <sup>22</sup> and all the kings of Tyre, and all the kings of Sidon, and the kings of the island that is across the sea. <sup>23</sup> The people of Dedan, and Tema, and Buz, and all the people with shaven temples; <sup>24</sup> and all the kings of Arabia and all the kings of the conglomeration of peoples who live in the desert; <sup>25</sup> and all the kings of Zimri, all the kings of Elam and all the kings of Media; <sup>26</sup> 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. <sup>27</sup> “You will say to them,

<sup>20</sup> 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.

<sup>21</sup> 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.

<sup>22</sup> The ‘island’ is Cyprus but perhaps includes the other Phoenician colonies as well.

<sup>23</sup> ‘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).

<sup>24</sup> On the term ‘conglomeration of peoples’, see #20; the LXX gives evidence of having read the term without reference to the kings of Arabia.

<sup>25</sup> 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.

<sup>26</sup> ‘Sheshak’ is a cryptogram for ‘Babel’ (Babylon), in which the letters are substituted in reverse order of the Hebrew alphabet.

<sup>27</sup> The imperatives following ‘Drink!’ are not parallel actions but consequent actions.



כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל שְׁתּוּ וְשִׁכְרוּ  
 וּקְיֹו וְנָפְלוּ וְלֹא תִקְוּמוּ מִפְּנֵי הַחֶרֶב אֲשֶׁר אֲנִכִּי  
 שִׁלַּח בֵּינֵיכֶם: כ<sup>ח</sup> וְהָיָה כִּי יִמָּאֲנוּ לִקְחַת־הַכּוֹס  
 מִיָּדְךָ לַשְׁתּוֹת וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵיהֶם כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה  
 צְבָאוֹת שְׁתּוּ תִשְׁתּוּ: כט<sup>כ</sup> כִּי הִנֵּה בָעִיר אֲשֶׁר נִקְרָא־  
 שְׁמִי עָלֶיהָ אֲנִכִּי מִחַל לַהֲרֹעַ וְאַתֶּם הַנִּקְהָ תִנָּקוּ  
 לֹא תִנָּקוּ כִּי חָרֵב אֲנִי קֹרֵא עַל־כָּל־יֹשְׁבֵי הָאָרֶץ  
 נֹאם יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת: ל<sup>ל</sup> וְאַתָּה תִּנְבֵּא אֲלֵיהֶם אֵת כָּל־  
 הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵיהֶם  
 יְהוָה מִמְרוֹם יִשְׁאָג  
 וּמִמַּעוֹן קִדְּשׁוּ יִתֵּן קוֹלוֹ  
 שִׁאָּג יִשְׁאָג עַל־נִוְהוֹ  
 הַיָּדָל בְּדֶרֶכִים יַעֲנֶה אֵל  
 כָּל־יֹשְׁבֵי הָאָרֶץ:  
 לא<sup>לא</sup> בָּא שָׁאוֹן עַד־קֶצֶה הָאָרֶץ  
 כִּי רִיב לִיהוָה בְּגוֹיִם  
 נִשְׁפָּט הוּא לְכָל־בָּשָׂר  
 הַרְשָׁעִים נִתְּנָם לַחֶרֶב  
 נֹאם־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!” <sup>28</sup> If they refuse to take the cup from your hand and drink, you will say to them, “Yahweh Sabaoth says this: You must drink! <sup>29</sup> 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.” <sup>30</sup> 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.

<sup>31</sup> 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.

<sup>28</sup> ‘You must drink’ translates an infinitive absolute preceding the finite verb, which is here an obligatory imperfect.

<sup>29</sup> 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.

<sup>30</sup> The word translated ‘his own fold’ refers to the land of Canaan, which Yahweh chose to make his earthly dwelling (Ex 15:13).

<sup>31</sup> Vv. 30–31, which describe the universal judgement, like Is 66, are perhaps post-Exilic.

לֵב כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת  
הִנֵּה רָעָה יֵצֵאת מִגּוֹי אֶל־גּוֹי  
וְסֶעַר גָּדוֹל  
יַעֲזֹר מִיִּרְכַּת־אָרֶץ:

<sup>32</sup> Yahweh Sabaoth says this:

Look, disaster is spreading from nation to nation;  
a mighty tempest is rising  
from the far ends of the earth.

לֵג וְהָיוּ חַלְלֵי יְהוָה בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא מִקְצֵה הָאָרֶץ וְעַד־  
קְצֵה הָאָרֶץ לֹא יִסְפְּדוּ וְלֹא יֵאָסְפוּ וְלֹא יִקְבְּרוּ  
לְדָמֶן עַל־פְּנֵי הָאֲדָמָה יִהְיוּ:

<sup>33</sup> “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.

לִד הִלִּילוּ הָרָעִים וְזָעְקוּ  
וְהִתְפַּלְשׁוּ אֲדִירֵי הָצֹאן  
כִּי־מָלְאוּ יָמֵיכֶם לְטִבּוֹחַ  
וְתַפּוּצוֹתֵיכֶם וְנִפְלַתֶם כְּכֹלִי חֲמֻדָּה:  
לֵה וְאָבַד מָנוֹס מִן־הָרָעִים  
וּפְלִיטָה מֵאֲדִירֵי הָצֹאן:  
לֹ קוֹל צַעֲקַת הָרָעִים  
וְיִלְלַת אֲדִירֵי הָצֹאן  
כִּי־שָׁדַד יְהוָה אֶת־מִרְעֵיתָם:

<sup>34</sup> 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.

<sup>35</sup> No refuge then for the shepherds,  
no escape for the lords of the flock!

<sup>36</sup> Listen: a shriek from the shepherds,  
a howl from the lords of the flock,  
for Yahweh has laid their pasture waste.

<sup>32</sup> 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.

<sup>33</sup> 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.

<sup>34</sup> 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 כְּכֹלִי חֲמֻדָּה); the LXX reading fits the context better but is probably secondary for that very reason.

<sup>35</sup> 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.

<sup>36</sup> 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.

וַיִּדְמּוּ נְאוֹת הַשְּׁלֹום לז  
 מִפְּנֵי חֲרוֹן אַף־יְהוָה:  
 עָזַב כִּכְפִּיר סֶבֶו לח  
 כִּי־הִיתָה אֶרֶץ  
 לְשָׂמָה מִפְּנֵי חֲרוֹן הַיּוֹנָה  
 וּמִפְּנֵי חֲרוֹן אַפּוֹ: {פ}

<sup>37</sup> The peaceful sheepfolds are laid waste  
because of the furious anger of Yahweh.

<sup>38</sup> 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.""

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<sup>37</sup> 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).

<sup>38</sup> The 'lion' is either Yahweh or Nebuchadnezzar.

## JEREMIAH 26

## ירמיהו פרק כו

א בְּרֵאשִׁית מַמְלָכֹת יְהוֹיָקִים בֶּן־יֹאשִׁיָּהוּ מֶלֶךְ  
יְהוּדָה הָיָה הַדְּבָר הַזֶּה מֵאֵת יְהוָה לֵאמֹר: ב כֹּה  
אָמַר יְהוָה עֹמֵד בְּחֶצֶר בֵּית־יְהוָה וְדִבַּרְתָּ עַל־כָּל־  
עַרְי יְהוּדָה הַבָּאִים לְהִשְׁתַּחֲוֹת בֵּית־יְהוָה אֵת כָּל־  
הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתִיךָ לֵדְבַר אֲלֵיהֶם אֶל־תִּגְרַע  
דְּבַר: ג אוֹלֵי יִשְׁמְעוּ וַיָּשֻׁבוּ אִישׁ מִדְּרָכֹו הָרָעָה  
וְנִחַמְתִּי אֶל־הָרָעָה אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי חֹשֵׁב לַעֲשׂוֹת לָהֶם  
מִפְּנֵי רָע מַעַלְלֵיהֶם: ד וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵיהֶם כֹּה אָמַר  
יְהוָה אֱסֹלָא תִשְׁמְעוּ אֵלַי לָלֶכֶת בְּתוֹרָתִי אֲשֶׁר  
נָתַתִּי לִפְנֵיכֶם: ה לִשְׁמֹעַ עַל־דְּבָרִי עֲבָדֵי הַנְּבִאִים  
אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי שִׁלַּח אֲלֵיכֶם וְהִשְׁכַּם וְשִׁלַּח וְלֹא  
שָׁמַעְתֶּם: ו וְנָתַתִּי אֶת־הַבַּיִת הַזֶּה כְּשִׁלָּה וְאֶת־  
הָעִיר הַזֹּאתָה אֶתֶּן לְקָלָלָה לְכָל גּוֹי  
הָאָרֶץ: {פ}

<sup>1</sup> At the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, the king of Judah, this word came to Jeremiah from Yahweh, saying <sup>2</sup> “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. <sup>3</sup> 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.” <sup>4</sup> 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, <sup>5</sup> 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, <sup>6</sup> I shall treat this Temple as I treated Shiloh, and make this city a curse for all the nations of the world.””

## JEREMIAH 26

<sup>1</sup> ‘To Jeremiah’ follows the *Peshitta* and *Vetus Latina* (and *NJB*); the *MT* (and *NRSV*) lacks the phrase.

<sup>2</sup> 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.

<sup>3</sup> The literal translation of ‘their evil doings’ (here following the *NRSV*) is ‘the wickedness of their deeds’.

<sup>4</sup> 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).

<sup>5</sup> See #7:13 on the idiom translated ‘so persistently, so urgently’.

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

וַיִּשְׁמְעוּ הַכֹּהֲנִים וְהַנְּבִיאִים וְכָל־הָעָם אֶת־יְרֵמְיָהוּ  
מְדַבֵּר אֶת־הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה בְּבֵית יְהוָה: <sup>ח</sup> וַיְהִי  
כְּכָל־זֶה יְרֵמְיָהוּ לִדְבֹר אֶת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר־צִוָּה יְהוָה  
לְדַבֵּר אֶל־כָּל־הָעָם וַיִּתְּפְּשׂוּ אֹתוֹ הַכֹּהֲנִים  
וְהַנְּבִיאִים וְכָל־הָעָם לֵאמֹר מוֹת תָּמוּת: <sup>ט</sup> מִדּוֹעַ  
נִבִּיתָ בְּשֵׁם־יְהוָה לֵאמֹר כְּשֶׁלוֹ יִהְיֶה הַבַּיִת הַזֶּה  
וְהָעִיר הַזֹּאת תִּחָרֵב מֵאִין יוֹשֵׁב וַיִּקְהַל כָּל־הָעָם  
אֶל־יְרֵמְיָהוּ בְּבֵית יְהוָה: <sup>י</sup> וַיִּשְׁמְעוּ שְׂרֵי־יְהוּדָה אֶת  
הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה וַיַּעֲלוּ מִבֵּית־הַמֶּלֶךְ בֵּית יְהוָה  
וַיֵּשְׁבוּ בִּפְתַח שַׁעַר־יְהוָה הַחֲדָשׁ: {ס}

<sup>יא</sup> וַיֹּאמְרוּ הַכֹּהֲנִים וְהַנְּבִיאִים אֶל־הַשָּׂרִים וְאֶל־כָּל־  
הָעָם לֵאמֹר מִשְׁפַּט־מוֹת לְאִישׁ הַזֶּה כִּי נִבֵּא אֶל־  
הָעִיר הַזֹּאת כְּאֲשֶׁר שָׁמַעְתֶּם בְּאָזְנֵיכֶם: <sup>יב</sup> וַיֹּאמֶר  
יְרֵמְיָהוּ אֶל־כָּל־הַשָּׂרִים וְאֶל־כָּל־הָעָם לֵאמֹר יְהוָה

<sup>7</sup> The priests and prophets and all the people heard Jeremiah say these words in the Temple of Yahweh. <sup>8</sup> 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! <sup>9</sup> 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. <sup>10</sup> 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.

<sup>11</sup> 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.”

<sup>12</sup> Jeremiah, however, replied to all the chief men and all the people as

<sup>7</sup> 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).

<sup>8</sup> 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).

<sup>9</sup> 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.

<sup>10</sup> ‘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.

<sup>11</sup> The literal translation of ‘as you have heard’ is ‘you have heard it’.

<sup>12</sup> 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  
 אֶת כָּל־הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר שָׁמַעְתֶּם: <sup>י</sup> וְעַתָּה הִיטִיבוּ  
 דְּרֹכֵיכֶם וּמַעַלְלֵיכֶם וּשְׁמָעוּ בְּקוֹל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם  
 וַיִּנָּחֶם יְהוָה אֶל־הָרָעָה אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר עֲלֵיכֶם: <sup>יד</sup> וְאֲנִי  
 הִנְנִי בְיַדְכֶם עֹשׂוֹ לִי כַטּוֹב וְכִישׁוֹר בְּעֵינֵיכֶם: <sup>טז</sup> אֲדָן  
 יָדַע תִּדְעוּ כִּי אִם־מִמֶּתִים אֲתֶם אֹתִי כִּי־דָם נָקִי  
 אֲתֶם נֹתְנִים עֲלֵיכֶם וְאֶל־הָעִיר הַזֹּאת וְאֶל־יֹשְׁבֶיהָ  
 כִּי בְּאַמַּת שְׁלַחְנִי יְהוָה עֲלֵיכֶם לְדַבֵּר בְּאָזְנוֹכֶם אֶת  
 כָּל־הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה: {ס}

<sup>טז</sup> וַיֹּאמְרוּ הַשָּׂרִים וְכָל־הָעָם אֶל־הַכֹּהֲנִים וְאֶל־  
 הַנְּבִיאִים אֵין־לָאִישׁ הַזֶּה מִשְׁפַּט־מוֹת כִּי בָשָׁם  
 יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ דִּבֶּר אֵלֵינוּ: <sup>יז</sup> וַיִּקְמוּ אַנְשִׁים מִזִּקְנֵי  
 הָאָרֶץ וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֶל־כָּל־קְהֵל הָעָם לֵאמֹר: <sup>יח</sup> מִיכָּה  
 מִיכָּה הַמֹּרֶשֶׁתִּי הִיָּה נָבִיא 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.” <sup>13</sup> 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. <sup>14</sup> For myself, I am, as you see, in your power. Do whatever you please or think right with me; <sup>15</sup> 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.”

<sup>16</sup> 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.” <sup>17</sup> Some of the country’s elders rose to address all the assembled people. <sup>18</sup> “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:

<sup>13</sup> 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.

<sup>14</sup> The literal translation of ‘power’ is ‘hand’ – this is a common idiom in the OT.

<sup>15</sup> The NJB has simply ‘all this’ in place of ‘all these words’, here following the MT & NRSV.

<sup>16</sup> 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).

<sup>17</sup> ‘Micah of Moresheth’ was a contemporary of Isaiah (Mi 1:1 & Is 1:1) from a town in the hill country southwest of Jerusalem.

<sup>18</sup> 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 תַחְרֹשׁ  
וִירוּשָׁלַיִם עֵיִם תִּהְיֶה  
וְהָר הַבַּיִת לְבִמּוֹת יַעַר:

Zion will become plough-land,  
Jerusalem a heap of rubble  
and the Temple Mount a wooded height.”

יִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה הַמֶּלֶךְ חֲזַקְיָהּ מֶלֶךְ־יְהוּדָה וְכָל־יְהוּדָה  
הֲלֹא־יָרָא אֶת־יְהוָה וַיַּחֲלֵ אֶת־פָּנָיו יְהוָה וַיִּנָּחֵם יְהוָה  
אֶל־הָרָעָה אֲשֶׁר־דִּבֶּר עֲלֵיהֶם וַאֲנַחְנוּ עֹשִׂים רָעָה  
גְּדוֹלָה עַל־נַפְשׁוֹתֵינוּ: <sup>כ</sup> וְגַם־אִישׁ הָיָה מִתְנַבֵּא  
בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה אֲוִרְיָהוּ בֶן־שֹׁמְעִיָה מִקְרִית הַיַּעֲרִים  
וַיִּנָּבֵא עַל־הָעִיר הַזֹּאת וְעַל־הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת כָּכָל  
דְּבָרֵי יִרְמְיָהוּ: <sup>כא</sup> וַיִּשְׁמַע הַמֶּלֶךְ־יְהוֹיָקִים וְכָל־  
גְּבוּרָיו וְכָל־הַשָּׂרִים אֶת־דְּבָרָיו וַיִּבְקֹשׁ הַמֶּלֶךְ  
הַמִּיתוֹ וַיִּשְׁמַע אֲוִרְיָהוּ וַיֵּרָא וַיִּבְרַח וַיָּבֹא מִצְרַיִם:  
<sup>כב</sup> וַיִּשְׁלַח הַמֶּלֶךְ יְהוֹיָקִים אֲנָשִׁים מִצְרַיִם אֶת  
אֶלְנָתָן בֶּן־עֶכְבֹּר וְאֲנָשִׁים אֲתוֹ אֶל־מִצְרַיִם:  
<sup>כג</sup> וַיּוֹצִיאוּ אֶת־אֲוִרְיָהוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם וַיָּבֹאוּ אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ  
יְהוֹיָקִים וַיִּכְהוּ בַּחֶרֶב וַיִּשְׁלַח אֶת־נִבְלָתוֹ אֶל־קִבְרֵי  
בְּנֵי הָעָם: <sup>כד</sup> אֵךְ יָד אַחִיקָם בֶּן־שָׁפָן הִיָּתָה אֶת־  
יִרְמְיָהוּ לְבִלְתִּי תִתֵּן אֹתוֹ בְּיַד־הָעָם לְהַמִּיתוֹ: {פ}

<sup>19</sup> “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?” <sup>20</sup> 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. <sup>21</sup> 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. <sup>22</sup> King Jehoiakim, however, sent Elnathan son of Achbor to Egypt with others, <sup>23</sup> 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. <sup>24</sup> However, Jeremiah had a protector in Ahikam son of Shaphan; so, he was not handed over to the people to be put to death.

<sup>19</sup> 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).

<sup>20</sup> Baruch tells the story of Uriah’s martyrdom to illustrate Jeremiah’s personal danger and fortunate official support.

<sup>21</sup> The literal translation of ‘bodyguards’ (here following NETB) is ‘mighty men’ or ‘soldiers’ but it is unlikely that this included all the army.

<sup>22</sup> After ‘sent’, the MT adds ‘men to Egypt’.

<sup>23</sup> A standard part of international treaties at this time was a stipulation of mutual extradition of political prisoners.

<sup>24</sup> ‘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־יְאֹשָׁיָהוּ מֶלֶךְ  
יְהוּדָה הָיָה הַדְּבָר הַזֶּה אֶל־יִרְמְיָה מֵאֵת יְהוָה  
לֵאמֹר: ב כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי עֲשֵׂה לְךָ מוֹסְרוֹת  
וּמִטּוֹת וּנְתַתֶּם עַל־צוּאֲרֶךְ: ג וְשַׁלַּחְתֶּם אֶל־מֶלֶךְ  
אֲדוֹם וְאֶל־מֶלֶךְ מוֹאָב וְאֶל־מֶלֶךְ בְּנֵי עַמּוֹן וְאֶל־  
מֶלֶךְ צֹר וְאֶל־מֶלֶךְ צִידוֹן בְּיַד מַלְאָכִים הַבָּאִים  
יְרוּשָׁלַם אֶל־צִדְקִיָּהוּ מֶלֶךְ יְהוּדָה: ד וְצִוִּיתִי אֹתָם  
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 בְּכָחִי הַגָּדוֹל וּבְזִרְעִי הַנְּטוּיָה וּנְתַתִּיָּהּ  
לְאִשֹּׁר יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּעֵינָי: ו וְעַתָּה אֲנֹכִי נֹתֵתִי אֶת־כָּל־  
הָאֲרָצוֹת הָאֵלֶּה בְּיַד נְבוּכַדְנֶאצַּר מֶלֶךְ־בָּבֶל עַבְדִּי  
וְגַם אֶת־חַיַּת הַשָּׂדֶה נֹתֵתִי לוֹ לְעִבְדּוֹ: ז וְעַבְדּוֹ אֹתוֹ

## JEREMIAH 27

<sup>1</sup> At the beginning of the reign of King Zedekiah son of Josiah, of Judah, this word came to Jeremiah from Yahweh: <sup>2</sup> Yahweh said this to me, “Make yourself a yoke of straps and bars and put them on your neck. <sup>3</sup> 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. <sup>4</sup> Give them the following message for their masters, “Thus says Yahweh Sabaoth, God of Israel: This is what you shall say to your masters: <sup>5</sup> 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. <sup>6</sup> 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. <sup>7</sup> 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).

- <sup>1</sup> ‘Zedekiah’ is conjectural, following vv. 3, 12, 28:1 and the Peshitta (as well as a few Hebrew MSS); the MT has ‘Jehoiakim’.
- <sup>2</sup> The ‘yoke’ is a common biblical symbol of political servitude; from 1K 12, it is clear that it applied to taxation and conscript labour.
- <sup>3</sup> ‘Use it to send messages’ is a conjectural translation (following NETB); the MT has ‘send them’.
- <sup>4</sup> Literally translated, this verse opens, “Give them a charge to their masters, saying:”
- <sup>5</sup> See Dn 4:17 for a similar statement from God.
- <sup>6</sup> 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.
- <sup>7</sup> 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־בְּנוֹ עַד בֹּא־עַת אֶרֶץ  
גַּם־הוּא וְעַבְדּוֹ בּוֹ גּוֹיִם רַבִּים וּמַלְכִּים גְּדֹלִים:  
<sup>ח</sup> וְהָיָה הַגּוֹי וְהַמְּמֻלָּכָה אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יַעֲבֹדוּ אֹתוֹ אֶת־  
נְבוּכַדְנֶאצַּר מֶלֶךְ־בָּבֶל וְאֶת אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יִתֵּן אֶת־  
צוּאָרוֹ בְּעַל מֶלֶךְ בָּבֶל בַּחֲרָב וּבָרָעַב וּבְדָבַר אֶפְקָד  
עַל־הַגּוֹי הַהוּא נֶאֱסִי־יְהוָה עַד־תָּמִי אַתֶּם בְּיָדוֹ:  
<sup>ט</sup> וְאַתֶּם אֱלֹהֵי־תַשְׁמְעוּ אֶל־נְבִיאֵיכֶם וְאֶל־קְסָמִיכֶם  
וְאֶל חֲלָמְתֵיכֶם וְאֶל־עֲנֻנֵיכֶם וְאֶל־כַּשְׁפֵּיכֶם אֲשֶׁר־  
הֵם אֹמְרִים אֲלֵיכֶם לֵאמֹר לֹא תַעֲבֹדוּ אֶת־מֶלֶךְ  
בָּבֶל: <sup>י</sup> כִּי שֶׁקֶר הֵם נִבְּאִים לָכֵם לְמַעַן הִרְחִיק  
אֶתְכֶם מֵעַל אֲדָמְתְּכֶם וְהִדְחִיתִי אֶתְכֶם וְאַבְדֶּתֶם:  
<sup>יא</sup> וְהַגּוֹי אֲשֶׁר יָבִיא אֶת־צוּאָרוֹ בְּעַל מֶלֶךְ־בָּבֶל  
וְעַבְדּוֹ וְהַנְּחֻתָיו עַל־אֲדָמְתוֹ נֶאֱסִי־יְהוָה וְעַבְדָּהּ  
וַיֵּשֶׁב בָּהּ: <sup>יב</sup> וְאֶל־צִדְקִיָּה מֶלֶךְ־יְהוּדָה דִּבַּרְתִּי כֹכֶל־  
הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה לֵאמֹר הֵבִיאוּ אֶת־צוּאָרֵיכֶם בְּעַל  
מֶלֶךְ־בָּבֶל וְעַבְדּוּ אֹתוֹ וְעָמּוּ וַחֲיוּ: <sup>יג</sup> לָמָּה תָמוּתוּ  
אֹתָהּ וְעָמְדָה בַּחֲרָב בָּרָעַב וּבְדָבַר כָּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר יְהוָה

comes in its turn, when many nations and great kings will enslave him.

<sup>8</sup> 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. <sup>9</sup> 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. <sup>10</sup> 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. <sup>11</sup> 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.”” <sup>12</sup> 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. <sup>13</sup> 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? <sup>14</sup> Do not

<sup>8</sup> ‘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’.

<sup>9</sup> ‘Dreamers’ follows the LXX, Peshitta & Vg; the MT has ‘dreams’.

<sup>10</sup> The NJB has ‘they prophesy lies’ in place of ‘they are prophesying a lie’, here following the MT (& NRSV).

<sup>11</sup> The NRSV ends this verse, here following the NJB, with, “to till it and live there.”

<sup>12</sup> 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.

<sup>13</sup> This rhetorical question expects the reply, “There is no reason!”

<sup>14</sup> See #10 on the phrase ‘they are prophesying a lie’.

אֶל־הַגּוֹי אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יַעֲבֹד אֶת־מֶלֶךְ בָּבֶל׃ י<sup>ד</sup> וְאֶל־  
תִּשְׁמְעוּ אֶל־דִּבְרֵי הַנְּבִאִים הָאֹמְרִים אֵלֵיכֶם  
לֵאמֹר לֹא תַעֲבֹדוּ אֶת־מֶלֶךְ בָּבֶל כִּי שֶׁקֶר הֵם  
נְבִאִים לָכֵם׃ ט<sup>ו</sup> כִּי לֹא שְׁלַחְתִּים נְאֻם־יְהוָה וְהֵם  
נְבִאִים בְּשֵׁמִי לִשְׁקֹר לְמַעַן הִדִּיחִי אֶתְכֶם וְאֲבַדְתֶּם  
אַתֶּם וְהַנְּבִאִים הַנְּבִאִים לָכֵם׃ טז וְאֶל־הַכֹּהֲנִים  
וְאֶל־כָּל־הָעָם הַזֶּה דִּבַּרְתִּי לֵאמֹר כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה  
אֶל־תִּשְׁמְעוּ אֶל־דִּבְרֵי נְבִיאֵיכֶם הַנְּבִאִים לָכֵם  
לֵאמֹר הִנֵּה כָּלִי בֵּית־יְהוָה מוֹשָׁבִים מִבְּבֶלָה עֲתָה  
מֵהֵרָה כִּי שֶׁקֶר הֵמָּה נְבִאִים לָכֵם׃ יז אֶל־תִּשְׁמְעוּ  
אֵלֵיהֶם עֲבֹדוּ אֶת־מֶלֶךְ־בָּבֶל וַחֲיוּ לְמָה תִּהְיֶה  
הָעִיר הַזֹּאת חֲרָבָה׃ יח וְאִם־נְבִאִים הֵם וְאִם־יֵישׁ  
דִּבְרֵי־יְהוָה אַתֶּם יִפְגְּעוּ־נָא בִּיהוָה צְבָאוֹת לְבִלְתִּי־  
בָּאוּ הַכֹּלִים׃ הַנּוֹתָרִים בְּבֵית־יְהוָה וּבֵית מֶלֶךְ  
יְהוּדָה וּבִירוּשָׁלַם בְּבֶלָה׃ יט כִּי כֹה אָמַר יְהוָה  
צְבָאוֹת אֱלֹהֵי־עַמּוּדִים וְעַל־הַיָּם וְעַל־הַמְּכָנֹת וְעַל־  
יֵתֶר הַכֹּלִים הַנּוֹתָרִים בָּעִיר הַזֹּאת׃ כ אֲשֶׁר לֹא־  
לָקָחם נְבוּכַדְנֶאצַּר מֶלֶךְ בָּבֶל בְּגִלוֹתוֹ אֶת־יִכְנִיָּה

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.<sup>15</sup> 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.”<sup>16</sup> 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.<sup>17</sup> Do not listen to them; serve the king of Babylon and live. Why should this city become a ruin?<sup>18</sup> 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!<sup>19</sup> For this is what Yahweh Sabaoth says about the pillars, the Sea, the stands and the other vessels still remaining in this city,<sup>20</sup> 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

<sup>15</sup> For the fulfilment of this prophecy, see 39:5–7, 52:7–11 and 2K 25:4–7.

<sup>16</sup> Jeremiah cautions the people against believing the assurance of the false prophets that the booty taken in 597 BCE would be returned shortly.

<sup>17</sup> The imperative with *vav* here (וַחֲיוּ, ‘live’) after another imperative (עֲבֹדוּ, ‘serve’) is an example of the imperative introducing a consequence.

<sup>18</sup> The word ‘elsewhere’ is not in the MT; it is added here (following the NJB) for clarity.

<sup>19</sup> 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.

<sup>20</sup> The *Kethib*/*Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

יְכוֹנִיָּה בְּנֵי־הַזִּיקִים מֶלֶךְ־יְהוּדָה מִירוּשָׁלַם בְּבִלָּה  
וְאֵת כָּל־חֲרֵי יְהוּדָה וִירוּשָׁלַם: כֹּא כִּי כֹה אָמַר יְהוָה  
עֲבָאוֹת אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל עַל־הַכֹּלִים הַנּוֹתָרִים בֵּית  
יְהוָה וּבֵית מֶלֶךְ־יְהוּדָה וִירוּשָׁלַם: כִּב בְּבִלָּה יֻבְאוּ  
וְשָׁמָּה יִהְיוּ עַד יוֹם פְּקֻדֵי אֲתָם נְאֻם־יְהוָה  
וְהָעֲלִיתִם וְהִשְׁיבְתִּים אֶל־הַמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה: {פ}

the leading men of Judah and Jerusalem. <sup>21</sup> 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. <sup>22</sup> 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.”

<sup>21</sup> Some of the flavour of the repetitive nature of Hebrew narrative is apparent in vv. 19–21.

<sup>22</sup> 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

<sup>א</sup> וַיְהִי בַּשָּׁנָה הַהִיא בְּרֵאשִׁית מַמְלַכַת צִדְקִיָּה מֶלֶךְ־יְהוּדָה בִּשְׁנַת בַּשָּׁנָה הָרִבְעִית בַּחֹדֶשׁ הַחֲמִישִׁי אָמַר אֵלֵי חֲנַנְיָה בֶן־עֲזוּר הַנְּבִיא אֲשֶׁר מִגְּבֻעוֹן בְּבֵית יְהוָה לְעֵינֵי הַכֹּהֲנִים וְכָל־הָעָם לֵאמֹר: <sup>ב</sup> כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר שִׁבְרֹתִי אֶת־עַל מֶלֶךְ בָּבֶל: <sup>ג</sup> בְּעוֹדוֹ שְׁנָתַיִם יָמִים אֲנִי מְשִׁיב אֶל־הַמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה אֶת־כָּל־כְּלֵי בֵּית יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר לָקַח נְבוּכַדְנֶאצַּר מֶלֶךְ־בָּבֶל מִן־הַמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה וַיְבִיֵּאֵם בָּבֶל: <sup>ד</sup> וְאֶת־יְכֹנְיָה בֶן־יְהוִיָּקִים מֶלֶךְ־יְהוּדָה וְאֶת־כָּל־גָּלוּת יְהוּדָה הַבָּאִים בָּבֶלָה אֲנִי מְשִׁיב אֶל־הַמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה נְאֻם־יְהוָה כִּי אֲשַׁבֵּר אֶת־עַל מֶלֶךְ בָּבֶל: <sup>ה</sup> וַיֹּאמֶר יִרְמְיָה הַנְּבִיא אֶל־חֲנַנְיָה הַנְּבִיא לְעֵינֵי הַכֹּהֲנִים וּלְעֵינֵי כָל־הָעָם הָעֹמְדִים בְּבֵית יְהוָה: <sup>ו</sup> וַיֹּאמֶר יִרְמְיָה הַנְּבִיא אֲמֹן כֵּן יַעֲשֶׂה יְהוָה יְקָם יְהוָה אֶת־דְּבָרֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר נִבֵּאתָ לְהָשִׁיב כָּלִי בֵּית־יְהוָה וְכָל־הַגּוֹלָה מִבָּבֶל אֶל־

<sup>1</sup> 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, <sup>2</sup> “Yahweh Sabaoth, the God of Israel, says this, “I will break the yoke of servitude to the king of Babylon. <sup>3</sup> 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. <sup>4</sup> 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.”” <sup>5</sup> 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; <sup>6</sup> 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

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- <sup>1</sup> 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 3<sup>rd</sup> person narrative – many explain the 1<sup>st</sup> person here as a misunderstanding of the abbreviation ‘to Jeremiah’ (אֵלֵי = אֶל יִרְמְיָה).
- <sup>2</sup> The literal translation of ‘*I will break*’ is ‘*I have broken*’; this is a case of the ‘prophetic perfect’ – the past tense indicating certainty.
- <sup>3</sup> The NJB opens this verse with ‘*In exactly two years’ time*’; here, we (loosely) follow NETB.
- <sup>4</sup> The NJB & NRSV lack the words ‘*servitude to*’, here following NETB (as also in v. 2).
- <sup>5</sup> The NJB has simply ‘*present*’ in place of ‘*who were standing*’, here following the NRSV.
- <sup>6</sup> The NJB has ‘*so be it*’ in place of ‘*Amen*’ (אָמֵן), here following the NRSV & NETB.



הַמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה: <sup>ז</sup> אֲדַשְׁמַעֲנָא הַדְּבָר הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר  
אֲנִכִּי דָּבַר בְּאַזְנֶיךָ וּבְאַזְנֵי כָּל־הָעָם: <sup>ח</sup> הַנְּבִיאִים  
אֲשֶׁר הָיוּ לִפְנֵי וּלְפָנֶיךָ מִן־הָעוֹלָם וַיִּנְבְּאוּ אֶל־  
אַרְצוֹת רַבּוֹת וְעַל־מַמְלָכוֹת גְּדֹלוֹת לְמַלְחָמָה  
וּלְרָעָה וּלְדָבָר: <sup>ט</sup> הַנְּבִיא אֲשֶׁר יִנְבֵּא לְשָׁלוֹם בָּבֶל  
דָּבַר הַנְּבִיא יוֹדֵעַ הַנְּבִיא אֲשֶׁר־שָׁלְחוּ יְהוָה  
בְּאַמַּת: <sup>י</sup> וַיִּקַּח חֲנַנְיָה הַנְּבִיא אֶת־הַמוֹטָה מֵעַל  
צוּר יִרְמְיָה הַנְּבִיא וַיִּשְׁבְּרֶהוּ: <sup>יא</sup> וַיֹּאמֶר חֲנַנְיָה  
לְעֵינַי כָּל־הָעָם לֵאמֹר כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה כִּכָּה אֲשַׁבֵּר  
אֶת־עֵל | נִבְכַּדְנֶאצַּר מֶלֶךְ־בָּבֶל בְּעוֹד שְׁנָתַיִם יָמִים  
מֵעַל צוּר כָּל־הַגּוֹיִם וַיִּלְךְ יִרְמְיָה הַנְּבִיא  
לְדַרְכּוֹ: {פ}

<sup>יב</sup> וַיְהִי דְבַר־יְהוָה אֶל־יִרְמְיָה אַחֲרֵי שְׁבוֹר חֲנַנְיָה  
הַנְּבִיא אֶת־הַמוֹטָה מֵעַל צוּר יִרְמְיָה הַנְּבִיא  
לֵאמֹר: <sup>יג</sup> הַלּוֹךְ וְאָמַרְתָּ אֶל־חֲנַנְיָה לֵאמֹר כֹּה אָמַר  
יְהוָה מוֹטָת עֵץ שִׁבְרָתָ וְעָשִׂיתָ תַּחְתֵּיהֶן מוֹטוֹת

Temple of Yahweh and all the exiles back to this place from Babylon.

<sup>7</sup> Listen carefully, however, to this word that I am now going to say for you and all the people to hear: <sup>8</sup> From ancient times, the prophets who preceded you and me prophesied war, disaster, and plague for many countries and for great kingdoms; <sup>9</sup> the prophet who prophesies peace can be recognised as one truly sent by Yahweh only when his word comes true.” <sup>10</sup> The prophet Hananiah then snatched the yoke from the neck of the prophet Jeremiah and broke it. <sup>11</sup> 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.

<sup>12</sup> After the prophet Hananiah had broken the yoke from the prophet Jeremiah’s neck, the word of Yahweh came to Jeremiah, <sup>13</sup> “Go to Hananiah and tell him this, “Yahweh says this: You have broken the wooden yokes only to make iron yokes to replace them! <sup>14</sup> For Yahweh

<sup>7</sup> 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.”

<sup>8</sup> In place of ‘disaster’, many Hebrew MSS read ‘famine’, which is the 2<sup>nd</sup> 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.)

<sup>9</sup> In stating that the prophet foretells disaster, Jeremiah implicitly refers to the sins of the nation, always condemned by the true prophets.

<sup>10</sup> Note how Hananiah acts dramatically, so as to draw the attention of the audience.

<sup>11</sup> The literal translation of ‘went away’ is ‘went his way’.

<sup>12</sup> At the beginning of this verse, the NRSV adds ‘sometime’ and NETB adds ‘shortly’; here, we follow the NJB.

<sup>13</sup> Jeremiah’s yoke was symbolic of submission to Babylonian rule; Hananiah breaking it showed that that rule would not last.

<sup>14</sup> 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 כִּי כֹה־אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל  
עַל בְּרֹזֶל נָתַתִּי עַל־צוּאֵר | כָּל־הַגּוֹיִם הָאֵלֶּה לְעֶבֶד  
אֶת־נְבֻכַדְנֶאצַּר מֶלֶךְ־בָּבֶל וְעִבְדָּהוּ וְגַם אֶת־חַיֵּית  
הַשָּׂדֶה נָתַתִּי לוֹ: <sup>טו</sup> וַיֹּאמֶר יִרְמְיָה הַנָּבִיא אֶל־  
חֲנַנְיָה הַנָּבִיא שָׁמַע־נָא חֲנַנְיָה לֹא־שָׁלַחךָ יְהוָה  
וְאַתָּה הַבְטַחְתָּ אֶת־הָעָם הַזֶּה עַל־שָׁקֶר: <sup>טז</sup> לָכֵן כֹּה  
אָמַר יְהוָה הַנְּנִי מִשְׁלַחךָ מֵעַל פְּנֵי הָאֲדָמָה הַשָּׂנִי  
אֶתָּה מֵת כִּי־סָרָה דְּבַרְתָּ אֶל־יְהוָה: <sup>יז</sup> וַיָּמָת חֲנַנְיָה  
הַנָּבִיא בַּשָּׁנָה 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.”” <sup>15</sup> 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. <sup>16</sup> 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.”” <sup>17</sup> The prophet Hananiah died the same year, in the seventh month.

<sup>15</sup> Another way to read the end of this verse is, “you are giving these people false assurances.”

<sup>16</sup> What Hananiah had done was contrary to the law of Dt 13:6 and was punishable by death.

<sup>17</sup> 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).



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## ירמיהו פרק כט

א ואלה דברי הספר אשר שלח ירמיה הנביא מירושלם אל־יתר זקני הגולה ואל־הכהנים ואל־הנביאים ואל־כל־העם אשר הגלה נבוכדנאצר מירושלם בבלה: ב אחרי זאת יכניה־המלך והגבילה והסריסים שרי יהודה וירושלם והחרש והמסגר מירושלם: ג ביד אלעשה בן־שפן וגמריה בן־חלקיה אשר שלח צדקיה מלך־יהודה אל־נבוכדנאצר מלך בבל בבבלה לאמר:

ד כה אמר יהוה צבאות אלהי ישראל לכל־הגולה אשר־הגליתי מירושלם בבלה: ה בנו בתים ושבו ונטעו גנות ואכלו את־פריה: ו קחו נשים והולידו בנים ובנות וקחו לבניכם נשים ואת־בנותיכם תנו לאנשים ותלדנה בנים ובנות ורבו־שם ואל־תמעטו: ז ודרשו את־שלום

<sup>1</sup> 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, <sup>2</sup> after King Jeconiah, the queen mother, the officials, the leaders of Judah and Jerusalem, and the artisans and smiths had left Jerusalem. <sup>3</sup> 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:

<sup>4</sup> “Yahweh Sabaoth, the God of Israel, says this to all the exiles sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: <sup>5</sup> Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat what they produce; <sup>6</sup> 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. <sup>7</sup> Work for

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- <sup>1</sup> 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).
- <sup>2</sup> The NJB has ‘eunuchs’ in place of ‘officials’ (here following NETB).
- <sup>3</sup> 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).
- <sup>4</sup> 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.
- <sup>5</sup> The message here is a clear indication that the period of the Exile will be long.
- <sup>6</sup> It is also clear here that God expects the Hebrew Nation to prosper during the Exile.
- <sup>7</sup> The NJB ends this verse (here following the NRSV) with, “... since on its welfare yours depends.”

הָעִיר אֲשֶׁר הִגַּלְתִּי אֶתְכֶם שָׁמָּה וְהִתְפַּלֵּלוּ  
 בַּעֲדָהּ אֶל־יְהוָה כִּי בְשָׁלוֹמָהּ יִהְיֶה לָכֶם שָׁלוֹם:  
 כִּי כֹה אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶל־  
 יְשִׁיאוּ לָכֶם נְבִיאֵיכֶם אֲשֶׁר־בְּקִרְבְּכֶם וְקִסְמֵיכֶם  
 וְאֶל־תִּשְׁמְעוּ אֶל־חִלְמֹתֵיכֶם אֲשֶׁר אַתֶּם  
 מַחְלָמִים: ט כִּי בִשְׁקֹר הֵם נְבִאִים לָכֶם בְּשֵׁמִי לֹא  
 שְׁלַחְתִּים נְאֻם־יְהוָה: {ס}

י כִּי־כֹה אָמַר יְהוָה כִּי לִפִּי מְלֹאת לְבַבְלִי שְׁבָעִים  
 שָׁנָה אֶפְקֹד אֶתְכֶם וְהִקְמַתִּי עֲלֵיכֶם אֶת־דְּבָרִי  
 הַטּוֹב לְהָשִׁיב אֶתְכֶם אֶל־הַמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה: יא כִּי  
 אֲנֹכִי יֹדַעְתִּי אֶת־הַמַּחְשָׁבָה אֲשֶׁר אֲנֹכִי חָשַׁב  
 עֲלֵיכֶם נְאֻם־יְהוָה מַחְשְׁבוֹת שָׁלוֹם וְלֹא לְרָעָה  
 לָתֵת לָכֶם אַחֲרִית וְתִקְוָה: יב וְקִרְאתֶם אֹתִי  
 וְהִלַּכְתֶּם וְהִתְפַּלַּלְתֶּם אֵלַי וְשָׁמַעְתִּי אֲלֵיכֶם:  
 יג וּבִקְשֹׁתֶם אֹתִי וּמָצֵאתֶם כִּי תִדְרָשְׁנִי בְּכָל־  
 לְבַבְכֶם: יד וְנִמְצָאתִי 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.

<sup>8</sup> 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, <sup>9</sup> since they prophesy lies to you in my name. I have not sent them, says Yahweh.

<sup>10</sup> “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.

<sup>11</sup> 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. <sup>12</sup> And then, when you call to me and you come and pray to me, I shall listen to you. <sup>13</sup> And when you search for me, you will find me – when you search for me with all your heart and soul. <sup>14</sup> And I shall let you find me, says Yahweh. I shall restore

<sup>8</sup> In place of ‘dreams you are encouraging them to dream’, here following NETB, the NJB has ‘dreams you have’.

<sup>9</sup> See #23:27 on the significance of the phrase ‘in my name’.

<sup>10</sup> See #25:11 for the reckoning of ‘seventy years’.

<sup>11</sup> 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.

<sup>12</sup> The verbs translated ‘call’ and ‘pray’ are *vav* consecutive perfects and can be taken either as unconditional futures or as contingent futures.

<sup>13</sup> 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 OT than to emotions.

<sup>14</sup> 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: <sup>טו</sup> כִּי אֲמַרְתֶּם הַקִּים לָנוּ  
יְהוָה נְבִאִים בְּבִלְהָ: {ס} <sup>טז</sup> כִּי־כֹה אָמַר יְהוָה  
אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ הַיּוֹשֵׁב אֶל־כִּסֵּא דָוִד וְאֶל־כָּל־הָעָם  
הַיּוֹשֵׁב בְּעִיר הַזֹּאת אַחֲיֵיכֶם אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יָצְאוּ  
אִתְּכֶם בְּגֹלָה: {ס} <sup>יז</sup> כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה עֲבֹאוֹת הַנְּגִי  
מִשְׁלַח בָּם אֶת־הַחֶרֶב אֶת־הָרָעָב וְאֶת־הַדָּבָר  
וְנִתְּתִי אוֹתָם כְּפִתְאֵנִים הַשְׁעָרִים אֲשֶׁר לֹא־  
תֵּאכְלָנָה מֵרַע: <sup>יח</sup> וְרִדַּפְתִּי אַחֲרֵיהֶם בַּחֶרֶב  
בָּרָעָב וּבַדָּבָר וְנִתְּתִים לְזוּעָה לְזוּעָה לְכָל־  
מַמְלָכוֹת הָאָרֶץ לְאֵלָה וּלְשִׁמָּה וּלְשָׂרָקָה  
וּלְחִרְפָּה בְּכָל־הַגּוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר־הִדַּחְתִּים שָׁם:  
<sup>יט</sup> תַּחַת אֲשֶׁר־לֹא־שָׁמְעוּ אֶל־דְּבָרִי נְאֻם־יְהוָה  
אֲשֶׁר שְׁלַחְתִּי אֲלֵיהֶם אֶת־עֲבָדֵי הַנְּבִאִים הַשֹּׁפֵם  
וְשִׁלַּח וְלֹא שָׁמְעֹתָם נְאֻם־יְהוָה: <sup>כ</sup> 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. <sup>15</sup> Furthermore, you have said: Yahweh has raised up prophets for us in Babylon. <sup>16</sup> 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: <sup>17</sup> 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. <sup>18</sup> 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, <sup>19</sup> 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. <sup>20</sup> But all you of the captivity,

<sup>15</sup> 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.

<sup>16</sup> 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.

<sup>17</sup> The meaning of the word translated ‘so bad’ (הַשְׁעָרִים) is somewhat uncertain; it occurs only here in the Hebrew Bible.

<sup>18</sup> The *Kethib*/*Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

<sup>19</sup> ‘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).

<sup>20</sup> Note the further example of the shift from 1<sup>st</sup> person to 3<sup>rd</sup> – common in Hebrew poetry and prophecy.

דְּבַר־יְהוָה כָּל־הַגּוֹלָה אֲשֶׁר־שָׁלַחְתִּי מִירוּשָׁלַם  
בְּבָלָה: {ס}

כא כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶל־  
אֲחָאָב בֶּן־קוֹלִיָּה וְאֶל־צִדְקִיָּהוּ בֶן־מַעַשְׂיָה  
הַנְּבָאִים לָכֶם בְּשֵׁמִי שֶׁקֶר הִנְגִּי | נָתַן אֹתָם בְּיַד  
נְבוּכַדְרֶאצַּר מֶלֶךְ־בָּבֶל וְהֵפֶם לְעֵינֵיכֶם: כב וְלָקַח  
מֵהֶם קִלְלָה לְכָל־גְּלוֹת יְהוּדָה אֲשֶׁר בְּבָבֶל לֵאמֹר  
יִשְׁמַךְ יְהוָה כְּצִדְקִיָּהוּ וְכֶאֱחָב אֲשֶׁר־קָלַם מֶלֶךְ־  
בָּבֶל בְּאֵשׁ: כג יֵעַן אֲשֶׁר עָשׂוּ נְבִלָה בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל  
וַיִּנְאַפּוּ אֶת־נָשֵׁי רֵעֵיהֶם וַיִּדְבְּרוּ דְבַר בְּשֵׁמִי שֶׁקֶר  
אֲשֶׁר לֹא צוִיתָם וְאֲנֹכִי הוֹדַעְתִּי וְעַד נֹאֵם־  
יְהוָה: {ס}

כד וְאֶל־שְׁמַעְיָהוּ הַנְּחַלְמִי תֹאמַר לֵאמֹר: כה כֹּה־  
אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר יֵעַן  
אֲשֶׁר אָתָּה שָׁלַחְתָּ בְּשִׁמְכָה סֹפְרִים אֶל־כָּל־  
הָעָם אֲשֶׁר בִּירוּשָׁלַם וְאֶל־צִפְנִיָּה בֶן־מַעַשְׂיָה  
הַכֹּהֵן וְאֵל כָּל־הַכֹּהֲנִים לֵאמֹר: כו יְהוָה נָתַן כְּהֵן  
תַּחַת יְהוֹדָע הַכֹּהֵן לַהֲיוֹת פְּקִידִים בֵּית יְהוָה

whom I have sent from Jerusalem to Babylon, listen to Yahweh's word!

<sup>21</sup> “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. <sup>22</sup> 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, <sup>23</sup> 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.

<sup>24</sup> “To Shemaiah of Nehelam you will speak as follows: <sup>25</sup> 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: <sup>26</sup> 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

<sup>21</sup> Jeremiah condemned two colleagues of Hananiah, Ahab and Zedekiah (compare Ezk 13) and predicted their execution.

<sup>22</sup> Being ‘roasted in the fire’ appears to have been a common method of execution in Babylon (see Dn 3:6, 19-21).

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

<sup>24</sup> Shemaiah wrote a scathing letter to the new Temple overseer, Zephaniah, charging him with dereliction of duty in not arresting Jeremiah.

<sup>25</sup> The NJB has ‘on your own initiative’ in place of ‘in your own name’, here following the MT & NRSV.

<sup>26</sup> The term translated ‘crazy fellow’ applies to anyone who exhibits irrational behaviour.

לְכָל-אִישׁ מִשְׁגָּע וּמִתְנַבֵּא וְנִתְּתָה אֹתוֹ אֶל-  
הַמֶּהֱפֶכֶת וְאֶל-הַצִּינֹק: <sup>כז</sup> וְעַתָּה לָמָּה לֹא גִעַרְתָּ  
בִּירְמְיָהוּ הָעֹנֵתֵנִי הַמִּתְנַבֵּא לָכֶם: <sup>כח</sup> כִּי עַל-כֵּן  
שָׁלַח אֵלֵינוּ בָּבֶל לֵאמֹר אֲרַכָּה הִיא בְּנוּ בָתִּים  
וְשִׁבוּ וְנִטְעוּ גִזְזִים וְאָכְלוּ אֶת-פְּרִיָהֶן:

<sup>כט</sup> וַיִּקְרָא צְפַנְיָה הַכֹּהֵן אֶת-הַסֵּפֶר הַזֶּה בְּאָזְנוֹ  
יְרְמְיָהוּ הַנָּבִיא: {פ}

<sup>ל</sup> וַיְהִי דְבַר-יְהוָה אֶל-יְרְמְיָהוּ לֵאמֹר: <sup>לא</sup> שְׁלַח עַל-  
כָּל-הַגּוֹלָה לֵאמֹר כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי שִׁמְעִיָּה  
הַנַּחֲלָמִי יֵעָן אֲשֶׁר נָבֵא לָכֶם שִׁמְעִיָּה וְאָנֹכִי לֹא  
שָׁלַחְתִּיו וַיִּבְטַח אֶתְכֶם עַל-שֶׁקֶר: <sup>לב</sup> לָכֵן כֹּה-אָמַר  
יְהוָה הַגָּדִי פֶקֶד עַל-שִׁמְעִיָּה הַנַּחֲלָמִי וְעַל-זִרְעוֹ  
לֹא-יִהְיֶה לוֹ אִישׁ יוֹשֵׁב בְּתוֹךְ-הָעָם הַזֶּה וְלֹא-  
יִרְאֶה בִטּוֹב אֲשֶׁר-אֲנִי עֹשֶׂה-לָּעָם נְאֻם-יְהוָה כִּי-  
סָרָה דְבַר עַל-יְהוָה: {ס}

a prophet in the stocks and collar, <sup>27</sup> why then have you not disciplined Jeremiah of Anathoth, now posing as a prophet to you? <sup>28</sup> 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 ...”

<sup>29</sup> The priest Zephaniah then read this letter in the hearing of the prophet Jeremiah,

<sup>30</sup> The word of Yahweh came then to Jeremiah: <sup>31</sup> “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, <sup>32</sup> 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.

<sup>27</sup> The rhetorical question functions as an emphatic assertion.

<sup>28</sup> 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.

<sup>29</sup> The NJB merges this verse with the following paragraph, reading, “Now, after the priest Zephaniah had read this letter to the prophet Jeremiah...”

<sup>30</sup> At the end of this verse, the NJB adds ‘as follows’; here, we follow the NRSV.

<sup>31</sup> An alternate reading for the end of this verse is, “...he has given you false assurances.”

<sup>32</sup> ‘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 נֹאֲמ־יְהוָה  
וְשִׁבְתִּי אֶת־שְׁבוֹת עַמִּי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיהוּדָה אָמַר  
יְהוָה וְהַשְׁבַּתִּים אֶל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר־נָתַתִּי לַאֲבוֹתָם  
וִירְשׁוּהָ: {פ}

ד וְאֵלֶּה הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר יְהוָה אֶל־יִשְׂרָאֵל  
וְאֶל־יְהוּדָה:

ה כִּי־כֹה אָמַר יְהוָה  
קוֹל חֲרָדָה שָׁמַעְנוּ  
פַּחַד וְאִין שָׁלוֹם:  
ו שְׂאֵל־וְנֹא וְרֹא  
אִם־יִלֵּד זָכָר  
מִדּוֹעַ רֵאִיתִי כָל־גֶּבֶר  
יָדָיו עַל־חֲלָצִיו

## JEREMIAH 30

<sup>1</sup> The word that came to Jeremiah from Yahweh, as follows, <sup>2</sup> “Yahweh, the God of Israel, says this, “Write for yourself in a book all the words that I am about to speak to you. <sup>3</sup> 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.””

<sup>4</sup> And these are the words that Yahweh spoke concerning Israel and Judah:

<sup>5</sup> Yes, Yahweh says this:

We have heard a cry of panic,  
of terror, not of peace.

<sup>6</sup> 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

<sup>1</sup> The NRSV lacks ‘as follows’, here following the NJB, and NETB has simply, “The LORD spoke to Jeremiah.”

<sup>2</sup> The literal translation of ‘am about to speak’ is ‘have spoken’; this is an example of the use of the prophetic perfect.

<sup>3</sup> The literal translation of ‘bring back the captives’ (here following the NJB) is ‘restore the fortunes’.

<sup>4</sup> NETB has ‘speaks’ in place of ‘spoke’ (see #2); however, here, the sentence forms part of the narrative, so the past tense is appropriate.

<sup>5</sup> The particle כִּי (‘yes’) is functioning here as loosely causal or exegetical of the preceding introduction.

<sup>6</sup> The word rendered ‘loins’ refers to the area between the ribs and the thighs.



כִּי־לִלְדָּה וְנִהְפְּכוּ כָּל־פָּנִים לִירְקוֹן:  
 הוּא כִּי גָדוֹל הַיּוֹם הַהוּא ז  
 מֵאִין כָּמֹהוּ  
 וְעַתָּ־צָרָה הִיא לִיעֲקֹב  
 וּמִמֶּנָּה יִוָּשֶׁעַ:

וְהָיָה בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא נֹאֵם יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת אֲשֶׁר  
 עָלָו מֵעַל צֹאֲרֹךְ וּמוֹסְרוֹתֶיךָ אֲנִתְּךָ וְלֹא־יַעֲבֹדוּ־  
 בּוֹ עוֹד זָרִים: ט וְעַבְדּוֹ אֶת יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיהֶם וְאֶת  
 דָּוִד מֶלֶכָם אֲשֶׁר אָקִים לָהֶם: {ס}

וְאַתָּה אֶל־תִּירָא עַבְדִּי יַעֲקֹב נֹאֵם־יְהוָה  
 וְאֶל־תַּחַת יִשְׂרָאֵל  
 כִּי הִנְנִי מוֹשִׁיעֶךָ מִרְחוֹק  
 וְאֶת־זִרְעֶךָ מֵאֶרֶץ שְׁבִים  
 וְשָׁב יַעֲקֹב וְשָׁקֵט וְשָׁאֲנָן  
 וְאִין מַחְרִיד:

כִּי־אֲתִידֶךָ אֲנִי נֹאֵם־יְהוָה לְהוֹשִׁיעֶךָ יא  
 כִּי אֶעֱשֶׂה כָּל־הַבְּלִיָּגוֹת  
 אֲשֶׁר הִפְצֹתִיךָ שָׁם  
 אֲךָ אֶתְּךָ 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.

וְיִסְרְתִּיךָ לְמִשְׁפָּט  
וְנִקָּה לֹא אֶנְקֶךָ: {פ}

יב כִּי כֹה אָמַר יְהוָה

אֲנוּשׁ לְשִׁבְרֶךָ

נִחְלָה מִכַּתֶּךָ:

יג אִין־דִּין דִּינֶךָ לְמִזֹּר

רְפָאוֹת תַּעֲלֶה אִין לְךָ:

יד כָּל־מְאַהֲבֶיךָ שָׁכְחוּךָ

אוֹתָךְ לֹא יִדְרֹשׁוּ

כִּי מַכַּת אוֹיֵב הִכִּיתִיךָ

מוֹסֵר אֶכְזָרִי עַל רֹב עֲוֹנוֹךָ

עֲצָמוֹ חֲטָאתֶיךָ:

טו מִה־תִּזְעַק עַל־שִׁבְרֶךָ

אֲנוּשׁ מִכְּאִבֶּךָ

עַל רֹב עֲוֹנוֹךָ עֲצָמוֹ חֲטָאתֶיךָ

עָשִׂיתִי אֵלֶּה לְךָ:

טז לָכֵן כָּל־אֹכְלֶיךָ יֹאכְלוּ

וְכָל־צָרֶיךָ כָּל־שָׂבִי 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 לָכֵן ('but') is normally translated as 'therefore' (cf. NJB & NRSV) but here it introduces a contrast, a rather unexpected salvation.

וְהָיוּ שֹׂאֲסִיךְ לַמִּשְׁפָּה  
וְכָל-בִּזְיֹךְ אֶתֶן לָבוֹ:  
כִּי אֵעֲלֶה אֶרְכָּה לָךְ וּמִמְכּוֹתֶיךָ אֶרְפָּאֲךָ  
נֶאֱמַר-יְהוָה  
כִּי נִדְחָה קָרָאוּ לָךְ  
צִיּוֹן הִיא דֶּרֶשׁ אֵין לָהּ: {ס}  
כֹּה | אָמַר יְהוָה  
הִנְנִי-שׁוֹב שְׁבוֹת אֶהְיֶי יַעֲקֹב  
וּמִשְׁכְּנֹתָיו אֶרְחֶם  
וְנִבְנְתָה עִיר עַל-תֵּלָהּ  
וְאֶרְמֹן עַל-מִשְׁפָּטָיו יֵשֵׁב:  
וַיֵּצֵא מֵהֶם תּוֹדָה  
וְקוֹל מְשֻׁחָקִים  
וְהִרְבִּיתִים וְלֹא יִמָּעֹטוּ  
וְהִכְבַּדְתִּים וְלֹא יִצְעָרוּ:  
וְהָיוּ בָנָיו בְּקָדָם  
וְעַדְתּוֹ לִפְנֵי תִבְּוֹן  
וּפְקַדְתִּי עַל כָּל-לֹחֲצָיו:

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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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.

כא וְהָיָה אֲדִירוֹ מִמֶּנּוּ  
וּמִשְׁלוֹ מִקְרָבוֹ יֵצֵא  
וְהִקְרַבְתִּיו וְנִגַּשׁ אֵלַי  
כִּי מִי הוּא־זֶה עֹרֵב אֶת־לִבּוֹ  
לִגְשֹׁת אֵלַי נְאֻם־יְהוָה:  
כב וְהִייתֶם לִי לְעָם  
וְאֲנֹכִי אֶהְיֶה לָכֶם לֵאלֹהִים: {ס}  
כג הִנֵּה | סַעֲרַת יְהוָה חֲמָה יֵצֵאָה  
סַעַר מִתְגֹּרֵר  
עַל רֹאשׁ רְשָׁעִים יִחוּל:  
כד לֹא יָשׁוּב חֲרוֹן אַף־יְהוָה  
עַד־עֲשֹׂתוֹ וְעַד־הִקְיָמוֹ  
מִזְמוֹת לִבּוֹ  
כה בְּאַחֲרֵית הַיָּמִים תִּתְּבוּנֶנּוּ בָּהֶם:  
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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 *MT*.

## ירמיהו פרק לא

א כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה  
מָצָא חַן בַּמִּדְבָּר  
עִם שְׂרִידֵי חָרֵב  
הַלֹּךְ לְהַרְגִּיעוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל:  
ב מִרְחֹק יְהוָה נִרְאָה לִי  
וְאֶהְבֶּת עוֹלָם אֶהְבֶּתִּיךָ  
עַל-כֵּן מִשְׁכָּתִּיךָ חֹסֵד:  
ג עוֹד אֶבְנֶךָ וְנִבְנִית  
בְּתוֹלַת יִשְׂרָאֵל  
עוֹד תַּעֲדִי תַפִּיךָ  
וּיֵצֵאת בְּמַחֹל מְשַׁחֲקִים:  
ד עוֹד תִּטְעִי כְרָמִים  
בְּהַרֵי שָׁמְרוֹן  
נִטְעוּ נֹטְעִים וְחָלְלוּ:

## 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.

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### 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*.

- <sup>1</sup> 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).
- <sup>2</sup> An alternative reading of 'afar' is 'long ago'.
- <sup>3</sup> Contrast this verse with 7:34 & 25:10.
- <sup>4</sup> 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>ה כי יִשְׁיֹזֵם קְרָאוּ נֹצְרִים<br/> בְּהָר אֶפְרַיִם<br/> קוּמוּ וְנַעֲלֵה צִיּוֹן<br/> אֶל־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ: {פ}</p> <p>ו כִּי־כֹה   אָמַר יְהוָה<br/> רְנוּ לִיעֲקֹב שִׂמְחָה וְצַהֲלוּ בְּרֹאשׁ הַגּוֹיִם<br/> הַשְׁמִיעוּ הַלְלוּ וְאָמְרוּ<br/> הוֹשַׁע יְהוָה אֶת־עַמּוֹךְ אֶת שְׂאֲרֵית יִשְׂרָאֵל:<br/> ז הִנְנִי מְבִיא אוֹתָם מֵאֶרֶץ<br/> צָפוֹן וְקִבְצָתִים<br/> מִרְכְּתֵי־אֶרֶץ בָּם עֹנֵר<br/> וּפְסֹחַ הָרָה וּלְדֹת<br/> יַחֲדוּ קָהָל גָּדוֹל יָשׁוּבוּ הֵנָּה:</p> | <p>5 Yes, a day will come when the watchmen shout<br/> on the mountains of Ephraim,<br/> “Up! Let us go up to Zion,<br/> to Yahweh our God!”</p> <p>6 For Yahweh says this:<br/> Shout with joy for Jacob! Hail the chief of nations!<br/> Proclaim! Praise! Shout,<br/> “Yahweh has saved his people, the remnant of Israel!”</p> <p>7 Watch, I shall bring them back from the land of the north<br/> and gather them in from the far ends of the earth.<br/> With them, the blind and the lame,<br/> women with child, women in labour,<br/> all together: a mighty throng will return here!</p> |
|--|--|

<sup>5</sup> ‘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); here, reference is made to the watchmen who signalled the special times of the year such as the New Moon and festival times when Israel was to go to Jerusalem to worship.

<sup>6</sup> ‘Has saved his’ follows the LXX (ἔσωσεν) 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 י, 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.

<sup>7</sup> In place of ‘watch’, following the NJB (the NRSV has ‘see’), NETB has, ‘and I will reply’.



בְּבִכִּי יָבֹאוּ וּבְתַחֲנוּנִים אֲוִבִילֵם ח  
אֲזַלִּיכֶם אֶל־נַחֲלֵי מַיִם  
בְּדֶרֶךְ יֵשֶׁר לֹא יִכְשְׁלוּ בָּהּ  
כִּי־הֵייתִי לְיִשְׂרָאֵל לְאָב  
וְאֶפְרַיִם בְּכֹרִי הוּא: {ס}  
שִׁמְעוּ דְּבַר־יְהוָה גּוֹיִם ט  
וְהַגִּידוּ בְּאֵיִם מִמֶּרְחֶק  
וְאָמְרוּ מִזֶּרֶחַ יִשְׂרָאֵל יִקְבְּצֵנוּ  
וְשִׁמְרוּ כְרֵעָה עֲדָרוֹ:  
כִּי־פָדָה יְהוָה אֶת־יַעֲקֹב י  
וְגָאֵלוּ מִיַּד חֲזָק מִמֶּנּוּ:  
וּבָאוּ וְרִנְּנוּ בְּמְרוֹם־צִיּוֹן יא  
וְנִהְיוּ אֶל־טוֹב יְהוָה  
עַל־דָּגָן וְעַל־תִּירֵשׁ וְעַל־יֵצֶהָר  
וְעַל־בְּנֵי־צֹאן וּבִקָּר  
וְהָיְתָה נֶפֶשׁ כָּגֵן רוֹהַ  
וְלֹא־יִוָּסִיפוּ לְדָאֲבָה עוֹד:

- 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,  
for I am a father to Israel  
and Ephraim is my first-born son.
- 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."
- 10 For Yahweh has ransomed Jacob,  
redeemed him from a hand stronger than his own.
- 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.

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 ἐξῆλθον, καὶ ἐν παρακλησει ἀνάξω αὐτούς - cf. Ps 126:5-6), though this is likely a correction to make an easier text.

9 In place of 'on the farthest coasts and islands', here following the NJB, the NRSV has 'in the coastlands far away'.

10 Two rather theologically significant metaphors are used in this verse: the word translated 'ransomed' is a word used in the legal sphere for paying a redemption price to secure the freedom of a person or thing (Ex 13:13, 15); the word translated 'redeemed' is a word 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 relative's property seized to pay a debt (Lv 25:25,33).

11 For the 2<sup>nd</sup> line, here following the NJB, the NRSV reads, "and they shall be radiant over the goodness of the LORD."

יב	אז תִּשְׂמַח בַּתּוֹלָה בְּמַחֲוֹל וּבְחָרִים וּזְקֵנִים יַחְדּוֹ וְהִפְכָּתִי אֲבֵלִם לְשִׂשׁוֹן וְנַחֲמָתִים וְשִׂמְחָתִים מִיָּגוֹנָם:	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.
יג	וְרוֹיְתִי נֶפֶשׁ הַכֹּהֲנִים דָּשֵׁן וְעַמִּי אֶת־טוֹבִי יִשְׂבְּעוּ נְאֻם־יְהוָה: {ס}	13	I shall refresh my priests with rich food, and my people will gorge themselves on my lavish gifts, says Yahweh.
יד	כֹּה   אָמַר יְהוָה קוֹל בְּרָמָה נִשְׁמָע נְהִי בְכֵי תַמְרוּרִים רָחֵל מִבְּכָה עַל־בָּנֶיהָ מֵאֲנָה לְהִנָּחֵם עַל־בָּנֶיהָ כִּי אֵינָנּוּ: {ס}	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.
טו	כֹּה   אָמַר יְהוָה מִנְעִי קוֹלְךָ מִבְּכִי וְעֵינַיִךְ מִדִּמְעָה כִּי יֵשׁ שָׂכָר לַפְּעֻלָּתְךָ נְאֻם־יְהוָה וְשָׁבוּ מֵאֶרֶץ אוֹיֵב:	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.
טז	וַיִּשְׁתַּקּוּהָ לְאַחֲרִיתָךְ נְאֻם־יְהוָה וְשָׁבוּ בָנִים לְגִבּוֹלָם: {ס}	16	There is hope for your posterity after all, says Yahweh, your children will return to their homeland.

12 The 2<sup>nd</sup> line here follows the LXX (νεανίσκων καὶ πρεσβύται χαρῆσονται) and NRSV; the MT (and NJB) has 'young men and old alike'.

13 The literal translation of the first line is, "I will satiate the priests with fat." However, the word translated 'fat' (דָּשֵׁן) 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 εἶσ'ν) 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' (אַחֲרִיתָ), the NJB & NRSV have 'future', translating more literally.

ז' שְׁמוֹעַ שְׁמִעָתִי  
 אֶפְרַיִם מִתְנוּדָד  
 יִסְרָתְנִי וְאוֹסֵר  
 כְּעֶגְלָא לֹא לָמַד הַשְׁבָּנִי וְאֶשׁוּבָה  
 כִּי אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי:  
 יח כִּי־אַחֲרֵי שׁוּבִי נִחַמְתִּי  
 וְאַחֲרֵי הוֹדַעִי סָפַקְתִּי עַל־יֶרֶךְ  
 בִּשְׁתִּי וְגַם־נִכְלַמְתִּי  
 כִּי נִשְׁאַתִּי חֲרַפְתָּ נְעוּרַי:  
 ט הִבֵּן יִקְרֶה לִּי אֶפְרַיִם  
 אִם יֵלֶד שַׁעֲשָׁעִים  
 כִּי־מִדֵּי דְבָרִי בּוֹ  
 זָכַר אֶזְכְּרֵנוּ עוֹד  
 עַל־כֵּן הָמוּ מֵעַי לוֹ  
 רַחֵם אֲרַחֲמֶנּוּ  
 נְאֻם־יְהוָה: {ס}  
 כ הַצִּיבִי לָךְ צִיָּנִים  
 שְׁמִי לָךְ תִּמְרוּרִים

- 17 I have indeed heard Ephraim's grieving,  
 "You flogged me; I took a flogging,  
 like a young, untrained bull.  
 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,

17 Jr 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.

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 הִלַכְתָּ ('which you went'), following the Qere, is an example of the old 2FS that the MT re-vocalises (the Ketiv has הִלַכְתִּי).

שְׁתִּי לַבֶּדֶךְ  
 לְמַסְלָה דֶּרֶךְ הַלִּכְתִּי הַלֵּכֶתָ  
 שׁוּבִי בְּתוּלַת יִשְׂרָאֵל  
 שְׁבִי אֶל־עָרֶיךָ אֵלֶּה:  
 כֹּא עַד־מָתִי תִתְחַמְקִין  
 הַבֵּת הַשׁוֹבֵבָה  
 כִּי־בָרָא יְהוָה חֲדָשָׁה בָּאָרֶץ  
 נִקְבָּה תִסּוּבֵב גָּבֶר: {ס}

כֹּב כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה עֲבָאוֹת אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל עוֹד יֹאמְרוּ  
 אֶת־הַדְּבָר הַזֶּה בָּאָרֶץ יְהוּדָה וּבְעָרָיו בְּשׁוּבֵי אֶת־  
 שְׁבוּתָם

יְבָרְכֶךָ יְהוָה נְוֵה־צֶדֶק  
 הַר הַקֹּדֶשׁ:

כג וַיֵּשְׁבוּ בָּהּ יְהוּדָה וְכָל־עָרָיו יַחְדָּו אֲכָרִים וְנִסְעוּ  
 כד בַּעֲדָר: כִּי הָרֹוּתִי נֶפֶשׁ עֵיפָה וְכָל־נֶפֶשׁ דָּאֲבָה  
 מִלֵּאֲתִי:

כה עַל־זֹאת הִקִּיצְתִּי וְאָרָאָה  
 וּשְׁנָתִי עֲרֵבָה לִי: {ס}

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.

<sup>21</sup> How long will you hesitate,  
 rebellious daughter?

For Yahweh is creating something new on earth:  
 the Woman sets out to find her Husband again.

<sup>22</sup> 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!"

<sup>23</sup> "And in this country, Judah and all its towns, the ploughmen and  
 those who wander with their flocks, will live together, <sup>24</sup> for I shall give  
 the weary all they need and satisfy all those whose strength has gone."

<sup>25</sup> At this, I awoke and saw  
 that my sleep had been sweet to me.

<sup>21</sup> The verb here translated as 'hesitate' (חמק) occurs only here in this stem (the Hitpaël) and only one other time in any other stem (the Qal in Sg 5:6); other translations are 'waver' (NRSV) and 'vacillate' (NETB).

<sup>22</sup> This and the following prophecy were pronounced in about 587 BCE (see #30:1).

<sup>23</sup> 'Those who wander' is a conjectural translation (וְנִסְעוּ – Qal participle); the MT has 'they shall wander' (וְנִסְעוּ – 3PL Qal perfect).

<sup>24</sup> The verbs here again emphasise that the actions are as good as done (i.e., they are prophetic perfects).

<sup>25</sup> This verse is a comment by the prophet, perhaps quoting lines from a popular song.

כו הִנֵּה יָמִים בָּאִים נֹאֲמ־יְהוָה וְזָרַעְתִּי אֶת־בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאֶת־בֵּית יְהוּדָה זֶרַע אָדָם וְזָרַע בְּהֵמָה: כז וְהָיָה כַּאֲשֶׁר שָׁקַדְתִּי עֲלֵיהֶם לְנָתוּשׁ וּלְנָתוּץ וּלְהָרִס׃ וּלְהַאֲבִיד וּלְהָרַע בֶּן אֲשָׁקֵד עֲלֵיהֶם לְבָנוֹת וּלְנָטֵעַ נֹאֲמ־יְהוָה:

כח בְּיָמִים הָהֵם לֹא־יֹאמְרוּ עוֹד אָבוֹת אָכְלוּ בֶסֶר וְשָׁנֵי בָנִים תִּקְהִינָה:

כט כִּי אִם־אִישׁ בְּעוֹנוֹ יָמוּת כָּל־הָאָדָם הָאֹכֵל הַבֶּסֶר תִּקְהִינָה שָׁנָיו: {ס}

ל הִנֵּה יָמִים בָּאִים נֹאֲמ־יְהוָה וְכָרַתִּי אֶת־בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאֶת־בֵּית יְהוּדָה בְּרִית חֲדָשָׁה: לא לֹא כַּבְרִית אֲשֶׁר כָּרַתִּי אֶת־אֲבוֹתָם בְּיוֹם הַחֲזִיקִי בְיָדָם לְהוֹצִיאָם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם אֲשֶׁר־הֵמָּה הִפְרוּ אֶת־בְּרִיתִי וְאֲנֹכִי בָעַלְתִּי בָם נֹאֲמ־יְהוָה: לב כִּי זֹאת

<sup>26</sup> “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 and cattle; <sup>27</sup> 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.

<sup>28</sup> “In those days, people will no longer say:  
“The fathers have eaten unripe grapes;  
the children’s teeth are set on edge.”

<sup>29</sup> But each will die for his own guilt. Everyone who eats unripe grapes will have his own teeth set on edge.

<sup>30</sup> “Look, the days are coming, Yahweh declares, when I shall make a New Covenant with the House of Israel and the House of Judah, <sup>31</sup> 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. <sup>32</sup> No, this is the Covenant

<sup>26</sup> 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).

<sup>27</sup> The words here repeat those of 1:10 and 1:12

<sup>28</sup> 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.

<sup>29</sup> To a certain extent the principle articulated here is anticipatory of the statement in v. 34, which refers to the forgiveness of former sins.

<sup>30</sup> The Old Covenant has been violated and the reform under Josiah was short-lived; it is evident now that God has other plans.

<sup>31</sup> In place of ‘Master’, here following the NJB, the NRSV has ‘husband’.

<sup>32</sup> Commentators agree that the term, ‘House of Israel’ (בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל), here refers to the whole nation, which was divided into the House of Israel and the House of Judah in v. 30.

הַבְּרִית אֲשֶׁר אֶכְרַת אֶת־בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל אַחֲרֵי הַיָּמִים  
הֵהֱם נֶאֱסִי־הוּהוּ נִתְּתִי אֶת־תּוֹרָתִי בְּקֶרְבָּם וְעַל־  
לִבָּם אֶכְתָּבֶנָּה וְהָיִיתִי לָהֶם לֵאלֹהִים וְהָמָּה יִהְיוּ־לִי  
לְעָם: <sup>ל</sup>וְלֹא יִלְמְדוּ עוֹד אִישׁ אֶת־רֵעֵהוּ וְאִישׁ אֶת־  
אָחִיו לֵאמֹר דָּעוּ אֶת־יְהוָה כִּי־כֹלָם יֵדְעוּ אוֹתִי  
לְמִקְטָנָם וְעַד־גְּדֹלָם נֶאֱסִי־הוּהוּ כִּי אֶסְלַח לְעֹנָם  
וְלִחַטָּאתָם לֹא אֶזְכֹּר־עוֹד: {ס}

<sup>לד</sup> כֹּה | אָמַר יְהוָה נִתֵּן שֶׁמֶשׁ לְאוֹר יוֹמָם  
חֻקֵּת יָרֵחַ וְכּוֹכָבִים לְאוֹר לַיְלָה  
רָגַע הַיָּם וַיִּהְיֶמוּ גָלָיו  
יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת שְׁמוֹ:  
<sup>לה</sup> אִם־יִמָּשׁוּ הַחֻקִּים הָאֵלֶּה  
מִלְּפָנַי נֶאֱסִי־הוּהוּ  
גַם זֶרַע יִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁבְּתוּ  
מִהַיּוֹת גּוֹי לִפְנֵי כָל־הַיָּמִים: {ס}

<sup>לו</sup> כֹּה | אָמַר יְהוָה  
אִם־יִמָּדוּ שָׁמַיִם מִלְמַעְלָה  
וַיִּחְקְרוּ מוֹסְדֵי־אָרֶץ לְמַטָּה

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. <sup>33</sup> “There 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.”

<sup>34</sup> 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:

<sup>35</sup> “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!”

<sup>36</sup> Yahweh says this:

“Were the heavens above ever to be measured,  
the foundations of the earth below ever to be fathomed,

<sup>33</sup> ‘Knowing’ God in covenant contexts like this involves more than just an awareness of who he is (9:22). It involves an acknowledgment of his sovereignty and wholehearted commitment to obedience to him.

<sup>34</sup> ‘Regulates’ is a conjectural translation (חֻקֵּת); the MT has ‘the laws of’ (חֻקֵּת).

<sup>35</sup> 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.

<sup>36</sup> This verse answers Jeremiah’s question of 14:19.



גַּם־אֲנִי אֶמְאָס בְּכָל־זֶרַע יִשְׂרָאֵל  
עַל־כָּל־אֲשֶׁר עָשׂוּ נְאֻם־יְהוָה: {ס}

then I, too, would reject the whole race of Israel  
for all that they have done, says Yahweh.”

לִּי הִנֵּה יָמִים [בָּאִים] נְאֻם־יְהוָה וְנִבְנְתָה הָעִיר  
לִיהוָה מִמִּגְדַּל חֲנַנְאֵל שְׁעַר הַפִּנָּה: <sup>לח</sup> וַיֵּצֵא עוֹד  
קוֹה קוֹ הַמִּדָּה נִגְדּוּ עַל גִּבְעַת גָּרֵב וְנִסַּב גִּעְתָּה:  
<sup>לט</sup> וְכָל־הָעֵמֶק הַפְּגָרִים וְהַדָּשָׁן וְכָל־הַשְּׂדֵמוֹת  
הַשְּׂרָמוֹת עַד־נָחַל קִדְרוֹן עַד־פֶּנֶת שְׁעַר הַסּוּסִים  
מִזְרָחָה קֹדֶשׁ לִיהוָה לֹא־יִנָּתֵשׁ וְלֹא־יִהְרָס עוֹד  
לְעוֹלָם: {פ}

<sup>37</sup> Look, the days are coming, Yahweh declares, when the City will be rebuilt for Yahweh, from the Tower of Hananel to the Corner Gate.

<sup>38</sup> Then, once again, the measuring line will stretch straight to the Hill of Gareb, turning then to Goah; <sup>39</sup> 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.

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<sup>37</sup> The phrase ‘are coming’, here following the *Qere* (בָּאִים), is not present in the *Ketiv*.

<sup>38</sup> The *Kethib*/*Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

<sup>39</sup> In place of הַשְּׂדֵמוֹת (‘fields’), here following the *Qere*, the *Ketiv* has the otherwise unknown word, הַשְּׂרָמוֹת. 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).

## JEREMIAH 32

## ירמיהו פרק לב

<sup>א</sup> הַדְּבָר אֲשֶׁר-הָיָה אֶל-יִרְמְיָהוּ מֵאֵת יְהוָה בְּשָׁנָה  
בְּשָׁנָה הָעֲשָׂרִית לְצִדְקִיָּהוּ מֶלֶךְ יְהוּדָה הִיא הַשָּׁנָה  
שְׁמֹנֶה-עֶשְׂרֵה שָׁנָה לְנְבוּכַדְרֶאצַּר: <sup>ב</sup> וְאִזְ חֵיל מֶלֶךְ  
בָּבֶל צָרִים עַל-יְרוּשָׁלַם וִירְמְיָהוּ הַנְּבִיא הָיָה כָּלֹא  
בַּחֲצַר הַמִּטְרָה אֲשֶׁר בֵּית-מֶלֶךְ יְהוּדָה: <sup>ג</sup> אֲשֶׁר  
כָּלֹא צִדְקִיָּהוּ מֶלֶךְ-יְהוּדָה לֵאמֹר מִדּוּעַ אַתָּה נִבֵּא  
לֵאמֹר כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה הַנְּנִי נָתַן אֶת-הָעִיר הַזֹּאת  
בְּיַד מֶלֶךְ-בָּבֶל וּלְכָדָה: <sup>ד</sup> וְצִדְקִיָּהוּ מֶלֶךְ יְהוּדָה לֹא  
יִמְלֹט מִיַּד הַכַּשְׂדִּים כִּי הִנֵּתָן יָנִתָן בְּיַד מֶלֶךְ-בָּבֶל  
וְדַבְּר־פִּיו עִם-פִּיו וְעֵינָיו אֶת-עֵינָיו תִּרְאֶינָה: <sup>ה</sup> וּבָבֶל  
יִוֹלֶךְ אֶת-צִדְקִיָּהוּ וְשֵׁם יְהוָה עַד-פָּקְדֵי אֹתוֹ נֹאֵם-  
יְהוָה כִּי תִלְחַמּוּ אֶת-הַכַּשְׂדִּים לֹא תִצְלִיחוּ: {פ}

<sup>ו</sup> וַיֹּאמֶר יִרְמְיָהוּ הִנֵּה דְבַר-יְהוָה אֵלַי לֵאמֹר: <sup>ז</sup> הִנֵּה  
חֲנַמְאֵל בֶּן-שָׁלֹם דִּדְךָ בָּא אֵלֶיךָ לֵאמֹר קְנֵה לִּי  
אֶת-שָׂדִי אֲשֶׁר בְּעַנְתּוֹת כִּי לִּי מִשְׁפַּט הַגָּאֻלָּה

<sup>1</sup> The word that came to Jeremiah from Yahweh in the tenth year of Zedekiah king of Judah, which was the eighteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar. <sup>2</sup> 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, <sup>3</sup> 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; <sup>4</sup> 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. <sup>5</sup> 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!”

<sup>6</sup> So, Jeremiah said, “The word of Yahweh has been addressed to me thus: <sup>7</sup> “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

- <sup>1</sup> The *Kethib/Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.
- <sup>2</sup> 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.
- <sup>3</sup> Zedekiah’s question has been called a rhetorical question of expostulation or remonstrance; NJPS translates as, “How dare you prophesy...”
- <sup>4</sup> Literally translated, this verse ends, “his mouth will speak with his mouth and his eyes will see his eyes.”
- <sup>5</sup> 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.
- <sup>6</sup> This is the most detailed account of a business transaction in the Bible (compare Gn 23:1–16).
- <sup>7</sup> Underlying this request are the laws of redemption of property spelled out in Lv 25:25–34 and illustrated in Rt 4:3–4.

לְקָנֹת: <sup>ח</sup> וַיָּבֹא אֵלַי חֲנַמְאֵל בֶּן־דָּדִי כְּדִבְרֵי יְהוָה  
 אֲל־חֹצֵר הַמִּטְרָה וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלַי קְנֵה נָא אֶת־שָׂדִי  
 אֲשֶׁר־בְּעֲנָתוֹת אֲשֶׁר בְּאֶרֶץ בְּנִימִין כִּי־לָךְ מִשְׁפָּט  
 הִירָשָׁה וְלָךְ הַגְּאֻלָּה קְנֵה־לָךְ וְאַדַּע כִּי דְבַר־יְהוָה  
 הוּא: <sup>ט</sup> וַאֲקָנָה אֶת־הַשָּׂדֶה מֵאֵת חֲנַמְאֵל בֶּן־דָּדִי  
 אֲשֶׁר בְּעֲנָתוֹת וַאֲשַׁקְלֶה־לּוֹ אֶת־הַכֶּסֶף שִׁבְעָה  
 שֻׁקְלִים וְעֶשְׂרֵה הֶכֶסֶף: <sup>י</sup> וַאֲכַתֵּב בְּסֵפֶר וְאַחֲתָם  
 וְאַעֲד עֵדִים וַאֲשַׁקֵּל הַכֶּסֶף בְּמֵאזְנִים: <sup>יא</sup> וַאֲקַח  
 אֶת־סֵפֶר הַמִּקְנָה אֶת־הַחֲתוּם הַמְצוּה וְהַחֲקִים  
 וְאֶת־הַגְּלוּי: <sup>יב</sup> וְאַתָּן אֶת־הַסֵּפֶר הַמִּקְנָה אֲל־בְּרוּךְ  
 בֶּן־נְרִיָּה בֶּן־מַחְסִיָּה לְעֵינֵי חֲנַמְאֵל דָּדִי וְלְעֵינֵי  
 הָעֵדִים הַכֹּתְבִים בְּסֵפֶר הַמִּקְנָה לְעֵינֵי כָל־  
 הַיְּהוּדִים הַיֹּשְׁבִים בְּחֹצֵר הַמִּטְרָה: <sup>יג</sup> וְאַצְוֶה אֶת־  
 בְּרוּךְ לְעֵינֵיהֶם לֵאמֹר: <sup>יד</sup> כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת  
 אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לִקְוֹחַ אֶת־הַסֵּפֶרִים הָאֵלֶּה אֶת סֵפֶר  
 הַמִּקְנָה הַזֶּה וְאֶת הַחֲתוּם וְאֶת סֵפֶר הַגְּלוּי הַזֶּה  
 וְנִתְּתָם בְּכִל־חֶרֶשׁ לְמַעַן יַעֲמְדוּ יָמִים רַבִּים: {ס}

tion to purchase it.” <sup>8</sup> 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. <sup>9</sup> So, I bought the field from my cousin Hanamel of Anathoth and weighed out the money to him: seventeen shekels of silver. <sup>10</sup> I drew up the deed and sealed it, called in witnesses and weighed out the money on the scales. <sup>11</sup> I then took both the sealed deed of purchase (the terms and conditions) and the open copy <sup>12</sup> 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. <sup>13</sup> In the presence of all these people, I gave Baruch this order, <sup>14</sup> “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.

<sup>8</sup> The last sentence follows NETB; the NRSV (and NJB) have, “Then I knew that this was the word of the LORD.”

<sup>9</sup> 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.

<sup>10</sup> Since the idiom translated ‘drew up’ (וְאַכְתֵּב בְּסֵפֶר) is used later (v. 12) with respect to the witnesses, it may simply refer to signing the document.

<sup>11</sup> 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.

<sup>12</sup> ‘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).

<sup>13</sup> In place of ‘in the presence of all these people’, here following NETB, the NJB & NRSV have ‘in their presence’.

<sup>14</sup> The literal translation of ‘a long time’ is ‘many days’.

<sup>טו</sup> כִּי כֹה אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל עוֹד יִקְנוּ  
בָּתִּים וְשָׂדוֹת וְכִרְמִים בָּאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת: {פ}

<sup>טז</sup> וְאַתְּ פָּלַל אֱלֹהֵינוּ אַחֲרֵי תַתִּי אֶת־סֵפֶר הַמִּקְנָה  
אֶל־בְּרוּךְ בֶּן־נְרִיָּה לֵאמֹר: <sup>יז</sup> "אָהָה אֲדֹנָי יְהוֹה הִנֵּה  
אַתָּה עָשִׂיתָ אֶת־הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת־הָאָרֶץ בְּכַחֲךָ  
הַגָּדוֹל וּבְזֹרְעֶךָ הַנָּטוּיָה לֹא־יִפְלֹא מִמֶּךָ כָּל־דְּבָר:  
<sup>יח</sup> עָשֵׂה חֶסֶד לְאֲלָפִים וּמִשְׁלָם עֵוֹן אָבוֹת אֶל־חֵיק  
בְּנֵיהֶם אַחֲרֵיהֶם הָאֵל הַגָּדוֹל הַגִּבּוֹר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת  
שְׁמוֹ: <sup>יט</sup> גְּדֹל הָעֲצָה וְרַב הָעֲלִילָה אֲשֶׁר־עִינִיךָ  
פָּקַחוֹת עַל־כָּל־דֶּרֶךְ בְּנֵי אָדָם לְתַת לְאִישׁ כְּדֶרְכּוֹ  
וּכְפָרִי מֵעַלְלָיו: <sup>כ</sup> אֲשֶׁר־שָׁמַתָּ אֹתוֹת וּמִפְתִּים  
בָּאָרֶץ־מִצְרַיִם עַד־הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה וּבִישְׂרָאֵל וּבְאָדָם

<sup>15</sup> "For, Yahweh Sabaoth, the God of Israel, says this: Houses, fields and vineyards will again be bought in this country."

<sup>16</sup> "After I had entrusted the deed of purchase to Baruch son of Neriah, I prayed to Yahweh thus, <sup>17</sup> "Ah, Lord Yahweh, you made the heavens and the earth by your great power and by your outstretched arm. To you, nothing is impossible. <sup>18</sup> 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, <sup>19</sup> 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. <sup>20</sup> You did miracles and amazing deeds in the land of Egypt which have had lasting effect. By this means you gained both in Israel

<sup>15</sup> 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.

<sup>16</sup> This section deals with the theme of the future of Judah; some of it represents editorial expansion.

<sup>17</sup> 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.

<sup>18</sup> 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'.

<sup>19</sup> The NJB ends this verse, here following the MT & NRSV, with, "...rewarding every individual as that person's ways and actions deserve!"

<sup>20</sup> 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.

וַתַּעֲשֶׂה-לָּךְ שֵׁם כַּיּוֹם הַזֶּה: כֹּא וַתֵּצֵא אֶת-עַמְּךָ  
 אֶת-יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם בְּאֹתוֹת וּבְמוֹפְתִים  
 וּבְיָד חֲזָקָה וּבְאַזְרוֹעַ נְטוּיָה וּבְמוֹרָא גָדוֹל: כִּב וַתֵּתֵן  
 לָהֶם אֶת-הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת אֲשֶׁר-נִשְׁבַּעְתָּ לְאַבוֹתָם  
 לֵאמֹר לָהֶם אֶרֶץ זָבַת חֶלֶב וּדְבַשׁ: כִּג וַיָּבֹאוּ וַיִּרְשׁוּ  
 אֹתָהּ וְלֹא-שָׁמְעוּ בְּקוֹלְךָ וּבַתְּרוּתְךָ וּבַתּוֹרַתְךָ לֹא-  
 הִלְכוּ אֶת כָּל-אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתָהּ לָהֶם לַעֲשׂוֹת לֹא עָשׂוּ  
 וַתִּקְרָא אֹתָם אֵת כָּל-הָרָעָה הַזֹּאת: כִּד הִנֵּה  
 הַסְּלָלוֹת בָּאוּ הָעִיר לְלַכְדָּהּ וְהָעִיר נִתְּנָה בְּיַד  
 הַכַּשְׂדִּים הַנֹּלְחָמִים עָלֶיהָ מִפְּנֵי הַחֶרֶב וְהָרָעָב  
 וְהַדָּבָר וְאֲשֶׁר דִּבַּרְתָּ הִיא וְהַנֶּגֶד רָאָה: כִּה וְאַתָּה  
 אָמַרְתָּ אֵלַי אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה קְנֵה-לָּךְ הַשָּׂדֶה בַּכֶּסֶף  
 וְהָעֵד עָדִים וְהָעִיר נִתְּנָה בְּיַד הַכַּשְׂדִּים: {ס}  
 כו וַיְהִי דְבַר-יְהוָה אֶל-יִרְמְיָהוּ לֵאמֹר: כִּז הִנֵּה אֲנִי  
 יְהוִה אֱלֹהֵי כָל-בָּשָׂר הַמִּמְּנִי יִפְלֹא כָל-דְּבָר: כִּח לָכֵן

and among mankind a renown that lasts to this day.<sup>21</sup> You brought your people Israel out of the land of Egypt with signs and wonders, with mighty hand and outstretched arm and fearsome terror.<sup>22</sup> Then you gave them this land, which you had promised on oath to their ancestors, a land where milk and honey flow.<sup>23</sup> 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.<sup>24</sup> 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.<sup>25</sup> 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.”

<sup>26</sup> The word of Yahweh was addressed to Jeremiah as follows, <sup>27</sup> “Look, I am Yahweh, God of all humanity. Is anything impossible to me? <sup>28</sup> So,

<sup>21</sup> The NJB lacks ‘land of’ before ‘Egypt’, here following the MT, NRSV & NETB (as also in v. 20).

<sup>22</sup> A more traditional rendering of ‘where milk and honey flow’ is ‘flowing with milk and honey’.

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

<sup>24</sup> Literally translated, the last sentenced reads, “And what you said has happened and behold you see it.”

<sup>25</sup> The Divine Title, ‘Lord Yahweh’, translates אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה.

<sup>26</sup> The NJB, following the LXX and *Vetus Latina* (cf. v. 16), has ‘me’ in place of ‘Jeremiah’; here, we follow the MT & NRSV.

<sup>27</sup> 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.

<sup>28</sup> The MT opens this verse with, “So, Yahweh says this;” however the speech has already been introduced as 1<sup>st</sup> person, so the 1<sup>st</sup> person style has been retained for smoother narrative style.



כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה הַנְּנִי נָתַן אֶת־הָעִיר הַזֹּאת בְּיַד  
הַכַּשְׂדִּים וּבְיַד נְבוּכַדְרֶאצַּר מֶלֶךְ־בָּבֶל וּלְכַדָּה:  
כֹּס וּבָאוּ הַכַּשְׂדִּים הַנִּלְחָמִים עַל־הָעִיר הַזֹּאת  
וְהָצִיתוּ אֶת־הָעִיר הַזֹּאת בָּאֵשׁ וּשְׂרָפוּהָ וְאֵת  
הַבָּתִּים אֲשֶׁר קָטְרוּ עַל־גּוֹזְלֵיהֶם לַבָּעַל וְהִסְכּוּ  
נִסְכִּים לֵאלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים לְמַעַן הַכְּעִסְנִי: <sup>ל</sup>כִּי־הָיוּ  
בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל וּבְנֵי יְהוּדָה אָךְ עָשִׂים הָרַע בְּעֵינַי  
מִנְעַרְתֵּיהֶם כִּי בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל אָךְ מַכְעִסִּים אֶתִּי  
בְּמַעֲשֵׂה יָדֵיהֶם נֹאֵם־יְהוָה: <sup>לא</sup>כִּי עַל־אִפִּי וְעַל־  
חַמְתִּי הֵיטָה לִּי הָעִיר הַזֹּאת לְמִן־הַיּוֹם אֲשֶׁר בָּנוּ  
אוֹתָהּ וְעַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה לְהַסִּירָהּ מֵעַל פָּנַי: <sup>לב</sup>עַל־כֹּל־  
רַעַת בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל וּבְנֵי יְהוּדָה אֲשֶׁר עָשׂוּ לְהַכְעִסְנִי  
הִמָּה מַלְכֵיהֶם שְׂרִייהֶם כַּהֲנֵיהֶם וּנְבִיאֵיהֶם וְאִישׁ  
יְהוּדָה וְיֹשְׁבֵי יְרוּשָׁלַם: <sup>לג</sup>וַיִּפְנוּ אֵלַי עֶרְף וּלֹא פָנִים  
וּלְמַד אֶתֶם הַשֹּׁכֵם וּלְמַד וְאִינָם שֹׁמְעִים לְקַחַת  
מוֹסֵר: <sup>לד</sup>וַיַּעֲשִׂימוּ שְׁקוּצֵיהֶם בַּבַּיִת אֲשֶׁר־נִקְרָא־  
שְׁמִי עָלָיו לְטִמְאוֹ: <sup>לה</sup>וַיִּבְנוּ אֶת־בָּמוֹת הַבָּעַל

I, Yahweh say this, "I shall hand this city over to the Chaldeans and to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and he will capture it; <sup>29</sup> 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. <sup>30</sup> 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. <sup>31</sup> 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, <sup>32</sup> 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. <sup>33</sup> 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. <sup>34</sup> Instead, they set up their abominations in the Temple that bears my name to defile it, <sup>35</sup> and built

<sup>29</sup> Compare this verse to 19:13.

<sup>30</sup> 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).

<sup>31</sup> The statements in vv. 28–29 regarding the certain destruction of the city are motivated by 3 parallel causal clauses in vv. 30<sup>a</sup>, 30<sup>b</sup> & 31, the last of which extends through subordinate and coordinate clauses until the end of v. 35.

<sup>32</sup> The NRSV has 'officials' in place of 'chief men', here following the NJB.

<sup>33</sup> 'I taught them' follows the LXX and Peshitta; the MT has 'of teaching'.

<sup>34</sup> In place of 'abominations', here following the NRSV, the NJB has 'Horrors' and NETB has 'disgusting idols'.

<sup>35</sup> 'Molech' is especially associated with the practice of child sacrifice; in 1K 11:7, he is identified as the god of the Ammonites.



אֲשֶׁר בָּגִיָּא בְּנִהְנֹם לְהַעֲבִיר אֶת־בְּנֵיהֶם וְאֶת־  
בְּנוֹתֵיהֶם לְמֹלֶךְ אֲשֶׁר לֹא־צִוִּיתִים וְלֹא עָלְתָה עָלַי־  
לְבִי לַעֲשׂוֹת הַתּוֹעֵבָה הַזֹּאת לְמַעַן הַחֲטִי אֶת־  
יְהוּדָה: {ס}

לֹא וְעַתָּה לָכֵן כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶל־  
הָעִיר הַזֹּאת אֲשֶׁר אַתֶּם אֹמְרִים נִתְּנָה בְיַד מֹלֶךְ־  
בָּבֶל בַּחֲרֹב וּבִרְעָב וּבַדָּבָר: לֹא הִנְנִי מְקַבֵּץ מִכָּל־  
הָאֲרָצוֹת אֲשֶׁר הִדַּחְתִּים שָׁם בְּאַפִּי וּבַחֲמָתִי  
וּבְקֶצֶף גָּדוֹל וְהִשְׁבַּתִּים אֶל־הַמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה  
וְהִשְׁבַּתִּים לְבֵטָח: לֹא וְהָיוּ לִי לְעָם וְאֲנִי אֶהְיֶה לָהֶם  
לֵאלֹהִים: לֹא וְנָתַתִּי לָהֶם לֵב אֶחָד וְדֶרֶךְ אֶחָד  
לִירְאָה אוֹתִי כָל־הַיָּמִים לְטוֹב לָהֶם וּלְבְנֵיהֶם  
אַחֲרֵיהֶם: מ וְכָרַתִּי לָהֶם בְּרִית עוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר לֹא־  
אֲשׁוּב מֵאַחֲרֵיהֶם לְהִיטִיבֵי אוֹתָם וְאֶת־יְרֵאָתִי אֶתֵּן  
בְּלִבָּם לְבִלְתִּי סוּר מֵעָלַי: מֵא וְשִׁשְׁתִּי עָלֵיהֶם  
לְהִטִּיב אוֹתָם וְנִטְעַתִּים בָּאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת בְּאֵמֶת 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!

<sup>36</sup> “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: <sup>37</sup> 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. <sup>38</sup> Then they will be my people, and I shall be their God. <sup>39</sup> 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. <sup>40</sup> 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. <sup>41</sup> 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.

<sup>36</sup> In this verse, the pronoun ‘you’ is singular in the LXX but plural in the MT (as also in v. 43).

<sup>37</sup> 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.

<sup>38</sup> The covenant formula setting forth the basic relationship is reinstituted along with a new covenant (v. 40); see also 24:7, 30:22, 31:1 & #30:22.

<sup>39</sup> The literal translation of ‘singleness of heart and singleness of conduct’ is ‘one heart and one way’.

<sup>40</sup> 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.

<sup>41</sup> Compare Dt 6:5.

מב כי־כֹה אָמַר יְהוָה בְּאֲשֶׁר הֵבֵאתִי אֶל־הָעָם הַזֶּה  
אֶת כָּל־הָרָעָה הַגְּדוֹלָה הַזֹּאת בֵּן אֲנֹכִי מֵבִיא  
עֲלֵיהֶם אֶת־כָּל־הַטּוֹבָה אֲשֶׁר אֲנֹכִי דֹבֵר עֲלֵיהֶם:  
מג וְנִקְנָה הַשָּׂדֶה בָּאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת אֲשֶׁר | אַתֶּם אֹמְרִים  
שָׁמָּה הִיא מְאִין אָדָם וּבְהֵמָה נִתְּנָה בְּיַד  
הַכַּשְׂדִּים: מד שְׂדוֹת בְּכֶסֶף יִקְנוּ וְכָתוּב בְּסֵפֶר |  
וְחֵתוּם וְהָעֵד עֲדִים בָּאָרֶץ בְּנִימָן וּבִסְבִיבֵי יְרוּשָׁלַם  
וּבְעָרֵי יְהוּדָה וּבְעָרֵי הָהָר וּבְעָרֵי הַשְּׁפֵלָה וּבְעָרֵי  
הַנֶּגֶב כִּי־אָשִׁיב אֶת־שְׁבוּתָם נְאֻם־יְהוָה: {פ}

<sup>42</sup> “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. <sup>43</sup> 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. <sup>44</sup> 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.”

<sup>42</sup> See #28 on the opening clause.

<sup>43</sup> The pronoun ‘you’ is plural, addressing more than just Jeremiah.

<sup>44</sup> The literal translation of ‘I shall bring back their captives’ is ‘I shall reverse their fortunes’.

## ירמיהו פרק לג

<sup>א</sup> וַיְהִי דְבַר־יְהוָה אֶל־יִרְמְיָהוּ שֵׁנִית וְהוּא עֹדֶנּוּ  
עֹצֹר בַּחֲצָר הַמַּטְרָה לֵאמֹר: <sup>ב</sup> כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה  
עֹשֶׂה יְהוָה יוֹצֵר אוֹתָהּ לַהֲכִינָהּ יְהוָה שְׁמוֹ: <sup>ג</sup> קְרָא  
אֵלַי וְאֶעֱנֶךָ וְאֶגִּידָה לָּךְ גְּדֻלוֹת וּבְצֻרוֹת לֹא  
יֵדְעֶתֶם: {פ}

<sup>ד</sup> כִּי כֹה אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל עַל־בְּתִי הָעִיר  
הַזֹּאת וְעַל־בְּתֵי מַלְכֵי יְהוּדָה הַנִּתְצָיִם אֶל־הַסְּלָלוֹת  
וְאֶל־הַחֲרָב: <sup>ה</sup> בָּאִים לַהֲלָחַם אֶת־הַכַּשְׂדִּים  
וּלְמַלְאֵם אֶת־פְּגָרֵי הָאָדָם אֲשֶׁר־הִכִּיתִי בְּאֶפִי  
וּבַחֲמָתִי וְאֲשֶׁר הִסְתַּרְתִּי פָנַי מִהָעִיר הַזֹּאת עַל  
כָּל־רָעָתָם: <sup>ו</sup> הִנְנִי מַעֲלֶה־לָּהּ אֲרֻכָּה וּמִרְפָּא  
וּרְפָאוֹתַיִם וְגִלִּיתִי לָהֶם עֲתֶרֶת שָׁלוֹם וְאַמֶּת:  
<sup>ז</sup> וְהִשְׁבַּתִּי אֶת־שְׁבוֹת יְהוּדָה וְאֶת שְׁבוֹת יִשְׂרָאֵל  
וּבְנֵתִים כְּבָרָאשָׁנָה: <sup>ח</sup> וְטִהַרְתִּים מִכָּל־עֲוֹנָם אֲשֶׁר

## JEREMIAH 33

<sup>1</sup> Jeremiah was still confined to the Court of the Guard when the word of Yahweh came to him a second time: <sup>2</sup> "Thus says Yahweh, who made the earth, who formed it and set it firm – Yahweh is his name: <sup>3</sup> "Call to me and I will answer you; I will tell you great and hidden things that you have no known.

<sup>4</sup> "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, <sup>5</sup> 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. <sup>6</sup> Look, I shall bring them remedy and cure; I shall cure them and reveal a new order of peace and loyalty to them.

<sup>7</sup> I will restore the fortunes of Judah and the fortunes of Israel, and will rebuild them as they were before. <sup>8</sup> I shall cleanse them of all their guilt,

## JEREMIAH 33

<sup>1</sup> This prophecy dates from the same period as that of Ch. 32. The first verse is an editorial connection with the preceding chapter.

<sup>2</sup> 'Who made the earth' follows the LXX; the MT has 'who made it'.

<sup>3</sup> 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.

<sup>4</sup> The meaning of the last phrase is uncertain.

<sup>5</sup> 'To fill the city' follows the LXX (literally, 'to fill it'); the MT has 'to fill them'.

<sup>6</sup> 'Bring them' follows the LXX and Peshitta; the MT has 'bring it (to the city)'.

<sup>7</sup> 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).

<sup>8</sup> The Kethib/Qere difference here would benefit from an explanation.

חֲטָאוֹלֵי וְסֹלְחָתִי לְכֹל לְכַל־עוֹנוֹתֵיהֶם אֲשֶׁר  
חֲטָאוּ־לִי וְאֲשֶׁר פָּשְׁעוּ בִּי: <sup>ט</sup> וְהָיְתָה 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}

<sup>י</sup> כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה עוֹד יִשְׁמַע בְּמָקוֹם־הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר  
אַתֶּם אֹמְרִים חָרֵב הוּא מֵאִין אָדָם וּמֵאִין בְּהֵמָה  
בְּעָרֵי יְהוּדָה וּבְחֻצוֹת יְרוּשָׁלַם הַנִּשְׁמָוֹת מֵאִין אָדָם  
וּמֵאִין יוֹשֵׁב וּמֵאִין בְּהֵמָה: <sup>יא</sup> קוֹל שְׂשׂוֹן וְקוֹל  
שִׁמְחָה קוֹל חֲתָן וְקוֹל כַּלָּה קוֹל אֹמְרִים הוֹדוּ אֶת־  
יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת כִּי־טוֹב יְהוָה כִּי־לַעֲוֹלָם חֲסִדּוֹ  
מִבָּאִים תּוֹדָה בֵּית יְהוָה כִּי־אֲשִׁיב אֶת־שְׁבוּת־  
הָאָרֶץ כְּבָרָאשְׁנָה אָמַר יְהוָה: {ס}

<sup>יב</sup> כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת עוֹד יִהְיֶה בְּמָקוֹם הַזֶּה  
הַחֲרָב מֵאִין־אָדָם וְעַד־בְּהֵמָה וּבְכָל־עָרָיו נוֹה  
רְעִים מִרְבָּצִים צֹאן: <sup>יג</sup> בְּעָרֵי הָהָר בְּעָרֵי הַשְּׁפֵלָה  
וּבְעָרֵי הַנֶּגֶב וּבָאָרֶץ 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; <sup>9</sup> 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."

<sup>10</sup> "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 <sup>11</sup> 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."

<sup>12</sup> "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. <sup>13</sup> In the towns of the highlands, of the low-  
lands and the Negeb, in the territory of Benjamin, in the districts round

<sup>9</sup> In place of 'it' (before 'will become'), here following the MT, the NJB has 'Jerusalem' and the NRSV has 'the city'.

<sup>10</sup> The pronoun, 'you', here is plural, referring to the people of Jerusalem. Vv. 10-11 reverse 7:34.

<sup>11</sup> A more literal translation of 'as at first' is 'as formerly'.

<sup>12</sup> 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.

<sup>13</sup> 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}

י' הִנֵּה יָמִים בָּאִים נֹאמֵי־יְהוָה וְהִקְמַתִּי אֶת־הַדָּבָר  
הַטּוֹב אֲשֶׁר דִּבַּרְתִּי אֶל־בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל וְעַל־בֵּית  
יְהוּדָה: טו בַּיָּמִים הָהֵם וּבָעֵת הַהִיא אֶצְמִיחַ לְדָוִד  
צֶמַח צְדָקָה וְעָשָׂה מִשְׁפָּט וְצְדָקָה בָּאָרֶץ: טז בַּיָּמִים  
הָהֵם תּוֹשַׁע יְהוּדָה וִירוּשָׁלַם תִּשְׁכֹּן לִבְטָח וְזֶה  
אֲשֶׁר־יִקְרָא־לָהּ יְהוָה | צְדָקָנוּ: {ס}

יז כִּי־כֹה אָמַר יְהוָה לֹא־יִכָּרֵת לְדָוִד אִישׁ יֹשֵׁב עַל־  
כִּסֵּא בֵּית־יִשְׂרָאֵל: יח וְלִכְהֹנִים הַלְוִיִּם לֹא־יִכָּרֵת  
אִישׁ מִלִּפְנֵי מַעֲלָה עֹלָה וּמִקְטִיר מִנְחָה וְעָשָׂה  
זֶבַח כָּל־הַיָּמִים: {פ}

יט וַיְהִי דְבַר־יְהוָה אֶל־יִרְמְיָהוּ לֵאמֹר: כ זֶה אָמַר  
יְהוָה אֲסַתְּפֹרוּ אֶת־בְּרִיתִי הַיּוֹם וְאֶת־בְּרִיתִי  
הַלַּיְלָה וּלְבִלְתִּי הֵיוֹת יוֹמָם־וַלַּיְלָה בְּעֵתָם: כא גַּם־  
בְּרִיתִי תִפָּרֵץ אֶת־דָּוִד עַבְדִּי מִהֵיוֹת־לּוֹ 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 יוֹמָם 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.

בְּסֵאֵוֹ וְאֶת־הַלְוִיִּם הַכֹּהֲנִים מִשְׁרָתִי: כִּי אֲשֶׁר לֹא־  
 יִסְפָּר צָבָא שָׁמַיִם וְלֹא יִמָּד חוֹל הַיָּם כֵּן אֲרֻבָּה  
 אֶת־זֶרַע דָּוִד עַבְדִּי וְאֶת־הַלְוִיִּם מִשְׁרָתִי אֲתִי: {ס}  
 כִּי וַיְהִי דְבַר־יְהוָה אֶל־יִרְמְיָהוּ לֵאמֹר: כִּי הֲלוֹא  
 רָאִיתָ מִה־הָעַם הַזֶּה דִּבְרוּ לֵאמֹר שְׁתֵּי הַמִּשְׁפָּחוֹת  
 אֲשֶׁר בָּחַר יְהוָה בָּהֶם וַיִּמָּאֲסוּ וְאֶת־עַמִּי יִנְאַצּוּן  
 מִהָיֹת עוֹד גּוֹי לִפְנֵיהֶם: {ס}

כִּי כֹה אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּרִיתִי יוֹמָם וּלְיָלָה חֻקֹּת  
 שָׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ לֹא־שָׁמַתִּי: כִּי גַם־זֶרַע יַעֲקֹב וְדוֹד  
 עַבְדִּי אֲמָאֵס מִקַּחַת מִזֵּרְעוֹ מִשְׁלִים אֶל־זֶרַע  
 אֲבֹרָהֶם יִשְׁחָק וַיַּעֲקֹב כִּי־אָשִׁיב אֶשׁוּב אֶת־  
 שְׁבוּתָם וְרַחֲמָתִים: {פ}

and my covenant with my ministers the Levites. <sup>22</sup> 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.””

<sup>23</sup> The word of Yahweh came to Jeremiah as follows, <sup>24</sup> “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.

<sup>25</sup> “Thus says Yahweh, “If I had not created day and night, and fixed the laws governing heaven and earth, <sup>26</sup> 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.””

<sup>22</sup> This verse is a reinterpretation of Gn 22:17–18.

<sup>23</sup> The introduction again affirms this section as a continuation of that begun in v. 1.

<sup>24</sup> 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).

<sup>25</sup> ‘Created day’ is a conjectural translation following the NJB; the MT has ‘my covenant with day’.

<sup>26</sup> The *Kethib*/*Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.



## ירמיהו פרק לד

אֲהַדְבִּיר אֲשֶׁר־הָיָה אֶל־יִרְמְיָהוּ מֵאֵת יְהוָה  
וְנִבְכַּדְרֶאצַּר מֶלֶךְ־בָּבֶל וְכָל־חֵילוֹ וְכָל־מַמְלָכוֹת  
אֶרֶץ מִמְּשַׁלַּת יָדוֹ וְכָל־הָעַמִּים נִלְחָמִים עַל־  
יְרוּשָׁלַם וְעַל־כָּל־עָרֶיהָ לֵאמֹר: בִּכְה־אָמַר יְהוָה  
אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הִלֵּךְ וְאָמַרְתָּ אֶל־צִדְקִיָּהוּ מֶלֶךְ־  
יְהוּדָה וְאָמַרְתָּ אֵלָיו כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה הִנְנִי נֹתֵן אֶת־  
הָעִיר הַזֹּאת בְּיַד מֶלֶךְ־בָּבֶל וְשָׂרְפָהּ בָּאֵשׁ: ג וְאַתָּה  
לֹא תִמָּלֵט מִיָּדוֹ כִּי תִפֹּשׁ תִּתְּפֹשׁ וּבִידוֹ תִּנָּתֵן  
וְעֵינֶיךָ אֶת־עֵינֵי מֶלֶךְ־בָּבֶל תִּרְאֶינָה וּפִיָּהּ אֶת־פִּיךָ  
יִדְבֹּר וּבָבֶל תִּבּוֹא: ד אַךְ שָׁמַע דְּבַר־יְהוָה צִדְקִיָּהוּ  
מֶלֶךְ יְהוּדָה כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה עֲלֶיךָ לֹא תָמוּת בַּחֲרֹב:  
ה בְּשָׁלוֹם תָּמוּת וְכַמְּשֻׁרְפוֹת אֲבוֹתֶיךָ הַמְּלָכִים  
הָרָאשֹׁנִים אֲשֶׁר־הָיוּ לִפְנֶיךָ כֵּן יִשְׂרְפוּ־לָךְ וְהָיָה  
אֲדוֹן יִסְפְּדוּ־לָךְ כִּי־דָבַר אֲנִי־דְּבַרְתִּי נְאֻם־  
יְהוָה: {ס}

## JEREMIAH 34

<sup>1</sup> 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., <sup>2</sup> "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. <sup>3</sup> 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. <sup>4</sup> 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; <sup>5</sup> 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

- <sup>1</sup> 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.
- <sup>2</sup> Note that the translation has attempted to avoid confusion by avoiding multiply-nested quotations.
- <sup>3</sup> Literally translated, the 2<sup>nd</sup> sentence reads, "Your eyes will see the eyes of the king of Babylon and his mouth will speak with your mouth."
- <sup>4</sup> 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).
- <sup>5</sup> 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).

וַיִּדְבֹּר יִרְמְיָהוּ הַנָּבִיא אֶל־צִדְקִיָּהוּ 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 מִבְצָר: {פ}

ח' הַדְּבָר אֲשֶׁר־הָיָה אֶל־יִרְמְיָהוּ מֵאֵת יְהוָה אַחֲרֵי  
 כָּרַת הַמֶּלֶךְ צִדְקִיָּהוּ בְרִית אֶת־כָּל־הָעָם אֲשֶׁר  
 בִּירוּשָׁלַם לִקְרָא לָהֶם דְּרוֹר: ט' לְשַׁלַּח אִישׁ אֶת־  
 עַבְדּוֹ וְאִישׁ אֶת־שִׁפְחָתוֹ הָעִבְרִי וְהָעִבְרִיָּה חֲפָשִׁים  
 לְבִלְתִּי עֲבָד־בָּם בִּיהוּדֵי אֶחָיו אִישׁ: י' וַיִּשְׁמְעוּ  
 כָּל־הָשָׂרִים וְכָל־הָעָם אֲשֶׁר־בָּאוּ בְּבְרִית לְשַׁלַּח  
 אִישׁ אֶת־עַבְדּוֹ וְאִישׁ אֶת־שִׁפְחָתוֹ חֲפָשִׁים לְבִלְתִּי  
 עֲבָד־בָּם עוֹד וַיִּשְׁמְעוּ וַיִּשְׁלְחוּ: יא' וַיָּשׁוּבוּ אַחֲרֵי־כֵן  
 וַיָּשׁוּבוּ אֶת־הָעֲבָדִים וְאֶת־הַשִּׁפְחוֹת אֲשֶׁר שְׁלְחוּ  
 חֲפָשִׁים וַיַּכְבִּישׁוּם וַיַּכְבְּשׁוּם לַעֲבָדִים  
 וּלְשִׁפְחוֹת: {פ}

<sup>6</sup> Then the prophet Jeremiah repeated all these words to Zedekiah king of Judah in Jerusalem, <sup>7</sup> 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.

<sup>8</sup> 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: <sup>9</sup> 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. <sup>10</sup> 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. <sup>11</sup> Afterwards, however, they changed their minds, recovered the slaves, male and female, whom they had set free, and reduced them to slavery again.

<sup>6</sup> The NJB lacks the opening 'then', here following the NRSV.

<sup>7</sup> 'Azekah' (modern Tell Zakariyeh) is about 30 Km southwest of Jerusalem; 'Lachish' (modern Tell Ed-Duweir) is about 20 Km southwest of Azekah.

<sup>8</sup> A better translation for 'covenant' may be 'pact' or 'agreement' but the same word (בְּרִית) is used for any agreement between two.

<sup>9</sup> 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).

<sup>10</sup> 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.

<sup>11</sup> 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 אוֹתָם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם  
 מִבֵּית עֲבָדִים לֵאמֹר: יד מִקֵּץ שִׁבְעַת שָׁנִים תִּשְׁלַחֻ  
 אִישׁ אֶת־אָחִיו הָעִבְרִי אֲשֶׁר־יָמַכְר לָךְ וְעַבְדְּךָ שֵׁשׁ  
 שָׁנִים וְשִׁלַּחְתּוּ חֲפָשִׁי מֵעִמְךָ וְלֹא־שָׁמְעוּ אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם  
 אֵלַי וְלֹא הָטוּ אֶת־אָזְנָם: טו וַתָּשְׁבוּ אַתֶּם הַיּוֹם  
 וַתַּעֲשׂוּ אֶת־הַיָּשָׁר בְּעֵינַי לְקַרְא דָּרוֹר אִישׁ לְרֵעֵהוּ  
 וַתִּכְרְתוּ בְרִית לִפְנֵי בַּיִת אֲשֶׁר־נִקְרָא שְׁמִי עָלָיו:  
 טז וַתָּשְׁבוּ וַתַּחֲלִלוּ אֶת־שְׁמִי וַתָּשְׁבוּ אִישׁ אֶת־עַבְדּוֹ  
 וְאִישׁ אֶת־שִׁפְחָתוֹ אֲשֶׁר־שִׁלַּחְתֶּם חֲפָשִׁים לְנַפְשָׁם  
 וַתִּכְבְּשׁוּ אַתֶּם לַהּוֹת לָכֶם לַעֲבָדִים  
 וְלִשְׁפָחוֹת: {ס} ז' לִכֹּן כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה אַתֶּם לֹא־  
 שָׁמַעְתֶּם אֵלַי לְקַרְא דָּרוֹר אִישׁ לְאָחִיו וְאִישׁ  
 לְרֵעֵהוּ הִנְנִי קָרָא לָכֶם דָּרוֹר נֹאם־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי־חֶרֶב  
 אֶל־הַדֶּבֶר וְאֶל־הָרָעָב וְנָתַתִּי אֶתְכֶם לְזֹעָה לְזֹעָה  
 לְכָל מַמְלָכוֹת הָאָרֶץ: יח וְנָתַתִּי אֶת־הָאֲנָשִׁים

<sup>12</sup> The word of Yahweh came then to Jeremiah from Yahweh, saying,  
<sup>13</sup> “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: <sup>14</sup> 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. <sup>15</sup> 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. <sup>16</sup> 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.” <sup>17</sup> “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. <sup>18</sup> As for the people who have broken my

<sup>12</sup> The NJB, following the LXX and Peshitta, omits ‘from Yahweh’, here following the MT & NRSV.

<sup>13</sup> The NJB lacks ‘land of’ before ‘Egypt’, here following the NRSV.

<sup>14</sup> See Dt 15:12–18 for the complete statement of this law; here, only the first part of it is cited.

<sup>15</sup> The presence of the independent pronoun (here translated ‘you yourselves’) is intended to contrast their actions with those of their ancestors.

<sup>16</sup> The literal translation of ‘changed your minds’ (here following the NJB) is ‘turned around’.

<sup>17</sup> The Kethib/Qere difference here would benefit from an explanation.

<sup>18</sup> On this ancient covenant ritual, in which the contracting parties passed between the two halves of a sacrificial animal, see #Gn 15:17.

הַעֲבָרִים אֲתֶּבְרַתִּי אֲשֶׁר לֹא־הִקִּימוּ אֶת־דְּבָרֵי  
הַבְּרִית אֲשֶׁר כָּרְתוּ לִפְנֵי הָעֵגֹל אֲשֶׁר כָּרְתוּ לְשׁוֹנִים  
וַיַּעֲבְרוּ בֵּין בְּתָרָיו: <sup>יט</sup> שְׂרֵי יְהוּדָה וְשְׂרֵי יְרוּשָׁלַם  
הַסֹּרְסִים וְהַכֹּהֲנִים וְכָל עַם הָאָרֶץ הַעֲבָרִים בֵּין  
בְּתָרֵי הָעֵגֹל: <sup>כ</sup> וְנָתַתִּי אוֹתָם בְּיַד אֹיְבֵיהֶם וּבְיַד  
מִבְקָשֵׁי נַפְשָׁם וְהָיְתָה נִבְלָתָם לְמֶאֱכָל לְעוֹף  
הַשָּׁמַיִם וּלְבִהֶמַת הָאָרֶץ: <sup>כא</sup> וְאֶת־צִדְקִיָּהוּ מֶלֶךְ־  
יְהוּדָה וְאֶת־שָׂרָיו אֶתֵּן בְּיַד אֹיְבֵיהֶם וּבְיַד מִבְקָשֵׁי  
נַפְשָׁם וּבְיַד חֵיל מֶלֶךְ בָּבֶל הָעֲלִים מֵעֲלֵיכֶם:  
<sup>כב</sup> הַנְּנִי מִצְוָה נְאֻם־יְהוָה וְהִשְׁבַּתִּים אֶל־הָעִיר  
הַזֹּאת וְנִלְחַמוּ עָלֶיהָ וּלְכָדוּהָ וְשָׂרְפָהּ בָּאֵשׁ וְאֶת־  
עָרֵי יְהוּדָה אֶתֵּן שְׂמָמָה מֵאִין יֵשֵׁב: {פ}

Covenant, who have not observed the terms of the covenant that they made before me, I shall treat them like the calf that people cut in two to pass between its pieces. <sup>19</sup> 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, <sup>20</sup> 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. <sup>21</sup> 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. <sup>22</sup> 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.””

<sup>19</sup> 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.

<sup>20</sup> Compare the last part of this verse with 7:33, 16:4 & 19:7.

<sup>21</sup> 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).

<sup>22</sup> The NJB has 'burn it down' in place of 'burn it with fire', here following the MT & NRSV.

## ירמיהו פרק לה

אֶת־הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר־הָיָה אֵל־יְרֵמְיָהוּ מֵאֵת יְהוָה בְּיָמֵי  
יְהוֹיָקִים בֶּן־יֹאשִׁיָּהוּ מֶלֶךְ יְהוּדָה לֵאמֹר: בִּהְיוֹתְךָ  
אֶל־בֵּית הַרְכָּבִים וְדַבַּרְתָּ אֹתָם וְהִבֵּאתָם בֵּית  
יְהוָה אֶל־אֶחָת הַלְּשָׁכוֹת וְהִשְׁקִיתָ אוֹתָם יַיִן:  
ג וְאָקַח אֶת־יֶאֱזַנְיָה בֶן־יְרֵמְיָהוּ בֶן־חֲבַצְנִיָּה וְאֶת־  
אָחָיו וְאֶת־כָּל־בָּנָיו וְאֶת כָּל־בֵּית הַרְכָּבִים: ד וְאָבֵא  
אֹתָם בֵּית יְהוָה אֶל־לְשַׁכַּת בְּנֵי חֲנָן בֶּן־יִגְדָלְיָהוּ  
אִישׁ הָאֱלֹהִים אֲשֶׁר־אָצֵל לְשַׁכַּת הַשָּׁרִים אֲשֶׁר  
מִמַּעַל לְלְשַׁכַּת מַעֲשִׂיהוּ בֶן־שָׁלֹם שֹׁמֵר הַסֵּף:  
ה וְאָתָּן לִפְנֵי בְנֵי בֵית־הַרְכָּבִים גְּבַעִים מְלֵאִים יַיִן  
וְכִסּוֹת וְאָמַר אֲלֵיהֶם שְׁתוּ־יַיִן: ו וַיֹּאמְרוּ לֹא  
נִשְׁתֶּה־יַיִן כִּי יֹנָדָב בֶּן־רִכְבָּב אָבִינוּ צִוָּה עָלֵינוּ  
לֵאמֹר לֹא תִשְׁתּוּ־יַיִן אַתֶּם וּבְנֵיכֶם עַד־עוֹלָם:  
ז וּבֵית לֹא־תִבְנוּ וְזֶרַע לֹא־תִזְרְעוּ וְכָרֶם לֹא־תִטְעוּ

## JEREMIAH 35

<sup>1</sup> The word that came to Jeremiah from Yahweh in the days of Jehoiakim son of Josiah, king of Judah, <sup>2</sup> "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." <sup>3</sup> So I took Jaazaniah son of Jeremiah, son of Habazziniah, with his brothers and all his sons, the whole house of the Rechabites, <sup>4</sup> 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. <sup>5</sup> I then set pitchers full of wine, and some cups, before the members of the Rechabite clan and said, "Have some wine." <sup>6</sup> 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; <sup>7</sup> nor shall you build houses or sow seed, nor plant vineyards or own them, but shall live in

### JEREMIAH 35

- <sup>1</sup> 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).
- <sup>2</sup> 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.
- <sup>3</sup> NETB reads 'the grandson of Habazziniah' in place of 'son of Habazziniah', here following the MT, MJB & NRSV.
- <sup>4</sup> 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).
- <sup>5</sup> The literal translation of 'have some wine' (here following the NRSV) is 'drink wine'.
- <sup>6</sup> See #2 on the likely identity of 'Jonadab'.
- <sup>7</sup> The literal translation of 'where you reside' is 'where you are sojourning'.



וְלֹא יִהְיֶה לָכֶם כִּי בָאֵהָלִים תִּשְׁבּוּ כְּלִימֵיכֶם לְמַעַן  
תַּחֲיוּ יָמִים רַבִּים עַל־פְּנֵי הָאֲדָמָה אֲשֶׁר אַתֶּם גָּרִים  
שָׁם: <sup>ח</sup> וְנִשְׁמַע בְּקוֹל יְהוֹנָדָב בֶּן־רֵכָב אֲבִינוּ לְכָל  
אֲשֶׁר צִוָּנוּ לַבִּלְתִּי שְׁתּוֹת־יַיִן כְּלִימֵינוּ אֲנַחְנוּ נְשִׁינוּ  
בְּגִינוּ וּבְנֹתֵינוּ: <sup>ט</sup> וּלְבִלְתִּי בָנוֹת בָּתִּים לִשְׁבֹּתָנוּ  
וּכְרֶם וְשָׂדֶה וְזֶרַע לֹא יִהְיֶה־לָּנוּ: <sup>י</sup> וְנִשְׁבַּ בְּאֵהָלִים  
וְנִשְׁמַע וְנַעֲשֶׂה כְּכָל אֲשֶׁר־צִוָּנוּ יוֹנָדָב אֲבִינוּ: <sup>יא</sup> וַיְהִי  
בְּעֵלוֹת נְבוּכַדְרֶאצַּר מֶלֶךְ־בָּבֶל אֶל־הָאָרֶץ וְנֹאמַר  
בָּאוּ וְנִבְּאוּ יְרוּשָׁלַם מִפְּנֵי חֵיל הַכַּשְׂדִּים וּמִפְּנֵי חֵיל  
אַרֶם וְנִשְׁבַּ בִּירוּשָׁלַם: {פ}

<sup>יב</sup> וַיְהִי דְבַר־יְהוָה אֶל־יִרְמְיָהוּ לֵאמֹר: <sup>יג</sup> כֹּה־אָמַר  
יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הֵלֶךְ וְאָמַרְתָּ לְאִישׁ  
יְהוּדָה וּלְיוֹשְׁבֵי יְרוּשָׁלַם הֲלוֹא תִקְחוּ מוֹסֵר לְשִׁמְעַ  
אֶל־דְּבָרִי נְאֻם־יְהוָה: <sup>יד</sup> הוֹקֵם אֶת־דְּבָרִי יְהוֹנָדָב  
בֶּן־רֵכָב אֲשֶׁר־צִוָּה אֶת־בָּנָיו לַבִּלְתִּי שְׁתּוֹת־יַיִן וְלֹא  
שָׁתוּ עַד־הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה כִּי שָׁמְעוּ אֶת מִצְוַת אֲבִיהֶם

tents all your lives, so that you may live long in the land where you reside.” <sup>8</sup> We have obeyed the orders of our father, Jonadab son of Rechab, never drinking wine ourselves, nor our wives, our sons or our daughters, <sup>9</sup> nor building houses to live in. We own neither vineyard nor field nor seed, <sup>10</sup> living in tents. We have obeyed the orders of our ancestor Jonadab, respecting them in every particular. <sup>11</sup> 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.

<sup>12</sup> Then the word of Yahweh came to Jeremiah as follows, <sup>13</sup> “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? <sup>14</sup> 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;

<sup>8</sup> Vv. 8<sup>b</sup>–9<sup>a</sup> is a series of infinitive constructs plus the negative לַבִּלְתִּי, explaining the particulars of how they have obeyed.

<sup>9</sup> 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).

<sup>10</sup> Literally translated, the last sentence reads, “We have obeyed and done according to all which our ancestor Jonadab commanded us.”

<sup>11</sup> The NJB lacks the 2<sup>nd</sup> instance of ‘the army of’, changing the 1<sup>st</sup> to ‘the armies of’; here, we follow the MT & NRSV.

<sup>12</sup> The literal translation of ‘as follows’ is simply ‘saying’.

<sup>13</sup> The rhetorical question here has the force of an imperative.

<sup>14</sup> On the idiom translated ‘so urgently and so untiringly’, see #7:13.



וְאֶנֶכִי דִבַּרְתִּי אֲלֵיכֶם הַשָּׁם וּדְבַר וְלֹא שָׁמַעְתֶּם  
אֵלַי: <sup>טו</sup> וְאֶשְׁלַח אֲלֵיכֶם אֶת-כָּל-עֲבָדֵי הַנְּבִאִים |  
הַשָּׁם וְשָׁלַח | לֵאמֹר שׁוּבוּ-נָא אִישׁ מִדֶּרֶכוֹ הָרָעָה  
וְהִיטִיבוּ מַעַלְלֵיכֶם וְאַל-תִּלְכוּ אַחֲרֵי אֱלֹהִים  
אַחֲרִים לְעַבְדָם וּשְׁבוּ אֶל-הָאֲדָמָה אֲשֶׁר-נָתַתִּי  
לָכֶם וְלֹאֲבֹתֵיכֶם וְלֹא הִטִּיתֶם אֶת-אָזְנוֹכֶם וְלֹא  
שָׁמַעְתֶּם אֵלַי: <sup>טז</sup> כִּי הִקִּימוּ בְנֵי יְהוֹנָדָב בֶּן-רֶכָב  
אֶת-מִצְוַת אֲבִיהֶם אֲשֶׁר צִוָּם וְהָעַם הַזֶּה לֹא שָׁמְעוּ  
אֵלַי: <sup>יז</sup> לָכֵן כֹּה-אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי צְבָאוֹת אֱלֹהֵי  
יִשְׂרָאֵל הַנְּנִי מֵבִיא אֶל-יְהוּדָה וְאֶל כָּל-יֹשְׁבֵי  
יְרוּשָׁלַם אֶת כָּל-הָרָעָה אֲשֶׁר דִּבַּרְתִּי עֲלֵיהֶם יַעַן  
דִּבַּרְתִּי אֲלֵיהֶם וְלֹא שָׁמְעוּ וְאֶקְרָא לָהֶם וְלֹא עָנוּ:  
<sup>יח</sup> וּלְבֵית הַרְכָּבִים אָמַר יִרְמְיָהוּ כֹה-אָמַר יְהוָה  
צְבָאוֹת אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל יַעַן אֲשֶׁר שָׁמַעְתֶּם עַל-מִצְוַת  
יְהוֹנָדָב אֲבִיכֶם וַתִּשְׁמְרוּ אֶת-כָּל-מִצְוֹתָיו וַתַּעֲשׂוּ  
כְּכָל אֲשֶׁר-צִוָּה אֶתְכֶם: <sup>יט</sup> לָכֵן כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה  
צְבָאוֹת אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא-יִכָּרֵת אִישׁ לְיוֹנָדָב בֶּן-  
רֶכָב עֹמֵד לִפְנֵי כָל-הַיָּמִים: {פ}

but to me, who spoke myself to you so urgently and so untiringly, you have not listened. <sup>15</sup> 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. <sup>16</sup> Thus, the sons of Jonadab son of Rechab have kept the command their ancestor gave them, but this people have not listened to me. <sup>17</sup> 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.””” <sup>18</sup> 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, <sup>19</sup> therefore, Yahweh Sabaoth, the God of Israel, says this: Jonadab son of Rechab shall never lack a male descendant to stand before me forever.”””

<sup>15</sup> In place of ‘follow’, NETB has ‘pay allegiance to’.

<sup>16</sup> The lesson here is one of simple obedience.

<sup>17</sup> God now end the lesson by announcing the imminent punishment for disobedience.

<sup>18</sup> The Rechabites are to be spared the punishment as a reward for their obedience to their ancestors’ commands.

<sup>19</sup> 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

א ויהי בשנה הרבעית ליהויקים בן-יאשיהו מלך יהודה ה'ה הדבר הזה אל-ירמיהו מאת יהוה לאמר: ב קח-לך מגלת-ספר וכתב 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 מדרך 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-

## JEREMIAH 36

<sup>1</sup> 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, <sup>2</sup> "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. <sup>3</sup> 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."

<sup>4</sup> Jeremiah then called Baruch son of Neriah, who at his dictation wrote on the scroll all the words Yahweh had spoken to him. <sup>5</sup> And Jeremiah gave Baruch this order, "I am prevented from entering the Temple of Yahweh, <sup>6</sup> 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

## JEREMIAH 36

- <sup>1</sup> 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.
- <sup>2</sup> What the 'scroll' most likely contained was a synopsis of Jeremiah's messages as constructed from his memory.
- <sup>3</sup> In place of 'their iniquity and their sin', here following the MT & NRSV, the NJB has 'their sinful guilt'.
- <sup>4</sup> Some critics suggest transposing v. 9 to after this verse.
- <sup>5</sup> For an unknown reason, Jeremiah was barred from the Temple.
- <sup>6</sup> 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.

יְהוּדָה הַבָּאִים מֵעָרֵיהֶם תִּקְרְאוּם: <sup>ז</sup>אוֹלֵי תִפְּלוּ  
תַּחֲנַתֶּם לִפְנֵי יְהוָה וְיָשְׁבוּ אִישׁ מִדְּרָכּוֹ הָרָעָה כִּי־  
גָּדוֹל הָאָף וְהַחֲמָה אֲשֶׁר־דִּבֶּר יְהוָה אֶל־הָעָם הַזֶּה:  
<sup>ח</sup>וַיַּעַשׂ בְּרוּךְ בֶּן־נְרִיָּה כְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר־צִוָּהוּ יִרְמְיָהוּ  
הַנָּבִיא לִקְרֹא בַסֵּפֶר דְּבַר־יְהוָה בֵּית יְהוָה: {פ}  
<sup>ט</sup>וַיְהִי בַשָּׁנָה הַחֲמִשִּׁית לִיהוֹיָקִים בֶּן־יֹאשִׁיָּהוּ מֶלֶךְ־  
יְהוּדָה בַּחֹדֶשׁ הַתְּשַׁעִי קָרְאוּ צֹם לִפְנֵי יְהוָה כָּל־  
הָעָם בִּירוּשָׁלַם וְכָל־הָעָם הַבָּאִים מֵעָרֵי יְהוּדָה  
בִּירוּשָׁלַם: <sup>י</sup>וַיִּקְרָא בְרוּךְ בַּסֵּפֶר אֶת־דְּבַר־יִרְמְיָהוּ  
בֵּית יְהוָה בְּלִשְׁכַּת גִּמְרִיָּהוּ בֶן־שָׁפָן הַסֹּפֵר בַּחֲצֵר  
הָעֲלִיזֹן פֶּתַח שַׁעַר בֵּית־יְהוָה הַחֹדֶשׁ בְּאַזְנֵי כָל־  
הָעָם: <sup>יא</sup>וַיִּשְׁמַע מַלְּיָהוּ בֶן־גִּמְרִיָּהוּ בֶן־שָׁפָן אֶת־  
כָּל־דְּבַר־יְהוָה מֵעַל הַסֵּפֶר: <sup>יב</sup>וַיֵּרֶד בֵּית־הַמֶּלֶךְ  
עַל־לִשְׁכַּת הַסֹּפֵר וְהִנֵּה־שָׁם כָּל־הַשָּׂרִים יוֹשְׁבִים  
אֲלִישַׁמָּע הַסֹּפֵר וּדְלִיָּהוּ בֶן־שַׁמְעִיָּהוּ וְאַלְנָתָן בֶּן־  
עֲכָבוֹר וְגִמְרִיָּהוּ בֶן־שָׁפָן וְצִדְקִיָּהוּ בֶן־חֲנַנְיָהוּ וְכָל־  
הַשָּׂרִים: <sup>יג</sup>וַיִּגַּד לָהֶם מַלְּיָהוּ אֶת כָּל־הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר

Judaeans who come in from their towns. <sup>7</sup> 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.”  
<sup>8</sup> 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.  
<sup>9</sup> 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. <sup>10</sup> 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. <sup>11</sup> When Micah son of Gemariah son of Shaphan had heard all Yahweh’s words read from the scroll, <sup>12</sup> 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; <sup>13</sup> and to them, Micah

<sup>7</sup> The literal translation of ‘furious anger’ is ‘anger and wrath’.

<sup>8</sup> 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.”

<sup>9</sup> The date is December 604 BCE.

<sup>10</sup> ‘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.

<sup>11</sup> Baruch was asked to re-read the scroll before an assembly of royal officials.

<sup>12</sup> 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.

<sup>13</sup> The literal translation of ‘hearing’ is ‘ears’.

שָׁמַע בְּקֶרֶא בְּרוּךְ בַּסֵּפֶר בְּאָזְנֵי הָעָם: י' וַיִּשְׁלַח  
כָּל־הַשָּׂרִים אֶל־בְּרוּךְ אֶת־יְהוּדִי בֶן־נְתַנְיָהוּ בֶן־  
שְׁלֵמְיָהוּ בֶן־כוּשִׁי לֵאמֹר הַמְּגִלָּה אֲשֶׁר קָרַאתָ בָּהּ  
בְּאָזְנֵי הָעָם קַחנָה בְיָדְךָ וּלְךָ וַיָּקֻחַ בְּרוּךְ בֶּן־נְרִיָּהוּ  
אֶת־הַמְּגִלָּה בְיָדוֹ וַיָּבֹא אֲלֵיהֶם: ט' וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֵלָיו שֶׁב  
נָא וּקְרָאנָה בְּאָזְנֵינוּ וַיִּקְרָא בְרוּךְ בְּאָזְנֵיהֶם: ט"ו וַיְהִי  
כַּשֶּׁמַּעַם אֶת־כָּל־הַדְּבָרִים פָּחְדוּ אִישׁ אֶל־רֵעֵהוּ  
וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֶל־בְּרוּךְ הֲגִיד נְגִיד לַמֶּלֶךְ אֵת כָּל־  
הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה: י"ז וְאֶת־בְּרוּךְ שָׁאֲלוּ לֵאמֹר הֲגִיד  
נָא לָנוּ אֵיךְ כָּתַבְתָּ אֶת־כָּל־הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה מִפִּיו:  
י"ח וַיֹּאמֶר לָהֶם בְּרוּךְ מִפִּי יִקְרָא אֵלַי אֵת כָּל־  
הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה וְאֲנִי כָתֵב עַל־הַסֵּפֶר בְּדִין: {ס}  
יט וַיֹּאמְרוּ הַשָּׂרִים אֶל־בְּרוּךְ לֵךְ הִסְתַּר אַתָּה  
וַיִּרְמִיָּהוּ וְאִישׁ אֶל־יָדַע אֵיפָה אַתָּם: כ' וַיָּבֹאוּ אֶל־  
הַמֶּלֶךְ חֲצֵרָה וְאֶת־הַמְּגִלָּה הִפְקְדוּ בְּלִשְׁכַּת  
אֱלִישָׁמַע הַסֵּפֶר וַיִּגִּדוּ 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. <sup>14</sup> 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. <sup>15</sup> And they said to him, "Sit down and read it to us." So, Baruch read it to them. <sup>16</sup> 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." <sup>17</sup> They then questioned Baruch, "Tell us," they said, "how you came to write all these words. Was it at his dictation?" <sup>18</sup> "Jeremiah dictated them all to me," Baruch replied, "and I wrote them down in ink in this book."

<sup>19</sup> The chief men said to Baruch, "You and Jeremiah had better go into hiding; and do not tell anyone where you are." <sup>20</sup> 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. <sup>21</sup> Then the king sent Jehudi to get the scroll, and he

<sup>14</sup> The NJB includes the last sentence as part of v. 15.

<sup>15</sup> The literal translation of 'to us' and 'to them' is 'in our ears' and 'in their ears'.

<sup>16</sup> Towards the end of this verse, the word דְּבָרִים most likely means 'things' rather than 'words'.

<sup>17</sup> 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.

<sup>18</sup> The literal translation of 'Jeremiah dictated them all to me' is 'He said them all to me with his mouth'.

<sup>19</sup> The verbs here are both direct imperatives but it sounds awkward to say "You and Jeremiah, go and hide" in contemporary English.

<sup>20</sup> The NJB has 'scribe' in place of 'secretary', here following the NRSV & NETB.

<sup>21</sup> The NJB lacks the 2<sup>nd</sup> occurrence of the name 'Jehudi' and NETB replaces it with 'he himself'; here, we follow the MT & NRSV.

הַמְּגִלָּה וַיִּקְחָהּ מִלְּשַׁכַּת אֵלִישָׁמָע הַסֹּפֵר וַיִּקְרָאָהּ  
 יְהוּדִי בְּאָזְנוֹ הַמֶּלֶךְ וּבְאָזְנוֹ כָּל־הַשָּׂרִים הָעֹמְדִים  
 מִעַל הַמֶּלֶךְ: <sup>כב</sup> וְהַמֶּלֶךְ יוֹשֵׁב בֵּית הַחֹרֶף בְּחֹדֶשׁ  
 הַתְּשִׁיעִי וְאֶת־הָאֵח לִפְנֵי מִבְעֶרֶת: <sup>כג</sup> וַיְהִי כִּקְרֹא  
 יְהוּדִי שְׁלֹשׁ דָּלְתוֹת וְאַרְבַּעַת יִקְרַעַהּ בְּתֵּעַר הַסֹּפֵר  
 וְהַשֹּׁלֵךְ אֶל־הָאֵשׁ אֲשֶׁר אֶל־הָאֵח עַד־תֵּם כָּל־  
 הַמְּגִלָּה עַל־הָאֵשׁ אֲשֶׁר עַל־הָאֵח: <sup>כד</sup> וְלֹא פָחַדּוּ  
 וְלֹא קָרְעוּ אֶת־בְּגָדֵיהֶם הַמֶּלֶךְ וְכָל־עַבְדָּיו  
 הַשְּׂמֹמִים אֵת כָּל־הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה: <sup>כה</sup> וְגַם אֶלְנָתָן  
 וְדִלְיָהּ וְגִמְרִיָּהּ הַפְּנִיעוּ בַּמֶּלֶךְ לְבִלְתִּי שָׂרֹף אֶת־  
 הַמְּגִלָּה וְלֹא שָׁמַע אֲלֵיהֶם: <sup>כו</sup> וַיִּצְוֶה הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶת־  
 יֶרַחְמֵאֵל בֶּן־הַמֶּלֶךְ וְאֶת־שָׂרְיָהּ וְאֶת־עֲזַרְיָאֵל וְאֶת־  
 שְׁלִמְיָהּ בֶּן־עַבְדָּאֵל לִקְחֹת אֶת־בְּרוּךְ הַסֹּפֵר וְאֶת־  
 יֶרְמְיָהּ הַנָּבִיא וַיְסִתְרֵם יְהוָה: {ס}

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. <sup>22</sup> 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. <sup>23</sup> 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. <sup>24</sup> Yet, in spite of hearing all these words, neither the king nor any of his courtiers took alarm or tore their clothes; <sup>25</sup> and although Elnathan and Delaiah and Gemariah had urged the king not to burn the scroll, he would not listen to them; <sup>26</sup> 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.

<sup>22</sup> 'With a fire burning in a brazier' follows the LXX, Tg and Peshitta; the MT has 'and with a brazier'.

<sup>23</sup> 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.

<sup>24</sup> 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 – קָרַע).

<sup>25</sup> This verse is essentially a flash back to a time before the scroll was totally burned (v. 23).

<sup>26</sup> The title 'king's son' (cf. 38:6, 1K 22:26–27) indicates a court functionary, perhaps, from the context, a courtier.



כז וַיְהִי דְבַר־יְהוָה אֶל־יִרְמְיָהוּ אַחֲרַי שְׂרָף הַמָּלֶךְ  
 אֶת־הַמְּגִלָּה וְאֶת־הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר כָּתַב בָּרוּךְ מִפִּי  
 יִרְמְיָהוּ לֵאמֹר: כח שׁוּב קַח־לָךְ מְגִלָּה אַחֶרֶת וּכְתֹב  
 עָלֶיהָ אֵת כָּל־הַדְּבָרִים הָרֵאשֹׁנִים אֲשֶׁר הָיוּ עַל־  
 הַמְּגִלָּה הָרֵאשׁוֹנָה אֲשֶׁר שְׂרָף יְהוֹיָקִים מֶלֶךְ־  
 יְהוּדָה: כט וְעַל־יְהוֹיָקִים מֶלֶךְ־יְהוּדָה תֹּאמַר כֹּה  
 אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵה שְׂרַפְתָּ אֶת־הַמְּגִלָּה הַזֹּאת לֵאמֹר  
 מִדּוֹעַ כָּתַבְתָּ עָלֶיהָ לֵאמֹר בֹּא־יָבוֹא מֶלֶךְ־בָּבֶל  
 וְהִשְׁחִית אֶת־הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת וְהִשְׁבִּית מִמֶּנָּה אָדָם  
 וּבְהֵמָּה: {ס}

ל לָכֵן כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה עַל־יְהוֹיָקִים מֶלֶךְ יְהוּדָה לֹא־  
 יִהְיֶה־לּוֹ יוֹשֵׁב עַל־כִּסֵּא דָוִד וְנִבְלָתוֹ תִּהְיֶה  
 מְשֻׁלָּכֶת לַחֲרֹב בַּיּוֹם וּלְקָרָח בַּלַּיְלָה: לא וּפְקַדְתִּי  
 עָלָיו וְעַל־זֶרְעוֹ וְעַל־עַבְדָּיו אֶת־עוֹנָם וְהִבֵּאתִי  
 עָלֵיהֶם וְעַל־יֹשְׁבֵי יְרוּשָׁלַם וְאֶל־אִישׁ יְהוּדָה אֵת  
 כָּל־הָרָעָה אֲשֶׁר־דִּבַּרְתִּי אֵלֵיהֶם וְלֹא שָׁמְעוּ:

27 Then the word of Yahweh came to Jeremiah, after the king had burnt the scroll containing the words that Baruch had written 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 this country waste and leave it without human or 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

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).

28 Literally translated, the verse opens, 'Return, take another...' but the verb 'return' (שׁוּב) is used in the sense of repetition; the idea is already contained in 'take another', so most modern English versions do not represent it.

29 There is no indication in the narrative that Jehoiakim ever directly asked Jeremiah this question; in fact, he had been hidden out of sight so Jehoiakim couldn't confront him.

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)."



לִב וִירְמְיָהוּ לָקַח מִגִּלָּה אַחֶרֶת וַיִּתְּנָהּ אֶל־בְּרוּךְ  
בֶּן־נִרְיָהוּ הַסֹּפֵר וַיִּכְתֹּב עָלֶיהָ מִפִּי יִרְמְיָהוּ אֵת כָּל־  
דְּבָרֵי הַסֵּפֶר אֲשֶׁר שָׁרַף יְהוֹיָקִים מֶלֶךְ־יְהוּדָה בָּאֵשׁ  
וְעוֹד נֹסֵף עָלֵיהֶם דְּבָרִים רַבִּים כַּהֶמָּה: {פ}

they have paid no attention.””<sup>32</sup> 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.

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<sup>32</sup> 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 צִדְקִיָּהוּ בֶן-יֹאשִׁיָּהוּ תַּחַת כְּנִיָּהוּ בֶן-  
יְהוֹיָכִים אֲשֶׁר הַמֶּלֶךְ נְבוּכַדְרֶאצַּר מֶלֶךְ-בָּבֶל  
בְּאַרְץ יְהוּדָה: <sup>ב</sup> וְלֹא שָׁמַע הוּא וְעַבְדָּיו וְעַם הָאָרֶץ  
אֶל-דְּבָרֵי יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר בְּיַד יִרְמְיָהוּ הַנָּבִיא:  
<sup>ג</sup> וַיִּשְׁלַח הַמֶּלֶךְ צִדְקִיָּהוּ אֶת-יְהוֹכָל בֶּן-שְׁלֵמְיָהוּ  
וְאֶת-צַפְנְיָהוּ בֶן-מַעֲשִׂיָּה הַכֹּהֵן אֶל-יִרְמְיָהוּ הַנָּבִיא  
לֵאמֹר הֲתַפְלִל-נָא בְּעַדָּנוּ אֱלֹהֵינוּ:  
<sup>ד</sup> וַיִּרְמְיָהוּ בָּא וַיֵּצֵא בְּתוֹךְ הָעָם וְלֹא-נִתְּנוּ אֹתוֹ בֵּית  
הַכֹּלִיא הַכְּלוּא: <sup>ה</sup> וַיְחִל פָּרְעָה יֵצֵא מִמִּצְרַיִם  
וַיִּשְׁמְעוּ הַכַּשְׂדִּים הַצָּרִים עַל-יְרוּשָׁלַם אֶת-שִׁמְעָם  
וַיַּעֲלוּ מֵעַל יְרוּשָׁלַם: {פ}

ו וַיְהִי דְבַר-יְהוָה אֶל-יִרְמְיָהוּ הַנָּבִיא לֵאמֹר: <sup>ז</sup> כֹּה-  
אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל כֹּה תֹאמְרוּ אֶל-מֶלֶךְ-

## JEREMIAH 37

<sup>1</sup> Zedekiah son of Josiah became king, succeeding Coniah son of Jehoiakim. Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had made him king of Judah; <sup>2</sup> but neither he nor his courtiers nor the people of the country paid any attention to the words Yahweh spoke through the prophet Jeremiah. <sup>3</sup> King Zedekiah sent Jehucal son of Shelemiah and the priest Zephaniah son of Maaseiah to the prophet Jeremiah with this message, "Intercede for us with Yahweh our God." <sup>4</sup> (Now Jeremiah was still moving freely among the people: he had not yet been put in prison. <sup>5</sup> Meanwhile, Pharaoh's army was on the move from Egypt and the Chaldeans besieging Jerusalem had raised the siege when they heard the news.) <sup>6</sup> Then the word of Yahweh came to Jeremiah as follows, <sup>7</sup> "Yahweh, the God of Israel, says this, "This is what the two of you shall say to the king

### JEREMIAH 37

- <sup>1</sup> 'Coniah' is another name for Jehoiakim (elsewhere in this book called 'Jeconiah').
- <sup>2</sup> 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.
- <sup>3</sup> This is the 2<sup>nd</sup> 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).
- <sup>4</sup> The *Kethib*/*Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.
- <sup>5</sup> 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).
- <sup>6</sup> The literal translation of 'as follows' is simply 'saying'.
- <sup>7</sup> The NJB & NRSV have 'inquire of' in place of 'ask help from', here following NETB: the dominant use of דַּרַּשׁ is in the sense of gaining information but it is also used in the sense of seeking help.

יְהוּדָה הַשְּׁלַח אֶתְכֶם אֵלַי לְדַרְשָׁנִי הִנֵּה חֵיל  
פָּרַעַה הֵיִצֵּא לָכֶם לַעֲזֹרָה שֶׁב לְאַרְצוֹ מִצְרַיִם:  
וְשָׁבוּ הַכַּשְׂדִּים וְנִלְחָמוּ עַל־הָעִיר הַזֹּאת וּלְכַדָּהּ  
וּשְׂרָפָהּ בָּאֵשׁ: {פ}

כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל נִפְשָׁתִיכֶם לֵאמֹר הֲלֹךְ  
יֵלְכוּ מֵעַלֵּינוּ הַכַּשְׂדִּים כִּי־לֹא יֵלְכוּ: ' כִּי אִם־  
הַכִּיתֶם כָּל־חֵיל כַּשְׂדִּים הַנִּלְחָמִים אֶתְכֶם  
וְנִשְׂאָרוֹבָם אֲנָשִׁים מְדַקְרִים אִישׁ בְּאַהֲלוֹ יָקוּמוּ  
וּשְׂרָפוּ אֶת־הָעִיר הַזֹּאת בָּאֵשׁ: יָ וְהָיָה בְּהַעֲלוֹת  
חֵיל הַכַּשְׂדִּים מֵעַל יְרוּשָׁלַם מִפְּנֵי חֵיל פָּרַעַה: {ס}  
יב וַיֵּצֵא יִרְמְיָהוּ מִירוּשָׁלַם לָלֶכֶת אֶרֶץ בְּנִימִן לַחֲלֹק  
מִשָּׁם בְּתוֹךְ הָעָם: יג וַיְהִי־הוּא בִשְׁעַר בְּנִימִן וְשָׁם  
בָּעַל פִּקְדֹת וּשְׁמוֹ יִרְאִיָּה בֶן־שִׁלְמִיָּה בֶן־חֲנַנְיָה  
וַיִּתְּפֹשׂ אֶת־יִרְמְיָהוּ הַנְּבִיא לֵאמֹר אֱלֹהֵי־הַכַּשְׂדִּים  
אֶתָּה נָפַל: יד וַיֹּאמֶר יִרְמְיָהוּ שֶׁקֶר אֵינֶנִּי נָפַל עַל־  
הַכַּשְׂדִּים וְלֹא שָׁמַע אֵלָיו וַיִּתְּפֹשׂ יִרְאִיָּה בִּירְמְיָהוּ  
וַיְבֹאֵהוּ אֶל־הַשָּׂרִים: טו וַיִּקְצְפוּ הַשָּׂרִים עַל־יִרְמְיָהוּ

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. <sup>8</sup> The Chaldeans will return to fight against this city; they will capture it and burn it down.

<sup>9</sup> "Yahweh says this: Do not cheer yourselves, thinking: The Chaldeans are leaving us for good! They will not leave. <sup>10</sup> 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."" <sup>11</sup> At the time when the Chaldaean army had withdrawn from Jerusalem at the approach of Pharaoh's army, <sup>12</sup> Jeremiah set out from Jerusalem for the land of Benjamin to receive a share of his property among the people there. <sup>13</sup> 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!" <sup>14</sup> "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; <sup>15</sup> and the officials, furious

<sup>8</sup> The NJB has 'attack' in place of 'fight against', here following the NRSV.

<sup>9</sup> In place of 'will not leave', the NJB has 'are not leaving'; here, we follow the MT.

<sup>10</sup> There is no easy way to reduce the complexity of this verse without losing the causal/conditional connexions that provide its rhetorical force.

<sup>11</sup> The *Setumah* at the end of this verse is represented in the translation by 2 Em-Space characters.

<sup>12</sup> 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.

<sup>13</sup> 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).

<sup>14</sup> The NJB has 'chief men' in place of 'officials', here following the NRSV & NETB.

<sup>15</sup> 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 בְּבֵית הָאֲסוּר בֵּית יְהוֹנָתָן  
הַסֹּפֵר כִּי־אֵתוֹ עָשׂוּ לְבֵית הַכֹּלָא: <sup>טז</sup> כִּי בָא יִרְמְיָהוּ  
אֶל־בֵּית הַבּוֹר וְאֶל־הַחֲנִיּוֹת וַיֵּשֶׁב־שָׁם יִרְמְיָהוּ  
יָמִים רַבִּים: <sup>יז</sup> וַיִּשְׁלַח הַמֶּלֶךְ צִדְקִיָּהוּ וַיִּקְחֵהוּ  
וַיִּשְׁאַלְהוּ הַמֶּלֶךְ בְּבֵיתוֹ בַּסֹּתֶר וַיֹּאמֶר הֵישׁ דָּבָר  
מֵאֵת יְהוָה וַיֹּאמֶר יִרְמְיָהוּ יֵשׁ וַיֹּאמֶר בְּיַד מֶלֶךְ־  
בָּבֶל תָּנֻתָּן: <sup>יח</sup> וַיֹּאמֶר יִרְמְיָהוּ אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ צִדְקִיָּהוּ  
מָה חָטָאתִי לָךְ וְלַעֲבָדֶיךָ וְלָעָם הַזֶּה כִּי־נִתַּתָּם  
אוֹתִי אֶל־בֵּית הַכֹּלָא: <sup>יט</sup> וְאִי וְאִי נְבִיאֵיכֶם אֲשֶׁר־  
נְבָאוּ לָכֶם לֵאמֹר לֹא־יָבֹא מֶלֶךְ־בָּבֶל עָלֵיכֶם וְעַל  
הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת: <sup>כ</sup> וְעַתָּה שְׁמַע־נָא אֲדֹנִי הַמֶּלֶךְ תִּפְלֹ־  
נָא תַּחֲנֹנְתִּי לִפְנֵיךָ וְאֶל־תִּשְׁבְּנִי בֵּית יְהוֹנָתָן הַסֹּפֵר  
וְלֹא אָמוֹת שָׁם: <sup>כא</sup> וַיִּצְוֶה הַמֶּלֶךְ צִדְקִיָּהוּ וַיִּפְקְדּוּ  
אֶת־יִרְמְיָהוּ בַּחֲצֵר הַמִּטְרָה וְנָתַן לוֹ כֶּכֶר־לֶחֶם  
לְיוֹם מִחוּץ הָאֵפִים עַד־תֵּם כָּל־הַלֶּחֶם מִן־הָעִיר  
וַיֵּשֶׁב יִרְמְיָהוּ בַּחֲצֵר הַמִּטְרָה:

with Jeremiah, had him beaten and shut up in the house of the scribe Jonathon, which had been turned into a prison. <sup>16</sup> Thus, Jeremiah found himself in an underground vault; and there he stayed for a long time. <sup>17</sup> 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.” <sup>18</sup> 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? <sup>19</sup> Where are your prophets now who prophesied, “The king of Babylon will not attack you or this country”? <sup>20</sup> 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.” <sup>21</sup> 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.

<sup>16</sup> The ‘underground vault’ was probably a cellar containing water cisterns.

<sup>17</sup> Jeremiah’s answer, even under duress, was the same that he had given Zedekiah earlier.

<sup>18</sup> The NJB has ‘courtiers’ in place of ‘servants’, here following the NRSV.

<sup>19</sup> The *Kethib*/*Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

<sup>20</sup> 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.

<sup>21</sup> 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.

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## ירמיהו פרק לח

<sup>א</sup> וַיִּשְׁמַע שִׁפְטִיָּה בֶן־מַטָּן וְגַדְלִיָּהוּ בֶן־פַּשְׁחֹור וַיּוֹכֵל בֶּן־שְׁלֵמְיָהוּ וּפַשְׁחֹור בֶּן־מַלְכִּיָּה אֶת־הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר יִרְמְיָהוּ מְדַבֵּר אֶל־כָּל־הָעָם לֵאמֹר:  
<sup>ב</sup> כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה הַיֹּשֵׁב בְּעִיר הַזֹּאת יָמוּת בַּחֶרֶב בָּרָעַב וּבַדְּבַר וְהִיצֵא אֶל־הַכַּשְׂדִּים יָחִיה וְחָיָה וְהִיתָ־לּוֹ נַפְשׁוֹ לְשָׁלָל וְחַי: {ס}

<sup>ג</sup> כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה הַנֶּתָן תִּנְתָּן הָעִיר הַזֹּאת בְּיַד חֵיל מֶלֶךְ־בָּבֶל וְלִכְדָּה: <sup>ד</sup> וַיֹּאמְרוּ הַשָּׂרִים אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ יוֹמֵת נָא אֶת־הָאִישׁ הַזֶּה כִּי־עֹלֶכֶן הוּא־מִרְפָּא אֶת־יְדֵי אֲנָשֵׁי הַמִּלְחָמָה הַנִּשְׁאָרִים בְּעִיר הַזֹּאת וְאֵת יְדֵי כָל־הָעָם לְדַבֵּר אֲלֵיהֶם כְּדִבְרֵי הָאֱלֹהִים כִּי הָאִישׁ הַזֶּה אֵינָנו דֹּרֵשׁ לְשָׁלוֹם לָעָם הַזֶּה כִּי אִם־לְרָעָה: <sup>ה</sup> וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ צְדֻקְיָהוּ הַנֶּה־הוּא בְּיַדְכֶם כִּי־אֵין הַמֶּלֶךְ יוֹכֵל אֶתְכֶם דָּבָר: <sup>ו</sup> וַיִּקְחוּ אֶת־יִרְמְיָהוּ וַיִּשְׁלְכוּ אֹתוֹ אֶל־הַבּוֹר מַלְכִּיָּהוּ בֶן־הַמֶּלֶךְ אֲשֶׁר בַּחֲצַר הַמִּטָּה וַיִּשְׁלְחוּ אֶת־יִרְמְיָהוּ

<sup>1</sup> 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, <sup>2</sup> “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.

<sup>3</sup> Yahweh says this: This city will certainly be handed over to the army of the king of Babylon, and he will capture it.”” <sup>4</sup> 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.” <sup>5</sup> And King Zedekiah answered, “Here he is; he is in your hands as you know; for, the king is powerless to oppose you.” <sup>6</sup> 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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- <sup>1</sup> Jeremiah’s continued insistence on surrender to Nebuchadnezzar was dangerous for Zedekiah’s pro-Egyptian counsellors.
- <sup>2</sup> The *Kethib*/*Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.
- <sup>3</sup> See 21:10, 32:28, 34:2 & 37:8 for this same prophecy; Jeremiah had repeatedly said this or words to the same effect.
- <sup>4</sup> The literal translation of ‘disheartening’ is ‘weakening the hands of’.
- <sup>5</sup> ‘To oppose you’ is a conjectural translation; the MT has ‘(with) you’.
- <sup>6</sup> 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 וּבִבּוֹר אֵין־מַיִם כִּי אִם־טִיט וַיִּטְבַּע  
יִרְמְיָהוּ בְּטִיט: {ס}

וַיִּשְׁמַע עֲבֹד־מֶלֶךְ הַכּוּשִׁי אִישׁ סָרִיס וְהוּא בְּבֵית  
הַמֶּלֶךְ כִּי־נָתְנוּ אֶת־יִרְמְיָהוּ אֶל־הַבּוֹר וְהַמֶּלֶךְ יוֹשֵׁב  
בַּשַּׁעַר בְּנִימָן: <sup>ח</sup> וַיֵּצֵא עֲבֹד־מֶלֶךְ מִבֵּית הַמֶּלֶךְ  
וַיְדַבֵּר אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ לֵאמֹר: <sup>ט</sup> אֲדֹנָי הַמֶּלֶךְ הֲרָעוּ  
הָאֲנָשִׁים הָאֵלֶּה אֶת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר עָשׂוּ לִירְמְיָהוּ  
הַנְּבִיא אֶת אֲשֶׁר־הִשְׁלִיכוּ אֶל־הַבּוֹר וַיָּמָת תַּחְתּוֹ  
מִפְּנֵי הָרָעָב כִּי אֵין הָלֶחֶם עוֹד בָּעִיר: <sup>י</sup> וַיִּצְוֶה הַמֶּלֶךְ  
אֶת עֲבֹד־מֶלֶךְ הַכּוּשִׁי לֵאמֹר קַח בִּידְךָ מִזֶּה  
שְׁלֵשִׁים אָנָשִׁים וְהַעֲלִיתָ אֶת־יִרְמְיָהוּ הַנְּבִיא מִן־  
הַבּוֹר בְּטָרֶם יָמוּת: <sup>יא</sup> וַיִּקַּח עֲבֹד־מֶלֶךְ אֶת־  
הָאֲנָשִׁים בְּיָדוֹ וַיָּבֵא בֵּית־הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶל־תַּחַת הָאוֹצָר  
וַיִּקַּח מִשָּׁם בָּלוּי הַסַּחֲבוֹת סַחֲבוֹת וּבָלוּי מְלָחִים  
וַיִּשְׁלַח אֶל־יִרְמְיָהוּ אֶל־הַבּוֹר בַּחֲבָלִים: <sup>יב</sup> וַיֹּאמֶר  
עֲבֹד־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.

<sup>7</sup> 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, <sup>8</sup> so Ebed-Melech came out from the king's house and spoke to the king. <sup>9</sup> "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." <sup>10</sup> 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." <sup>11</sup> 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. <sup>12</sup> 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."

<sup>7</sup> A 'Cushite' is an Ethiopian; the NRSV uses the latter term.

<sup>8</sup> The NJB & NETB have 'palace' in place of 'king's house', here following the MT & NRSV (as also in v. 7).

<sup>9</sup> 'There is no bread left in the city' is rhetorical exaggeration: the food did not run out until just before the city fell.

<sup>10</sup> 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 (שְׁלֹשָׁה for שְׁלִישִׁים), there is no textual evidence for it except for one Hebrew MS.

<sup>11</sup> 'To the wardrobe' is a conjectural translation (אֶל־מִלְתַּחַת, see 2K 10:22); the MT has 'to under' (אֶל־תַּחַת). The Kethib/Qere difference here would benefit from an explanation.

<sup>12</sup> The literal translation of 'to pad the ropes' is 'under the ropes'.



לַחֲבָלִים וַיַּעַשׂ יִרְמְיָהוּ כֵן: <sup>י</sup> וַיִּמְשְׁכוּ אֶת־יִרְמְיָהוּ  
בַּחֲבָלִים וַיַּעֲלוּ אֹתוֹ מִן־הַבּוֹר וַיָּשֶׁב יִרְמְיָהוּ בַּחֲצֵר  
הַמִּטְרָה: {ס}

<sup>יד</sup> וַיִּשְׁלַח הַמֶּלֶךְ צִדְקִיָּהוּ וַיִּקָּח אֶת־יִרְמְיָהוּ הַנְּבִיא  
אֵלָיו אֶל־מְבוֹא הַשְּׁלִישִׁי אֲשֶׁר בְּבֵית יְהוָה וַיֹּאמֶר  
הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶל־יִרְמְיָהוּ שְׂאֵל אֲנִי אֶתְּךָ דְּבַר אֶל־תַּכְחֹד  
מִמֶּנִּי דְּבַר: <sup>טו</sup> וַיֹּאמֶר יִרְמְיָהוּ אֶל־צִדְקִיָּהוּ כִּי אֲגִיד  
לְךָ הַלּוֹא הֵמֶת תְּמִיתָנִי וְכִי אֵינְעָדָךְ לֹא תִשְׁמַע  
אֵלָי: <sup>טז</sup> וַיִּשָּׁבַע הַמֶּלֶךְ צִדְקִיָּהוּ 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}

<sup>יז</sup> וַיֹּאמֶר יִרְמְיָהוּ אֶל־צִדְקִיָּהוּ {ס} כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה  
אֱלֹהֵי עֲבָאוֹת אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אִם־יֵצֵא תֵצֵא אֶל־  
שָׂרֵי מַלְךְ־בָּבֶל וְחִיתָה נַפְשְׁךָ וְהָעִיר הַזֹּאת לֹא  
תִשְׂרֹף בָּאֵשׁ וְחִיתָה אַתָּה וּבֵיתְךָ: <sup>יח</sup> וְאִם לֹא־תֵצֵא  
אֶל־שָׂרֵי מַלְךְ בָּבֶל וְנִתְּנָה הָעִיר הַזֹּאת בְּיַד

Jeremiah did this. <sup>13</sup> 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.

<sup>14</sup> 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." <sup>15</sup> 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."

<sup>16</sup> 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."

<sup>17</sup> 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. <sup>18</sup> But if you do not surrender to the king of Babylon's generals, this city will be handed over to the

<sup>13</sup> Jeremiah has been released from the storage-well but still had to stay in the Court of the Guard.

<sup>14</sup> The precise location of the 'third entrance' is unknown, since it is mentioned nowhere else in the OT.

<sup>15</sup> Jeremiah's question is rhetorical and expects a positive answer.

<sup>16</sup> 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.

<sup>17</sup> Zedekiah held out his hope of escape until the end and attempted to do so but was unsuccessful (cf. 39:4-5).

<sup>18</sup> The literal translation of 'clutches' is 'hand'.

הַכַּשְׂדִּים וְשָׂרְפוּהָ בָּאֵשׁ וְאַתָּה לֹא־תִמָּלֵט  
מִיָּדָם: {ס}

יט וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ צְדָקְיָהוּ אֶל־יִרְמְיָהוּ אֲנִי דָאֵג אֶת־  
הַיְּהוּדִים אֲשֶׁר נָפְלוּ אֶל־הַכַּשְׂדִּים פֶּן־יִתְּנוּ אֹתִי  
בְּיָדָם וְהִתְעַלְלוּ־בִּי: כ וַיֹּאמֶר יִרְמְיָהוּ לֹא יִתְּנוּ  
שְׁמַע־נָא | בְּקוֹל יְהוָה לֵאמֹר אֲנִי דֹבֵר אֵלֶיךָ וְיִיטֵב  
לָךְ וְתִחִי נַפְשְׁךָ: כא וְאִם־מָאֵן אַתָּה לָצֵאת זֶה  
הַדָּבָר אֲשֶׁר הִרְאֵנִי יְהוָה: כב וְהִנֵּה כָל־הַנָּשִׁים  
אֲשֶׁר נִשְׂאָרוּ בְּבֵית מֶלֶךְ־יְהוּדָה מוֹצְאוֹת אֶל־שָׂרֵי  
מֶלֶךְ בָּבֶל

וְהִנֵּה אָמַרְתְּ  
הַסִּיתוּדָה וַיִּכְלוּ לָךְ אֲנָשֵׁי שְׁלָמָךְ  
הִטְבְּעוּ בְּבֶץ רַגְלֶךָ  
נִסְגּוּ אַחֲזֹר:

כג וְאַתָּה כָּל־נָשִׁיךָ וְאַתָּה בְּנֶיךָ מוֹצְאִים אֶל־הַכַּשְׂדִּים  
וְאַתָּה לֹא־תִמָּלֵט מִיָּדָם כִּי בְיַד מֶלֶךְ־בָּבֶל תִּתְּפֹשׂ  
וְאַתָּה־הָעִיר הַזֹּאת תִּשְׂרֹף בָּאֵשׁ: {ס}

Chaldaeans and they will burn it down; nor will you yourself escape their clutches.””

<sup>19</sup> 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.” <sup>20</sup> 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. <sup>21</sup> But if you refuse to surrender, this is what Yahweh has shown me: <sup>22</sup> 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!”

<sup>23</sup> “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.”

<sup>19</sup> Other possible translations for ‘torture’ (following NETB) are ‘abuse’ (NRSV) and ‘ill-treat’ (NJB); cf. Jg 19:25 & 1S 31:4.

<sup>20</sup> Literally translated, this verse ends, “...and your life will live.”

<sup>21</sup> 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.”

<sup>22</sup> 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.

<sup>23</sup> ‘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’.

כד וַיֹּאמֶר צִדְקִיָּהוּ אֶל־יִרְמְיָהוּ אִישׁ אֶל־יָדְעַ  
בְּדַבְרֵי־הָאֱלֹהִים וְלֹא תָמוּת: כה וְכִי־יִשְׁמְעוּ הַשָּׂרִים  
כִּי־דִבַּרְתִּי אִתָּךְ וַיָּבֹאוּ אֵלֶיךָ וְאָמְרוּ אֵלֶיךָ הַגִּידָה־  
נָא לָנוּ מִה־דִּבְרַת אֱלֹהֵי־מֶלֶךְ אֶל־תַּכְחֹד מִמֶּנּוּ וְלֹא  
נָמִיתָךְ וּמִה־דִּבַּר אֵלֶיךָ הַמֶּלֶךְ: כו וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵיהֶם  
מִפִּיל־אֲנִי תַחֲנַנְתִּי לִפְנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ לְבַלְתִּי הַשִּׁיבֵנִי בֵּית  
יְהוֹנָתָן לָמוֹת שָׁם: {פ}

כז וַיָּבֹאוּ כָל־הַשָּׂרִים אֶל־יִרְמְיָהוּ וַיִּשְׁאֲלוּ אוֹתוֹ וַיֹּגֵד  
לָהֶם כְּכָל־הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה הַמֶּלֶךְ  
וַיַּחֲרֹשׁוּ מִמֶּנּוּ כִּי לֹא־נִשְׁמַע הַדָּבָר: כח וַיֵּשֶׁב  
יִרְמְיָהוּ בַּחֲצַר הַמַּטָּרָה עַד־יוֹם אֲשֶׁר־נִלְכְּדָה  
יְרוּשָׁלַם {ס}

והיה כאשר נלכדה ירושלם:

<sup>24</sup> Zedekiah then said to Jeremiah, "Do not let anyone else know of this conversation, or you will die. <sup>25</sup> 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," <sup>26</sup> 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.""

<sup>27</sup> 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.

<sup>28</sup> Jeremiah stayed in the Court of the Guard until the day Jerusalem was captured.

And he was there when Jerusalem actually was captured.

<sup>24</sup> The literal translation of 'know of this conversation' (following the NRSV) is 'hear these words'.

<sup>25</sup> 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).

<sup>26</sup> 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.

<sup>27</sup> Literally translated, this verse ends, "And they were silent from him because the word had not been heard."

<sup>28</sup> 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

## JEREMIAH 39

א בִּשְׁנָה הַתְּשֻׁעִית לְצִדְקִיָּהוּ מֶלֶךְ־יְהוּדָה בַּחֹדֶשׁ  
הָעֲשָׂרִי בָּא נְבוּכַדְרֶאצַּר מֶלֶךְ־בָּבֶל וְכָל־חִילוֹ אֵל־  
יְרוּשָׁלַם וַיִּצְרוּ עָלֶיהָ: ב בַּעֲשֻׁתֵּי־עֶשְׂרֵה שָׁנָה  
לְצִדְקִיָּהוּ בַּחֹדֶשׁ הָרְבִיעִי בַּתְּשַׁעַה לַחֹדֶשׁ הִבְקָעָה  
הָעֵיר: ג וַיָּבֹאוּ כָּל שָׂרֵי מֶלֶךְ־בָּבֶל וַיֵּשְׁבוּ בְּשַׁעַר  
הַתּוֹךְ נִרְגַל שְׂרָאֶצֶר סַמְגַר־נָבֹו שַׂר־סָכִים רַב־  
סָרִיס נִרְגַל שְׂרָאֶצֶר רַב־מַג וְכָל־שְׂאֵרֵי שָׂרֵי מֶלֶךְ  
בָּבֶל: ד וַיְהִי כַּאֲשֶׁר רָאָם צִדְקִיָּהוּ מֶלֶךְ־יְהוּדָה וְכָל־  
אֲנָשֵׁי הַמְּלָחָמָה וַיִּבְרָחוּ וַיֵּצְאוּ לַיְלָה מִן־הָעִיר דֶּרֶךְ  
גֵּן הַמֶּלֶךְ בְּשַׁעַר בֵּין הַחֲמֹתִים וַיֵּצֵא דֶּרֶךְ הָעֲרָבָה:  
ה וַיִּרְדְּפוּ חֵיל־כַּשְׂדִּים אַחֲרֵיהֶם וַיִּשְׁגּוּ אֶת־צִדְקִיָּהוּ  
בְּעֲרֹבוֹת יָרָחוֹ וַיִּקְחוּ אוֹתוֹ וַיַּעֲלֵהוּ אֶל־  
נְבוּכַדְרֶאצַּר מֶלֶךְ־בָּבֶל רַב־לָתָה בְּאֶרֶץ חֲמַת

<sup>1</sup> 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. <sup>2</sup> In the eleventh year of Zedekiah, in the fourth month, a breach was made in the city. <sup>3</sup> 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. <sup>4</sup> 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. <sup>5</sup> 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

### JEREMIAH 39

- <sup>1</sup> The date here was December 589 – January 588 BCE, at the end of the 9<sup>th</sup> year of Zedekiah's reign. The text of this section is composed of disparate, ill-assorted elements. The LXX lacks 38:28<sup>b</sup> and 39:4–13.
- <sup>2</sup> The date here is June–July 587 BCE; so, the siege lasted a full 18 months.
- <sup>3</sup> 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.
- <sup>4</sup> 'They went' follows the Peshitta (cf. 52:7); the MT has 'he went'.
- <sup>5</sup> 2K 25:5 and Jr 52:8 mention that the soldiers all scattered from him: that is why the text focuses on Zedekiah here.

וַיִּדְבֹּר אֹתוֹ מִשְׁפָּטִים: <sup>ו</sup> וַיִּשְׁחַט מֶלֶךְ בָּבֶל אֶת־בְּנֵי  
צִדְקִיָּהוּ בְּרִבְלָה לְעֵינָיו וְאֶת כָּל־חֲרֵי יְהוּדָה שָׁחַט  
מֶלֶךְ בָּבֶל: <sup>ז</sup> וְאֶת־עֵינָיו צִדְקִיָּהוּ עָוָר וַיֹּאסְרֵהוּ  
בַּנְּחָשְׁתִּים לָבִיא אֹתוֹ בָּבֶלָה: <sup>ח</sup> וְאֶת־בֵּית הַמֶּלֶךְ  
וְאֶת־בֵּית הָעָם שָׂרְפוּ הַכַּשְׂדִּים בָּאֵשׁ וְאֶת־חֲמוֹת  
יְרוּשָׁלַם נָתְצוּ: <sup>ט</sup> וְאֶת יֵתֶר הָעָם הַנִּשְׁאָרִים בְּעִיר  
וְאֶת־הַנָּפְלִים אֲשֶׁר נָפְלוּ עָלָיו וְאֶת יֵתֶר הָעָם  
הַנִּשְׁאָרִים הִגְלָה נְבוּזַרְאֲדָן רַב־טַבָּחִים בָּבֶל:  
<sup>י</sup> וּמִן־הָעָם הַדֹּלִים אֲשֶׁר אֵין־לָהֶם מְאֻמָּה הִשְׁאִיר  
נְבוּזַרְאֲדָן רַב־טַבָּחִים בְּאֶרֶץ יְהוּדָה וַיִּתֵּן לָהֶם  
כֶּרְמִים וְיִגְבִּים בִּיּוֹם הַהוּא: <sup>יא</sup> וַיֵּצֵאוּ נְבוּכַדְרֶאצַּר  
מֶלֶךְ־בָּבֶל עַל־יְרֵמְיָהוּ בֶּיֶד נְבוּזַרְאֲדָן רַב־טַבָּחִים  
לֵאמֹר: <sup>יב</sup> קַחְנוּ וְעִנִּיף שִׁים עָלָיו וְאַל־תַּעַשׂ לוֹ  
מְאֻמָּה רָע כִּי (אִם) כְּאֲשֶׁר יִדְבֹּר אֵלָיְךָ כֵּן עֲשֵׂה  
עִמּוֹ: <sup>יג</sup> וַיִּשְׁלַח נְבוּזַרְאֲדָן רַב־טַבָּחִים וּנְבוּשַׁזְבָּן

on him. <sup>6</sup> 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. <sup>7</sup> He then put out Zedekiah's eyes and bound him in chains to take him to Babylon. <sup>8</sup> The Chaldeans burnt down the royal palace and the private houses and demolished the walls of Jerusalem. <sup>9</sup> 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. <sup>10</sup> 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. <sup>11</sup> With regard to Jeremiah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had commanded Nebuzaradan, captain of the guard, as follows <sup>12</sup> "Take him, look after him; do him no harm, but treat him as he may ask you." <sup>13</sup> He entrusted this mission to Nebuzaradan commander of the guard, Nebushazban the high dignitary of state, Nergal-Sharezer the chief astrologer and all

<sup>6</sup> The NJB has 'leading men' in place of 'nobles', here following the NRSV & NETB.

<sup>7</sup> A more literal translation of 'chains' would be 'fetters'.

<sup>8</sup> 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.

<sup>9</sup> 'Artisans' is a conjectural translation following the NJB (cf. 52:15); the MT (and NRSV) has 'people who remained'.

<sup>10</sup> Just why Nebuzaradan should do this is uncertain – perhaps he was thinking they would maintain the country for future settlement.

<sup>11</sup> 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.

<sup>12</sup> On the word אֵת, here highlighted according to the MAM text, see #38:16. Note the unusual/unexpected dagesh on the *resh* in רָע.

<sup>13</sup> The translation, 'he entrusted this mission' (literally 'he despatched'), is uncertain; perhaps it should be understood as 'Nebuzaradan ... Nebushazban ... despatched (men)'.



רַב־סָרִיס וְנִרְגָל שְׂרָאֶצֶר רַב־מַג וְכָל רַבֵּי מֶלֶךְ־בָּבֶל: יָד וַיִּשְׁלְחוּ וַיִּקְחוּ אֶת־יִרְמְיָהוּ מִחֲצֵר הַמָּטְרָה וַיִּתְּנוּ אֹתוֹ אֶל־גְּדַלְיָהוּ בֶן־אֲחִיקָם בֶּן־שָׁפָן לְהוֹצֵאֵהוּ אֶל־הַבַּיִת וַיֵּשֶׁב בְּתוֹךְ הָעָם: {ס}

טו וְאֶל־יִרְמְיָהוּ הָיָה דְּבַר־יְהוָה בְּהִיתוֹ עֹצוֹר בַּחֲצֵר הַמָּטְרָה לֵאמֹר: טז הֲלוֹךְ וְאָמַרְתָּ לְעֶבֶד־מֶלֶךְ הַכּוּשִׁי לֵאמֹר כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הִנְנִי מֵבִי אֶת־דְּבָרִי אֶל־הָעִיר הַזֹּאת לָרַעָה וְלֹא לְטוֹבָה וְהָיוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא: יז וְהִצַּלְתִּיךָ בַּיּוֹם־הַהוּא נְאֻם־יְהוָה וְלֹא תִתֵּן בְּיַד הָאֲנָשִׁים אֲשֶׁר־אַתָּה יָגוֹר מִפְּנֵיהֶם: יח כִּי מִלֵּט אֲמַלְטֶךָ וּבַחֲרָב לֹא תִפֹּל וְהָיְתָה לְךָ נַפְשֶׁךָ לְשָׁלָל כִּי־בִטַּחְתָּ בִּי נְאֻם־יְהוָה: {פ}

the king of Babylon's other officials. <sup>14</sup> 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.

<sup>15</sup> While Jeremiah was confined in the Court of the Guard, the word of Yahweh came to him as follows, <sup>16</sup> "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. <sup>17</sup> However, I shall rescue you that day, Yahweh declares, and you will not be handed over to the hands of the men you fear. <sup>18</sup> 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."

<sup>14</sup> 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).

<sup>15</sup> This passage continues the narrative of 38:7-13 and is out of chronological order.

<sup>16</sup> 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.

<sup>17</sup> 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.

<sup>18</sup> The literal translation of 'you will escape with your life' is 'your life will be to you for spoil'.



## JEREMIAH 40

## ירמיהו פרק מ

<sup>1</sup> 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: <sup>2</sup> The captain of the guard took Jeremiah and said to him, “Yahweh your God foretold calamity for this country, <sup>3</sup> 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. <sup>4</sup> 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.” <sup>5</sup> “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

<sup>א</sup> הַדְּבָר אֲשֶׁר-הָיָה אֶל-יִרְמְיָהוּ מֵאֵת יְהוָה אַחֲרֵי שֶׁלַח אֹתוֹ נְבוּזַרְאֲדָן רַב-טַבָּחִים מִן-הָרְמָה בְּקַחְתּוֹ אֹתוֹ וְהוּא-אֲסוּר בְּאֲזָקִים בְּתוֹךְ כָּל-גָּלוּת יְרוּשָׁלַם וַיהוָה הַמְגִלִים בְּבִלְהָ: <sup>ב</sup> וַיִּקַּח רַב-טַבָּחִים לִירְמְיָהוּ וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ דִּבֶּר אֶת-הָרָעָה הַזֹּאת אֶל-הַמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה: <sup>ג</sup> וַיָּבֵא וַיַּעַשׂ יְהוָה כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר כִּי-יַחְטְאֶתֶם לַיהוָה וְלֹא-שָׁמַעְתֶּם בְּקוֹלֹ וְהִנֵּה לָכֶם דְּבַר הַדְּבָר הַזֶּה: <sup>ד</sup> וַעֲתָה הִנֵּה פִתַּחְתִּיךָ הַיּוֹם מִן-הָאֲזָקִים אֲשֶׁר עַל-יָדְךָ אֲסֻטּוֹב בְּעֵינֶיךָ לְבוֹא אִתִּי בָּבֶל בָּא וְאֲשִׁים אֶת-עֵינִי עָלֶיךָ וְאֲסֻרְךָ בְּעֵינֶיךָ לְבוֹא-אִתִּי בָּבֶל חֲדַל רָאֵה כָּל-הָאָרֶץ לִפְנֶיךָ אֶל-טוֹב וְאֶל-הַיָּשָׁר בְּעֵינֶיךָ לָלֶכֶת שָׁמָּה לָךְ: <sup>ה</sup> וְעוֹדְנֹו לֹא-יָשׁוּב וְשָׁבָה אֶל-גְּדַלְיָה בֶן-אֲחִיקָם בֶּן-שַׁפָּן אֲשֶׁר הִפְקִיד מֶלֶךְ-בָּבֶל בְּעָרֵי יְהוּדָה וְשָׁב אִתּוֹ בְּתוֹךְ הָעָם אֹו אֶל-כָּל-הַיָּשָׁר בְּעֵינֶיךָ לָלֶכֶת לָךְ וַיִּתְּנוּ לוֹ רַב-טַבָּחִים

## JEREMIAH 40

- <sup>1</sup> 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.
- <sup>2</sup> Jeremiah was mistakenly rounded up with the in Jerusalem but, when he arrived at Ramah, Nebuzaradan recognized and released him.
- <sup>3</sup> The *Kethib*/*Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.
- <sup>4</sup> For reasons unknown, Jeremiah was allowed to choose exile or residence in Judah.
- <sup>5</sup> The opening of this verse follows the NRSV & *Peshitta*, reading *וְעוֹדְנֹו לֹא-יָשׁוּב וְשָׁבָה אֶל-גְּדַלְיָה* for what is likely a very corrupt *MT* reading of *וְעוֹדְנֹו לֹא-יָשׁוּב וְשָׁבָה אֶל-גְּדַלְיָה* (“and he was not yet turning and return to Gedaliah”).

אַרְחָה וּמִשְׁאָת וַיִּשְׁלַחְהוּ: <sup>ו</sup> וַיָּבֹא יִרְמְיָהוּ אֶל־  
גְּדַלְיָה בֶן־אֲחִיקָם הַמְצַפְתָּה וַיֵּשֶׁב אִתּוֹ בְּתוֹךְ הָעָם  
הַנִּשְׁאָרִים בָּאָרֶץ: {פ}

<sup>ז</sup> וַיִּשְׁמְעוּ כָל־שָׂרֵי הַחֲיָלִים אֲשֶׁר בְּשָׂדֵה הַמָּה  
וְאֲנָשֵׁיהֶם כִּי־הִפְקִיד מֶלֶךְ־בָּבֶל אֶת־גְּדַלְיָהוּ בֶן־  
אֲחִיקָם בָּאָרֶץ וְכִי הִפְקִיד אִתּוֹ אָנָשִׁים וְנָשִׁים וְטָף  
וּמִדַּלַּת הָאָרֶץ מֵאֲשֶׁר לֹא־הִגְלוּ בָבֶלָה: <sup>ח</sup> וַיָּבֹאוּ  
אֶל־גְּדַלְיָה הַמְצַפְתָּה וַיִּשְׁמַעֲלֵם בֶּן־נְתַנְיָהוּ וַיּוֹחֲנָן  
וַיֹּנָתָן בְּנֵי־קָרֵחַ וּשְׂרָיָה בֶן־תַּנְחֻמֶּת וּבְנִי עוֹפִי  
עִיפִי הַנְּטַפְתִּי וַיֹּנִיָּהוּ בֶן־הַמַּעַתָּה הָמָּה וְאֲנָשֵׁיהֶם:  
<sup>ט</sup> וַיֵּשְׁבְּעוּ לָהֶם גְּדַלְיָהוּ בֶן־אֲחִיקָם בֶּן־שָׁפָן  
וְלֹאֲנָשֵׁיהֶם לֵאמֹר אַל־תִּירָאוּ מֵעֲבֹד הַכַּשְׂדִּים  
שְׁבוּ בָאָרֶץ וְעַבְדוּ אֶת־מֶלֶךְ בָּבֶל וַיֵּיטֵב לָכֶם: <sup>י</sup> וְאֲנִי  
הֲנִי יֹשֵׁב בַּמְצַפָּה לַעֲמֹל לִפְנֵי הַכַּשְׂדִּים אֲשֶׁר  
יָבֹאוּ אֵלֵינוּ וְאַתֶּם אִסְפוּ יֵין וְקִיץ וְשֶׁמֶן וְשִׁמּוּ  
בְכֵלֵיכֶם וּשְׁבוּ בְּעָרֵיכֶם אֲשֶׁר־תִּפְשֹׁתֶם: <sup>יא</sup> וְגַם כָּל־  
הַיְּהוּדִים אֲשֶׁר־בְּמוֹאָב וּבְבְנֵי־עַמּוֹן וּבְאֶדוֹם  
וְאֲשֶׁר בְּכָל־הָאֲרָצוֹת שָׁמָּעוּ כִּי־נָתַן מֶלֶךְ־בָּבֶל

provisions and a present, and dismissed him. <sup>6</sup> Jeremiah went to Mizpah, to Gedaliah son of Ahikam and stayed with him, among those people still left in the country.

<sup>7</sup> 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, <sup>8</sup> 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.

<sup>9</sup> 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. <sup>10</sup> 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." <sup>11</sup> Likewise, when all the Judaeans living in Moab, with the Ammonites, in Edom and elsewhere, heard that the king of Babylon had

<sup>6</sup> '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).

<sup>7</sup> Gedaliah assured his countrymen that he would represent them before the Babylonians and urged them to return to their fields and cities.

<sup>8</sup> The *Ketiv* has עופי in place of עיפי ('Ephai'), here following the *Qere*.

<sup>9</sup> Gedaliah's oath served as an assurance of safety.

<sup>10</sup> The 'summer fruit' most likely comprised dates and figs.

<sup>11</sup> 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: י<sup>ב</sup> וַיָּשׁבוּ כָּל־הַיְּהוּדִים מִכָּל־  
הַמְּקוֹמוֹת אֲשֶׁר נִדְּחוּ־שָׁם וַיָּבֹאוּ אֶרֶץ־יְהוּדָה אֶל־  
גְּדַלְיָהוּ הַמַּצְפָּתָה וַיֹּאסְפוּ יַיִן וְקִיץ הָרֶבֶה  
מְאֹד: {ס}

י<sup>ג</sup> וַיּוֹחֲנָן בֶּן־קָרַח וְכָל־שָׂרֵי הַחֲיָלִים אֲשֶׁר בָּשָׂדָה  
בָּאוּ אֶל־גְּדַלְיָהוּ הַמַּצְפָּתָה: י<sup>ד</sup> וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֵלָיו הֲיָדַעַתָּה  
כִּי בָּעֲלִים מֶלֶךְ בְּנֵי־עַמּוֹן שָׁלַח אֶת־  
יִשְׁמָעֵאל בֶּן־נְתַנְיָה לְהַכָּתֵךְ נַפֶּשׁ וְלֹא־הָאֱמִין לָהֶם  
גְּדַלְיָהוּ בֶן־אֲחִיקָם: טו וַיּוֹחֲנָן בֶּן־קָרַח אָמַר אֶל־  
גְּדַלְיָהוּ בְּסֹתֵר בַּמַּצְפָּה לֵאמֹר אֲלֹכָה נָא וְאַכֶּה  
אֶת־יִשְׁמָעֵאל בֶּן־נְתַנְיָה וְאִישׁ לֹא יָדַע לָמָּה יַכְכָּה  
נַפֶּשׁ וְנִפְצְצוּ כָּל־יְהוּדָה הַנִּקְבָּצִים אֵלָיֶךָ וְאַבְדָּה  
שְׂאֲרִית יְהוּדָה: טז וַיֹּאמֶר גְּדַלְיָהוּ בֶן־אֲחִיקָם אֶל־  
יּוֹחָנָן בֶּן־קָרַח אֶל־תַּעֲשֵׂה תַעֲשׂ אֶת־הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה  
כִּי־שָׁקֵר אַתָּה דֹּבֵר אֶל־יִשְׁמָעֵאל: {פ}

left a remnant in Judah and had appointed Gedaliah son of Ahikam so of Shaphan as their governor, <sup>12</sup> 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.

<sup>13</sup> Now, Johanan son of Kareah and all the military leaders still in the field came to Gedaliah at Mizpah <sup>14</sup> 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. <sup>15</sup> 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? <sup>16</sup> 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.”

<sup>12</sup> The NJB has ‘an immense quantity of’ in place of ‘in great abundance’, here following the NRSV.

<sup>13</sup> Johanan was seemingly the principal captain of the resistance, after Ishmael.

<sup>14</sup> ‘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.

<sup>15</sup> The question, “Why should he assassinate you ... ?” is rhetorical, here introducing the reason why something should not be done.

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

## ירמיהו פרק מא

א וַיְהִי בַחֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁבִיעִי בֵּא יִשְׁמָעֵאל בֶּן־נְתַנְיָה בֶּן־אֱלִישָׁמָע מִזְרַע הַמְּלוּכָה וְרֹבִי הַמֶּלֶךְ וַעֲשָׂרָה אַנְשִׁים אִתּוֹ אֶל־גְּדַלְיָהוּ בֶן־אֲחִיקָם הַמִּצְפָּתָה וַיֹּאכְלוּ שָׁם לֶחֶם יַחְדָּו בַּמִּצְפָּה: ב וַיָּקָם יִשְׁמָעֵאל בֶּן־נְתַנְיָה וַעֲשָׂרַת הָאֲנָשִׁים אֲשֶׁר־הָיוּ אִתּוֹ וַיִּכּוּ אֶת־גְּדַלְיָהוּ בֶן־אֲחִיקָם בֶּן־שָׁפָן בַּחֶרֶב וַיָּמָת אֹתוֹ אֲשֶׁר־הִפְקִיד מֶלֶךְ־בָּבֶל בְּאַרְצָ: ג וְאֵת כָּל־הַיְּהוּדִים אֲשֶׁר־הָיוּ אִתּוֹ אֶת־גְּדַלְיָהוּ בַּמִּצְפָּה וְאֵת־הַכַּשְׂדִּים אֲשֶׁר נִמְצְאוּ־שָׁם אֵת אֲנָשֵׁי הַמֶּלֶכְמָה הִכָּה יִשְׁמָעֵאל: ד וַיְהִי בַיּוֹם הַשֵּׁנִי לַהֲמִית אֶת־גְּדַלְיָהוּ וְאִישׁ לֹא יָדַע: ה וַיָּבֹאוּ אֲנָשִׁים מִשְׁכֶּם מִשְׁלֹ וּמִשְׁמֶרֶן שְׂמָנִים אִישׁ מִגִּלְחַי זֶקֶן וְקֹרְעֵי

## JEREMIAH 41

<sup>1</sup> 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, <sup>2</sup> 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. <sup>3</sup> 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. <sup>4</sup> On the day after the murder of Gedaliah, before the news had become known, <sup>5</sup> 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

### JEREMIAH 41

- <sup>1</sup> It is not clear if this is in the same year that Jerusalem fell or not: the wall was breached in the 4<sup>th</sup> 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 5<sup>th</sup> month (early August, 52:12); that would have left time between the 5<sup>th</sup> month and the 7<sup>th</sup> 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).
- <sup>2</sup> 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.”
- <sup>3</sup> The anniversary of this event (September 587 BCE) was celebrated in subsequent years (see Zc 7:5, 8:19).
- <sup>4</sup> The NRSV ends this verse, “before anyone knew of it;” here, we follow the NJB.
- <sup>5</sup> Evidently, Jerusalem was still regarded as the religious centre by many Israelites of the Northern Kingdom, or at least 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.

בגדים ומתגדדים ומנחה ולבונה בידם להביא  
 בית יהוה: וַיֵּצֵא יִשְׁמָעֵאל בֶּן־נְתַנְיָה לִקְרֹאתָם  
 מִן־הַמִּצְפָּה הַלֵּךְ הֵלֵךְ וּבִכָּה וַיְהִי כַּפָּגֶשׁ אֹתָם  
 וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵיהֶם בָּאוּ אֶל־גְּדַלְיָהוּ בֶן־אֲחִיקָם: וַיְהִי  
 כְּבֹאָם אֶל־תּוֹךְ הָעִיר וַיִּשְׁחָטֵם יִשְׁמָעֵאל בֶּן־  
 נְתַנְיָה אֶל־תּוֹךְ הַבּוֹר הוּא וְהָאֲנָשִׁים אֲשֶׁר־אִתּוֹ:  
 ח וַעֲשָׂרָה אָנָשִׁים נִמְצְאוּ־בָם וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֶל־יִשְׁמָעֵאל  
 אֶל־תִּמְתֵּנוּ כִּי־יִשְׁלָלֵנוּ מִטְּמָנִים בַּשָּׂדֶה חֲטִים  
 וְשַׁעֲרִים וְשֶׁמֶן וְדָבָשׁ וַיַּחְדֵּל וְלֹא הִמִּיתָם בַּתּוֹךְ  
 אֲחֵיהֶם: ט וְהַבּוֹר אֲשֶׁר הִשְׁלִיךְ שָׁם יִשְׁמָעֵאל אֶת  
 כָּל־פְּגָרֵי הָאֲנָשִׁים אֲשֶׁר הִכָּה בְּיַד־גְּדַלְיָהוּ הוּא  
 אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה הַמֶּלֶךְ אָסָא מִפְּנֵי בַעֲשָׂא מֶלֶךְ־יִשְׂרָאֵל  
 אִתּוֹ מֵלֹא יִשְׁמָעֵאל בֶּן־נְתַנְיָהוּ חָלָלִים: י וַיֵּשֶׁב  
 יִשְׁמָעֵאל אֶת־כָּל־שְׂאֵרֵיט הָעָם אֲשֶׁר בַּמִּצְפָּה  
 אֶת־בָּנוֹת הַמֶּלֶךְ וְאֶת־כָּל־הָעַם הַנִּשְׁאָרִים בַּמִּצְפָּה  
 אֲשֶׁר הִפְקִיד נְבוּזַרְאֲדָן רַב־טַבָּחִים אֶת־גְּדַלְיָהוּ  
 בֶן־אֲחִיקָם וַיֵּשְׁבָם יִשְׁמָעֵאל בֶּן־נְתַנְיָה וַיֵּלֶךְ לַעֲבֹר  
 אֶל־בְּנֵי עַמּוֹן: {ס}

cereal offerings and incense with them to present to the Temple of Yahweh. <sup>6</sup> 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.” <sup>7</sup> 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. <sup>8</sup> 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. <sup>9</sup> 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. <sup>10</sup> 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.

<sup>6</sup> Ishmael’s tears were, of course, feigned.

<sup>7</sup> ‘Had them thrown’ follows the *Peshitta* (the *MT* omits) but see v. 9.

<sup>8</sup> 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.”

<sup>9</sup> ‘Was the large one’ follows the *LXX*, translating בּוֹר גָּדוֹל הוּא for the *MT*’s בְּיַד־גְּדַלְיָהוּ הוּא (‘by the hand of Gedaliah’).

<sup>10</sup> The actual daughters of Zedekiah are not referred to here, since they would have been too politically important to have escaped exile.



<sup>יא</sup> וַיִּשְׁמַע יוֹחָנָן בֶּן־קָרַח וְכָל־שָׂרֵי הַחִילִים אֲשֶׁר אִתּוֹ אֶת כָּל־הָרָעָה אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה יִשְׁמַעֵאל בֶּן־נֶתַנְיָה: <sup>יב</sup> וַיִּקְחוּ אֶת־כָּל־הָאֲנָשִׁים וַיֵּלְכוּ לְהִלָּחֵם עִם־יִשְׁמַעֵאל בֶּן־נֶתַנְיָה וַיִּמָּצְאוּ אֹתוֹ אֶל־מַיִם רַבִּים אֲשֶׁר בְּגִבְעֹן: <sup>יג</sup> וַיְהִי כִּרְאוֹת כָּל־הָעָם אֲשֶׁר אִתְּיִשְׁמַעֵאל אֶת־יוֹחָנָן בֶּן־קָרַח וְאֶת כָּל־שָׂרֵי הַחִילִים אֲשֶׁר אִתּוֹ וַיִּשְׂמְחוּ: <sup>יד</sup> וַיָּסֹבּוּ כָל־הָעָם אֲשֶׁר־שָׁבָה יִשְׁמַעֵאל מִן־הַמִּצְפָּה וַיָּשֻׁבוּ וַיֵּלְכוּ אֶל־יוֹחָנָן בֶּן־קָרַח: <sup>טו</sup> וַיִּשְׁמַעֵאל בֶּן־נֶתַנְיָה נִמְלֹט בְּשִׁמְנָה אֲנָשִׁים מִפָּנָיו יוֹחָנָן וַיֵּלֶךְ אֶל־בְּנֵי עַמּוֹן: {ס}

<sup>טז</sup> וַיִּקַּח יוֹחָנָן בֶּן־קָרַח וְכָל־שָׂרֵי הַחִילִים אֲשֶׁר־אִתּוֹ אֶת כָּל־שְׂאֵרֵי הָעָם אֲשֶׁר הָשִׁיב מֵאֵת יִשְׁמַעֵאל בֶּן־נֶתַנְיָה מִן־הַמִּצְפָּה אַחֵר הַכָּה אֶת־גְּדַלְיָה בֶּן־אֲחִיקָם גְּבָרִים אֲנָשִׁי הַמִּלְחָמָה וְנָשִׁים וְטָף וְסָרְסִים אֲשֶׁר הָשִׁיב מִגִּבְעֹן: <sup>יז</sup> וַיֵּלְכוּ וַיָּשֻׁבוּ בְּגֵרוֹת

<sup>11</sup> 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, <sup>12</sup> 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. <sup>13</sup> 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. <sup>14</sup> So, all the people, whom Ishmael had taken as prisoners from Mizpah turned around and went back, and joined Johanan, the son of Kareah. <sup>15</sup> Ishmael son of Nethaniah, however, escaped from Johanan with eight of his men and fled to the Ammonites.

<sup>16</sup> 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. <sup>17</sup> Setting off, they made a halt at Geruth Kimham

<sup>11</sup> Other readings for 'all the crimes' (here following the NJB & NRSV) are 'atrocities' (NETB), 'evil things' and 'the evil'.

<sup>12</sup> The 'Pool of Gibeon' (2S 2:13) is at modern El-Jib, about 10 Km northwest of Jerusalem.

<sup>13</sup> 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.

<sup>14</sup> In place of 'turned around and went back', here following the NRSV, the NJB has 'turned about, came back'.

<sup>15</sup> NETB has 'Ammon' in place of 'the Ammonites', here following the NJB, NRSV & MT (אֶל־בְּנֵי עַמּוֹן).

<sup>16</sup> '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 הָשִׁיב מֵאֵת).

<sup>17</sup> 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 בֵּית לָחֶם לָלֶכֶת לְבוֹא  
מִצָּרִים: יי מִפְּנֵי הַכַּשְׂדִּים כִּי יֵרְאוּ מִפְּנֵיהֶם כִּי־  
הָכָה יִשְׁמַעְאֵל בֶּן־נְתַנְיָה אֶת־גְּדַלְיָהוּ בֶן־אֲחִיקָם  
אֲשֶׁר־הִפְקִיד מֶלֶךְ־בָּבֶל בָּאָרֶץ: {פ}

near Bethlehem, intending to go on to Egypt, <sup>18</sup> to get away from the Chaldeans. They were now terrified of them, since Ishmael son of Nathaniah had killed Gedaliah son of Ahikam, whom the king of Babylon had made governor of the country.

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<sup>18</sup> Vv. 16–18<sup>a</sup> are one long, complicated sentence in the *MT*, with some rather awkward placements of qualifying terms.

## JEREMIAH 42

## ירמיהו פרק מב

א וַיָּגֶשׁוּ כָּל־שָׂרֵי הַחֲיָלִים וַיּוֹחֲנָן בֶּן־קָרַח וַיִּזְנְיָה בֶן־  
הוֹשַׁעְיָה וְכָל־הָעָם מִקָּטָן וְעַד־גָּדוֹל: ב וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֶל־  
יִרְמְיָהוּ הַנָּבִיא תַּפְלִגָּא תַּחֲנֹתְנוּ לַפְּנִיךָ וְהַתְּפַלֵּל  
בְּעַדָּנוּ אֱלֹהֵי־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּעַד כָּל־הַשְּׂאֲרִית הַזֹּאת  
כִּי־נִשְׁאַרְנוּ מֵעַט מִהֶרְבָּה כַּאֲשֶׁר עֵינֶיךָ רְאוּת  
אֲתָנוּ: ג וַיַּגִּדְלָנוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֶת־הַדֶּרֶךְ אֲשֶׁר  
נִלְךְ־בָּהּ וְאֶת־הַדְּבָר אֲשֶׁר נַעֲשֶׂה: ד וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵיהֶם  
יִרְמְיָהוּ הַנָּבִיא שְׁמַעְתִּי הַנְּגִי מִתְּפִלָּל אֱלֹהֵי־יְהוָה  
אֱלֹהֵיכֶם כַּדְּבָרִיכֶם וְהָיָה כָּל־הַדְּבָר אֲשֶׁר־יַעֲנֶה  
יְהוָה אֶתְכֶם אֶגִּיד לָכֶם לֹא־אֲמַנֶּע מִכֶּם דְּבָר:  
ה וְהִלָּמָה אָמְרוּ אֶל־יִרְמְיָהוּ יְהִי יְהוָה בָּנוּ לְעַד אָמֵת  
וְנִאֲמָן אִם־לֹא כָּל־הַדְּבָר אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁלַחְךָ יְהוָה  
אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֵלֵינוּ בֵּן נַעֲשֶׂה: ו אִם־טוֹב וְאִם־רָע בְּקוֹל  
יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֲשֶׁר אָנוּ אֲנַחְנוּ שֹׁלְחִים אֵתְךָ אֵלָיו  
נִשְׁמָע לְמַעַן אֲשֶׁר יִיטַב־לָנוּ כִּי נִשְׁמָע בְּקוֹל יְהוָה  
אֱלֹהֵינוּ: {פ}

<sup>1</sup> 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 <sup>2</sup> 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 – <sup>3</sup> so that Yahweh your God may show us the way in which we are to walk and what we must do." <sup>4</sup> 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." <sup>5</sup> 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. <sup>6</sup> 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

<sup>1</sup> 'Azariah' follows the LXX and 43:2; the MT has 'Jezaniah', perhaps to be identified with the Jezaniah of 40:8.

<sup>2</sup> Jeremiah here (and compare 15:11, 2M 15:14) plays the part of intercessor, like Moses (Ex 32:11).

<sup>3</sup> Note that the people refer to Yahweh as 'your God', as also does Jeremiah in his reply (v. 4).

<sup>4</sup> Jeremiah's opening clause ('I have heard you') is a form of acknowledgement (the NRSV has 'very well' and NETB has 'agreed').

<sup>5</sup> In place of 'act according to everything', here following the NRSV, the NJB has 'follow the instruction'.

<sup>6</sup> Note that here the people refer to Yahweh as 'our God' (cf. #3). The Kethib/Qere difference here would benefit from an explanation.

וַיְהִי מִקֵּץ עֶשְׂרֵת יָמִים וַיְהִי דְבַר־יְהוָה אֶל־  
 יִרְמְיָהוּ: <sup>ח</sup> וַיִּקְרָא אֶל־יֹחָנָן בֶּן־קָרַח וְאֶל כָּל־שָׂרֵי  
 הַחֲיָלִים אֲשֶׁר אִתּוֹ וְלִכְל־הָעָם לְמִקְטָן וְעַד־גָּדוֹל:  
<sup>ט</sup> וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵיהֶם כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל  
 אֲשֶׁר שְׁלַחְתֶּם אֹתִי אֵלָיו לְהַפִּיל תַּחֲנֻתְכֶם לִפְנֵי:  
<sup>י</sup> אִם־שׁוּב תֵּשְׁבוּ בָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת וּבִנִּיתִי אֶתְכֶם וְלֹא  
 אֶהָרֵס וְנִטְעַתִּי אֶתְכֶם וְלֹא אֶתּוֹשׁ כִּי נַחֲמַתִּי אֶל־  
 הָרָעָה אֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתִי לָכֶם: <sup>יא</sup> אֶל־תִּירְאוּ מִפְּנֵי מֶלֶךְ  
 בָּבֶל אֲשֶׁר־אַתֶּם יֹרְאִים מִפְּנֵי אֶל־תִּירְאוּ מִמֶּנּוּ  
 נְאֻם־יְהוָה כִּי־אַתֶּם אֲנִי לְהוֹשִׁיעַ אֶתְכֶם וּלְהַצִּיל  
 אֶתְכֶם מִיָּדוֹ: <sup>יב</sup> וְאַתֶּן לָכֶם רַחֲמִים וְרַחֵם אֶתְכֶם  
 וְהָשִׁיב אֶתְכֶם אֶל־אֲדֹמְתְכֶם: <sup>יג</sup> וְאִם־אֲמָרִים אַתֶּם  
 לֹא נִשְׁבַּ בָּאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת לְבַלְתִּי שְׁמַע בְּקוֹל יְהוָה  
 אֱלֹהֵיכֶם: <sup>יד</sup> לֵאמֹר לֹא כִי אָרֶץ מִצְרַיִם נִבּוֹא אֲשֶׁר  
 לֹא־נִרְאָה מִלְחָמָה וְקוֹל שׁוֹפָר לֹא נִשְׁמָע וּלְלַחֵם  
 לֹא־נִרְעַב וְשֵׁם נִשְׁבַּ: <sup>טו</sup> וְעַתָּה לֵכֶן שְׁמָעוּ דְבַר־

<sup>7</sup> And it came to pass that, after ten days had passed, the word of Yahweh came to Jeremiah. <sup>8</sup> 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, <sup>9</sup> and he said to them, “Yahweh, the God of Israel, to whom you deputed me to present your supplication before him, says this, <sup>10</sup> “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. <sup>11</sup> 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. <sup>12</sup> I will have compassion for you, and he will have mercy for you and let you return to your native soil. <sup>13</sup> However, if you continue to say, “We will not stay in this country,” if you disobey the voice of Yahweh your God, <sup>14</sup> 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,”

<sup>7</sup> The NJB opens this verse with ‘ten days later’; here, we follow the NRSV.

<sup>8</sup> The phrase, ‘from the least to the greatest’, is an expression using polar opposites as an all-inclusive designation of everyone without exception.

<sup>9</sup> Their ‘petition’ was for Jeremiah to tell them where to go and what to do (v. 3).

<sup>10</sup> The literal translation of ‘if you will only remain’, following the LXX and Tg (reading יִשְׁבַּ), is ‘if you stay to remain’; the MT has ‘if you stay once more’ (שׁוּב).

<sup>11</sup> In place of ‘as you have been’, here following the NRSV, the NJB has ‘whom, you fear now’.

<sup>12</sup> ‘I will have compassion for you’ follows NETB; the NJB has ‘I shall take pity on you’.

<sup>13</sup> The NJB lacks ‘continue to’, here following the NRSV.

<sup>14</sup> The trumpet was used to gather the troops and to sound the alarm for battle.

יְהוָה שְׂאֵרֵית יְהוּדָה כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת אֱלֹהֵי  
 יִשְׂרָאֵל אִם־אַתֶּם שׁוֹם תִּשְׁמוֹן פְּנֵיכֶם לָבֹא מִצְרַיִם  
 וּבַאתֶם לָגוֹר שָׁם: <sup>טז</sup> וְהִיתָה הַחֶרֶב אֲשֶׁר אַתֶּם  
 יֹרְאִים מִמֶּנָּה שָׁם תִּשְׁיֹג אֶתְכֶם בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם  
 וְהָרָעַב אֲשֶׁר־אַתֶּם | דְּאִגִּים מִמֶּנּוּ שָׁם יִדְבֹק  
 אַחֲרֵיכֶם מִצְרַיִם וְשָׁם תָּמֹתוּ: <sup>יז</sup> וְיָהִיו כָּל־הָאֲנָשִׁים  
 אֲשֶׁר־שָׁמוּ אֶת־פְּנֵיהֶם לָבֹא מִצְרַיִם לָגוֹר שָׁם  
 יָמוּתוּ בַחֶרֶב בְּרָעַב וּבִדְבַר וְלֹא־יִהְיֶה לָהֶם שְׂרִיד  
 וּפְלִיט מִפְּנֵי הָרָעָה אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי מֵבִיא עֲלֵיהֶם: <sup>יח</sup> כִּי  
 כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל כַּאֲשֶׁר נָתַדְּ  
 אֲפִי וַחֲמָתִי עַל־יֹשְׁבֵי יְרוּשָׁלַם בֶּן תַּתָּד חֲמָתִי  
 עֲלֵיכֶם בְּבֹאְכֶם מִצְרַיִם וְהִיִּיתֶם לְאֵלָה וּלְשִׁמָּה  
 וּלְקַלְלָה וּלְחֶרֶפָה וְלֹא־תִרְאוּ עוֹד אֶת־הַמָּקוֹם  
 הַזֶּה: <sup>יט</sup> דְּבַר יְהוָה עֲלֵיכֶם שְׂאֵרֵית יְהוּדָה אֶל־  
 תָּבֹאוּ מִצְרַיִם יִדְעוּ תִדְעוּ כִּי־הֵעִידֹתִי בָכֶם הַיּוֹם:  
<sup>כ</sup> כִּי הִתְעִיתִם הַתְעִיתֶם בְּנִפְשׁוֹתֵיכֶם כִּי־אַתֶּם  
 שְׁלַחְתֶּם אֹתִי אֶל־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם לֵאמֹר הַתְּפִלָּל  
 בְּעַדְנוּ אֶל־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וּכְכֹל אֲשֶׁר יֹאמַר יְהוָה

<sup>15</sup> 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, <sup>16</sup> 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. <sup>17</sup> 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. <sup>18</sup> 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." <sup>19</sup> Remnant of Judah, Yahweh has told you, "Do not go into Egypt." Understand clearly that today I have given you a solemn warning. <sup>20</sup> You are making a fatal mistake: for, you yourselves sent me to Yahweh your God and said, "Intercede for us with Yahweh our God;

<sup>15</sup> The literal translation of 'if you are determined to go' is 'if you set your face to go'.

<sup>16</sup> The NJB lacks the section, "and the famine that you dread shall follow close after you into Egypt," here following the NSRV & MT.

<sup>17</sup> In place of 'plague', here following the NJB, the NRSV has 'pestilence' and NETB has 'disease'.

<sup>18</sup> The threat here is that they should be seen in the same light as Sodom and Gomorrah.

<sup>19</sup> 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.

<sup>20</sup> The NJB, following the *Ketiv* (הַתְעִיתִם), opens with, "You were not being sincere when you sent me;" here, we follow the NRSV & *Qere* (הַתְעִיתֶם)

אֱלֹהֵינוּ בֵּן הַגְּדֹלָנוּ וְעָשִׂינוּ: כֹּא וְאֶגֶד לָכֶם הַיּוֹם  
וְלֹא שָׁמַעְתֶּם בְּקוֹל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם וּלְכֹל אֲשֶׁר-  
שְׁלַחְנִי אֵלֵיכֶם: כִּבְיָעַתָּה יָדַע תִּדְּעוּ כִּי בַחֲרֹב  
בָּרָעַב וּבַדָּבָר תָּמוּתוּ בַּמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר חָפַצְתֶּם לָבוֹא  
לָגוֹר שָׁם: {ס}

tell us exactly what Yahweh our God says and we will do it.” <sup>21</sup> 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. <sup>22</sup> Understand this clearly, then: You will die by sword, by famine and by plague in the place where you want to go and settle.”

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<sup>21</sup> The use of the perfect here is perhaps to be related to the perfect expressing resolve or determination.

<sup>22</sup> In place of ‘*plague*’, here following the *NJB*, the *NRSV* has ‘*pestilence*’ and *NETB* has ‘*disease*’.

## JEREMIAH 43

## ירמיהו פרק מג

א 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-הוֹשִׁעַיָּה וִיחָנָן בֶּן-קִרְיָח וְכָל-  
הָאֲנָשִׁים הַזֵּדִים אֹמְרִים אֶל-יִרְמְיָהוּ שֹׁקֵר אַתָּה  
מְדַבֵּר לֹא שְׁלַחְךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ לֵאמֹר לֹא-תָבֹאוּ  
מִצְרַיִם לְגֹר שָׁם: <sup>ג</sup> כִּי בְרוּךְ בֶּן-נֶרְיָה מִסִּית אֶתְּךָ  
בָּנוּ לְמַעַן תֵּת אֶתָּנוּ בְּיַד-הַכַּשְׂדִּים לְהַמִּית אֶתָּנוּ  
וּלְהַגְלוֹת אֶתָּנוּ בָּבֶל: <sup>ד</sup> וְלֹא-שָׁמַעַ יוֹחָנָן בֶּן-קִרְיָח  
וְכָל-שָׂרֵי הַחֲיָלִים וְכָל-הָעָם בְּקוֹל יְהוָה לְשַׁבֵּת  
בְּאֶרֶץ יְהוּדָה: <sup>ה</sup> וַיִּקָּח יוֹחָנָן בֶּן-קִרְיָח וְכָל-שָׂרֵי  
הַחֲיָלִים אֶת כָּל-שְׂאֲרֵי יְהוּדָה אֲשֶׁר-שָׁבוּ מִכָּל-  
הַגּוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר נִדְּחוּ-שָׁם לְגֹר בְּאֶרֶץ יְהוּדָה: <sup>ו</sup> אֶת-  
הַגְּבָרִים וְאֶת-הַנָּשִׁים וְאֶת-הַטַּף וְאֶת-בָּנוֹת הַמֶּלֶךְ

<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> Then Azariah son of Hoshaiiah, 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.” <sup>3</sup> 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.” <sup>4</sup> 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. <sup>5</sup> 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: <sup>6</sup> men, women, children, the royal princesses too, and

## JEREMIAH 43

- <sup>1</sup> 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.
- <sup>2</sup> See #42:1 for the possible identification of 'Azariah' with Jezaniah son of Hoshaiiah and Jezaniah the son of the Maacathite.
- <sup>3</sup> 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.
- <sup>4</sup> 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.
- <sup>5</sup> This verse refers to the people who are mentioned in 40:11–12.
- <sup>6</sup> This verse refers to the group mentioned in 40:7 & 41:10.



וְאֵת כָּל־הַנֶּפֶשׁ אֲשֶׁר הָיִיחַ נְבוּזַרְאֲדָן רֶב־טַבָּחִים  
 אֶת־גְּדַלְיָהוּ בֶן־אֲחִיקָם בֶּן־שַׁפָּן וְאֵת יִרְמְיָהוּ  
 הַנָּבִיא וְאֶת־בָּרוּךְ בֶּן־נֶרְיָהוּ: <sup>ז</sup> וַיָּבֹאוּ אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם  
 כִּי לֹא שָׁמְעוּ בְּקוֹל יְהוָה וַיָּבֹאוּ עַד־תַּחְפָּנֶחַס: {ס}  
<sup>ח</sup> וַיְהִי דְבַר־יְהוָה אֶל־יִרְמְיָהוּ בַתְּחַפְּנֶחַס לֵאמֹר:  
<sup>ט</sup> קַח בְּיָדְךָ אֲבָנִים גְּדֹלוֹת וְטַמְנָתָם בַּמָּלֵט בַּמַּלְבֵּן  
 אֲשֶׁר בִּפְתָח בֵּית־פַּרְעֹה בַתְּחַפְּנֶחַס לְעֵינַי אֲנָשִׁים  
 יְהוּדִים: <sup>י</sup> וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵיהֶם כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת  
 אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הִנְנִי שֹׁלֵחַ וְלִקְחָתִי אֶת־נְבוּכַדְרֶאצַּר  
 מֶלֶךְ־בָּבֶל עִבְדִּי וְשִׁמְתִּי כִסְאוֹ מִמַּעַל לָאֲבָנִים  
 הָאֵלֶּה אֲשֶׁר טַמַּנְתִּי וְנָטָה אֶת־שַׁפְרִירוֹ שִׁפְרוֹרוֹ  
 עֲלֵיהֶם: <sup>יא</sup> וּבָאָה וּבָא וְהָכָה אֶת־אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם

אֲשֶׁר לַמָּוֶת לַמָּוֶת  
 וְאֲשֶׁר לַשְּׁבִי לַשְּׁבִי  
 וְאֲשֶׁר לַחֶרֶב לַחֶרֶב:

<sup>יב</sup> וְהִצַּתִּי אֵשׁ בְּבֵתֵי אֱלֹהֵי מִצְרַיִם וְשָׂרְפָם וְשָׂבָם  
 וְעָטָה אֶת־אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם כַּאֲשֶׁר־יַעֲטֶה הָרֹעֶה 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. <sup>7</sup> Thus, in disobedience to the voice of Yahweh, they reached Egypt and arrived at Tahpanhes.

<sup>8</sup> At Tahpanhes, the word of Yahweh was addressed to Jeremiah as follows, <sup>9</sup> “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. <sup>10</sup> 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. <sup>11</sup> 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!

<sup>12</sup> “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

<sup>7</sup> ‘Tahpanhes’ was a frontier town, east of the Nile delta (see #2:16).

<sup>8</sup> Literally translated, ‘as follows’ would be ‘saying’.

<sup>9</sup> Jeremiah symbolically (see #18:1) lays the foundations for Nebuchadnezzar’s throne.

<sup>10</sup> ‘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 שִׁפְרוֹרוֹ, a word that occurs only here and whose precise meaning is uncertain.

<sup>11</sup> The Kethib/Qere difference here would benefit from an explanation.

<sup>12</sup> ‘He will set fire’ follows the LXX and Peshitta; the MT has ‘I will set fire’.

בְּגָלוֹ וַיֵּצֵא מִשָּׁם בְּשָׁלוֹם: י' וְשָׁבַר אֶת־מַצְבֹּת בֵּית  
 שֶׁמֶשׁ אֲשֶׁר בָּאָרֶץ מִצְרַיִם וְאֶת־בְּתֵי אֱלֹהֵי־מִצְרַיִם  
 יִשְׂרָף בָּאֵשׁ: {פ} him, so he will wrap Egypt round him, and then leave without anyone  
 laying hands on him. <sup>13</sup> He will break the obelisks of the Temple of the  
 Sun in Egypt, and burn down the temples of the gods of Egypt.""

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<sup>13</sup> 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.

## JEREMIAH 44

## ירמיהו פרק מד

<sup>א</sup> הַדְּבָר אֲשֶׁר הָיָה אֶל־יִרְמְיָהוּ אֶל כָּל־הַיְּהוּדִים  
הַיֹּשְׁבִים בָּאָרֶץ מִצְרַיִם הַיֹּשְׁבִים בְּמִגְדּוֹל  
וּבְתַחֲפָנְחָס וּבְנֹף וּבָאָרֶץ פַּתְרוֹס לֵאמֹר: <sup>ב</sup> כֹּה־  
אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אַתֶּם רְאִיתֶם אֵת  
כָּל־הָרָעָה אֲשֶׁר הֵבֵאתִי עַל־יְרוּשָׁלַם וְעַל כָּל־עָרֵי  
יְהוּדָה וְהֵנָּם חָרְבָה הַיּוֹם וְאֵין בָּהֶם יוֹשֵׁב:  
<sup>ג</sup> מִפְּנֵי רָעַתְם אֲשֶׁר עָשׂוּ לְהַכְעִסְנִי לְלַכֵּת לְקַטֹּר  
לְעַבֵּד לֵאלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים אֲשֶׁר לֹא יָדְעוּם הִמָּה  
אַתֶּם וְאַבְתִּיכֶם: <sup>ד</sup> וְאֶשְׁלַח אֲלֵיכֶם אֶת־כָּל־עַבְדֵי  
הַנְּבִיאִים הַשֹּׁכִים וְשָׁלַח לֵאמֹר אֲלֵנָּה תַעֲשׂוּ אֵת  
דְּבַר־הַתַּעֲבָה הַזֹּאת אֲשֶׁר שָׁנֵאתִי: <sup>ה</sup> וְלֹא שָׁמְעוּ  
וְלֹא־הָטוּ אֶת־אָזְנָם לָשׁוּב מִרָעַתָם לְבַלְתִּי קַטֹּר  
לֵאלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים: <sup>ו</sup> וַתִּתֵּן חֲמָתִי וְאָפִי וַתִּבְעַר בְּעָרֵי  
יְהוּדָה וּבְחֻצוֹת יְרוּשָׁלַם וַתְּהִינָה לְחָרְבָה לְשִׁמְמָה  
כַּיּוֹם הַזֶּה: {ס}

<sup>1</sup> 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. <sup>2</sup> “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. <sup>3</sup> 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, <sup>4</sup> although I urgently and untiringly sent you all my servants the prophets to say: You must not do this loathsome thing, which I hate. <sup>5</sup> However, they would not listen or pay any attention, and turn from their wickedness and stop offering incense to other gods. <sup>6</sup> 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.

## JEREMIAH 44

- <sup>1</sup> ‘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.
- <sup>2</sup> The NJB lacks the phrase ‘look at them’, here following the NRSV.
- <sup>3</sup> Compare 19:4 for the same thought and see also 7:9.
- <sup>4</sup> In place of ‘urgently and untiringly’, here following the NJB, the NRSV has ‘persistently’.
- <sup>5</sup> There is a 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).
- <sup>6</sup> The literal translation of ‘my furious anger’ is ‘my anger and my wrath’, but this is here interpreted as a hendiadys (following the NJB).

וַעֲתָה כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי צְבָאוֹת אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל  
 לֵמָּה אַתֶּם עֹשִׂים רָעָה גְדוֹלָה אֶל־נַפְשֵׁיכֶם  
 לְהַכְרִית לָכֶם אִישׁ־וְאִשָּׁה עוֹלָל וְיוֹנֵק מִתּוֹךְ יְהוּדָה  
 לְבַלְתִּי הוֹתִיר לָכֶם שְׂאֲרִית: <sup>ח</sup> לְהַכְעִסְנִי בְּמַעֲשֵׂי  
 יְדֵיכֶם לְקַטֵּר לֵאלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים בָּאָרֶץ מִצְרַיִם  
 אֲשֶׁר־אַתֶּם בָּאִים לָגוּר שָׁם לְמַעַן הַכְרִית לָכֶם  
 וּלְמַעַן הִיֹּותְכֶם לְקָלִלָה וּלְחֶרֶף בְּכָל גּוֹי הָאָרֶץ:  
<sup>ט</sup> הֲשַׁכַּחְתֶּם אֶת־דַּעוֹת אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם וְאֶת־דַּעוֹת  
 מַלְכֵי יְהוּדָה וְאֶת רָעוֹת נָשָׂיו וְאֶת רַעְתְּכֶם וְאֶת  
 רַעַת נְשֵׁיכֶם אֲשֶׁר עָשׂוּ בָאָרֶץ יְהוּדָה וּבְחֻצוֹת  
 יְרוּשָׁלַם: <sup>י</sup> לֹא דָבָאוּ עַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה וְלֹא יֵרְאוּ וְלֹא־  
 הָלְכוּ בְּתוֹרָתִי וּבְחֻקֹּתַי אֲשֶׁר־נָתַתִּי לִפְנֵיכֶם וּלְפָנַי  
 אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם: {ס}

<sup>יא</sup> לָכֵן כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הִנְנִי  
 שֹׁם פָּנַי בָּכֶם לְרָעָה וּלְהַכְרִית אֶת־כָּל־יְהוּדָה:  
<sup>יב</sup> וְלִקְחָתִי אֶת־שְׂאֲרִית יְהוּדָה אֲשֶׁר־שָׁמוּ פְּנֵיהֶם

<sup>7</sup> “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, <sup>8</sup> 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? <sup>9</sup> 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? <sup>10</sup> 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.

<sup>11</sup> “Therefore, Yahweh Sabaoth, the God of Israel, says this: Look, I am determined to bring disaster on you and to destroy Judah completely.

<sup>12</sup> I will take the remnant of Judah who are determined to come to the

<sup>7</sup> Once again, God questions the supposed wisdom of living in Egypt.

<sup>8</sup> 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.

<sup>9</sup> 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).

<sup>10</sup> Note that the pronoun ‘they’ includes both the people just referred to and the current addressees.

<sup>11</sup> Literally translated, this verse ends, “I am setting my face against you for disaster and to destroy all Judah.”

<sup>12</sup> See also 24:9 for the threat at the end of this verse.

לְבוֹא אֶרֶץ-מִצְרַיִם לָגוּר שָׁם וְתָמוּ כָל בְּאֶרֶץ  
מִצְרַיִם יָפְלוּ בַחֲרֵב בָּרָעַב יָתָמוּ מִקְטָן וְעַד-גָּדוֹל  
בַּחֲרֵב וּבָרָעַב יָמָתוּ וְהָיוּ לְאֵלָה לְשִׁמָּה וּלְקִלְלָה  
וּלְחִרְפָּה: <sup>13</sup> וּפְקַדְתִּי עַל הַיּוֹשְׁבִים בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם  
כְּאֲשֶׁר פְּקַדְתִּי עַל-יְרוּשָׁלַם בַּחֲרֵב בָּרָעַב וּבַדָּבָר:  
<sup>14</sup> וְלֹא יִהְיֶה פָלִיט וְשָׂרִיד לְשִׁאֲרֵי יְהוּדָה הַבָּאִים  
לָגוּר-שָׁם בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם וּלְשׁוּבוֹ אֶרֶץ יְהוּדָה  
אֲשֶׁר-הִמָּה מְנַשְׂאִים אֶת-נַפְשָׁם לָשׁוּב לְשִׁבְתָּ שָׁם  
כִּי לֹא-יָשׁוּבוּ כִּי אִם-פְּלִטִים: {פ}

<sup>15</sup> וַיַּעֲנוּ אֶת-יִרְמְיָהוּ כָל-הָאֲנָשִׁים הַיֹּדְעִים כִּי-  
מִקְטָרוֹת נָשִׂיָהֶם לְאֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים וְכָל-הַנָּשִׁים  
הָעֹמְדוֹת קֹהֵל גָּדוֹל וְכָל-הָעָם הַיּוֹשְׁבִים בְּאֶרֶץ-  
מִצְרַיִם בִּפְתָרוֹס לֵאמֹר: <sup>16</sup> הַדְּבַר אֲשֶׁר-דִּבַּרְתָּ  
אֵלֵינוּ בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה אֵינָנו שׁוֹמְעִים אֵלָיֶךָ: <sup>17</sup> כִּי עָשָׂה  
נַעֲשֶׂה אֶת-כָּל-הַדְּבָר אֲשֶׁר-יֵצֵא מִפִּינוּ לְקֹטֵר  
לְמַלְכֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְהַסִּידָלָה נִסְכִּים בְּאֲשֶׁר עָשִׂינוּ  
אֲנַחְנוּ וְאֲבֹתֵינוּ מִלְכֵינוּ 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. <sup>13</sup> I will punish those who live in the land of Egypt just as I punished Jerusalem: by sword, famine, and plague. <sup>14</sup> 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.”

<sup>15</sup> 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: <sup>16</sup> “We will not listen to the word you have just spoken to us in Yahweh’s name, <sup>17</sup> 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

<sup>13</sup> Throughout this section, the NJB omits ‘land of’ before ‘Egypt’; here, we follow the NRSV.

<sup>14</sup> Another possible reading for this verse is: “None of the Judaeen remnant 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).

<sup>15</sup> NETB reinterprets the phrase ‘in Pathros in Egypt’ as ‘in northern and southern Egypt’; here, we follow the MT, NJB & NRSV.

<sup>16</sup> In place of ‘we will not listen’, the NJB has ‘we have no intention of listening’.

<sup>17</sup> The ‘Queen of Heaven’ refers to the Babylonian-Assyrian goddess Ishtar (see #7:18); the cakes (v. 19) represented the naked goddess.



וּבַחֲצוֹת יְרוּשָׁלַם וְנִשְׁבַּע־לָחֶם וְנָהִיָּה טוֹבִים וְרָעָה  
 לֹא רָאִינוּ: י<sup>ח</sup> וּמִן־אֲזַחְלָנוּ לְקַטֹּר לַמַּלְכֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם  
 וְהַסֹּדֶף־לָהּ נִסְכִּים חֲסָרְנוּ כָּל וּבַחֲרָב וּבִרְעָב תָּמְנוּ:  
 יט וְכִי־אֲנַחְנוּ מִקְטָרִים לַמַּלְכֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְלַהֶסֶדֶף לָהּ  
 נִסְכִּים הַמְּבֻלְעָדִי אֲנִשְׁנוּ עֲשִׂינוּ לָהּ כְּוָנִים  
 לְהַעֲצֹבָהּ וְהַסֹּדֶף לָהּ נִסְכִּים: {ס} כ וַיֹּאמֶר יִרְמְיָהוּ  
 אֶל־כָּל־הָעָם עַל־הַגְּבָרִים וְעַל־הַנָּשִׁים וְעַל־כָּל־  
 הָעָם הָעֹנִים אֹתוֹ דָּבָר לֵאמֹר: כא הֲלוֹא אֶת־הַקְטֹּר  
 אֲשֶׁר קִטַּרְתֶּם בְּעָרֵי יְהוּדָה וּבַחֲצוֹת יְרוּשָׁלַם אַתֶּם  
 וְאֲבוֹתֵיכֶם מַלְכֵיכֶם וְשָׂרֵיכֶם וְעַם הָאָרֶץ אַתֶּם זָכַר  
 יְהוָה וְתַעֲלֶה עַל־לִבּוֹ: כב וְלֹא־יִוָּכַל יְהוָה עוֹד  
 לַשְּׂאֵת מִפְּנֵי רָע מַעַלְלֵיכֶם מִפְּנֵי הַתּוֹעֵבֹת אֲשֶׁר  
 עָשִׂיתֶם וְתִהְיֶה אֶרְצְכֶם לְחָרָבָה וּלְשָׂמָה וּלְקָלָלָהּ  
 מֵאִין יוֹשֵׁב בְּהִיּוֹם הַזֶּה: כג מִפְּנֵי אֲשֶׁר קִטַּרְתֶּם  
 וְאֲשֶׁר חֲטַאתֶם לַיהוָה וְלֹא שָׁמַעְתֶּם בְּקוֹל יְהוָה  
 וּבִתְרַתּוֹ וּבַחֲקֻתָיו וּבַעֲדוּתָיו לֹא הִלַכְתֶּם עַל־כֵּן  
 קָרָאת אֶתְכֶם הָרָעָה הַזֹּאת כִּיּוֹם הַזֶּה: {ס}

no disaster. <sup>18</sup> 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. <sup>19</sup> 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? <sup>20</sup> Then Jeremiah retorted, to all those people, men and women, all those people who were giving him this answer, <sup>21</sup> “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? <sup>22</sup> 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? <sup>23</sup> 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.”

<sup>18</sup> 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).

<sup>19</sup> The women speak at this point (the NRSV, following the *Peshitta*, inserts the words ‘the women said’ at the start of this verse).

<sup>20</sup> NETB omits the 2<sup>nd</sup> instance of ‘all those people’, considering the appositional phrase redundant in contemporary English.

<sup>21</sup> The NJB replaces the last question with a conjunctive clause linking to the next verse: “and found so repellent that.”

<sup>22</sup> In place of ‘your misdeeds and your loathsome practices’, following the NJB, the NRSV has ‘your evil doings, the abominations that you committed’.

<sup>23</sup> The NJB lacks ‘as is still evident today’ (here following the NRSV) but has ‘present’ before ‘disaster’.



כד וַיֹּאמֶר יְרֵמְיָהוּ אֶל־כָּל־הָעָם וְאֶל כָּל־הַנָּשִׁים  
שָׁמְעוּ דְּבַר־יְהוָה כָּל־יְהוּדָה אֲשֶׁר בָּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם:  
כה כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה־צְבָאוֹת אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר  
אַתֶּם וְנָשֵׁיכֶם וַתְּדַבְּרֶנָּה בְּפִיכֶם וּבִידֵיכֶם מִלֵּאתֶם |  
לֵאמֹר עֲשֵׂה נַעֲשֵׂה אֶת־נִדְרֵינוּ אֲשֶׁר נִדְרְנוּ לְקָטֹר  
לְמַלְכַּת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְלִהְסֹךְ לָהּ נִסְכִּים הַקִּים תְּקִימֶנָּה  
אֶת־נִדְרֵיכֶם וַעֲשֵׂה תַעֲשִׂינָה אֶת־נִדְרֵיכֶם: {ס}

כו לָכֵן שָׁמְעוּ דְּבַר־יְהוָה כָּל־יְהוּדָה הַיֹּשְׁבִים בָּאֶרֶץ  
מִצְרַיִם הַנְּגִי נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי בְּשֵׁמי הַגָּדוֹל אֲמַר יְהוָה  
אִם־יִהְיֶה עוֹד שְׁמִי נִקְרָא | בְּפִי | כָּל־אִישׁ יְהוּדָה  
אֲמַר חִי־אֲדֹנִי יְהוָה בְּכָל־אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם: כז הַנְּגִי  
שָׁקֵד עָלֵיהֶם לְרָעָה וְלֹא לְטוֹבָה וְתָמוּ כָל־אִישׁ  
יְהוּדָה אֲשֶׁר בָּאֶרֶץ־מִצְרַיִם בַּחֲרָב וּבִרְעָב עַד־  
כח כָּל־וָתָם: כח וּפְלִיטֵי חָרָב יָשׁוּבוּן מִן־אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם

<sup>24</sup> Further, Jeremiah said to all the people, and particularly to all the women, “Listen to the word of Yahweh, all you Judaeans in Egypt,  
<sup>25</sup> 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!

<sup>26</sup> 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. <sup>27</sup> 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. <sup>28</sup> Yet, though few in number, those who escape the sword will return to the country

<sup>24</sup> The words ‘and particularly’ here translate a simple *vav* (ו) prefix.

<sup>25</sup> 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, *וַתְּדַבְּרֶנָּה*] with your [2MP] mouth and you have fulfilled [2MP, *מִלֵּאתֶם*] with your [2MP] hands, saying, ‘We will certainly carry out....’ Indeed fulfil [2FP, *תְּקִימֶנָּה*] 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’ (*אַתֶּנָּה הַנָּשִׁים*) in place of ‘you and your wives’ (*אַתֶּם וְנָשֵׁיכֶם*). 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.

<sup>26</sup> The worshippers of Ishtar also made a show of invoking the name of Yahweh.

<sup>27</sup> Literally translated, this verse opens, “Behold, I am watching over them for evil/disaster/harm not for good/prosperity/blessing.” (Cf. 31:28.)

<sup>28</sup> The 1<sup>st</sup> half of this verse shows that the preceding ‘none’ and ‘all’ in vv. 26–27 are rhetorical hyperbole.

אֶרֶץ יְהוּדָה מִתִּי מִסְפָּר וַיֵּדְעוּ כָּל־שְׂאֲרֵית יְהוּדָה  
הַבָּאִים לָאֶרֶץ־מִצְרַיִם לָגוּר שָׁם דְּבַר־מִי יָקוּם  
מִמֶּנִּי וּמֵהֶם: כִּי זֹאת־לָכֶם הָאוֹת נֹאֲם־יְהוָה כִּי־  
פֶּקֶד אֲנִי עֲלֵיכֶם בַּמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה לְמַעַן תֵּדְעוּ כִּי קוֹם  
יָקוּמוּ דְבָרַי עֲלֵיכֶם לְרָעָה: {פ}

לְכָה | אָמַר יְהוָה הִנְנִי נֹתֵן אֶת־פֶּרְעָה חֶפְרַע מֶלֶךְ־  
מִצְרַיִם בְּיַד אֹיְבָיו וּבְיַד מְבַקְשֵׁי נַפְשׁוֹ כַּאֲשֶׁר נָתַתִּי  
אֶת־צִדְקִיָּהוּ 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.

<sup>29</sup> 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:

<sup>30</sup> "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."""

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<sup>29</sup> 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).

<sup>30</sup> 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 27<sup>th</sup> (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).

## JEREMIAH 45

## ירמיהו פרק מה

אֵלֶּה הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר יִרְמְיָהוּ הַנָּבִיא אֶל־בָּרוּךְ בֶּן־נֶרְיָה בְּכָתְבוֹ אֶת־הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה עַל־סֵפֶר מִפִּי יִרְמְיָהוּ בַּשָּׁנָה הָרְבַּעִית לַיהוֹיָקִים בֶּן־יֹאשִׁיָּהוּ מֶלֶךְ־יְהוּדָה לֵאמֹר: <sup>ב</sup> כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל עָלֶיךָ בָּרוּךְ: <sup>ג</sup> אָמַרְתָּ אֲוִי־נָא לִי כִי־יִסָּף יְהוָה יָגוֹן עָלַי מִכְּאָבִי יִגְעָלִי בְּאַנְחָתִי וּמְנוּחָה לֹא מָצָאתִי: <sup>ד</sup> כֹּה | תֹּאמַר אֵלָיו כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה הִנֵּה אֲשֶׁר־בִּנִיתִי אֲנִי הָאֵרֶץ וְאֶת־אֲשֶׁר־נִטַּעְתִּי אֲנִי נֹתֵשׁ וְאֶת־כָּל־הָאָרֶץ הִיא: <sup>ה</sup> וְאֵתָּה תִּבְקֶשׁ־לָךְ גְּדֻלּוֹת אֶל־תִּבְקֶשׁ כִּי הִנְנִי מֵבִיא רָעָה עַל־כָּל־בָּשָׂר נְאֻם־יְהוָה וְנָתַתִּי לָךְ אֶת־נַפְשְׁךָ לְשָׁלָל עַל כָּל־הַמְּקוֹמוֹת אֲשֶׁר תֵּלֵךְ־שָׁם: {פ}

<sup>1</sup> The word that came to the prophet Jeremiah addressed to Baruch son of Neriah, when the latter wrote these words down in a scroll at Jeremiah's dictation in the fourth year of Jehoiakim son of Josiah, king of Judah, <sup>2</sup> "This is what Yahweh, the God of Israel, says about you, Baruch! <sup>3</sup> "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!" <sup>4</sup> 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! <sup>5</sup> 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

- <sup>1</sup> 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).
- <sup>2</sup> The passage is both a rebuke to Baruch and an encouragement that his life will be spared wherever he goes.
- <sup>3</sup> 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.
- <sup>4</sup> There is some debate whether אֶרֶץ ('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.
- <sup>5</sup> 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־יִרְמְיָהוּ הַנָּבִיא עַל־  
הַגּוֹיִם: <sup>ב</sup> לַמַּצְרִים עַל־חֵיל פָּרְעָה נָכוֹ מֶלֶךְ מִצְרַיִם  
אֲשֶׁר־הָיָה עַל־נְהַר־פָּרָת בְּכַרְכַּמֶּשׁ אֲשֶׁר הָפָה  
נְבֻכַדְרֶאצַּר מֶלֶךְ בָּבֶל בַּשָּׁנָה הָרְבִיעִית לַיהוֹיָקִים  
בֶּן־יֹאשִׁיָּהוּ מֶלֶךְ יְהוּדָה:

ג עֲרֹכוּ מָגֵן וְצִנֹּה

וּגִשּׁוּ לַמִּלְחָמָה:

ד אֶסְרוּ הַסּוּסִים

וְעָלוּ הַפָּרָשִׁים

וְהִתְיַצְבוּ בְּכוֹבָעִים

מִרְקוֹ הָרִמָּחִים

לְבָשׁוּ הַסְרִיגָּת:

ה מַדּוּעַ רָאִיתִי

הֵמָּה חֲתִים נִסְגָּיִם אַחֲזֹרִי

## JEREMIAH 46

<sup>1</sup> The words of Yahweh that were addresses to the prophet Jeremiah against the nations: <sup>2</sup> 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:

<sup>3</sup> Prepare buckler and shield,  
and advance to battle!

<sup>4</sup> Harness the horses:  
into the saddle, horsemen!  
Take to your ranks! Put on your helmets!  
Sharpen your spears  
and put on your breastplates!

<sup>5</sup> Why do I see them  
retreating, panic-stricken?

## JEREMIAH 46

- <sup>1</sup> 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.
- <sup>2</sup> 'Carchemish' is the modern Syrian township of Jerablus, northeast of Aleppo on the Euphrates.
- <sup>3</sup> 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' (מָגֵן), which only protected the torso.
- <sup>4</sup> In place of 'breastplates', here following the NJB, the NRSV has 'coats of mail' and NETB has 'armour'.
- <sup>5</sup> 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  
וּמָנוֹס נָסוּ וְלֹא הִפְנוּ  
מִגֹּזֵר מִסְבִּיב נֶאֱסִי-הוֹה:  
אֶל-יָנוֹס הַקָּל ו  
וְאֶל-יִמְלֹט הַגָּבוֹר  
צָפוֹנָה עַל-יַד נְהַר-פָּרָת  
כָּשְׁלוּ וַנִּפְּלוּ:  
מִי־זֶה כִּי-אֵר יַעֲלֶה ו  
כְּנִהְרוֹת יִתְגַּעְשׂוּ מִיָּמָיו:  
מִצְרַיִם כִּי-אֵר יַעֲלֶה ח  
וּכְנִהְרוֹת יִתְגַּעְשׂוּ מִיָּם  
וַיֹּאמֶר אֲעֹלָה אֶכְסֶה-אֶרֶץ  
אֲבִידָה עִיר וְיֹשְׁבֵי בָהּ:  
עָלוּ הַסּוֹסִים וְהַתְּהַלְלוּ הָרֶכֶב ט  
וַיֵּצְאוּ הַגְּבוּרִים  
כּוֹשׁ וּפּוֹט תִּפְשִׁי מִגֶּן  
וְלֹדִים תִּפְשִׁי דְרָכֵי קֶשֶׁת:  
וְהַיּוֹם הַהוּא לְאֹדְנִי יִהְיֶה צָבָאוֹת י  
יוֹם נִקְמָה לְהִנָּקֵם מִצְרָיו

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 2<sup>nd</sup> line is a reference to God exacting vengeance on Pharaoh Necho.

וְאָכְלָה חֶרֶב וְשָׂבְעָה  
וְרוּתָהּ מִדָּמָם  
כִּי זָבַח לַאֲדֹנֵי יְהוָה צִבְאוֹת  
בְּאֶרֶץ צָפוֹן אֶל־נְהַר־פָּרָת:  
עָלִי גִלְעָד וְקַחֵי צֹרִי יא  
בְּתוּלַת בֶּת־מִצְרַיִם  
לְשׂוֹאֵי הָרַבִּיתִי הָרַבִּית רַפְאוֹת  
תַּעֲלֶה אֵין לָךְ:  
שָׁמְעוּ גוֹיִם קְלוֹנֶיךָ יב  
וְצוֹחֲתֶיךָ מִלֵּאָה הָאָרֶץ  
כִּי־גִבּוֹר בְּגִבּוֹר כָּשְׁלוּ  
יַחֲדָיו נָפְלוּ שְׁנֵיהֶם: {פ}

יג הַדָּבָר אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר יְהוָה אֶל־יִרְמְיָהוּ הַנָּבִיא לְבֹא  
נְבוּכַדְרֶאצַּר מֶלֶךְ בָּבֶל לְהַכּוֹת אֶת־אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם:  
יד הִגִּידוּ בְּמִצְרַיִם וּבְשִׁמְעוֹ בְּמִגְדּוֹל  
וּבְשִׁמְעוֹ בְּנֹף וּבְתַחְפַּנְחֶס  
אָמְרוּ הַתִּיַּעֲב וְהִכְּנוּ לָךְ  
כִּי־אָכְלָה חֶרֶב סְבִיבֶיךָ:  
טו מְדוּעַ נִסְחַף אֲבִירֶיךָ

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 1<sup>st</sup> line follows the *LXX* (*διὰ τί ἐφύγεν ὁ Ἄπῖς*); the *MT* has, "Why has he been overthrown?" 'Mighty One' is singular in 65 Hebrew MSS and



לֹא עָמַד  
 כִּי יְהוָה הִדְפּוֹ:  
 הָרַבָּה בּוֹשָׁל טז  
 גַּם־נָפַל אִישׁ אֶל־רֵעֵהוּ  
 וַיֹּאמְרוּ קוֹמָה |  
 וּנְשָׁבָה אֶל־עַמָּנוּ וְאֶל־אֶרֶץ מוֹלַדְתָּנוּ  
 מִפְּנֵי חֶרֶב הַיּוֹנָה:  
 קִרְאוּ שֵׁם פֶּרְעָה מֶלֶךְ־מִצְרַיִם שְׁאוֹן יז  
 הָעֶבֶיר הַמוֹעֵד:  
 חַי־אֲנִי נֶאֱסֶה־מֶלֶךְ יח  
 יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת שְׁמוֹ  
 כִּי כְתָבוֹר בְּהָרִים  
 וּכְכֹרֶמַל בֵּים יְבוּא:  
 כָּלִי גוֹלָה עָשִׂי לָךְ יט  
 יוֹשֶׁבֶת בְּת־מִצְרַיִם  
 כִּי־נָף לְשִׁמָּה תִהְיֶה  
 וְנִצָּתָה 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 first 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).

כ עֲגֻלָּה יִפְה־פִּיָּה מִצָּרִים  
 קָרַץ מִצָּפוֹן בָּא בָּא:  
 כא גַּם־שֹׁכְרֶיהָ בְּקִרְבָּהּ כְּעֻגְלֵי מִרְבֵּק  
 כִּי־גַם־הֵמָּה הִפְנוּ נָסוּ יַחְדָּיו לֹא עָמְדוּ  
 כִּי יוֹם אִידָם בָּא עֲלֵיהֶם  
 עֵת פְּקֻדָּתָם:  
 כב קוֹלָהּ בִּנְחָשׁ יִלָּךְ  
 כִּי־בַחִיל יֵלְכוּ  
 וּבְקִרְדָּמוֹת בָּאוּ לָהּ  
 כַּחֲטָבֵי עֵצִים:  
 כג כָּרְתוּ יַעֲרָהּ נְאֻם־יְהוָה  
 כִּי לֹא יִחָקֵר  
 כִּי רַבּוּ מְאֹרְבָּהּ  
 וְאֵין לָהֶם מִסְפָּר:  
 כד הַבִּישָׁה בֶּת־מִצְרַיִם  
 נִתְּנָה בְיַד עַם־צָפוֹן:

20 Egypt is a beautiful heifer,  
 but a gadfly from the north has settled on her.  
 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.  
 22 Hear her hissing like a snake  
 as they advance in force  
 to fall on her with their axes,  
 like woodcutters.  
 23 They will fell her forest, Yahweh declares,  
 though it is impenetrable,  
 for they are more numerous than locusts,  
 there is no counting them.  
 24 Daughter Egypt shall be put to shame,  
 handed over to a people from the north.

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 3<sup>rd</sup> line (NETB assumes the temporal use: 'when their day of disaster...').

22 'Hissing' follows the LXX; the MT has 'advancing' (see the 2<sup>nd</sup> 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<sup>a</sup> has already been dropped in v. 22<sup>b-d</sup>, hence, it is probably best to see this as a continuation of the simile in v. 22<sup>c-d</sup> 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־אֱמוֹן מִזָּא וְעַל־פִּרְעֹה וְעַל־מִצְרַיִם וְעַל־אֱלֹהֵיהֶם  
 וְעַל־מַלְכֵיהֶם וְעַל־פִּרְעֹה וְעַל הַבְּטָחִים בּוֹ:  
 כִּי וְנִתְּתִים בְּיַד מִבְקָשֵׁי נַפְשָׁם וּבְיַד נְבוּכַדְרֶאצַּר  
 מֶלֶךְ־בָּבֶל וּבְיַד־עֲבָדָיו וְאַחֲרֵי־כֵן תִּשְׁכֹּן כִּימֵי־קֶדֶם  
 נֶאֱמַר יְהוָה: {פ}

כִּי וְאַתָּה אֶל־תִּירָא עֲבָדֵי יַעֲקֹב  
 וְאַל־תַּחַת יִשְׂרָאֵל  
 כִּי הִנְנִי מוֹשְׁעֶךָ מֵרָחוֹק  
 וְאַת־זֶרְעֶךָ מֵאֶרֶץ שָׁבִים  
 וְשָׁב יַעֲקֹב וְשָׁקֵט וְשָׁאֵן  
 וְאֵין מַחֲרִיד:  
 כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה אֶל־תִּירָא עֲבָדֵי יַעֲקֹב  
 נֶאֱמַר יְהוָה כִּי אִתִּי אָנֹכִי  
 כִּי אֶעֱשֶׂה כָּל־הַבְּלִיָּהִים  
 אֲשֶׁר הִדַּחְתִּיךָ שָׁמָּה  
 וְאַתָּה לֹא־אֶעֱשֶׂה כָּל־הַ  
 וְיִסְרַתִּיךָ לַמִּשְׁפָּט  
 וְנִקָּה לֹא אֶנְקֶדֶךָ: {פ}

<sup>25</sup> 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. <sup>26</sup> 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.”

<sup>27</sup> 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.  
<sup>28</sup> 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.

<sup>25</sup> ‘Amon’ was the ram-headed god of Thebes, the Egyptian name for which was ‘No’ (see Ezk 30:14–16, Na 3:8).

<sup>26</sup> For similar prophecies of recovery for nations punished by God, see 48:47, 49:6, 39, Is 19:21ff.

<sup>27</sup> Here, ‘Jacob’ and ‘Israel’ no longer mean the Northern Kingdom but, in the spirit of the second part of Isaiah, all Yahweh’s people.

<sup>28</sup> 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

<sup>א</sup> אֲשֶׁר הָיָה דְּבַר־יְהוָה אֶל־יִרְמְיָהוּ הַנָּבִיא אֶל־  
פְּלִשְׁתִּים בְּטָרָם יָכָה פָּרַעְה אֶת־עֲזָה: <sup>ב</sup> כֹּה אָמַר  
יְהוָה: <sup>1</sup> This is that which came as the word of Yahweh to Jeremiah  
about the Philistines before Pharaoh attacked Gaza: <sup>2</sup> Thus says  
Yahweh:

הִנֵּה־מַיִם עֹלִים מִצָּפוֹן וְהָיוּ לְנַחַל שׁוֹטֵף וַיִּשְׁטְפוּ אֶרֶץ וּמְלוֹאָהָ עִיר וַיִּשְׁבִּי בָּהּ וַיַּעֲקוּ הָאָדָם וְהַיֵּלֵל כָּל יוֹשֵׁב הָאָרֶץ: <sup>ג</sup> מִקּוֹל שַׁעֲטַת פָּרָסוֹת אֲבִירָיו מִרַעַשׁ לִרְכָּבוֹ הַמֶּזֶן גִּלְגָּלָיו לֹא־הִפְנוּ אֲבוֹת אֶל־בָּנִים מִרַפְּיוֹן יָדַיִם: עַל־הַיּוֹם <sup>ד</sup> הַבֹּא לְשָׂדֶד אֶת־כָּל־פְּלִשְׁתִּים לְהַכְרִית לָצַר 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. <sup>3</sup> 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, <sup>4</sup> for the day has come for all the Philistines to be destroyed, for Tyre and Sidon to be stripped
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### JEREMIAH 47

- <sup>1</sup> 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.
- <sup>2</sup> 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.
- <sup>3</sup> The phrase 'their hands fall limp' is figurative of helplessness caused by terror.
- <sup>4</sup> 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 עֶזְרָא  
 כִּי־שָׂדֵד יִהְיֶה אֶת־פְּלִשְׁתִּים  
 שְׂאֲרִית אִי כַפְתּוֹר:  
 בָּאָה קְרַחַה אֶל־עֵזָה ה  
 נְדַמְתָּה אֲשַׁקְלוֹן  
 שְׂאֲרִית עַמְקִים  
 עַד־מָתִי תִתְגַּדְּדִי:  
 הֲוִי חֶרֶב לִיהוָה ו  
 עַד־אָנָּה לֹא תִשְׁקָטִי  
 הָאֶסְפִּי אֶל־תַּעֲרֹךְ  
 הִרְגָּעִי וְדָמִי:  
 אֵיךְ תִּשְׁקָטִי ז  
 וַיְהִי צֶוֶה־לָּהּ  
 אֶל־אֲשַׁקְלוֹן וְאֶל־חֹוֹף  
 הַיָּם שֵׁם יַעֲדָהּ: {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?

<sup>5</sup> For 'you who remain in the valley', a minor emendation would give the reading, as in the LXX, of 'of the Anakim' (עֲנָקִים for עַמְקִים, 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).

<sup>6</sup> 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.

<sup>7</sup> 'It rest' follows the LXX, Peshitta and Vg (and see the remainder of the verse); the MT has 'you rest'.

## ירמיהו פרק מח

א לְמוֹאָב כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל 1 Concerning Moab, thus says Yahweh, the God of Israel:

הוּא אֶל־נֶבּוֹ כִּי שֻׁדָּה  
הַבִּישָׁה נִלְכְּדָה קִרְיָתָיִם  
הַבִּישָׁה הַמְשֻׁגָּב וַחֲתָהּ:  
אֵין עוֹד תְּהִלַּת מוֹאָב ב  
בַּחֲשִׁבּוֹן חֲשְׁבוּ עָלֶיהָ רָעָה  
לָכוּ וְנִכְרִיתָנָה מִגּוֹי  
גַּם־מִדְּמִן תִּדְּמִי  
אֲחֵרֶיךָ תִּלְךָ חֶרֶב:  
קוֹל צַעֲקָה מִחֲרוֹנַיִם ג  
שָׁד וְשֹׁבֵר גְּדוֹל:  
נִשְׁבְּרָה מוֹאָב ד  
הַשְׁמִיעוּ זַעֲקָה צְעוּרִיהָ צְעִירֶיהָ:  
כִּי מַעַלְה הַלְּחֹת הַלְּחִית ה  
בְּבִכִּי יַעֲלֶה־בְּכִי

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 nor 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

- <sup>1</sup> 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).
- <sup>2</sup> 'Heshbon' (חֲשִׁבּוֹן, modern Hesban, 12 Km north of Medeba) forms a play on words with חֲשָׁבוּ, 'they plotted'; 'Madmen' (מִדְּמִן, modern Khirbet Dimna, 12 Km north of Kerak) plays on תִּדְּמִי, 'will be silenced'.
- <sup>3</sup> 'Horonaim' was apparently in the eastern part of the country, on the edge of the desert.
- <sup>4</sup> 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.
- <sup>5</sup> 'Luhith' is unidentified but seems to have been in the west. The *Kethib*/*Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.



כִּי בַמִּוֶּרֶד חֹרֶנַיִם  
 צָרִי צַעֲקַת־שֹׁבֵר שָׁמְעוּ:  
 נָסוּ מִלִּטּוֹ נַפְשֵׁכֶם  
 וְתִהְיֶינָה כַּעֲרוּעָר בַּמִּדְבָּר:  
 כִּי יֵעַן בִּטְחָךְ בַּמַּעֲשִׂיךְ  
 וּבִאֲזָרוֹתֶיךָ גַּם־אֵת תִּלְכְּדִי  
 וַיֵּצֵא כְּמִישׁ כְּמוֹשׁ בְּגוֹלָה  
 כַּהֲנָיו וְשָׂרָיו יַחַד יַחֲדָיו:  
 וַיָּבֵא שָׂדֶד אֶל־כָּל־עִיר  
 וְעִיר לֹא תִמָּלֵט  
 וְאֶבֶד הָעֵמֶק וְנִשְׁמַד הַמִּישֹׁר  
 אֲשֶׁר אָמַר יְהוָה:  
 תִּנּוּ־צִיץ לְמוֹאָב  
 כִּי נֵצַא תֵּצֵא  
 וְעָרֶיהָ לְשָׁמָּה תִּהְיֶינָה  
 מֵאֵין 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.

יֵאָרֹר עֹשֶׂה מְלָאכֶת יְהוָה רַמְיָה וְאֲרֹר מִנֵּג חֲרָבוֹ  
 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 כַּעֲרוּד) follows the LXX (Aquila); the MT has ‘like Aroer’ (כַּעֲרוּעָר).

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.

יֵא שֶׁאֲנֵן מִזֶּאֱב מִנְעוּרָיו  
וְשֶׁקֶט הוּא אֶל-שִׁמְרָיו  
וְלֹא-הוֹרֵק מִכָּלִי אֶל-כָּלִי  
וּבְגוּלָה לֹא הִלָּךְ  
עַל-כֵּן עָמַד טַעְמוֹ בּוֹ  
וְרִיחוֹ לֹא נִמְרָ: {ס}

יב לָכֵן הֵנָּה-יָמִים בָּאִים נֹאס־יְהוָה וְשִׁלַּחְתִּי-לּוֹ  
צִעִים וְצִעָהּ וְכָלִיו יִרְקוּ וְנִבְלִיהֶם יִנְפְּצוּ: יג וּבֶשׂ  
מִזֶּאֱב מִכְּמוֹשׁ כְּאֲשֶׁר-בָּשׂוּ בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל מִבֵּית אֵל  
מִבְּטָחָם:

יד אֵיךְ תֹּאמְרוּ גִבּוֹרִים אֲנַחְנוּ  
וְאֲנֹשֵׁי-חֵיל לְמַלְחָמָה:  
טו שִׁדָּד מִזֶּאֱב וְעָרִיָּה עָלָה  
וּמִבְּחַר בַּחֲוָרָיו יִרְדּוּ לְטַבַּח  
נֹאס־הַמֶּלֶךְ יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת שְׁמוֹ:  
טז קָרוֹב אִיד־מִזֶּאֱב  
לְבוֹא וְרַעְתּוֹ מִהֵרָה מְאֹד:

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.

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.

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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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."

ז' נָדוּ לוֹ כָּל־סְבִיבָיו  
 וְכָל יֹדְעֵי שְׁמוֹ  
 אָמְרוּ אִיכָּה נִשְׁבַּר מִטֵּה־עֹז  
 מִקֵּל תִּפְאָרָה:  
 יח רְדֵי מִכְבוֹד יֹשְׁבֵי וְשְׁבִי בַצָּמָא  
 יֹשֶׁבֶת בֵּת־דִּיבּוֹן  
 כִּי־שָׁדַד מוֹאָב עָלָה בָּךְ  
 שָׁחַת מִבְצָרֶיךָ:  
 ט אֶל־דֶּרֶךְ עֲמָדִי וְצַפִּי  
 יוֹשֶׁבֶת עֲרוֹעֵר  
 שְׁאַל־נָס וְנִמְלָטָה  
 אָמְרִי מִה־נִּהְיָתָה:  
 כ הִבִּישׁ מוֹאָב כִּי־חָתָה  
 הִלִּילִי וְזַעֲקִי [הִלִּילוּ וְזַעֲקוּ]  
 הִגִּידוּ בְּאֶרְנוֹן  
 כִּי שָׁדַד מוֹאָב:

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!"

כא וּמִשְׁפַּט בָּא אֶל־אֶרֶץ הַמִּישֹׁר אֶל־חֲלוֹן וְאֶל־  
 יַהֲצָה וְעַל־מוֹפֶעֶת מִיַּפְעָת: 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 דִּבְלָתַיִם: כג וְעַל קִרְיַתַּיִם וְעַל־בֵּית גַּמּוּל  
וְעַל־בֵּית מְעוֹן: כד וְעַל־קְרִיּוֹת וְעַל־בְּצָרָה וְעַל כָּל־  
עָרֵי אֶרֶץ מוֹאָב הָרְחֻקוֹת וְהַקְּרִבּוֹת:

כה נִגְדָּעָה קֶרֶן מוֹאָב

וְזָרְעוֹ נִשְׁבְּרָה נֶאֱמַר יְהוָה:

כו הַשְׁכִּירָהוּ כִּי עַל־יְהוָה הִגְדִּיל וְסָפַק מוֹאָב  
בְּקִיאָו וְהָיָה לְשֹׁחַק גַּם־הוּא: כז וְאִם לֹא הִשְׁחָק  
הָיָה לְךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל אִם־בְּגַנְבִים נִמְצְאָה נִמְצָא כִּי־מִדֵּי  
דְּבָרֶיךָ בּוֹ תִתְנַדֵּד:

כח עֲזְבוּ עָרִים וְשִׁכְנוּ בַּסֶּלַע

יֹשְׁבֵי מוֹאָב

וְהָיוּ כִּדּוֹנָה

תִּקְנֶן בְּעֵבְרֵי פִי־פַחַת:

כט שָׁמַעְנוּ גְּאוֹן־מוֹאָב

גְּאָה מְאֹד

Diblathaim; <sup>23</sup> upon Kiriathaim, upon Beth-Gamul and upon Beth-Meon; <sup>24</sup> upon Kerioth, upon Bozrah, and upon all the towns of Moab, both far and near.

<sup>25</sup> Moab's horn has been cut off  
and his arm is broken, says Yahweh.

<sup>26</sup> Make him drunk, for he has set himself up against Yahweh; let Moab wallow in his vomit; he shall become a laughing-stock. <sup>27</sup> Israel was a laughing-stock for you, though he was not caught among thieves; but whenever you spoke of him you shook your head!

<sup>28</sup> 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.

<sup>29</sup> We have heard about Moab's pride,  
so very proud!

<sup>23</sup> '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).

<sup>24</sup> 'Bozrah' was the capital city of Edom and the hometown of Jacob's brother, Esau.

<sup>25</sup> The LXX lacks 'Yahweh declares', possibly an addition.

<sup>26</sup> 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).

<sup>27</sup> 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?"

<sup>28</sup> The point of the last 2 lines is the inaccessibility of the dove's nest.

<sup>29</sup> 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.

גְּבוּהוֹ וּגְאוֹנוֹ וּגְאוֹתוֹ  
וְרִם לְבָבוֹ:  
אֲנִי יֹדַעְתִּי נֶאֱסִי-יְהוָה ל  
עֲבָרְתוֹ וְלֹא-כֵן  
בִּדְיוֹ לֹא-כֵן עָשׂוֹ:  
עַל-כֵּן עַל-מוֹאָב אֵילִיל לֹא  
וְלִמוֹאָב כָּלָה אֲזַעַק  
אֶל-אֲנָשֵׁי קִיר-חֶרֶשׁ יִהְיֶה:  
מִבְּכִי יַעְזֹר אֲבָכָה-לָךְ לֹב  
הַגֶּפֶן שִׁבְמָה  
נִטְיַשְׁתִּיךָ עָבְרוּ יָם  
עַד יָם יַעְזֹר נִגְעוּ  
עַל-קִיְצֶךָ וְעַל-בְּצִירֶךָ  
שָׁדַד נָפַל:  
וְנִאֲסָפָה שִׁמְחָה וְגִיל מִכָּרְמְךָ לֹג  
וּמֵאֲרָץ מוֹאָב

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.

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 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 4<sup>th</sup> line follows 2 Hebrew MSS and Is 16:8; the MT has ‘as far as the Sea of Jazer’.

33 For the 2<sup>nd</sup> line, the LXX reads simply ‘from the land of Moab’.

וַיִּזֶן מִיִּקְבֵּים הַשִּׁבְתִּי  
לֹא־יִדְרֹךְ הַיָּד  
הַיָּד לֹא הַיָּד:

I have dried up the wine in the presses,  
no one treads the grapes any more,  
and the joyful shouting has ceased.

יָד מִזְעַקַת חֲשָׁבוֹן עַד־אֶלְעָלָה עַד־יָהֶץ נִתְּנוּ קוֹלָם  
מִצְעָר עַד־חֲרָנִים עֲגֹלַת שְׁלִישִׁיָּה בִּי גַם־מִי נִמְרִים  
לְמַשְׁמוֹת יֵהוּ: לֵה וְהַשְׁבַּתִּי לְמוֹאָב נְאֻם־יְהוָה  
מִעֲלָה בָמָה וּמִקְטִיר לֹא־הָיוּ: לוֹ עַל־כֵּן לְבִי לְמוֹאָב  
כַּחֲלִילִים יִהְיֶה וּלְבִי אֶל־אֲנָשֵׁי קִיר־חֶרֶשׁ כַּחֲלִילִים  
יִהְיֶה עַל־כֵּן יִתְּרַת עָשָׂה אֲבָדוֹ: לז בִּי כָל־רֹאשׁ  
קָרְחָה וְכָל־זָקֵן גָּרָעָה עַל כָּל־יָדַיִם גִּדְּדָתָה וְעַל־  
מִתְּנִים שָׁק: לח עַל כָּל־גִּגְוֹת מוֹאָב וּבִרְחֻבֶתֶיהָ  
כָּלָה מִסִּפָּד בִּי־שִׁבְרָתִי אֶת־מוֹאָב כְּכֹלִי אֵין־חֶפֶץ  
בּוֹ נְאֻם־יְהוָה: לט אֵיךְ חָתָה הִילִילוּ אֵיךְ הִפְנָה־עָרָךְ  
מוֹאָב בּוֹשׁ וְהָיָה מוֹאָב לְשֹׁחַק וּלְמַחֲתָה לְכָל־  
סְבִיבָיו: {ס}

<sup>34</sup> 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. <sup>35</sup> And I shall bring an end, in Moab, Yahweh says, to those offering sacrifice on the high places or making offerings to their gods. <sup>36</sup> 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. <sup>37</sup> Yes, every head is shaved, every beard cut off, gashes are on every hand, sackcloth round every waist. <sup>38</sup> 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. <sup>39</sup> 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 בִּי־כָה אָמַר יְהוָה  
הִנֵּה כְנֻשָׁר יִדָּאָה

<sup>40</sup> For, thus Yahweh says:  
Look, he will swoop down like an eagle,

<sup>34</sup> 'And Elealeh' is a conjectural translation (see Is 15:4); the MT has 'as far as Elealeh'.

<sup>35</sup> On the significance of the 'high places', see #7:31.

<sup>36</sup> 'Kir-Heres' (קִיר־חֶרֶשׁ, meaning 'City of the Sun') was the capital of Moab.

<sup>37</sup> The MT lacks the word 'every' before 'waist', here restored following a number of Hebrew MSS and versions.

<sup>38</sup> The literal translation of 'says Yahweh' is 'oracle of Yahweh'.

<sup>39</sup> The NJB refers to Moab with masculine pronouns; here, we follow the MT & NETB.

<sup>40</sup> Conquering nations are often identified with a swiftly flying eagle swooping down on its victims (cf. Dt 28:49).



וּפְרַשׁ כַּנְפָּיו אֶל־מוֹאָב׃  
 מֵא גִלְכָּדָה הַקְרִיּוֹת  
 וְהַמְצָדוֹת נִתְפָּשָׁה  
 וְהָיָה לֵב גִּבּוֹרֵי מוֹאָב  
 בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא כֵּלֶב אִשָּׁה מְצָרָה׃  
 מֵב וְנִשְׁמַד מוֹאָב מֵעַם  
 כִּי עַל־יְהוָה הִגְדִּיל׃  
 מֵג פַּחַד וּפַחַת וּפֶחַ  
 עַל־יָד יוֹשֵׁב מוֹאָב  
 נֹאמַר־יְהוָה׃  
 מֵד הַנִּס הַזֶּס מִפְּנֵי הַפַּחַד  
 יִפֹּל אֶל־הַפַּחַת  
 וְהָעֹלָה מִן־הַפַּחַת  
 יִלְכָּד בַּפֶּחַ  
 כִּי־אָבִיא אֵלֶיהָ אֶל־מוֹאָב שְׁנַת פְּקֻדָּתָם  
 נֹאמַר־יְהוָה׃  
 מֵה בָּצַל חֲשֹׁבוֹן עֲמָדוֹ  
 מִפֶּחַ נְסִים

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 2<sup>nd</sup> line, and the NRSV has a masculine one; here, we follow the MT & NETB.

43 The assonance in the 1<sup>st</sup> line is underscores the extensive trouble that is in store.

44 The Kethib/Qere difference here would benefit from an explanation. 'All this' (in the 4<sup>th</sup> line) follows the LXX and Peshitta; the MT has 'on her'.

45 'Palace' (מִבֵּית) follows 3 Hebrew MSS; the MT has 'middle' (מִבְּיֶן). 'Sihon' was the Amorite king who had Heshbon as his capital city (Nb 21:27–28, Dt 2:26–37).

כִּי־אֵשׁ יֵצֵא מִחֶשְׁבּוֹן  
 וְלֹהֶבֶת מִבֵּין סִיחֹן  
 וְתֹאכַל פְּאֶת מוֹאָב  
 וְקִדְקֹד בְּנֵי שָׁאוֹן:  
 מו אוֹיֵלָךְ מוֹאָב  
 אֶבֶד עַם־כְּמוֹשׁ  
 כִּי־לִקְחוּ בְנֵיךָ בַּשָּׂבִי  
 וּבְנֹתֶיךָ בַּשְּׁבִיָּה:  
 מז וְשִׁבְתִּי שְׁבוּת־מוֹאָב בְּאַחֲרִית הַיָּמִים  
 נְאֻם־יְהוָה  
 עַד־הֵנָּה מִשְׁפַּט 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.

<sup>46</sup> Disaster for you, Moab!

The people of Chemosh are lost,  
 for your sons have been taken into exile  
 and your daughters into captivity.

<sup>47</sup> Yet, I shall bring back Moab's captives in the final days,  
 says Yahweh.

Thus far is the judgement on Moab.

<sup>46</sup> 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.

<sup>47</sup> The last line is a scribal note (cf. 51:64).

## ירמיהו פרק מט

## JEREMIAH 49

<sup>א</sup> לַבְנֵי עַמּוֹן <sup>1</sup> To the Ammonites:

כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה  
הַבָּנִים אֵין לְיִשְׂרָאֵל  
אִם־יֹרֵשׁ אֵין לוֹ  
מִדּוּעַ יִרַשׁ מֶלֶכְם אֶת־גָּד  
וְעַמּוֹ בְּעָרָיו יֵשֵׁב:  
לִכֵּן הִנֵּה יָמִים בָּאִים נְאֻם־יְהוָה <sup>ב</sup>  
וְהִשְׁמַעְתִּי אֶל־רַבַּת בְּנֵי־עַמּוֹן  
תִּרְוַעַת מִלְחָמָה וְהִיתָה לְתֵל שְׂמָמָה  
וּבְנֵיהָ בָאֵשׁ תִּצְתָּנָה  
וְיִרַשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת־יְרֻשָּׁיו  
אָמַר יְהוָה:  
הִלִּילִי חֲשִׁבּוֹן כִּי שִׁדְּדָה־עִי <sup>ג</sup>  
צִעֲקָנָה בָנוֹת רַבָּה  
חֲגֹרְנָה שִׁקִּים  
סָפְדָנָה וְהִתְשׁוּטְטָנָה בַּגְּדָרוֹת  
כִּי מֶלֶכְם בְּגוֹלָה יֵלֶךְ  
כָּהֲנָיו וְשָׂרָיו יַחֲדָיו:

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?

<sup>2</sup> 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.

<sup>3</sup> 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.

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### JEREMIAH 49

<sup>1</sup> 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 מֶלֶכְם ('their king').

<sup>2</sup> The literal translation of 'villages' is 'daughters' (cf. Jg 1:27).

<sup>3</sup> '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 4<sup>th</sup> line is uncertain: here, we follow the NJB; the NRSV has, "and slash yourselves with whips."

ד מה־תִּתְהַלֵּל בְּעַמִּים זָב עַמְּךָ  
 הַבַּת הַשׁוֹבֵבָה  
 הַבֹּטָחָה בְּאַצְרֹתֶיהָ  
 מִי יָבֹוא אֵלַי:  
 ה הֲנִי מְבִיא עָלֶיךָ פָּחַד  
 נְאֻם־אֲדֹנֵי יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת  
 מִכָּל־סְבִיבֶיךָ  
 וְנִדְחֶתֶם אִישׁ לִפְנֵיו  
 וְאִין מִקְבֵּץ לְנַדֵּד:  
 ו אַחֲרֵי־כֵן  
 אָשִׁיב אֶת־שְׁבוֹת בְּנֵי־עַמּוֹן  
 נְאֻם־יְהוָה: {פ}

ז לְאֶדוֹם 7 To Edom:

כָּה אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת  
 הָאֵין עוֹד חֲכָמָה בְּתִימָן  
 אֲבָדָה עֲצָה מִבָּנִים  
 נִסְרַחָה חֲכָמָתָם:  
 ח גִּסּוּ הַפָּנוּ הָעַמִּיקוּ לְשֶׁבֶת  
 יֹשְׁבֵי דֶדָן

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.

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 4<sup>th</sup> 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 אֵיד עֲשׂוּ הַבֹּאֲתִי עָלָיו

עַתָּה פִּקְדֹתַי:

ט אִם־בָּצֻרִים בָּאוּ לָךְ

לֹא יִשְׁאָרוּ עוֹלָלוֹת

אִם־גִּנְבִים בַּלֵּילָה

הַשְּׁחִיתוּ דַּיִם:

י כִּי־אֲנִי חֲשַׁפְתִּי אֶת־עֲשׂוֹ

גְּלִיתִי אֶת־מִסְתָּרָיו

וְנִחְבֶּה לֹא יוֹכֵל

שָׂדֶד זֶרַעוּ וְאָחִיו וּשְׁכֵנָיו וְאֵינָנוּ:

א עֲזָבָה יְתִמִּיךָ אֲנִי אֲחִיָּה

וְאֶלְמָנוֹתֶיךָ עָלַי תִּבְטָחוּ: {ס}

יב כִּי־כֹה | אָמַר יְהוָה הִנֵּה אֲשֶׁר־אֵין מִשְׁפָּטָם

לְשִׁתּוֹת הַכּוֹס שְׁתּוֹ יִשְׁתּוּ וְאַתָּה הוּא נָקָה תִּנָּקֶה

לֹא תִנָּקֶה כִּי שְׁתָּה תִשְׁתָּה: יג כִּי בִי נִשְׁפָּעְתִּי נֶאֱס־

יְהוָה כִּי־לִשְׁמָה לְחִרְפָּה לְחִרְבַּ וּלְקִלְלָה תִהְיֶה

בְּצָרָה וְכָל־עֲרִיָּה תִהְיֶינָה לְחִרְבוֹת עוֹלָם:

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!

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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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.

יְהוָה שְׁמוּעָה שְׁמַעְתִּי מֵאֵת יְהוָה

וְצִיר בְּגוֹיִם שְׁלֹחַ

הַתְּקַבֵּצוּ וּבֹאוּ עָלֶיהָ

וְקוּמוּ לְמִלְחָמָה:

טו כִּי־הִנֵּה קָטָן נִתְּתִיד בְּגוֹיִם

בְּזוּי בָּאָדָם:

טז הַתְּפַלֵּצְתָּ הַשִּׂיא אֶתְךָ

זָדוֹן לִבְךָ

שָׁכַנְתָּ בְּחַגְוֵי הַסֵּלַע

תַּפְשִׂי מְרוֹם גְּבֻעָה

כִּי־תִגְבֶּיָה בְנֶשֶׁר קִנְיָךְ

מִשָּׁם אוֹרִידְךָ נֶאֱסִי־יְהוָה:

יז וְהִיְתָה אֲדוֹם לְשֹׂמָה כָּל עֹבֵר עָלֶיהָ יִשָּׁם וַיִּשְׁרַק

עַל־כָּל־מְכוֹתָהָ: יח כִּמְהַפֵּכַת סֵדִם וְעִמְרָה וּשְׁכֻנֶיהָ

אָמַר יְהוָה לֹא־יֵשֵׁב שָׁם אִישׁ וְלֹא־יִגְוֹר בָּהּ בֶּן־

אָדָם:

יט הִנֵּה כְּאַרְיֵה יַעֲלֶה מִגְּאֹן הַיַּרְדֵּן

אֶל־נֹה 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 תְּפַלֵּצְתָּ ('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 4<sup>th</sup> line is, "and I will single out the choicest of his rams." Vv. 19–21 are an editorial revision of 50:44–46.



כִּי־אַרְגִּיעָה אֲרִיצֵנּוּ מֵעֲלֶיהָ  
 וּמִי בַחֹר אֶלֶיהָ אֶפְקֹד  
 כִּי מִי כְמוֹנִי  
 וּמִי יַעֲיִדֵנִי  
 וּמִי־זֶה רֹעֶה  
 אֲשֶׁר יַעֲמֹד לִפְנָי: {ס}  
 לָכֵן שָׁמְעוּ עֲצַת־יְהוָה כ  
 אֲשֶׁר יַעַן אֶל־אֲדֹם  
 וּמַחֲשַׁבוֹתָיו אֲשֶׁר חָשַׁב אֶל־יֹשְׁבֵי תִימָן  
 אִם־לֹא יִסְחָבוּם  
 צִעְרֵי הַצֹּאן  
 אִם־לֹא יֵשִׁים עֲלֵיהֶם נוֹהֵם:  
 מִקּוֹל נִפְלֹם רַעְשָׁה הָאָרֶץ כא  
 צִעֲקָה בֵּים־סוּף נִשְׁמַע קוֹלָהּ:  
 הִנֵּה כְנֶשֶׁר יַעֲלֶה וַיִּדָּאָה כב  
 וַיִּפְרֹשׂ כַּנְפָיו עַל־בְּצָרָה  
 וַיְהִי לֵב גְּבוּרֵי אֲדֹם  
 בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא כָּלֵב אִשָּׁה מִצָּרָה: {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' (תִּימָן) 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.

בג לַדְּמֶשֶׁק 23 To Damascus:

בוֹשָׁה חֲמַת וְאַרְפָּד  
כִּי־שָׁמְעָה רָעָה שָׁמְעוּ נִמְגּוּ  
בַיָּם דָּאָגָה  
הַשֶּׁקֶט לֹא יוּכַל:

כד רָפְתָה דְּמֶשֶׁק הַפְּנִתָה לָנוֹס  
וְרִטְט | הַחֲזִיקָה צָרָה  
וְחִבְלִים אֲחֻזָּתָה  
כִּי־לֵדָה:

כה אֵיךְ לֹא־עֲזָבָה עִיר תְּהֵלָה תְּהִלָּתָה  
קָרִית מְשׁוֹשִׁי:

כו לָכֵן יִפְּלוּ בַחֲזִירָהּ בְּרַחֲבֶיהָ  
וְכָל־אֲנָשֵׁי הַמִּלְחָמָה יָדְמוּ בַיּוֹם הַהוּא  
נֹאם יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת:

כז וְהִצַּתִּי אֵשׁ בַּחֲזֹמֶת דְּמֶשֶׁק  
וְאֶכְלָה אֲרָמֶנוֹת 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 | וְלִמְמַלְכוֹת 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 (בַּיָּם); 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 לוֹ.

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:  
 אֶהְיֶיהֶם וְצֹאנָם יִקְחוּ כט  
 יִרְעוּתֵיהֶם וְכָל־כְּלֵיהֶם  
 וְגַמְלֵיהֶם יִשְׂאוּ לָהֶם  
 וְקִרְאוּ עֲלֵיהֶם מִגֹּזֵר מִסָּבִיב:  
 נָסוּ נָדוּ מֵאֵד הָעַמִּיקוּ לַשָּׁבֶת ל  
 יִשְׁבִּי חֲצוֹר נֶאֱסִי־הָהָה  
 כִּי־יַעַץ עָלֵיכֶם נְבוּכַדְרֶאצַּר מֶלֶךְ־בָּבֶל  
 עָצָה וַחֲשַׁב עֲלֵיהֶם עָלֵיכֶם מַחֲשָׁבָה:  
 קומו עלו אל־גֹּזֵי שְׁלֹו יוֹשֵׁב לְבֶטֶח לא  
 נֶאֱסִי־הָהָה  
 לֹא־דִלְתִּים וְלֹא־בָרִיחַ לוֹ  
 בִּדְדָה יִשְׁכְּנוּ:  
 וְהָיוּ גַמְלֵיהֶם לְבָז לב  
 וְהָמוֹן מִקְנֵיהֶם לְשָׁלָל  
 וְזִרְתֵּיהֶם לְכָל־רוּחַ  
 קִצּוּצֵי פֶאֶה  
 וּמִכָּל־עֲבָרֵיו אָבִיא אֶת־אִידִם  
 נֶאֱסִי־הָהָה:

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 חָצֹר לְמַעוֹן תְּנִינִים  
 שְׁמָמָה עַד־עוֹלָם  
 לֹא־יֵשֵׁב שָׁם אִישׁ  
 וְלֹא־יִגֹּר בָּהּ בֶּן־אָדָם: {ס}

לְדֹ אֲשֶׁר הָיָה דְּבַר־יְהוָה אֶל־יִרְמְיָהוּ הַנָּבִיא אֶל־  
 עֵילָם בְּרֹאשִׁית מַלְכוּת צְדַקְיָה מֶלֶךְ־יְהוּדָה  
 לֵאמֹר: לֵה כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת  
 הַנְּנִי שֶׁבֶר אֶת־קֶשֶׁת עֵילָם  
 רֹאשִׁית גְּבוּרָתָם:  
 וְהֵבֵאתִי אֶל־עֵילָם אַרְבַּע רוּחוֹת  
 מֵאַרְבַּע קְצוֹת הַשָּׁמַיִם  
 וְזָרְתִּים לְכָל הָרְחוֹת הָאֵלֶּה  
 וְלֹא־יִהְיֶה הַגּוֹי  
 אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יָבֹא שָׁם נִדְחֵי עוֹלָם עֵילָם:  
 וְהִחַתַּתִּי אֶת־עֵילָם לְפָנַי אִיְבֵיהֶם וּלְפָנַי  
 מִבְּקָשֵׁי נַפְשָׁם  
 וְהֵבֵאתִי עֲלֵיהֶם  
 רָעָה אֶת־חֲרוֹן אַפִּי נֹאֵם־יְהוָה

<sup>33</sup> Hazor will become the lair of jackals,  
 desolate forever.  
 No one will be there any more,  
 no human being settle there again.

<sup>34</sup> The word of Yahweh that came to the prophet Jeremiah about Elam,  
 at the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah king of Judah: <sup>35</sup> Thus says  
 Yahweh Sabaoth:

Look, I shall break Elam's bow,  
 the source of his might.

<sup>36</sup> 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.

<sup>37</sup> 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.

<sup>33</sup> Compare the 1<sup>st</sup> line with 9:11.

<sup>34</sup> As early as 597 BCE, Jeremiah may have foreseen the conquest of Elam by the Persians.

<sup>35</sup> The Elamites were renowned for their prowess as archers.

<sup>36</sup> 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.

<sup>37</sup> The NRSV formats vv. 34–38 as prose; here, we follow the NJB.

וְשַׁלַּחְתִּי אַחֲרֵיהֶם אֶת־הַחֶרֶב  
עַד כְּלוֹתִי אוֹתָם:  
וְשִׁמַּתִּי כִסְאִי בְּעִילָם לַח  
וְהֶאֱבַדְתִּי מֶשֶׁם מֶלֶךְ וְשָׂרִים  
נְאֻם־יְהוָה:

I shall pursue them with the sword  
until I have destroyed them all.

<sup>38</sup> I shall set up my throne in Elam,  
uprooting its king and princes,  
says Yahweh.

לֹט וְהָיָה | בְּאַחֲרֵית הַיָּמִים אֲשׁוּב אֶת־שְׁבוֹת <sup>39</sup> But it shall happen in the final days, that I shall bring Elam's captives  
שְׁבִית עִילָם נְאֻם־יְהוָה: {פ} back, says Yahweh.

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<sup>38</sup> 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.

<sup>39</sup> The *Kethib*/*Qere* differences here would benefit from explanations.

## ירמיהו פרק נ

## JEREMIAH 50

- <sup>א</sup> הַדְּבָר אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר יְהוָה אֶל-בָּבֶל אֶל-אֶרֶץ כַּשְׂדִּים  
בְּיַד יִרְמְיָהוּ הַנָּבִיא:
- <sup>ב</sup> הִגִּידוּ בַּגּוֹיִם וְהַשְׁמִיעוּ וְשִׂאוּ-נֶס  
הַשְׁמִיעוּ אֶל-תַּכְחָדוּ  
אָמְרוּ נִלְכְּדָה בָּבֶל הַבֵּישׁ בֵּל  
חַת מְרֻדָּה  
הַבִּישׁוּ עֲצָבֶיהָ  
חַתוּ גִלּוּלֶיהָ:
- <sup>ג</sup> כִּי עָלָה עָלֶיהָ גּוֹי מִצָּפוֹן  
הוּא יִשִּׁית אֶת-אֶרֶצָהּ לְשָׂמָה  
וְלֹא-יִהְיֶה יוֹשֵׁב  
בָּהּ מֵאָדָם וְעַד-בְּהֵמָה נָדוּ הַלְכוּ:  
בְּיָמִים הָהֵמָּה וּבַעֲתָהּ הָיָא נְאֻם-יְהוָה
- <sup>ד</sup> יָבֹאוּ בְנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל הֵמָּה וּבְנֵי-יְהוּדָה יַחְדָּו  
הִלּוּךְ וּבָכוּ לֵלְכוּ  
וְאֶת-יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיהֶם יִבְקְשׁוּ:
- <sup>1</sup> The word that Yahweh spoke against Babylon, against the land of the Chaldaeans, through the prophet Jeremiah:
- <sup>2</sup> 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."
- <sup>3</sup> 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.
- <sup>4</sup> 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

- <sup>1</sup> 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).
- <sup>2</sup> '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).
- <sup>3</sup> '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.
- <sup>4</sup> Here, as in v. 33 and 51:5, glossators seem to have been responsible for adding Judah alongside Israel (cf. similarly 31:31).



ה	צִיּוֹן יִשְׁאַלּוּ דֶּרֶךְ הִנֵּה פְּנֵיהֶם בָּאוּ וְנָלוּ אֶל־יְהוָה בְּרִית עוֹלָם לֹא תִשְׁכַּח: צֹאן אֲבֹדוֹת הִיא הִיוּ עַמִּי רְעִיָּהֶם הִתְעוּם הָרִים שׁוֹבְבִים שׁוֹבְבִים מִהָר אֶל־גִּבְעָה הָלְכוּ שָׁכְחוּ רִבְצָם: כָּל־מוֹצְאֵיהֶם אֲכָלוּם וְצָרִיָּהֶם אָמְרוּ לֹא נֹאשָׁם תַּחַת אֲשֶׁר חָטְאוּ לַיהוָה נֹוֹה־צֶדֶק וּמִקְנֵה אֲבוֹתֵיהֶם יְהוָה: {ס}	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!"
ו	רְעִיָּהֶם הִתְעוּם הָרִים שׁוֹבְבִים שׁוֹבְבִים מִהָר אֶל־גִּבְעָה הָלְכוּ שָׁכְחוּ רִבְצָם: כָּל־מוֹצְאֵיהֶם אֲכָלוּם וְצָרִיָּהֶם אָמְרוּ לֹא נֹאשָׁם תַּחַת אֲשֶׁר חָטְאוּ לַיהוָה נֹוֹה־צֶדֶק וּמִקְנֵה אֲבוֹתֵיהֶם יְהוָה: {ס}	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.
ז	כָּל־מוֹצְאֵיהֶם אֲכָלוּם וְצָרִיָּהֶם אָמְרוּ לֹא נֹאשָׁם תַּחַת אֲשֶׁר חָטְאוּ לַיהוָה נֹוֹה־צֶדֶק וּמִקְנֵה אֲבוֹתֵיהֶם יְהוָה: {ס}	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."
ח	נָדוּ מִתּוֹךְ בָּבֶל וּמֵאֶרֶץ כַּשְׂדִּים יֵצְאוּ וְהָיוּ כְּעִזֹּת לִפְנֵי־צֹאן: כִּי הִנֵּה אֲנִי מֵעִיר וּמִמְעָלָה עַל־בָּבֶל קֹה־לְגוֹיִם גְּדֹלִים	8	Escape from Babylon; leave the country of the Chaldeans. Be like he-goats, leading the sheep!
ט	כִּי הִנֵּה אֲנִי מֵעִיר וּמִמְעָלָה עַל־בָּבֶל קֹה־לְגוֹיִם גְּדֹלִים	9	See, I shall raise up against Babylon a league of mighty nations,

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.

מֵאֶרֶץ צָפוֹן  
וְעָרְכוּ לָהּ מִשָּׁם תִּלְכֹּד  
חֲצִיו כְּגִבּוֹר מִשְׁכִּיל  
לֹא יָשׁוּב רִיקָם:  
וְהִיְתָה כְּשָׂדִים לְשָׁלָל י  
כָּל־שָׁלִלֶיהָ יִשְׂבְּעוּ נְאֻם־יְהוָה:  
כִּי תִשְׂמַחִי תִשְׁמַחֻ כִּי תַעֲלִזִי תַעֲלִזוּ יא  
שְׁסִי נִחַלְתִּי  
כִּי תִפּוּשִׁי תִפּוּשׁוּ בְּעִגְלָה דָּשָׁה  
וְתִצְהַלִּי וְתִצְהַלּוּ בְּאַבְרִים:  
בּוֹשָׁה אִמְכֶם מֵאֵד יב  
חִפְרָה יוֹלִדְתֶּכֶם  
הִנֵּה אַחֲרִית גּוֹלִים  
מִדְּבַר צִיָּה וְעִרְבָה:  
מִקֶּצֶף יְהוָה לֹא תִשָּׁב יג  
וְהִיְתָה שְׁמֵמָה כָּלָה  
כָּל עֹבֵר עַל־בָּבֶל  
יִשֹּׁם וְיִשְׂרָק עַל־כָּל־מִכּוֹתֶיהָ:  
עָרְכוּ עַל־בָּבֶל | 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 3<sup>rd</sup> line should probably be read as יָרֹו (with a few *Hebrew MSS*) rather than יָרִי (with the *MT* and majority of *Hebrew MSS*).

כָּל־דֹּרְכֵי קֶשֶׁת  
 יָדוּ אֵלֶיהָ אֶל־תַּחֲמְלוּ אֶל־חֶץ  
 כִּי לִיהוָה חָטְאָה:  
 טו הֲרִיעוּ עָלֶיהָ סָבִיב נִתְּנָה יָדָהּ  
 נָפְלוּ אֲשׁוּרֵיֶיהָ אֲשׁוּרֵיֶיהָ  
 נִהְרָסוּ חֻמוֹתֶיהָ  
 כִּי נִקְמַת יְהוָה הִיא הִנֵּקְמוּ בָּהּ  
 כַּאֲשֶׁר עָשְׂתָה עֲשׂוּ־לָהּ:  
 טז כָּרְתוּ זֹרַעַ מִבְּבֶל  
 וְתַפֵּשׁ מִגֶּל בָּעֵת קָצִיר מִפְּנֵי  
 חֶרֶב הַיּוֹנָה  
 אִישׁ אֶל־עַמּוֹ יָפְנוּ  
 וְאִישׁ לְאֶרְצוֹ יָנֹסוּ: {ס}  
 זי שֶׁה פְּזוּרָה יִשְׂרָאֵל  
 אֲרֵיזוֹת הַדִּיחוּ  
 הָרֹאשׁוֹן אָכְלוּ מֶלֶךְ אֲשׁוּר וְזֶה הָאֲחֵרוֹן  
 עֲצָמוֹ נְבוּכַדְרֶאצַּר מֶלֶךְ 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 4<sup>th</sup> line would refer to the disasters of 605 and 598 BCE, and all the harassment that Israel experienced from Babylon up until the 4<sup>th</sup> 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 הִנְנִי  
פֹקֵד אֶל־מֶלֶךְ בָּבֶל וְאֶל־אֶרְצוֹ כַּאֲשֶׁר פִּקַּדְתִּי אֶל־  
מֶלֶךְ אַשּׁוּר:

יט וְשִׁבַּבְתִּי אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶל־נִוְהוֹ  
וְרַעַה הַכְרֵמַל וְהַבָּשָׁן  
וּבְהָר אֶפְרַיִם וְהַגִּלְעָד  
תִּשְׂבַּע נַפְשׁוֹ:

כ בַּיָּמִים הֵהֵם וּבַעֲתָה הִיא נֹאֵם־יְהוָה  
יִבְקֹשׁ אֶת־עֹן יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאִינֶנּוּ  
וְאֶת־חַטָּאת יְהוּדָה וְלֹא תִמְצָאֶנָּה  
כִּי אֶסְלַח לְאֲשֶׁר אֲשָׁאִיר: {פ}

כא עַל־הָאָרֶץ מִרְתַּיִם עָלָה עָלֶיהָ  
וְאֶל־יוֹשְׁבֵי פֶקוֹד  
חָרַב וְהַחֲרָם אַחֲרֵיהֶם  
נֹאֵם־יְהוָה  
וַעֲשֵׂה כָכָל אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתִיךָ: {ס}

כב קוֹל מִלְחָמָה בָּאָרֶץ  
וְשֹׁבֵר 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 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> 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.

בג	אֵיךְ נִגְדַע וַיִּשָּׁבֵר פְּטִישׁ כָּל־הָאָרֶץ אֵיךְ הָיְתָה לְשֹׁמָה בָּבֶל בְּגוֹיִם:	23	How the hammer of the world is cut down and broken! How Babylon has become a horror among the nations!
כד	יָקַשְׁתִּי לָךְ וְגַם־נִלְכַּדְתָּ בָּבֶל וְאַתָּה לֹא יָדַעְתָּ נִמְצְאתָ וְגַם־נִתְּפָשֶׁתָּ כִּי בִיהוָה הִתְגַּדְּרִיתָ:	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.
כה	פָּתַח יְהוָה אֶת־אוּצְרוֹ וַיּוֹצֵא אֶת־כָּלֵי זַעֲמוֹ כִּי־מִלֶּאכָה הִיא לְאֹדְנֵי יְהוָה צָבָאוֹת בְּאֶרֶץ כַּשְׂדִּים:	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.
כו	בָּאוּ־לָהּ מִקָּץ פִּתְחוּ מִאֲבָסֶיהָ סִלּוּהָ כְמוֹ־עֵרְמִים וְהַחְרִימוּהָ אֶל־תִּהְיֶה־לָּהּ שְׂאֲרִית:	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.
כז	חָרְבוּ כָל־פָּרִיָּה יִרְדּוּ לַטֶּבַח הֲוֵי עֲלֵיהֶם כִּי־בָא יוֹמָם עַתָּה פִּקְדָתָם: {ס}	27	Kill all her bulls; let them go down to the slaughter! Alas for them: their day has come, the time of their punishment.

<sup>23</sup> 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.

<sup>24</sup> Note that God is speaking in here, hence the opening 1P pronoun.

<sup>25</sup> 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.

<sup>26</sup> The meaning of the word here translated as 'from every side' (מִקָּץ) is uncertain. The word usually means 'end' or 'extremity' but may on occasion mean 'whole' or 'totality' ('without exception' or 'from all directions').

<sup>27</sup> Commentators are almost universally agreed that the reference to 'bulls' is figurative here for the princes and warriors.

כח קול נִסִּים וּפְלִטִים  
מֵאֶרֶץ בָּבֶל  
לְהִגִּיד בְּצִיּוֹן  
אֶת־נִקְמַת יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ  
נִקְמַת הַיְכָלֹ:

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 הַשְׁמִיעוּ אֶל־בָּבֶל | רִבִּים כָּל־דִּרְכֵי קֶשֶׁת חֲנוּ  
עָלֶיהָ סָבִיב אֶל־יְהִי־[לָהּ] פְּלִיטָה שְׁלֹמוֹ־לָהּ  
כַּפְעָלָהּ כָּכָל אֲשֶׁר עָשְׂתָה עֲשׂוֹ־לָהּ כִּי אֶל־יְהוָה  
זָדָה אֶל־קְדוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל: לֹכֵן יִפְּלוּ בַחֲוָרֶיהָ  
בְּרַחֲבֶיהָ וְכָל־אֲנָשֵׁי מִלְחָמָתָה יָדָמוּ 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 הִנְנִי אֵלֶיךָ זָדוֹן  
נְאֻם־אֲדֹנֵי יְהוָה עֲבָאוֹת  
כִּי בָא יוֹמֶךָ  
עַתָּה פִּקְדֹתֶיךָ:  
לב וְכָשֶׁל זָדוֹן וְנָפַל  
וְאִין לוֹ מִקִּים  
וְהִצַּתִּי אֵשׁ בְּעָרָיו  
וְאָכְלָה כָּל־סְבִיבָתָיו: {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 (3<sup>rd</sup> person) rather than direct (2<sup>nd</sup> person).



לַג כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת  
 עֲשׂוּקִים בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל וּבְנֵי־יְהוּדָה יַחְדָּו  
 וְכָל־שִׁבְיָהֶם הַחֲזִיקוּ בָם  
 מֵאֲנוּ שְׁלָחָם:  
 לַד גְּאֻלָּם | חֲזַק יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת שְׁמוֹ  
 רִיב יִרִיב אֶת־רִיבָם  
 לְמַעַן הִרְגִיעַ אֶת־הָאָרֶץ  
 וְהִרְגִּיז לִישְׁבֵי בָבֶל:  
 לַה חֶרֶב עַל־כַּשְׂדִּים  
 נֹאֲם־יְהוָה  
 וְאֶל־יֹשְׁבֵי בָבֶל  
 וְאֶל־שָׂרֶיהָ וְאֶל־חֲכָמֶיהָ:  
 לֹו חֶרֶב אֶל־הַבְּדִים וְנֹאֲלוּ  
 חֶרֶב אֶל־גִּבּוֹרֶיהָ וַחֲתּוּ:  
 לֹו חֶרֶב אֶל־סוּסֶיהָ וְאֶל־רֶכֶבָּהּ  
 וְאֶל־כָּל־הָעָרֹב 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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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  
חֶרֶב אֶל-אֲצֻרֹתֶיהָ וּבָזָזוּ:  
חֶרֶב אֶל-מִימֶיהָ וַיִּבָּשׁוּ  
כִּי אֶרֶץ פְּסָלִים הִיא  
וּבְאִימִים יִתְהַלְלוּ:  
לֶכֶן יֵשְׁבוּ צִיִּים אֶת-אֵיִם  
וַיֵּשְׁבוּ בָּהּ בְּנוֹת יַעֲנָה  
וְלֹא-תֵשֵׁב עוֹד לְנֶצַח  
וְלֹא תִשְׁכֹּן עַד-דָּוָר וְדָר:  
כַּמֶּה־פָּכַת אֱלֹהִים אֶת-סְדֹם וְאֶת-עֲמֹרָה  
וְאֶת-שְׁכִנְיָהּ נָאִם-יְהוָה  
לֹא-יֵשֵׁב שָׁם אִישׁ  
וְלֹא-יִגֹּר בָּהּ בֶּן-אָדָם:  
הִנֵּה עַם בָּא מִצָּפוֹן  
וְגֹזִי גָדוֹל וּמַלְכִּים רַבִּים  
יַעֲרוּ מִיִּרְכַּת־אֶרֶץ:  
קֶשֶׁת וְכִידָן יַחֲזִיקוּ  
אֲכַזְרֵי הַמָּה וְלֹא יִרְחֲמוּ

may they be like women!

A sword against her treasures: may they be plundered!

<sup>38</sup> Drought on her waters: may they dry up,  
for it is a country of images,  
and they go mad over idols!

<sup>39</sup> 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.

<sup>40</sup> 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.

<sup>41</sup> Look, a people is coming from the north, a mighty nation;  
from the far ends of the earth,  
many kings are stirring.

<sup>42</sup> They are armed with bow and spear;  
they are cruel and pitiless;

<sup>38</sup> Another reading for 'drought' is 'sword' (as in previous lines); the difference is only one vowel (חֶרֶב for חָרֶב).

<sup>39</sup> In the 1<sup>st</sup> line, the NRSV has 'in Babylon' in place of 'there', here following the NJB; the MT lacks either.

<sup>40</sup> Compare 49:18, where the same prophecy is applied to Edom.

<sup>41</sup> 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).

<sup>42</sup> The word 'daughter' is a personification of the city of Babylon and its inhabitants.

קוֹלָם כַּיִם יִהְיֶה  
 וְעַל־סוּסִים יִרְכָּבוּ  
 עָרוּדִים כְּאִישׁ לִמְלַחְמָה  
 עָלֶיךָ בַת־בָּבֶל:  
 שָׁמַע מֶלֶךְ־בָּבֶל אֶת־שִׁמְעָם מג  
 וּרְפוּ יָדָיו  
 צָרָה הִחְזִיקָתָהּ  
 חֵיל כִּיּוֹלָדָה:  
 הִנֵּה כְּאַרְיֵה יַעֲלֶה מִגְּאֹן הַיַּרְדֵּן מד  
 אֶל־גֹּנָה אִיתָן  
 כִּי־אַרְגָּעָה אֲרוּצִים אֲרִיצִים מֵעָלֶיהָ  
 וּמִי בַחֲזֹר אֵלֶיהָ אֶפְקֹד  
 כִּי מִי כְמוֹנִי  
 וּמִי יוֹעֵדֵנִי  
 וּמִי־זֶה רֹעֶה  
 אֲשֶׁר יַעֲמֹד לִפְנָי:  
 לֵכֵן שָׁמְעוּ עֲצַת־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!

- <sup>43</sup> The king of Babylon heard the news!  
 His hands fell limp  
 and anguish seized him,  
 pain like that of a woman in labour.  
<sup>44</sup> 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?  
<sup>45</sup> 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!

<sup>43</sup> Compare 6:22–24, where almost the same exact words as 50:41–43 are applied to the people of Judah.

<sup>44</sup> The *Kethib*/*Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

<sup>45</sup> 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 יֵשִׁים עֲלֵיהֶם נֹה:  
מִקּוֹל נִתְפָּשָׂה בָּבֶל נִרְעָשָׂה הָאָרֶץ  
וַיִּזְעַק בַּגּוֹיִם נִשְׁמָע: {ס}

Surely, their fold shall be appalled at their fate!

<sup>46</sup> The earth quakes at the sound of Babylon's capture  
and the shouting echoes through the nations.

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<sup>46</sup> 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

א כה אמר יהוה  
הגנל מעיר על-בבל ואלי-שבִי לב קמי  
רוח משחית:  
ב ושלחתי לבבל זרים וזרוה  
ויבקקו את-ארצה  
ביהיו עליה מסביב  
ביום רעה:  
ג אל-ידרך (ידרך) הדרך קשתו  
ואל-יתעל בסריגו  
ואל-תחמלו אל-בחריה  
החרימו כל-עבאיה:  
ד ונפלו חללים בארץ בשדים  
ומדקרים בחוצותיה:  
ה כי לא-אלמן ישראל ויהודה  
מאלהיו מיהוה עבאות  
כי ארצם מלאה אשם

## 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 זרים for זרים.
- 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 ידרך ('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 3<sup>rd</sup> person command (jussive) as NETB and NJPS do.
- 5 Vv. 5-19 all speak of God in the 3<sup>rd</sup> person; thus, the prophet, who is the spokesman for God (50:1), is speaking.

מְקִדּוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל:		against the Holy One of Israel.
גָּסוֹן מִתּוֹךְ בָּבֶל	ו	6 Escape from Babylon –
וּמִלְטוּ אִישׁ נַפְשׁוֹ		save your lives, each one of you;
אַל־תִּדְּמוּ בַעֲוֹנָהּ		do not perish for her guilt,
כִּי עַתָּה נִקְמָה הִיא לַיהוָה		for now is the time for Yahweh's vengeance:
גָּמוֹל הוּא מְשַׁלֵּם לָהּ:		he will pay her reward!
בּוֹסִיזָהּ בָּבֶל	ז	7 Babylon was a golden cup in Yahweh's hand;
בְּיַד־יְהוָה מְשַׁכֶּרֶת כָּל־הָאָרֶץ		she made the whole world drunk;
מִיַּיִנָּה שָׁתוּ גוֹיִם		the nations drank her wine
עַל־כֵּן יִתְהַלְּלוּ גוֹיִם:		and then the nations went mad.
פָּתָאם נָפְלָה בָּבֶל וַתִּשָּׁבֶר	ח	8 Babylon has suddenly fallen, is broken:
הִילִילוּ עָלֶיהָ		wail for her!
קְחוּ צֶרֶף לְמַכְאוּבָּהּ		Fetch balm for her wounds –
אוּלִי תִרְפָּא:		perhaps she can be cured!
רָפֵאנוּ אֶת־בָּבֶל וְלֹא נִרְפְּתָה	ט	9 “We tried to cure Babylon; she has got no better.
עֲזְבוּהָ וְנִלְךְ אִישׁ לְאֶרְצוֹ		Leave her alone and let us each go to his own country.”
כִּי־נִגַּע אֶל־הַשָּׁמַיִם מִשְׁפָּטָהּ		Yes, her sentence reaches to the sky,
וְנִשָּׂא עַד־שָׁחֳקִים:		rises to the very clouds.
הוֹצִיא יְהוָה אֶת־צַדִּיקְתֵּינוּ	י	10 Yahweh has brought forth our vindication.

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 those 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'.



בֹּאוּ וְנִסְפָּרָה בְּצִיּוֹן  
אֶת־מַעֲשֵׂה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ: {ס}

יא הִבְרוּ הַחֲצִים  
מִלְּאוּ הַשְּׁלֵטִים

הָעִיר יְהוָה אֶת־רוּחַ מַלְכֵי מְדֵי כִי־עַל־בָּבֶל מְזַמְתּוּ  
לְהַשְׁחִיתָהּ כִּי־נִקְמַת יְהוָה הִיא נִקְמַת הַיְכָלוֹ:

יב אֶל־חֹמֹת בָּבֶל שְׂאוֹנִים  
הַחֲזִיקוּ הַמִּשְׁמָר  
הַקִּימוּ שְׁמָרִים  
הַכִּינוּ הָאֲרָבִים

כִּי גַם־זָמַם יְהוָה גַּם־עָשָׂה אֶת אֲשֶׁר־דִּבֶּר אֵל־  
יִשְׂרָאֵל בָּבֶל:

יג שְׁכַנְתִּי שְׁכַנְתָּ עַל־מֵי־רַבִּים  
רַבַּת אוֹצְרוֹת  
בְּאֵ קֶצֶד  
אֲמַת בְּצַעֲד:

יד נִשְׁבַּע יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת בְּנִפְשׁוֹ  
כִּי אִם־מִלְּאֲתֶיךָ אָדָם כְּלֶקֶד  
וְעָנּוּ עָלֶיךָ הַיָּדָד: {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.

<sup>11</sup> The poem originally spoke of an 'enemy from the north' (50:3, 9, 41, 51:48); the prose gloss says more specifically the 'Medes'.

<sup>12</sup> 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).

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

<sup>14</sup> The 'you' refers to Babylon, which has been alluded to in the preceding verses under descriptive titles.

טו עֲשֵׂה אֶרֶץ בְּכֹחוֹ  
מְכִין תִּבְל בְּחִכְמָתוֹ  
וּבְתַבּוּנָתוֹ נָטָה שָׁמַיִם:  
טז לְקוֹל תִּתּוֹ הַמּוֹן מַיִם  
בְּשָׁמַיִם וַיַּעַל נִשְׁאִים מִקְצֵה-אֶרֶץ  
בְּרָקִים לַמָּטָר עָשָׂה  
וַיּוֹצֵא רוּחַ מֵאֵצְרָתוֹ:  
יז נִבְעֵר כָּל-אָדָם מִדַּעַת  
הַבֵּישׁ כָּל-צֹרֶף מִפֶּסֶל  
כִּי שֶׁקֶר נִסְכּוֹ  
וְלֹא-רוּחַ בָּם:  
יח הֵבֵל הֵמָּה מַעֲשֵׂה תַעֲתָעִים  
בְּעֵת פְּקֻדָּתָם יֵאָבְדוּ:  
יט לֹא-כִאֲלֵה חֵלֶק יַעֲקֹב  
כִּי-יוֹצֵר הַכֹּל הוּא  
וְשֹׁבֵט נִחְלָתוֹ  
יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת שְׁמוֹ: {פ}

15 By his power, he made the earth,  
by his wisdom, set the world firm,  
by his discernment, spread out the heavens.  
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.  
17 At this, everyone stands stupefied, uncomprehending;  
every goldsmith blushes for his idols:  
his castings are but delusion,  
with no breath in them.  
18 They are futile, a laughable production;  
at the time of their punishment they shall perish.  
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.

- 
- 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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).

כ	מִפֶּן־אַתָּה לִי כָּלִי מִלְחָמָה וְנִפְצַתִּי בְּךָ גּוֹיִם וְהִשַּׁחֲתִי בְּךָ מַמְלָכוֹת:	20	You were my mace, a weapon of war. With you, I crushed nations, struck kingdoms down.
כא	וְנִפְצַתִּי בְּךָ סּוֹס וּרְכָבוֹ וְנִפְצַתִּי בְּךָ רֶכֶב וּרְכָבוֹ:	21	With you, I crushed horse and rider; with you, I crushed chariot and charioteer.
כב	וְנִפְצַתִּי בְּךָ אִישׁ וְאִשָּׁה וְנִפְצַתִּי בְּךָ זָקֵן וְנָעַר וְנִפְצַתִּי בְּךָ בָּחוּר וּבִתּוּלָה:	22	With you, I crushed man and woman; with you, I crushed old man and boy; with you, I crushed young man and girl.
כג	וְנִפְצַתִּי בְּךָ רֹעֶה וְעֵדְרוֹ וְנִפְצַתִּי בְּךָ אֹכֵר וְצִמְדּוֹ וְנִפְצַתִּי בְּךָ פְּחוֹת וּסְגָנִים:	23	With you, I crushed shepherd and flock; with you, I crushed ploughman and team; with you, I crushed governors and magistrates.
כד	וְשָׁלַמְתִּי לְבָבֶל וּלְכָל יוֹשְׁבֵי כְּשָׁדִים אֶת כָּל־ רַעְתָם אֲשֶׁר־עָשׂוּ בְּצִיּוֹן לְעֵינֵיכֶם נָאִם יְהוָה: {ס}	24	I will repay Babylon and the inhabitants of Chaldaea, before your eyes, for all the wrongs they have done in Zion, says Yahweh.
כה	הִנְנִי אֵלַיִךְ הָרַ הַמִּשְׁחִית נָאִם־יְהוָה הַמִּשְׁחִית אֶת־כָּל־הָאָרֶץ	25	I am setting myself against you, says Yahweh, mountain of destruction, destroyer of the world!

<sup>20</sup> This oracle of the mace addresses the destroying enemy of Babylon.

<sup>21</sup> The nouns throughout vv. 21–23 are collective singulars.

<sup>22</sup> The NJB has ‘young’ in place of ‘boy’, here following the NRSV & NETB.

<sup>23</sup> The 2 words translated ‘governors’ and ‘magistrates’ are Accadian loan words that often occur together (cf. Ezk 23:6, 12, 23).

<sup>24</sup> 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<sup>b</sup>–23 to 2MP in ‘before your eyes’ argue that a change in referent/addressee occurs in this verse.

<sup>25</sup> 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 שָׂרָפָה:  
וְלֹא־יִקָּחוּ מִמֶּךָ אֶבֶן לִפְנֵה

כו

וְאֶבֶן לְמוֹסְדוֹת  
כִּי־שָׁמָּוֶת עוֹלָם תִּהְיֶה  
נֶאֱסִיָּהּ:

כז

שְׂאו־נֶס בְּאַרְץ  
תִּקְעוּ שׁוֹפָר בְּגוֹיִם  
קִדְּשׁוּ עָלֶיהָ גּוֹיִם  
הַשְׁמִיעוּ עָלֶיהָ מַמְלָכוֹת אֲרָרַט מִנִּי וְאַשְׁכְּנַז  
פָּקְדוּ עָלֶיהָ  
טַפְסֵר הָעֲלוֹ־סוֹס כִּילָק סָמַר:

כח קִדְּשׁוּ עָלֶיהָ גּוֹיִם אֶת־מַלְכֵי מִדֵּי אֶת־פַּחוֹתֶיהָ  
וְאֶת־כָּל־סִגְנֶיהָ וְאֶת כָּל־אֶרֶץ מְשֻׁלָּתָהּ:

כט

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 6<sup>th</sup> 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 גִבּוּרֵי בָבֶל לְהִלָּחֵם  
יֵשְׁבוּ בַּמְצֹדֹת נִשְׁתָּה גִבּוּרָתָם  
הֵיוּ לְנָשִׁים  
הָצִיתוּ מִשְׁפְּנֵתֶיהָ  
נִשְׁבְּרוּ בְּרִיחֶיהָ:  
לא רֶץ לְקִרְאֵת־רֶץ יְרוּץ  
וּמַגִּיד לְקִרְאֵת מַגִּיד  
לְהַגִּיד לְמֶלֶךְ בָּבֶל  
כִּי־נִלְכְּדָה עִירוֹ מִקְצָה:  
לב וְהַמַּעְבְּרוֹת נִתְפָּשׁוּ  
וְאֶת־הָאֲגָמִים שָׂרְפוּ בָאֵשׁ  
וְאֲנָשֵׁי הַמִּלְחָמָה נִבְהָלוּ: {ס}  
לג כִּי כֹה אָמַר יְהוָה עֲבָאוֹת אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל  
בֵּת־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 1<sup>st</sup> 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 מַעֲט  
 וּבָאָה עַת־הַקָּצִיר לָהּ:  
 לַד אֲכַלְנוּ אֶכְלָנִי הַמִּמְנוּ הַמִּמְנִי  
 נְבוּכַדְרֶאצַּר מֶלֶךְ בָּבֶל  
 הֵצִיגְנוּ הַצִּיגְנִי כְּלִי רֵיק  
 בִּלְעֵנוּ בִּלְעָנִי כְּתַנִּין מִלֵּא כְּרֶשֶׁז מַעֲדָנִי  
 הִדִּיחְנוּ הִדִּיחְנִי:  
 לַה חֲמָסִי וּשְׂאֵרִי עַל־בָּבֶל  
 תֹּאמַר יֹשֶׁבֶת צִיּוֹן  
 וְדַמִּי אֶל־יֹשְׁבֵי כְּשָׁדִים  
 תֹּאמַר יְרוּשָׁלַם: {ס}  
 לַד לֶכֶן כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה  
 הִנְנִי־רֹב אֶת־רִיבְךָ  
 וְנִקְמָתִי אֶת־נִקְמָתְךָ  
 וְהִחַרְבֹתִי אֶת־יָמָהּ  
 וְהִבְשַׁתִּי אֶת־מְקוֹרָהּ:  
 לַד וְהִיְתָה בָבֶל | לְגִלִּים |

when it is being trodden:  
 a little while, and the time for harvesting will come.

<sup>34</sup> 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.

<sup>35</sup> "On Babylon be the wounds I suffered,"  
 the daughters of Zion will say.  
 "On the inhabitants of Chaldaea be my blood,"  
 Jerusalem will say.

<sup>36</sup> 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.

<sup>37</sup> Babylon will become a heap of stones,

<sup>34</sup> 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 (הִדִּיחְנִי & בִּלְעָנִי, הַצִּיגְנִי, הַמִּמְנִי, אֶכְלָנִי) (הִדִּיחְנוּ, בִּלְעֵנוּ, הֵצִיגְנוּ, הַמִּמְנוּ, אֲכַלְנוּ), but the *Qere* (followed here) has singular (הִדִּיחְנִי & בִּלְעָנִי, הַצִּיגְנִי, הַמִּמְנִי, אֶכְלָנִי).

<sup>35</sup> The literal translation of 'the wounds I suffered' is 'my violence, my broken flesh'.

<sup>36</sup> 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.

<sup>37</sup> The literal translation of 'scorn' is 'hissing'.



מְעוֹן־תַּנִּים שְׁמָהּ וּשְׂרָקָה מֵאֵין יוֹשֵׁב:		the lair of jackals, a thing of horror and of scorn, with no inhabitant.
לח יַחְדּוֹ כְּכַפְרִים יִשְׁאָגוּ נִעְרוּ כְּגֹרֵי אַרְיֹת:	38	Like lions, they roar together; they growl like lions' whelps.
לט בַּחֲמָם אֲשִׁית אֶת־מִשְׁתֵּיהֶם וְהִשְׁכַּרְתִּים לְמַעַן יִעֲלְזוּ וְיִשְׁנוּ שְׁנַת־עוֹלָם וְלֹא יִקְיצוּ נֹאם 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 אֹרִידֵם כְּכָרִים לְטִבּוֹחַ כְּאַיִלִים 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 הִיטָה לְשִׁמָּה בָּבֶל 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־בָּבֶל 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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’ (בָּבֶל, 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 וּפְקַדְתִּי עַל־בֵּל בְּבָבֶל  
 וְהִצֵּאתִי אֶת־בִּלְעוֹ מִפִּי  
 וְלֹא־יִנְהָרוּ אֵלָיו עוֹד גּוֹיִם  
 גַּם־חֹמֶת בָּבֶל נָפְלָה׃  
 מֵה צֵאוּ מִתּוֹכָהּ עַמִּי  
 וּמִלְטוּ אִישׁ אֶת־נַפְשׁוֹ  
 מִחֲרוֹן אַף־יְהוָה׃

מו וּפְנִי־יִרְדּוּ לְבַבְכֶּם וְתִירְאוּ בִשְׁמוּעָה הַנִּשְׁמָעַת  
 בָּאֶרֶץ וּבֹא בַשָּׁנָה הַשְּׁמוּעָה וְאַחֲרָיו בַּשָּׁנָה  
 הַשְּׁמוּעָה וְחָמָס בָּאֶרֶץ וּמִשָּׁל עַל־מִשָּׁל׃

מז לְכֵן הִנֵּה יָמִים בָּאִים  
 וּפְקַדְתִּי עַל־פְּסִילֵי בָבֶל  
 וְכָל־אַרְצָהּ תִּבּוֹשׁ  
 וְכָל־חֲלָלֶיהָ יִפְּלוּ בְּתוֹכָהּ׃  
 מח וְרָנְנוּ עַל־בָּבֶל שָׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ

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.

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.

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 1<sup>st</sup> 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 מִצָּפוֹן יָבוֹא אֱלֹהֵי הַשּׁוֹדְדִים  
 נֹאמֵר יְהוָה:  
 גַּם-בָּבֶל לִנְפֹל חֲלִלֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מִט  
 גַּם-לְבָבֶל נָפְלוּ  
 חֲלִלֵי כָל-הָאָרֶץ:  
 פְּלִטִים מִחֶרֶב נ  
 הִלְכוּ אֶל-תַּעֲמָדוֹ  
 זָכְרוּ מִרְחוֹק אֶת-יְהוָה  
 וִירוּשָׁלַם תִּעֲלֶה עַל-לִבְבְּכֶם:  
 בְּשָׁנוֹ כִּי-שָׁמַעְנוּ חֲרָפָה נא  
 כִּסְתָה כְלִמָּה פָּנֵינוּ  
 כִּי בָאוּ זָרִים  
 עַל-מִקְדָּשֵׁי בֵּית יְהוָה: {פ}  
 לֵכֵן הִנֵּה-יָמִים בָּאִים נב  
 נֹאמֵר יְהוָה  
 וּפָקַדְתִּי עַל-פְּסִילֶיהָ  
 וּבְכָל-אֶרֶצָהּ 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, לֵכֵן 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).

נג	כִּי־תַעֲלֶה בְּבַלְּי הַשָּׁמַיִם וְכִי תִבְצֹר מְרוֹם עֲזָה מֵאֵתִי יָבֹאוּ שׂוֹדְדִים לָהּ נֶאֱמַר־יְהוָה: {ס}	53	Were Babylon to scale the heavens or reinforce her towering citadel, destroyers would still come to her on my orders, says Yahweh.
נד	קוֹל זַעֲקָה מִבָּבֶל וְשֹׁבֵר גָּדוֹל מֵאֶרֶץ כַּשְׂדִּים:	54	Listen – a cry from Babylon! A great crashing from the country of the Chaldeans!
נה	כִּי־שֹׁדֵד יְהוָה אֶת־בָּבֶל וְאֶבֶד מִמֶּנָּה קוֹל גָּדוֹל וְהָמוּ גְלִיָּהֶם כַּמִּים רַבִּים נָתַן שְׁאוֹן קוֹלָם:	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.
נו	כִּי בָא עָלֶיהָ עַל־בָּבֶל שׁוֹדֵד וְנִלְכְּדוּ גִבּוֹרֶיהָ חֲתָתָהּ קִשְׁתּוֹתָם כִּי אֵל גְּמֻלוֹת יְהוָה שָׁלֵם יִשְׁלָם:	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.
נז	וְהִשְׁכַּרְתִּי שָׂרֶיהָ וְחֻכְמֶיהָ פְּחוּתֶיהָ וְסִגְנֶיהָ וְגִבּוֹרֶיהָ וְיִשְׁנּוּ שְׁנַת־עוֹלָם וְלֹא יִקְיצוּ	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,

53 Compare the 1<sup>st</sup> 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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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.

נֹאס־הַמֶּלֶךְ  
 יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת שְׁמוֹ: {ס}  
 כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת נח  
 חֲמוֹת בָּבֶל הַרְחֲבָה עָרֶךְ תִּתְּעָרֶךְ  
 וְשַׁעֲרֶיהָ הִגְבְּהִים  
 בָּאֵשׁ יִצְתּוּ  
 וַיִּגְעוּ עַמִּים בְּדִירֵי־קֶי  
 וּלְאֻמִּים בְּדִי־אֵשׁ וַיַּעֲפוּ: {ס}

declares the King,  
 whose name is Yahweh Sabaoth.

<sup>58</sup> 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.

נֹט הַדְּבָר אֲשֶׁר־צִוָּה | יִרְמְיָהוּ הַנָּבִיא אֶת־שֶׁרְיָה בֶן־  
 נֵרְיָה בֶן־מַחְסִיָּה בְּלִכְתּוֹ אֶת־צִדְקִיָּהוּ מֶלֶךְ־יְהוּדָה  
 בָּבֶל בְּשָׁנַת הָרִבְעִית לְמַלְכוֹ וּשְׁרָיָה שֶׁר מְנוּחָה:  
 וַיִּכְתֹּב יִרְמְיָהוּ אֶת כָּל־הָרָעָה אֲשֶׁר־תָּבוֹא אֶל־  
 בָּבֶל אֶל־סֵפֶר אֶחָד אֶת כָּל־הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה  
 הַכְּתוּבִים אֶל־בָּבֶל: סא וַיֹּאמֶר יִרְמְיָהוּ אֶל־שֶׁרְיָה  
 כְּבֹאֲךָ בָּבֶל וְרָאִיתָ וְקִרְאתָ אֶת כָּל־הַדְּבָרִים  
 הָאֵלֶּה: סב וְאָמַרְתָּ יְהוָה אֵתָּה דִּבַּרְתָּ אֶל־הַמָּקוֹם  
 הַזֶּה לְהַכְרִיתוֹ לְבִלְתִּי הֵיטֵב־בּוֹ יוֹשֵׁב לְמַאֲדָם וְעַד־  
 בְּהֵמָה כִּי־שִׁמְמוֹת עוֹלָם תִּהְיֶה: סג וְהָיָה כְּכֹלֶתְךָ

<sup>59</sup> 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. <sup>60</sup> 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. <sup>61</sup> Jeremiah then said to Seraiah, "When you reach Babylon, see to it that you read all these words aloud. <sup>62</sup> 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." <sup>63</sup> Then, when you have finished reading

<sup>58</sup> The last line follows the LXX; the MT has, "and the nations for fire, and they are weary."

<sup>59</sup> This symbolic gesture (see #18:1), which was to be kept secret, took place in about 593 BCE.

<sup>60</sup> NETB has 'judgements' in place of 'disasters', here following the MT, NJB & NRSV.

<sup>61</sup> The word 'aloud' is not in the MT; it has here been added (following the NJB) for clarity.

<sup>62</sup> In place of 'threatened', here following the NRSV, the NJB has 'promised' and NETB has 'announced'.

<sup>63</sup> The word 'River' is not in the MT and is here added for clarity (following NETB).

לְקַרְא אֶת־הַסֵּפֶר הַזֶּה תִּקְשֹׁר עָלָיו אֶבֶן וְהִשְׁלַכְתָּו  
אֶל־תּוֹךְ פְּרַת׃ <sup>סד</sup> וְאָמַרְתָּ כָכָה תִּשְׁקַע בָּבֶל וְלֹא־  
תִּקּוּם מִפְּנֵי הָרָעָה אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי מֵבִיא עָלֶיהָ וַיַּעֲפוּ  
עַד־הֵנָּה דְּבָרֵי יִרְמְיָהוּ׃ {פ}

this sheet, tie a stone to it and throw it into the middle of the River Euphrates, <sup>64</sup> 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.

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<sup>64</sup> 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.



## JEREMIAH 52

## ירמיהו פרק נב

<sup>א</sup> בֶּן-עֶשְׂרִים וָאֶחָת שָׁנָה צָדָקְיָהוּ בְּמָלְכוֹ וְאַחַת עֶשְׂרֵה שָׁנָה מָלָךְ בִּירוּשָׁלַם וְשֵׁם אִמּוֹ חַמְיֻטָל חַמְיֻטָל בַּת-יִרְמְיָהוּ מִלִּבְנָה: <sup>ב</sup> וַיַּעַשׂ הָרַע בְּעֵינֵי יְהוָה כְּכָל אֲשֶׁר-עָשָׂה יְהוֹיָקִים: <sup>ג</sup> כִּי עַל-אָף יְהוָה הִיתָה בִּירוּשָׁלַם וַיהוָה עַד-הִשְׁלִיכוֹ אוֹתָם מֵעַל פָּנָיו וַיִּמְרֹד צָדָקְיָהוּ בְּמָלְךְ בָּבֶל: <sup>ד</sup> וַיְהִי בַשָּׁנָה הַתְּשָׁעִית לְמָלְכוֹ בַּחֹדֶשׁ הָעֲשִׂירִי בַּעֲשׂוֹר לַחֹדֶשׁ <sup>ה</sup> בָּא נְבוּכַדְרֶאצַּר מֶלֶךְ-בָּבֶל הוּא וְכָל-חִילוֹ עַל-יְרוּשָׁלַם וַיִּחְנּוּ עָלֶיהָ וַיִּבְנוּ עָלֶיהָ דֵּיק סָבִיב: <sup>ו</sup> וַתִּבָּא הָעִיר בַּמָּצוֹר עַד עָשָׂתִי עֲשָׂרָה שָׁנָה לְמָלְךְ צָדָקְיָהוּ: <sup>ז</sup> בַּחֹדֶשׁ הָרְבִיעִי בַתְּשַׁעָה לַחֹדֶשׁ וַיִּחָזֶק הָרָעָב בָּעִיר וְלֹא-הָיָה לָחֶם לָעָם הָאָרֶץ: <sup>ח</sup> וַתִּבָּקַע

<sup>1</sup> 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. <sup>2</sup> And he did that which was displeasing to Yahweh, just as Jehoiakim had done. <sup>3</sup> Indeed, Jerusalem and Judah so angered Yahweh that he expelled them from his presence. Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon. <sup>4</sup> 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. <sup>5</sup> The city was besieged until the eleventh year of King Zedekiah. <sup>6</sup> By the ninth day of the fourth month, the famine was raging in the city and there was no food for the people; <sup>7</sup> 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.

- <sup>1</sup> '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' (חַמְיֻטָל) in place of 'Hamutal', here following the Qere (חַמְיֻטָל) & NRSV.
- <sup>2</sup> The literal translation of 'was displeasing to' is 'was evil in the eyes of'.
- <sup>3</sup> For the 1<sup>st</sup> 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."
- <sup>4</sup> The date was the end of December 589 BCE.
- <sup>5</sup> The NJB has 'lay under siege' in place of 'was besieged', here following the NRSV.
- <sup>6</sup> The date was June-July 587 BCE.
- <sup>7</sup> After 'wall', the NJB adds 'the king' (cf. v. 8 and 39:4); here, we follow the MT & NRSV.

הָעִיר וְכָל־אֲנָשֵׁי הַמֶּלֶחֶמָה יִבְרָחוּ וַיֵּצְאוּ מִהָעִיר  
לַיְלָה דֶּרֶךְ שַׁעַר בֵּין־הַחֲמֹתִים אֲשֶׁר עַל־גֵּן הַמֶּלֶךְ  
וְכַשְׁדִּים עַל־הָעִיר סָבִיב וַיֵּלְכוּ דֶּרֶךְ הָעֲרָבָה:  
<sup>ח</sup> וַיִּרְדְּפוּ חֵיל־כַּשְׂדִּים אַחֲרֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ וַיִּשְׁיֹגּוּ אֶת־  
צִדְקִיָּהוּ בַּעֲרֶבֶת יֶרֶחוֹ וְכָל־חֵילוֹ נָפְצוּ מֵעָלָיו:  
<sup>ט</sup> וַיִּתְּפְשׂוּ אֶת־הַמֶּלֶךְ וַיַּעֲלוּ אוֹתוֹ אֶל־מֶלֶךְ בָּבֶל  
רַב־לְתָה בָּאָרֶץ חֲמַת וַיִּדְבֹּר אוֹתוֹ מִשְׁפָּטִים:  
<sup>י</sup> וַיִּשְׁחַט מֶלֶךְ־בָּבֶל אֶת־בְּנֵי צִדְקִיָּהוּ לְעֵינָיו וְגַם  
אֶת־כָּל־שָׂרֵי יְהוּדָה שָׁחַט בְּרַב־לְתָה: <sup>יא</sup> וְאֶת־עֵינֵי  
צִדְקִיָּהוּ עֹור וַיֹּאסְרֵהוּ בִּנְחָשָׁתִים וַיִּבְאֵהוּ מֶלֶךְ־  
בָּבֶל בְּבֵלָה וַיִּתְּנֵהוּ בְּבֵית בֵּית־הַפִּקְדֹּת עַד־יוֹם  
מוֹתוֹ: <sup>יב</sup> וּבַחֹדֶשׁ הַחֲמִישִׁי בְּעָשׂוֹר לַחֹדֶשׁ הָיָא  
שְׁנַת תִּשְׁע־עֶשְׂרֵה שָׁנָה לַמֶּלֶךְ נְבוּכַדְרֶאצַּר מֶלֶךְ־  
בָּבֶל בָּא נְבוּזַרְאֲדָן רַב־טַבָּחִים עֹמֵד לִפְנֵי מֶלֶךְ־  
בָּבֶל בִּירוּשָׁלַם: <sup>יג</sup> וַיִּשְׂרֹף אֶת־בֵּית־יְהוָה וְאֶת־בֵּית  
הַמֶּלֶךְ וְאֶת כָּל־בֵּית יְרוּשָׁלַם וְאֶת־כָּל־בֵּית הַגָּדוֹל  
שָׂרָף בָּאֵשׁ: <sup>יד</sup> 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. <sup>8</sup> The Chaldaean troops pursued the king and caught up with Zedekiah in the plains of Jericho, where all his troops deserted. <sup>9</sup> 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. <sup>10</sup> He had Zedekiah's sons slaughtered before his eyes; he also had all the chief men of Judah put to death at Riblah. <sup>11</sup> 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. <sup>12</sup> 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. <sup>13</sup> 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. <sup>14</sup> The Chaldaean

<sup>8</sup> The 'plains of Jericho' are less than a day's march from Jerusalem.

<sup>9</sup> '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.

<sup>10</sup> Nebuchadnezzar's 'brutal' punishment served as a demonstration that he had completely vanquished the leadership of Judah.

<sup>11</sup> The *Kethib*/*Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

<sup>12</sup> The date was July-August 587 BCE.

<sup>13</sup> The *NJB* omits the final clause (a gloss).

<sup>14</sup> 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: <sup>טו</sup> וּמַדְלֹת  
הָעָם וְאֶת־יֵתֶר הָעָם | הַנְּשֹׂאֲרִים בְּעִיר וְאֶת־  
הַנְּפִלִים אֲשֶׁר נָפְלוּ אֶל־מֶלֶךְ בָּבֶל וְאֶת יֵתֶר הָאָמּוֹן  
הַגָּלָה נְבוּזַרְאֲדָן רַב־טַבָּחִים: <sup>טז</sup> וּמַדְלֹת הָאָרֶץ  
הַשְּׂאִיר נְבוּזַרְאֲדָן רַב־טַבָּחִים לְכַרְמִים וּלְיִגְבִּים:  
<sup>יז</sup> וְאֶת־עַמּוּדֵי הַנְּחֹשֶׁת אֲשֶׁר לְבֵית־יְהוָה וְאֶת־  
הַמְּכֻנֹת וְאֶת־יָם הַנְּחֹשֶׁת אֲשֶׁר בְּבֵית־יְהוָה שִׁבְרוּ  
כְּשָׂדִים וַיִּשְׂאוּ אֶת־כָּל־נְחֹשֶׁת בָּבֶלָה: <sup>יח</sup> וְאֶת־  
הַסְּרוֹת וְאֶת־הַיָּעִים וְאֶת־הַמְּזֻמְרוֹת וְאֶת־הַמְּזֻרְקֹת  
וְאֶת־הַכַּפֹּת וְאֶת כָּל־כְּלֵי הַנְּחֹשֶׁת אֲשֶׁר־יִשְׁרְתּוּ  
בָּהֶם לְקָחוּ: <sup>יט</sup> וְאֶת־הַסְּפִים וְאֶת־הַמַּחְתֹּת וְאֶת־  
הַמְּזֻרְקֹת וְאֶת־הַסִּירֹת וְאֶת־הַמְּנֹרוֹת וְאֶת־  
הַכַּפֹּת וְאֶת־הַמְּנַקְלוֹת אֲשֶׁר זָהָב וְזָהָב וְאֲשֶׁר־כֶּסֶף  
כֶּסֶף לָקַח רַב־טַבָּחִים: <sup>כ</sup> הָעַמּוּדִים | שְׁנַיִם הֵימָּן  
אֶחָד וְהַבֶּקֶר שְׁנַיִם־עָשָׂר נְחֹשֶׁת אֲשֶׁר־תַּחַת  
הַמְּכֻנֹת אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה הַמֶּלֶךְ שְׁלֹמֹה לְבֵית יְהוָה לֹא־  
הָיָה מִשְׁקָל לְנְחֹשֶׁת כָּל־הַכֵּלִים הָאֵלֶּה:  
<sup>כא</sup> וְהָעַמּוּדִים שְׁמֹנֶה עָשָׂרָה אַמָּה קוֹמָה קוֹמָה

troops who accompanied the commander of the guard demolished all the walls surrounding Jerusalem. <sup>15</sup> 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. <sup>16</sup> However, Nebuzaradan commander of the guard left some of the poor country people behind as vineyard workers and ploughmen. <sup>17</sup> 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. <sup>18</sup> They also took the ash containers, the scoops, the knives, the sprinkling bowls, the incense bowls and all the bronze furnishings used in worship. <sup>19</sup> 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. <sup>20</sup> 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. <sup>21</sup> As regards the pillars, the height of one

<sup>15</sup> 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.

<sup>16</sup> NETB replaces 'Nebuzaradan commander of the guard' (repeated from v. 15) with the simple pronoun, 'he'.

<sup>17</sup> 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.

<sup>18</sup> The 'scoops' were used to clean the altar and the 'knives' were for trimming the wicks of the lamps.

<sup>19</sup> The 'censers' held the embers used for the incense offerings.

<sup>20</sup> '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).

<sup>21</sup> The *Kethib*/*Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

הַעֲמֹד הָאֶחָד וְחוּט שְׁתֵּים-עָשָׂרָה אַמָּה יִסְבֵּנוּ  
וְעִבּוֹ אַרְבַּע אֲצָבָעוֹת נָבֹב: <sup>כב</sup> וְכִתְרַת עָלָיו  
נְחֹשֶׁת וְקוֹמַת הַכִּתְרַת הָאֶחָת חֲמֵשׁ אַמּוֹת  
וְשִׁבְכָה וְרִמּוֹנִים עַל-הַכִּוְרֵת סָבִיב הַכֹּל נְחֹשֶׁת  
וְכֹאֵלָה לַעֲמֹד הַשְּׁנִי וְרִמּוֹנִים: <sup>כג</sup> וַיְהִי הָרִמּוֹנִים  
תְּשָׁעִים וְשֵׁשׁ רֹוּחָה כָּל-הָרִמּוֹנִים מֵאָה עַל-  
הַשִּׁבְכָה סָבִיב: {ס}

<sup>כד</sup> וַיִּקַּח רַב-טַבָּחִים אֶת-שָׂרִיָּה כֹהֵן הָרֹאשׁ וְאֶת-  
צְפַנְיָה כֹהֵן הַמִּשְׁנָה וְאֶת-שְׁלֹשֶׁת שְׁמָרֵי הַסֵּף:  
<sup>כה</sup> וּמִן-הָעִיר לָקַח סָרִיס אֶחָד אֲשֶׁר-הָיָה פְּקִיד  
עַל-אֲנָשֵׁי הַמִּלְחָמָה וְשִׁבְעָה אֲנָשִׁים מֵרָאִי פָנָי-  
הַמֶּלֶךְ אֲשֶׁר נִמְצְאוּ בָּעִיר וְאֶת סֹפֵר שֹׁר הַצֹּבָא  
הַמִּצָּבָא אֶת-עַם הָאָרֶץ וְשָׂשִׁים אִישׁ מֵעַם הָאָרֶץ  
הַנִּמְצָאִים בְּתוֹךְ הָעִיר: <sup>כו</sup> וַיִּקַּח אוֹתָם נְבוּזַרְאֲדָן  
רַב-טַבָּחִים וַיִּלְךְ אוֹתָם אֶל-מֶלֶךְ בָּבֶל רַב־לַתָּה:  
<sup>כז</sup> וַיָּבֵה אוֹתָם מֶלֶךְ בָּבֶל וַיִּמָּתם בְּרַבְּלָה בְּאֶרֶץ  
חֲמַת וַיַּגֵּל יְהוּדָה מֵעַל אֲדָמָתוֹ: {ס}

pillar was eighteen cubits, its circumference was twelve cubits, it was four fingers thick and hollow inside; <sup>22</sup> 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. <sup>23</sup> There were ninety-six pomegranates round the sides, making a hundred pomegranates round the filigree in all.

<sup>24</sup> The commander of the guard took prisoner Seraiah the Chief Priest, Zephaniah the priest next in rank and the three guardians of the threshold. <sup>25</sup> 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. <sup>26</sup> Nebuzaradan commander of the guard took these men and brought them to the king of Babylon at Riblah, <sup>27</sup> and, at Riblah, in the territory of Hamath, the king of Babylon had them put to death. Thus, Judah was deported from its country.

<sup>22</sup> 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.

<sup>23</sup> 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).

<sup>24</sup> 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).

<sup>25</sup> The literal translation of 'citizens' is 'men, people of the land'.

<sup>26</sup> See #9 on Nebuchadnezzar's court at Riblah.

<sup>27</sup> 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  
לחודש נשא אִוִּיל מֶרֶדַךְ מֶלֶךְ בָּבֶל בשנת מלכותו  
את־ראש יהויכין מלך־יהודה ויצא אתו מבית  
הכליא הכלוא: לב וידבר אתו טבות ויתן את־  
בסאו ממעל לבסא מלכים המלכים אשר אתו  
בבבל: לג ושנה את בגדי כלאו ואכל לחם לפניו  
תמיד כל־ימי חייו: לד וארחתו ארחת תמיד נתנה־  
לו מאת מלך־בבל דבר־יום ביומו עד־יום מותו  
כל ימי חייו: {ש}

<sup>28</sup> The number of people taken into exile by Nebuchadnezzar was as follows. In the seventh year: three thousand and twenty-three Judaeans; <sup>29</sup> in the eighteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar, eight hundred and thirty-two persons were taken into exile from Jerusalem; <sup>30</sup> 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.

<sup>31</sup> 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. <sup>32</sup> He spoke kindly to him and allotted him a seat above those of the other kings who were with him in Babylon. <sup>33</sup> Thus, Jehoiachin laid aside his prisoner's clothes and, for the rest of his life, he always ate at the king's table. <sup>34</sup> 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.

<sup>28</sup> 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.

<sup>29</sup> This would be 587 BCE.

<sup>30</sup> This would be 582 BCE.

<sup>31</sup> This occurred in 561 BCE. The *Kethib*/*Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

<sup>32</sup> The *Kethib*/*Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

<sup>33</sup> The subject is unstated in the *MT*, but ‘Jehoiachin’ is clearly the subject of the following verb.

<sup>34</sup> The Book of Jeremiah ends with Jehoiachin's pardon, symbolising the end of the captivity.