

Jeremiah

BEREAN STANDARD BIBLE

Chapter 1

THE CALL OF JEREMIAH

¹These are the words of Jeremiah son of Hilkiah, one of the priests in Anathoth in the territory of Benjamin. ²The word of the LORD came to Jeremiah in the thirteenth year of the reign of Josiah son of Amon king of Judah, ³and through the days of Jehoiakim son of Josiah king of Judah, until the fifth month of the eleventh year of Zedekiah son of Josiah king of Judah, when the people of Jerusalem went into exile. ⁴The word of the LORD came to me, saying: ⁵“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I set you apart and appointed you as a prophet to the nations.” ⁶“Ah, Lord GOD,” I said, “I surely do not know how to speak, for I am only a child!” ⁷But the LORD told me: “Do not say, ‘I am only a child.’ For to everyone I send you, you must go, and all that I command you, you must speak. ⁸Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you,” declares the LORD. ⁹Then the LORD reached out His hand, touched my mouth, and said to me: “Behold, I have put My words in your mouth. ¹⁰See, I have appointed you today over nations and kingdoms to uproot and tear down, to destroy and overthrow, to build and plant.” ¹¹And the word of the LORD came to me, asking, “Jeremiah, what do you see?” “I see a branch of an almond tree,” I replied. ¹²“You have observed correctly,” said the LORD, “for I am watching over My word to accomplish it.” ¹³Again the word of the LORD came to me, asking, “What do you see?” “I see a boiling pot,” I replied, “and it is tilting toward us from the north.” ¹⁴Then the LORD said to me, “Disaster from the north will be poured out on all who live in the land. ¹⁵For I am about to summon all the clans and kingdoms of the north,” declares the LORD. “Their kings will come and set up their thrones at the entrance of the gates of Jerusalem. They will attack all her surrounding walls and all the other cities of Judah. ¹⁶I will pronounce My judgments against them for all their wickedness, because they have forsaken Me, and they have burned incense to other gods and worshiped the works of their own hands. ¹⁷Get yourself ready. Stand up and tell them everything that I command you. Do not be intimidated by them, or I will terrify you before them. ¹⁸Now behold, this day I have made you like a fortified city, an iron pillar, and bronze walls against the whole land—against the kings of Judah, its officials, its priests,

and the people of the land. ¹⁹They will fight against you but will never overcome you, since I am with you to deliver you,” declares the LORD.

Chapter 2

ISRAEL HAS FORSAKEN GOD

¹Now the word of the LORD came to me, saying, ²“Go and proclaim in the hearing of Jerusalem that this is what the LORD says: ‘I remember the devotion of your youth, your love as a bride, how you followed Me in the wilderness, in a land not sown. ³Israel was holy to the LORD, the firstfruits of His harvest. All who devoured her were found guilty; disaster came upon them,’” declares the LORD. ⁴Hear the word of the LORD, O house of Jacob, and all you families of the house of Israel. ⁵This is what the LORD says: “What fault did your fathers find in Me that they strayed so far from Me? They followed worthless idols, and became worthless themselves. ⁶They did not ask, ‘Where is the LORD who brought us up from the land of Egypt, who led us through the wilderness, through a land of deserts and pits, a land of drought and darkness, a land where no one travels and no one lives?’ ⁷I brought you into a fertile land to eat its fruit and bounty, but you came and defiled My land and made My inheritance detestable. ⁸The priests did not ask, ‘Where is the LORD?’ The experts in the law no longer knew Me, and the leaders rebelled against Me. The prophets prophesied by Baal and followed useless idols. ⁹Therefore, I will contend with you again, declares the LORD, and I will bring a case against your children’s children. ¹⁰Cross over to the coasts of Cyprus and take a look; send to Kedar and consider carefully; see if there has ever been anything like this: ¹¹“Has a nation ever changed its gods? (Yet they are not gods at all.) But My people have exchanged their Glory for useless idols. ¹²Be stunned by this, O heavens; be shocked and utterly appalled,” declares the LORD. ¹³“For My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living water, and they have dug their own cisterns—broken cisterns that cannot hold water.

THE CONSEQUENCE OF ISRAEL’S SIN

¹⁴Is Israel a slave? Was he born into slavery? Why then has he become prey? ¹⁵The young lions have roared at him;

they have sounded their voices. They have laid waste his land; his cities lie in ruins, without inhabitant. ¹⁶The men of Memphis and Tahpanhes have shaved the crown of your head. ¹⁷Have you not brought this on yourself by forsaking the LORD your God when He led you in the way? ¹⁸Now what will you gain on your way to Egypt to drink the waters of the Nile? What will you gain on your way to Assyria to drink the waters of the Euphrates? ¹⁹Your own evil will discipline you; your own apostasies will reprimand you. Consider and realize how evil and bitter it is for you to forsake the LORD your God and to have no fear of Me,” declares the Lord GOD of Hosts. ²⁰“For long ago you broke your yoke and tore off your chains, saying, ‘I will not serve!’ Indeed, on every high hill and under every green tree you lay down as a prostitute. ²¹I had planted you like a choice vine from the very best seed. How could you turn yourself before Me into a rotten, wild vine? ²²Although you wash with lye and use an abundance of soap, the stain of your guilt is still before Me,” declares the Lord GOD.

ISRAEL'S UNFAITHFULNESS

²³“How can you say, ‘I am not defiled; I have not run after the Baals’? Look at your behavior in the valley; acknowledge what you have done. You are a swift young she-camel galloping here and there, ²⁴a wild donkey at home in the wilderness, sniffing the wind in the heat of her desire. Who can restrain her passion? All who seek her need not weary themselves; in mating season they will find her. ²⁵You should have kept your feet from going bare and your throat from being thirsty. But you said, ‘It is hopeless! For I love foreign gods, and I must go after them.’ ²⁶As the thief is ashamed when he is caught, so the house of Israel is disgraced. They, their kings, their officials, their priests, and their prophets ²⁷say to a tree, ‘You are my father,’ and to a stone, ‘You gave me birth.’ They have turned their backs to Me and not their faces. Yet in the time of trouble, they say, ‘Rise up and save us!’ ²⁸But where are the gods you made for yourselves? Let them rise up in your time of trouble and save you if they can; for your gods are as numerous as your cities, O Judah. ²⁹Why do you bring a case against Me? You have all rebelled against Me,” declares the LORD. ³⁰“I have struck your sons in vain; they accepted no discipline. Your own sword has devoured your prophets like a voracious lion.” ³¹You people of this generation, consider the word of the LORD: “Have I been a wilderness to Israel or a land of dense darkness? Why do My people say, ‘We are free to roam; we will come to You no more’? ³²Does a maiden forget her jewelry or a bride her wedding sash? Yet My people have forgotten Me for days without number. ³³How skillfully you pursue love! Even the most immoral of women

could learn from your ways. ³⁴Moreover, your skirts are stained with the blood of the innocent poor, though you did not find them breaking in. But in spite of all these things ³⁵you say, ‘I am innocent. Surely His anger will turn from me.’ Behold, I will judge you, because you say, ‘I have not sinned.’ ³⁶How impulsive you are, constantly changing your ways! You will be disappointed by Egypt just as you were by Assyria. ³⁷Moreover, you will leave that place with your hands on your head, for the LORD has rejected those you trust; you will not prosper by their help.”

Chapter 3

THE WAGES OF THE HARLOT

¹“If a man divorces his wife and she leaves him to marry another, can he ever return to her? Would not such a land be completely defiled? But you have played the harlot with many lovers—and you would return to Me?” declares the LORD. ²“Lift up your eyes to the barren heights and see. Is there any place where you have not been violated? You sat beside the highways waiting for your lovers, like a nomad in the desert. You have defiled the land with your prostitution and wickedness. ³Therefore the showers have been withheld, and no spring rains have fallen. Yet you have the brazen look of a prostitute; you refuse to be ashamed. ⁴Have you not just called to Me, ‘My Father, You are my friend from youth. ⁵Will He be angry forever? Will He be indignant to the end?’ This you have spoken, but you keep doing all the evil you can.”

JUDAH FOLLOWS ISRAEL'S EXAMPLE

⁶Now in the days of King Josiah, the LORD said to me, “Have you seen what faithless Israel has done? She has gone up on every high hill and under every green tree to prostitute herself there. ⁷I thought that after she had done all these things, she would return to Me. But she did not return, and her unfaithful sister Judah saw it. ⁸She saw that because faithless Israel had committed adultery, I gave her a certificate of divorce and sent her away. Yet that unfaithful sister Judah had no fear and prostituted herself as well. ⁹Indifferent to her own infidelity, Israel had defiled the land and committed adultery with stones and trees. ¹⁰Yet in spite of all this, her unfaithful sister Judah did not return to Me with all her heart, but only in pretense,” declares the LORD.

A CALL TO REPENTANCE

¹¹And the LORD said to me, “Faithless Israel has shown herself more righteous than unfaithful Judah. ¹²Go, proclaim this message toward the north: ‘Return, O faithless Israel,’ declares the LORD. ‘I will no longer look on you

with anger, for I am merciful,' declares the LORD. 'I will not be angry forever. ¹³Only acknowledge your guilt, that you have rebelled against the LORD your God. You have scattered your favors to foreign gods under every green tree and have not obeyed My voice,'" declares the LORD. ¹⁴"Return, O faithless children," declares the LORD, "for I am your master, and I will take you—one from a city and two from a family—and bring you to Zion. ¹⁵Then I will give you shepherds after My own heart, who will feed you with knowledge and understanding." ¹⁶"In those days, when you multiply and increase in the land," declares the LORD, "they will no longer discuss the ark of the covenant of the LORD. It will never come to mind, and no one will remember it or miss it, nor will another one be made. ¹⁷At that time they will call Jerusalem The Throne of the LORD, and all the nations will be gathered in Jerusalem to honor the name of the LORD. They will no longer follow the stubbornness of their evil hearts. ¹⁸In those days the house of Judah will walk with the house of Israel, and they will come together from the land of the north to the land that I gave to your fathers as an inheritance. ¹⁹Then I said, 'How I long to make you My sons and give you a desirable land, the most beautiful inheritance of all the nations!' I thought you would call Me 'Father' and never turn away from following Me. ²⁰But as a woman may betray her husband, so you have betrayed Me, O house of Israel," declares the LORD. ²¹A voice is heard on the barren heights, the children of Israel weeping and begging for mercy, because they have perverted their ways and forgotten the LORD their God. ²²"Return, O faithless children, and I will heal your faithlessness." "Here we are. We come to You, for You are the LORD our God. ²³Surely deception comes from the hills, and commotion from the mountains. Surely the salvation of Israel is in the LORD our God. ²⁴From our youth, that shameful god has consumed what our fathers have worked for—their flocks and herds, their sons and daughters. ²⁵Let us lie down in our shame; let our disgrace cover us. We have sinned against the LORD our God, both we and our fathers; from our youth even to this day we have not obeyed the voice of the LORD our God."

Chapter 4

A PLEA TO RETURN

¹"If you will return, O Israel, return to Me," declares the LORD. "If you will remove your detestable idols from My sight and no longer waver, ²and if you can swear, 'As surely as the LORD lives,' in truth, in justice, and in righteousness, then the nations will be blessed by Him, and in Him they will glory." ³For this is what the LORD says to the

men of Judah and Jerusalem: "Break up your unplowed ground, and do not sow among the thorns. ⁴Circumcise yourselves to the LORD, and remove the foreskins of your hearts, O men of Judah and people of Jerusalem. Otherwise, My wrath will break out like fire and burn with no one to extinguish it, because of your evil deeds."

DISASTER FROM THE NORTH

⁵Announce in Judah, proclaim in Jerusalem, and say: "Blow the ram's horn throughout the land. Cry aloud and say, 'Assemble yourselves and let us flee to the fortified cities.' ⁶Raise a signal flag toward Zion. Seek refuge! Do not delay! For I am bringing disaster from the north, and terrible destruction. ⁷A lion has gone up from his thicket, and a destroyer of nations has set out. He has left his lair to lay waste your land. Your cities will be reduced to ruins and lie uninhabited. ⁸So put on sackcloth, mourn and wail, for the fierce anger of the LORD has not turned away from us." ⁹"In that day," declares the LORD, "the king and officials will lose their courage. The priests will tremble in fear, and the prophets will be astounded." ¹⁰Then I said, "Ah, Lord GOD, how completely You have deceived this people and Jerusalem by saying, 'You will have peace,' while a sword is at our throats." ¹¹At that time it will be said to this people and to Jerusalem, "A searing wind from the barren heights in the desert blows toward the daughter of My people, but not to winnow or to sift; ¹²a wind too strong for that comes from Me. Now I also pronounce judgments against them." ¹³Behold, he advances like the clouds, his chariots like the whirlwind. His horses are swifter than eagles. Woe to us, for we are ruined! ¹⁴Wash the evil from your heart, O Jerusalem, so that you may be saved. How long will you harbor wicked thoughts within you? ¹⁵For a voice resounds from Dan, proclaiming disaster from the hills of Ephraim. ¹⁶Warn the nations now! Proclaim to Jerusalem: "A besieging army comes from a distant land; they raise their voices against the cities of Judah. ¹⁷They surround her like men guarding a field, because she has rebelled against Me," declares the LORD. ¹⁸"Your ways and deeds have brought this upon you. This is your punishment; how bitter it is, because it pierces to the heart!"

LAMENTATION FOR JUDAH

¹⁹My anguish, my anguish! I writhe in pain! Oh, the pain in my chest! My heart pounds within me; I cannot be silent. For I have heard the sound of the horn, the alarm of battle. ²⁰Disaster after disaster is proclaimed, for the whole land is laid waste. My tents are destroyed in an instant, my curtains in a moment. ²¹How long must I see the signal flag and hear the sound of the horn? ²²"For My people are fools; they have not known Me. They are foolish children,

without understanding. They are skilled in doing evil, but they know not how to do good.” ²³I looked at the earth, and it was formless and void; I looked to the heavens, and they had no light. ²⁴I looked at the mountains, and behold, they were quaking; all the hills were swaying. ²⁵I looked, and no man was left; all the birds of the air had fled. ²⁶I looked, and the fruitful land was a desert. All its cities were torn down before the LORD, before His fierce anger. ²⁷For this is what the LORD says: “The whole land will be desolate, but I will not finish its destruction. ²⁸Therefore the earth will mourn and the heavens above will grow dark. I have spoken, I have planned, and I will not relent or turn back.” ²⁹Every city flees at the sound of the horseman and archer. They enter the thickets and climb among the rocks. Every city is abandoned; no inhabitant is left. ³⁰And you, O devastated one, what will you do, though you dress yourself in scarlet, though you adorn yourself with gold jewelry, though you enlarge your eyes with paint? You adorn yourself in vain; your lovers despise you; they want to take your life. ³¹For I hear a cry like a woman in labor, a cry of anguish like one bearing her first child—the cry of the Daughter of Zion gasping for breath, stretching out her hands to say, “Woe is me, for my soul faints before the murderers!”

Chapter 5

NO ONE IS JUST

¹“Go up and down the streets of Jerusalem. Look now and take note; search her squares. If you can find a single person, anyone who acts justly, anyone who seeks the truth, then I will forgive the city. ²Although they say, ‘As surely as the LORD lives,’ they are swearing falsely.” ³O LORD, do not Your eyes look for truth? You struck them, but they felt no pain. You finished them off, but they refused to accept discipline. They have made their faces harder than stone and refused to repent. ⁴Then I said, “They are only the poor; they have played the fool, for they do not know the way of the LORD, the justice of their God. ⁵I will go to the powerful and speak to them. Surely they know the way of the LORD, the justice of their God.” But they too, with one accord, had broken the yoke and torn off the chains. ⁶Therefore a lion from the forest will strike them down, a wolf from the desert will ravage them. A leopard will lie in wait near their cities, and everyone who ventures out will be torn to pieces. For their rebellious acts are many, and their unfaithful deeds are numerous. ⁷“Why should I forgive you? Your children have forsaken Me and sworn by gods that are not gods. I satisfied their needs, yet they committed adultery and assembled at the houses of prostitutes.

⁸They are well-fed, lusty stallions, each neighing after his neighbor’s wife. ⁹Should I not punish them for these things?” declares the LORD. “Should I not avenge Myself on such a nation as this? ¹⁰Go up through her vineyards and ravage them, but do not finish them off. Strip off her branches, for they do not belong to the LORD. ¹¹For the house of Israel and the house of Judah have been utterly unfaithful to Me,” declares the LORD. ¹²They have lied about the LORD and said: “He will not do anything; harm will not come to us; we will not see sword or famine. ¹³The prophets are but wind, for the word is not in them. So let their own predictions befall them.”

JUDGMENT PROCLAIMED

¹⁴Therefore this is what the LORD God of Hosts says: “Because you have spoken this word, I will make My words a fire in your mouth and this people the wood it consumes. ¹⁵Behold, I am bringing a distant nation against you, O house of Israel,” declares the LORD. “It is an established nation, an ancient nation, a nation whose language you do not know and whose speech you do not understand. ¹⁶Their quivers are like open graves; they are all mighty men. ¹⁷They will devour your harvest and food; they will consume your sons and daughters; they will eat up your flocks and herds; they will feed on your vines and fig trees. With the sword they will destroy the fortified cities in which you trust.” ¹⁸“Yet even in those days,” declares the LORD, “I will not make a full end of you. ¹⁹And when the people ask, ‘For what offense has the LORD our God done all these things to us?’ You are to tell them, ‘Just as you have forsaken Me and served foreign gods in your land, so will you serve foreigners in a land that is not your own.’” ²⁰Declare this in the house of Jacob and proclaim it in Judah: ²¹“Hear this, O foolish and senseless people, who have eyes but do not see, who have ears but do not hear. ²²Do you not fear Me?” declares the LORD. “Do you not tremble before Me, the One who set the sand as the boundary for the sea, an enduring barrier it cannot cross? The waves surge, but they cannot prevail. They roar but cannot cross it. ²³But these people have stubborn and rebellious hearts. They have turned aside and gone away. ²⁴They have not said in their hearts, ‘Let us fear the LORD our God, who gives the rains, both autumn and spring, in season, who keeps for us the appointed weeks of harvest.’ ²⁵Your iniquities have diverted these from you; your sins have deprived you of My bounty. ²⁶For among My people are wicked men; they watch like fowlers lying in wait; they set a trap to catch men. ²⁷Like cages full of birds, so their houses are full of deceit. Therefore they have become powerful and rich. ²⁸They have grown fat and sleek, and have excelled in the

deeds of the wicked. They have not taken up the cause of the fatherless, that they might prosper; nor have they defended the rights of the needy. ²⁹Should I not punish them for these things?" declares the LORD. "Should I not avenge Myself on such a nation as this? ³⁰A horrible and shocking thing has happened in the land. ³¹The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests rule by their own authority. My people love it so, but what will you do in the end?"

Chapter 6

JERUSALEM'S FINAL WARNING

¹"Run for cover, O sons of Benjamin; flee from Jerusalem! Sound the ram's horn in Tekoa; send up a signal over Beth-haccherem, for disaster looms from the north, even great destruction. ²Though she is beautiful and delicate, I will destroy the Daughter of Zion. ³Shepherds and their flocks will come against her; they will pitch their tents all around her, each tending his own portion: ⁴Prepare for battle against her; rise up, let us attack at noon. Woe to us, for the daylight is fading; the evening shadows grow long. ⁵Rise up, let us attack by night and destroy her fortresses!" ⁶For this is what the LORD of Hosts says: "Cut down the trees and raise a siege ramp against Jerusalem. This city must be punished; there is nothing but oppression in her midst. ⁷As a well gushes its water, so she pours out her evil. Violence and destruction resound in her; sickness and wounds are ever before Me. ⁸Be forewarned, O Jerusalem, or I will turn away from you; I will make you a desolation, a land without inhabitant." ⁹This is what the LORD of Hosts says: "Glean the remnant of Israel as thoroughly as a vine. Pass your hand once more like a grape gatherer over the branches." ¹⁰To whom can I give this warning? Who will listen to me? Look, their ears are closed, so they cannot hear. See, the word of the LORD has become offensive to them; they find no pleasure in it. ¹¹But I am full of the LORD's wrath; I am tired of holding it back. "Pour it out on the children in the street, and on the young men gathered together. For both husband and wife will be captured, the old and the very old alike. ¹²Their houses will be turned over to others, their fields and wives as well, for I will stretch out My hand against the inhabitants of the land," declares the LORD. ¹³"For from the least of them to the greatest, all are greedy for gain; from prophet to priest, all practice deceit. ¹⁴They dress the wound of My people with very little care, saying, 'Peace, peace,' when there is no peace at all. ¹⁵Are they ashamed of the abomination they have committed? No, they have no shame at all; they do not even know how to blush. So they will fall among the fallen; when I punish them, they will collapse," says the LORD. ¹⁶This is what the

LORD says: "Stand at the crossroads and look. Ask for the ancient paths: 'Where is the good way?' Then walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls. But they said, 'We will not walk in it!' ¹⁷I appointed watchmen over you and said, 'Listen for the sound of the ram's horn.' But they answered, 'We will not listen!' ¹⁸Therefore hear, O nations, and learn, O congregations, what will happen to them. ¹⁹Hear, O earth! I am bringing disaster on this people, the fruit of their own schemes, because they have paid no attention to My word and have rejected My instruction. ²⁰What use to Me is frankincense from Sheba or sweet cane from a distant land? Your burnt offerings are not acceptable; your sacrifices do not please Me." ²¹Therefore this is what the LORD says: "I will lay stumbling blocks before this people; fathers and sons alike will be staggered; friends and neighbors will perish."

AN INVASION FROM THE NORTH

²²This is what the LORD says: "Behold, an army is coming from the land of the north; a great nation is stirred up from the ends of the earth. ²³They grasp the bow and spear; they are cruel and merciless. Their voice roars like the sea, and they ride upon horses, lined up like men in formation against you, O Daughter of Zion." ²⁴We have heard the report; our hands hang limp. Anguish has gripped us, pain like that of a woman in labor. ²⁵Do not go out to the fields; do not walk the road. For the enemy has a sword; terror is on every side. ²⁶O daughter of my people, dress yourselves in sackcloth and roll in ashes. Mourn with bitter wailing, as you would for an only son, for suddenly the destroyer will come upon us. ²⁷"I have appointed you to examine My people like ore, so you may know and try their ways. ²⁸All are hardened rebels, walking around as slanderers. They are bronze and iron; all of them are corrupt. ²⁹The bellows blow fiercely, blasting away the lead with fire. The refining proceeds in vain, for the wicked are not purged. ³⁰They are called rejected silver, because the LORD has rejected them."

Chapter 7

JEREMIAH'S MESSAGE AT THE TEMPLE GATE

¹This is the word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, ²"Stand in the gate of the house of the LORD and proclaim this message: Hear the word of the LORD, all you people of Judah who enter through these gates to worship the LORD. ³Thus says the LORD of Hosts, the God of Israel: Correct your ways and deeds, and I will let you live in this place. ⁴Do not trust in deceptive words, saying: 'This is the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD, the

temple of the LORD.’ ⁵For if you really correct your ways and deeds, if you act justly toward one another, ⁶if you no longer oppress the foreigner and the fatherless and the widow, and if you no longer shed innocent blood in this place or follow other gods to your own harm, ⁷then I will let you live in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers forever and ever. ⁸But look, you keep trusting in deceptive words to no avail. ⁹Will you steal and murder, commit adultery and perjury, burn incense to Baal, and follow other gods that you have not known, ¹⁰and then come and stand before Me in this house, which bears My Name, and say, ‘We are delivered, so we can continue with all these abominations’? ¹¹Has this house, which bears My Name, become a den of robbers in your sight? Yes, I too have seen it, declares the LORD. ¹²But go now to the place in Shiloh where I first made a dwelling for My Name, and see what I did to it because of the wickedness of My people Israel. ¹³And now, because you have done all these things, declares the LORD, and because I have spoken to you again and again but you would not listen, and I have called to you but you would not answer, ¹⁴therefore what I did to Shiloh I will now do to the house that bears My Name, the house in which you trust, the place that I gave to you and your fathers. ¹⁵And I will cast you out of My presence, just as I have cast out all your brothers, all the descendants of Ephraim.

JUDAH’S IDOLATRY PERSISTS

¹⁶As for you, do not pray for these people, do not offer a plea or petition on their behalf, and do not beg Me, for I will not listen to you. ¹⁷Do you not see what they are doing in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem? ¹⁸The sons gather wood, the fathers light the fire, and the women knead the dough to make cakes for the Queen of Heaven; they pour out drink offerings to other gods to provoke Me to anger. ¹⁹But am I the One they are provoking? declares the LORD. Is it not themselves they spite, to their own shame? ²⁰Therefore this is what the Lord GOD says: Behold, My anger and My fury will be poured out on this place, on man and beast, on the trees of the field and the produce of the land, and it will burn and not be extinguished. ²¹This is what the LORD of Hosts, the God of Israel, says: Add your burnt offerings to your other sacrifices and eat the meat yourselves! ²²For when I brought your fathers out of the land of Egypt, I did not merely command them about burnt offerings and sacrifices, ²³but this is what I commanded them: Obey Me, and I will be your God, and you will be My people. You must walk in all the ways I have commanded you, so that it may go well with you. ²⁴Yet they did not listen or incline their ear, but they

followed the stubborn inclinations of their own evil hearts. They went backward and not forward. ²⁵From the day your fathers came out of the land of Egypt until this day, I have sent you all My servants the prophets again and again. ²⁶Yet they would not listen to Me or incline their ear, but they stiffened their necks and did more evil than their fathers. ²⁷When you tell them all these things, they will not listen to you. When you call to them, they will not answer. ²⁸Therefore you must say to them, ‘This is the nation that would not listen to the voice of the LORD their God and would not receive correction. Truth has perished; it has disappeared from their lips. ²⁹Cut off your hair and throw it away. Raise up a lamentation on the barren heights, for the LORD has rejected and forsaken the generation of His wrath.’

THE VALLEY OF SLAUGHTER

³⁰For the people of Judah have done evil in My sight, declares the LORD. They have set up their abominations in the house that bears My Name, and so have defiled it. ³¹They have built the high places of Topheth in the Valley of Ben-hinnom so they could burn their sons and daughters in the fire—something I never commanded, nor did it even enter My mind. ³²So behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when this place will no longer be called Topheth and the Valley of Ben-hinnom, but the Valley of Slaughter. For they will bury the dead in Topheth until there is no more room. ³³The corpses of this people will become food for the birds of the air and the beasts of the earth, and there will be no one to scare them away. ³⁴I will remove from the cities of Judah and the streets of Jerusalem the sounds of joy and gladness and the voices of the bride and bridegroom, for the land will become a wasteland.”

Chapter 8

JUDAH’S SIN AND PUNISHMENT

“At that time,” declares the LORD, “the bones of the kings of Judah, the bones of the officials, the bones of the priests, the bones of the prophets, and the bones of the people of Jerusalem will be removed from their graves. ²They will be exposed to the sun and moon, and to all the host of heaven which they have loved, served, followed, consulted, and worshiped. Their bones will not be gathered up or buried, but will become like dung lying on the ground. ³And wherever I have banished them, the remnant of this evil family will choose death over life,” declares the LORD of Hosts. ⁴So you are to tell them this is what the LORD says: “Do men fall and not get up again? Does one turn away and not

return? ⁵Why then have these people turned away? Why does Jerusalem always turn away? They cling to deceit; they refuse to return. ⁶I have listened and heard; they do not speak what is right. No one repents of his wickedness, asking, 'What have I done?' Everyone has pursued his own course like a horse charging into battle. ⁷Even the stork in the sky knows her appointed seasons. The turtledove, the swift, and the thrush keep their time of migration, but My people do not know the requirements of the LORD. ⁸How can you say, 'We are wise, and the Law of the LORD is with us,' when in fact the lying pen of the scribes has produced a deception? ⁹The wise will be put to shame; they will be dismayed and trapped. Since they have rejected the word of the LORD, what wisdom do they really have? ¹⁰Therefore I will give their wives to other men and their fields to new owners. For from the least of them to the greatest, all are greedy for gain; from prophet to priest, all practice deceit. ¹¹They dress the wound of the daughter of My people with very little care, saying, 'Peace, peace,' when there is no peace at all. ¹²Are they ashamed of the abomination they have committed? No, they have no shame at all; they do not even know how to blush. So they will fall among the fallen; when I punish them, they will collapse, says the LORD. ¹³I will take away their harvest, declares the LORD. There will be no grapes on the vine, nor figs on the tree, and even the leaf will wither. Whatever I have given them will be lost to them."

THE PEOPLE RESPOND

¹⁴Why are we just sitting here? Gather together, let us flee to the fortified cities and perish there, for the LORD our God has doomed us. He has given us poisoned water to drink, because we have sinned against the LORD. ¹⁵We hoped for peace, but no good has come, for a time of healing, but there was only terror. ¹⁶The snorting of enemy horses is heard from Dan. At the sound of the neighing of mighty steeds, the whole land quakes. They come to devour the land and everything in it, the city and all who dwell in it. ¹⁷"For behold, I will send snakes among you, vipers that cannot be charmed, and they will bite you," declares the LORD.

JEREMIAH WEEPS FOR HIS PEOPLE

¹⁸My sorrow is beyond healing; my heart is faint within me. ¹⁹Listen to the cry of the daughter of my people from a land far away: "Is the LORD no longer in Zion? Is her King no longer there?" "Why have they provoked Me to anger with their carved images, with their worthless foreign idols?" ²⁰"The harvest has passed, the summer has ended, but we have not been saved." ²¹For the brokenness of the daughter of my people I am crushed. I mourn; horror has gripped

me. ²²Is there no balm in Gilead? Is no physician there? Why then has the health of the daughter of my people not been restored?

Chapter 9

A LAMENT OVER ZION

¹Oh, that my head were a spring of water, and my eyes a fountain of tears! I would weep day and night over the slain daughter of my people. ²If only I had a traveler's lodge in the wilderness, I would abandon my people and depart from them, for they are all adulterers, a crowd of faithless people. ³"They bend their tongues like bows; lies prevail over truth in the land. For they proceed from evil to evil, and they do not take Me into account," declares the LORD. ⁴"Let everyone guard against his neighbor; do not trust any brother, for every brother deals craftily, and every friend spreads slander. ⁵Each one betrays his friend; no one tells the truth. They have taught their tongues to lie; they wear themselves out committing iniquity. ⁶You dwell in the midst of deception; in their deceit they refuse to know Me," declares the LORD. ⁷Therefore this is what the LORD of Hosts says: "Behold, I will refine them and test them, for what else can I do because of the daughter of My people? ⁸Their tongues are deadly arrows; they speak deception. With his mouth a man speaks peace to his neighbor, but in his heart he sets a trap for him. ⁹Should I not punish them for these things? declares the LORD. Should I not avenge Myself on such a nation as this?" ¹⁰I will take up a weeping and wailing for the mountains, a dirge over the wilderness pasture, for they have been scorched so no one passes through, and the lowing of cattle is not heard. Both the birds of the air and the beasts have fled; they have gone away. ¹¹"And I will make Jerusalem a heap of rubble, a haunt for jackals; and I will make the cities of Judah a desolation, without inhabitant." ¹²Who is the man wise enough to understand this? To whom has the mouth of the LORD spoken, that he may explain it? Why is the land destroyed and scorched like a desert, so no one can pass through it? ¹³And the LORD answered, "It is because they have forsaken My law, which I set before them; they have not walked in it or obeyed My voice. ¹⁴Instead, they have followed the stubbornness of their hearts and gone after the Baals, as their fathers taught them." ¹⁵Therefore this is what the LORD of Hosts, the God of Israel, says: "Behold, I will feed this people wormwood and give them poisoned water to drink. ¹⁶I will scatter them among the nations that neither they nor their fathers have known, and I will send a sword after them until I have finished them off." ¹⁷This is what the LORD of Hosts says: "Take note, and summon the wailing

women; send for the most skillful among them. ¹⁸Let them come quickly and take up a lament over us, that our eyes may overflow with tears, and our eyelids may gush with water. ¹⁹For the sound of wailing is heard from Zion: ‘How devastated we are! How great is our shame! For we have abandoned the land because our dwellings have been torn down.’ ²⁰Now, O women, hear the word of the LORD. Open your ears to the word of His mouth. Teach your daughters to wail, and one another to lament. ²¹For death has climbed in through our windows; it has entered our fortresses to cut off the children from the streets, the young men from the town squares. ²²Declare that this is what the LORD says: “The corpses of men will fall like dung upon the open field, like newly cut grain behind the reaper, with no one to gather it.” ²³This is what the LORD says: “Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, nor the strong man in his strength, nor the wealthy man in his riches. ²⁴But let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the LORD, who exercises loving devotion, justice and righteousness on the earth—for I delight in these things,” declares the LORD. ²⁵“Behold, the days are coming,” declares the LORD, “when I will punish all who are circumcised only in the flesh— ²⁶Egypt, Judah, Edom, Ammon, Moab, and all the inhabitants of the desert who clip the hair of their temples. For all these nations are uncircumcised, and the whole house of Israel is uncircumcised in heart.”

Chapter 10

THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD

¹Hear the word that the LORD speaks to you, O house of Israel. ²This is what the LORD says: “Do not learn the ways of the nations or be terrified by the signs in the heavens, though the nations themselves are terrified by them. ³For the customs of the peoples are worthless; they cut down a tree from the forest; it is shaped with a chisel by the hands of a craftsman. ⁴They adorn it with silver and gold and fasten it with hammer and nails, so that it will not totter. ⁵Like scarecrows in a cucumber patch, their idols cannot speak. They must be carried because they cannot walk. Do not fear them, for they can do no harm, and neither can they do any good.” ⁶There is none like You, O LORD. You are great, and Your name is mighty in power. ⁷Who would not fear You, O King of nations? This is Your due. For among all the wise men of the nations, and in all their kingdoms, there is none like You. ⁸But they are altogether senseless and foolish, instructed by worthless idols made of wood! ⁹Hammered silver is brought from Tarshish, and gold from Uphaz—the work of a craftsman from the hands

of a goldsmith. Their clothes are blue and purple, all fashioned by skilled workers. ¹⁰But the LORD is the true God; He is the living God and eternal King. The earth quakes at His wrath, and the nations cannot endure His indignation. ¹¹Thus you are to tell them: “These gods, who have made neither the heavens nor the earth, will perish from this earth and from under these heavens.” ¹²The LORD made the earth by His power; He established the world by His wisdom and stretched out the heavens by His understanding. ¹³When He thunders, the waters in the heavens roar; He causes the clouds to rise from the ends of the earth. He generates the lightning with the rain and brings forth the wind from His storehouses. ¹⁴Every man is senseless and devoid of knowledge; every goldsmith is put to shame by his idols. For his molten images are a fraud, and there is no breath in them. ¹⁵They are worthless, a work to be mocked. In the time of their punishment they will perish. ¹⁶The Portion of Jacob is not like these, for He is the Maker of all things, and Israel is the tribe of His inheritance—the LORD of Hosts is His name.

THE COMING CAPTIVITY OF JUDAH

¹⁷Gather up your belongings from this land, you who live under siege. ¹⁸For this is what the LORD says: “Behold, at this time I will sling out the inhabitants of the land and bring distress upon them so that they may be captured.” ¹⁹Woe to me because of my brokenness; my wound is grievous! But I said, “This is truly my sickness, and I must bear it.” ²⁰My tent is destroyed, and all its ropes are snapped. My sons have departed from me and are no more. I have no one left to pitch my tent or set up my curtains. ²¹For the shepherds have become senseless; they do not seek the LORD. Therefore they have not prospered, and all their flock is scattered. ²²Listen! The sound of a report is coming—a great commotion from the land to the north. It will make the cities of Judah a desolation, a haunt for jackals. ²³I know, O LORD, that a man’s way is not his own; no one who walks directs his own steps. ²⁴Correct me, O LORD, but only with justice—not in Your anger, or You will bring me to nothing. ²⁵Pour out Your wrath on the nations that do not acknowledge You, and on the families that do not call on Your name. For they have devoured Jacob; they have consumed him and finished him off; they have devastated his homeland.

Chapter 11

THE BROKEN COVENANT

¹This is the word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD: ²“Listen to the words of this covenant and tell them to the

men of Judah and the residents of Jerusalem. ³You must tell them that this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: Cursed is the man who does not obey the words of this covenant, ⁴which I commanded your forefathers when I brought them out of the land of Egypt, out of the iron furnace, saying, ‘Obey Me, and do everything I command you, and you will be My people, and I will be your God.’ ⁵This was in order to establish the oath I swore to your forefathers, to give them a land flowing with milk and honey, as it is to this day.” “Amen, LORD,” I answered. ⁶Then the LORD said to me, “Proclaim all these words in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem, saying: Hear the words of this covenant and carry them out. ⁷For from the time I brought your fathers out of the land of Egypt until today, I strongly warned them again and again, saying, ‘Obey My voice.’ ⁸Yet they would not obey or incline their ears, but each one followed the stubbornness of his evil heart. So I brought on them all the curses of this covenant I had commanded them to follow but they did not keep.” ⁹And the LORD told me, “There is a conspiracy among the men of Judah and the residents of Jerusalem. ¹⁰They have returned to the sins of their forefathers who refused to obey My words. They have followed other gods to serve them. The house of Israel and the house of Judah have broken the covenant I made with their fathers. ¹¹Therefore this is what the LORD says: ‘I am about to bring upon them a disaster that they cannot escape. They will cry out to Me, but I will not listen to them. ¹²Then the cities of Judah and the residents of Jerusalem will go and cry out to the gods to which they have been burning incense, but these gods certainly will not save them in their time of disaster. ¹³Your gods are indeed as numerous as your cities, O Judah; the altars of shame you have set up—the altars to burn incense to Baal—are as many as the streets of Jerusalem.’ ¹⁴As for you, do not pray for these people. Do not raise up a cry or a prayer on their behalf, for I will not be listening when they call out to Me in their time of disaster. ¹⁵What right has My beloved in My house, having carried out so many evil schemes? Can consecrated meat avert your doom? When you are wicked, then you rejoice. ¹⁶The LORD once called you a flourishing olive tree, beautiful with well-formed fruit. But with a mighty roar He will set it on fire, and its branches will be consumed. ¹⁷The LORD of Hosts, who planted you, has decreed disaster against you on account of the evil that the house of Israel and the house of Judah have brought upon themselves, provoking Me to anger by burning incense to Baal.”

A PLOT AGAINST JEREMIAH

¹⁸And the LORD informed me, so I knew. Then You showed me their deeds. ¹⁹For I was like a gentle lamb led to slaughter; I did not know that they had plotted against me: “Let us destroy the tree with its fruit; let us cut him off from the land of the living, that his name may be remembered no more.” ²⁰O LORD of Hosts, who judges righteously, who examines the heart and mind, let me see Your vengeance upon them, for to You I have committed my cause. ²¹Therefore this is what the LORD says concerning the people of Anathoth who are seeking your life and saying, “You must not prophesy in the name of the LORD, or you will die by our hand.” ²²So this is what the LORD of Hosts says: “I will punish them. Their young men will die by the sword, their sons and daughters by famine. ²³There will be no remnant, for I will bring disaster on the people of Anathoth in the year of their punishment.”

Chapter 12

THE PROSPERITY OF THE WICKED

¹Righteous are You, O LORD, when I plead before You. Yet about Your judgments I wish to contend with You: Why does the way of the wicked prosper? Why do all the faithless live at ease? ²You planted them, and they have taken root. They have grown and produced fruit. You are ever on their lips, but far from their hearts. ³But You know me, O LORD; You see me and test my heart toward You. Drag away the wicked like sheep to the slaughter and set them apart for the day of carnage. ⁴How long will the land mourn and the grass of every field be withered? Because of the evil of its residents, the animals and birds have been swept away, for the people have said, “He cannot see what our end will be.”

GOD’S ANSWER TO JEREMIAH

⁵“If you have raced with men on foot and they have worn you out, how can you compete with horses? If you stumble in a peaceful land, how will you do in the thickets of the Jordan? ⁶Even your brothers—your own father’s household—even they have betrayed you; even they have cried aloud against you. Do not trust them, though they speak well of you. ⁷I have forsaken My house; I have abandoned My inheritance. I have given the beloved of My soul into the hands of her enemies. ⁸My inheritance has become to Me like a lion in the forest. She has roared against Me; therefore I hate her. ⁹Is not My inheritance to Me like a speckled bird of prey with other birds of prey circling against her? Go, gather all the beasts of the field; bring them to devour her. ¹⁰Many shepherds have destroyed My vineyard; they

have trampled My plot of ground. They have turned My pleasant field into a desolate wasteland. ¹¹They have made it a desolation; desolate before Me, it mourns. All the land is laid waste, but no man takes it to heart. ¹²Over all the barren heights in the wilderness the destroyers have come, for the sword of the LORD devours from one end of the earth to the other. No flesh has peace. ¹³They have sown wheat but harvested thorns. They have exhausted themselves to no avail. Bear the shame of your harvest because of the fierce anger of the LORD.”

A MESSAGE FOR ISRAEL’S NEIGHBORS

¹⁴This is what the LORD says: “As for all My evil neighbors who attack the inheritance that I bequeathed to My people Israel, I am about to uproot them from their land, and I will uproot the house of Judah from among them. ¹⁵But after I have uprooted them, I will once again have compassion on them and return each one to his inheritance and to his land. ¹⁶And if they will diligently learn the ways of My people and swear by My name, saying, ‘As surely as the LORD lives’—just as they once taught My people to swear by Baal—then they will be established among My people. ¹⁷But if they will not obey, then I will uproot that nation; I will uproot it and destroy it, declares the LORD.”

Chapter 13

THE LINEN LOINCLOTH

¹This is what the LORD said to me: “Go and buy yourself a linen loincloth and put it around your waist, but do not let it touch water.” ²So I bought a loincloth in accordance with the word of the LORD, and I put it around my waist. ³Then the word of the LORD came to me a second time: ⁴“Take the loincloth that you bought and are wearing, and go at once to Perath and hide it there in a crevice of the rocks.” ⁵So I went and hid it at Perath, as the LORD had commanded me. ⁶Many days later the LORD said to me, “Arise, go to Perath, and get the loincloth that I commanded you to hide there.” ⁷So I went to Perath and dug up the loincloth, and I took it from the place where I had hidden it. But now it was ruined—of no use at all. ⁸Then the word of the LORD came to me: ⁹“This is what the LORD says: In the same way I will ruin the pride of Judah and the great pride of Jerusalem. ¹⁰These evil people, who refuse to listen to My words, who follow the stubbornness of their own hearts, and who go after other gods to serve and worship them, they will be like this loincloth—of no use at all. ¹¹For just as a loincloth clings to a man’s waist, so I have made the whole house of Israel and the whole house of Judah cling to Me, declares the LORD, so that they might be My

people for My renown and praise and glory. But they did not listen.

THE WINESKINS

¹²Therefore you are to tell them that this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: ‘Every wineskin shall be filled with wine.’ And when they reply, ‘Don’t we surely know that every wineskin should be filled with wine?’ ¹³then you are to tell them that this is what the LORD says: ‘I am going to fill with drunkenness all who live in this land—the kings who sit on David’s throne, the priests, the prophets, and all the people of Jerusalem. ¹⁴I will smash them against one another, fathers and sons alike, declares the LORD. I will allow no mercy or pity or compassion to keep Me from destroying them.’”

CAPTIVITY THREATENED

¹⁵Listen and give heed. Do not be arrogant, for the LORD has spoken. ¹⁶Give glory to the LORD your God before He brings darkness, before your feet stumble on the dusky mountains. You wait for light, but He turns it into deep gloom and thick darkness. ¹⁷But if you do not listen, I will weep in secret because of your pride. My eyes will overflow with tears, because the LORD’s flock has been taken captive. ¹⁸Say to the king and to the queen mother: “Take a lowly seat, for your glorious crowns have fallen from your heads.” ¹⁹The cities of the Negev have been shut tight, and no one can open them. All Judah has been carried into exile, wholly taken captive. ²⁰Lift up your eyes and see those coming from the north. Where is the flock entrusted to you, the sheep that were your pride? ²¹What will you say when He sets over you close allies whom you yourself trained? Will not pangs of anguish grip you, as they do a woman in labor? ²²And if you ask yourself, “Why has this happened to me?” It is because of the magnitude of your iniquity that your skirts have been stripped off and your body has been exposed. ²³Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? Neither are you able to do good—you who are accustomed to doing evil. ²⁴“I will scatter you like chaff driven by the desert wind. ²⁵This is your lot, the portion I have measured to you,” declares the LORD, “because you have forgotten Me and trusted in falsehood. ²⁶So I will pull your skirts up over your face, that your shame may be seen. ²⁷Your adulteries and lustful neighings, your shameless prostitution on the hills and in the fields—I have seen your detestable acts. Woe to you, O Jerusalem! How long will you remain unclean?”

Chapter 14

DROUGHT, FAMINE, SWORD, AND PLAGUE

¹This is the word of the LORD that came to Jeremiah concerning the drought: ²"Judah mourns and her gates languish. Her people wail for the land, and a cry goes up from Jerusalem. ³The nobles send their servants for water; they go to the cisterns, but find no water; their jars return empty. They are ashamed and humiliated; they cover their heads. ⁴The ground is cracked because no rain has fallen on the land. The farmers are ashamed; they cover their heads. ⁵Even the doe in the field deserts her newborn fawn because there is no grass. ⁶Wild donkeys stand on barren heights; they pant for air like jackals; their eyes fail for lack of pasture." ⁷Although our iniquities testify against us, O LORD, act for the sake of Your name. Indeed, our rebellions are many; we have sinned against You. ⁸O Hope of Israel, its Savior in times of distress, why are You like a stranger in the land, like a traveler who stays but a night? ⁹Why are You like a man taken by surprise, like a warrior powerless to save? Yet You are among us, O LORD, and we are called by Your name. Do not forsake us! ¹⁰This is what the LORD says about this people: "Truly they love to wander; they have not restrained their feet. So the LORD does not accept them; He will now remember their iniquity and punish them for their sins." ¹¹Then the LORD said to me, "Do not pray for the well-being of this people. ¹²Although they may fast, I will not listen to their cry; although they may offer burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them. Instead, I will finish them off by sword and famine and plague." ¹³"Ah, Lord GOD!" I replied, "Look, the prophets are telling them, 'You will not see the sword or suffer famine, but I will give you lasting peace in this place.'" ¹⁴"The prophets are prophesying lies in My name," replied the LORD. "I did not send them or appoint them or speak to them. They are prophesying to you a false vision, a worthless divination, the futility and delusion of their own minds. ¹⁵Therefore this is what the LORD says about the prophets who prophesy in My name: I did not send them, yet they say, 'No sword or famine will touch this land.' By sword and famine these very prophets will meet their end! ¹⁶And the people to whom they prophesy will be thrown into the streets of Jerusalem because of famine and sword. There will be no one to bury them or their wives, their sons or their daughters. I will pour out their own evil upon them. ¹⁷You are to speak this word to them: 'My eyes overflow with tears; day and night they do not cease, for the virgin daughter of my people has been shattered by a crushing blow, a severely grievous wound. ¹⁸If I go out to the country, I see those slain by the sword; if I enter the city, I see

those ravaged by famine! For both prophet and priest travel to a land they do not know.'"

A PRAYER FOR MERCY

¹⁹Have You rejected Judah completely? Do You despise Zion? Why have You stricken us so that we are beyond healing? We hoped for peace, but no good has come, and for the time of healing, but there was only terror. ²⁰We acknowledge our wickedness, O LORD, the guilt of our fathers; indeed, we have sinned against You. ²¹For the sake of Your name do not despise us; do not disgrace Your glorious throne. Remember Your covenant with us; do not break it. ²²Can the worthless idols of the nations bring rain? Do the skies alone send showers? Is this not by You, O LORD our God? So we put our hope in You, for You have done all these things.

Chapter 15

JUDGMENT TO CONTINUE

¹Then the LORD said to me: "Even if Moses and Samuel should stand before Me, My heart would not go out to this people. Send them from My presence, and let them go! ²If they ask you, 'Where shall we go?' you are to tell them that this is what the LORD says: 'Those destined for death, to death; those destined for the sword, to the sword; those destined for famine, to famine; and those destined for captivity, to captivity.' ³I will appoint over them four kinds of destroyers, declares the LORD: the sword to kill, the dogs to drag away, and the birds of the air and beasts of the earth to devour and destroy. ⁴I will make them a horror to all the kingdoms of the earth because of what Manasseh son of Hezekiah king of Judah did in Jerusalem. ⁵Who will have pity on you, O Jerusalem? Who will mourn for you? Who will turn aside to ask about your welfare? ⁶You have forsaken Me, declares the LORD. You have turned your back. So I will stretch out My hand against you and I will destroy you; I am weary of showing compassion. ⁷I will scatter them with a winnowing fork at the gates of the land. I will bereave and destroy My people who have not turned from their ways. ⁸I will make their widows more numerous than the sand of the sea. I will bring a destroyer at noon against the mothers of young men. I will suddenly bring upon them anguish and dismay. ⁹The mother of seven will grow faint; she will breathe her last breath. Her sun will set while it is still day; she will be disgraced and humiliated. And the rest I will put to the sword in the presence of their enemies," declares the LORD.

JEREMIAH'S WOE

¹⁰Woe to me, my mother, that you have borne me, a man of strife and conflict in all the land. I have neither lent nor borrowed, yet everyone curses me. ¹¹The LORD said: "Surely I will deliver you for a good purpose; surely I will intercede with your enemy in your time of trouble, in your time of distress. ¹²Can anyone smash iron—iron from the north—or bronze? ¹³Your wealth and your treasures I will give up as plunder, without charge for all your sins within all your borders. ¹⁴Then I will enslave you to your enemies in a land you do not know, for My anger will kindle a fire that will burn against you." ¹⁵You understand, O LORD; remember me and attend to me. Avenge me against my persecutors. In Your patience, do not take me away. Know that I endure reproach for Your honor. ¹⁶Your words were found, and I ate them. Your words became my joy and my heart's delight. For I bear Your name, O LORD God of Hosts. ¹⁷I never sat with the band of revelers, nor did I celebrate with them. Because Your hand was on me, I sat alone, for You have filled me with indignation. ¹⁸Why is my pain unending, and my wound incurable, refusing to be healed? You have indeed become like a mirage to me—water that is not there.

THE LORD'S PROMISE

¹⁹Therefore this is what the LORD says: "If you return, I will restore you; you will stand in My presence. And if you speak words that are noble instead of worthless, you will be My spokesman. It is they who must turn to you, but you must not turn to them. ²⁰Then I will make you a wall to this people, a fortified wall of bronze; they will fight against you but will not overcome you, for I am with you to save and deliver you, declares the LORD. ²¹I will deliver you from the hand of the wicked and redeem you from the grasp of the ruthless."

Chapter 16

DISASTER PREDICTED

¹Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying, ²"You must not marry or have sons or daughters in this place." ³For this is what the LORD says concerning the sons and daughters born in this place, and the mothers who bore them, and the fathers who fathered them in this land: ⁴"They will die from deadly diseases. They will not be mourned or buried, but will lie like dung on the ground. They will be finished off by sword and famine, and their corpses will become food for the birds of the air and beasts of the earth." ⁵Indeed, this is what the LORD says: "Do not enter a house where there is a funeral meal. Do not go to

mourn or show sympathy, for I have removed from this people My peace, My loving devotion, and My compassion," declares the LORD. ⁶"Both great and small will die in this land. They will not be buried or mourned, nor will anyone cut himself or shave his head for them. ⁷No food will be offered to comfort those who mourn the dead; not even a cup of consolation will be given for the loss of a father or mother. ⁸You must not enter a house where there is feasting and sit down with them to eat and drink. ⁹For this is what the LORD of Hosts, the God of Israel, says: I am going to remove from this place, before your very eyes and in your days, the sounds of joy and gladness, the voices of the bride and bridegroom. ¹⁰When you tell these people all these things, they will ask you, 'Why has the LORD pronounced all this great disaster against us? What is our iniquity? What is the sin that we have committed against the LORD our God?' ¹¹Then you are to answer them: 'It is because your fathers have forsaken Me, declares the LORD, and followed other gods, and served and worshiped them. They abandoned Me and did not keep My instruction. ¹²And you have done more evil than your fathers. See how each of you follows the stubbornness of his evil heart instead of obeying Me. ¹³So I will cast you out of this land into a land that neither you nor your fathers have known. There you will serve other gods day and night, for I will show you no favor.'

GOD WILL RESTORE ISRAEL

¹⁴Yet behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when they will no longer say, 'As surely as the LORD lives, who brought the Israelites up out of the land of Egypt.' ¹⁵Instead they will say, 'As surely as the LORD lives, who brought the Israelites up out of the land of the north and all the other lands to which He had banished them.' For I will return them to their land that I gave to their forefathers. ¹⁶But for now I will send for many fishermen, declares the LORD, and they will catch them. After that I will send for many hunters, and they will hunt them down on every mountain and hill, even from the clefts of the rocks. ¹⁷For My eyes are on all their ways. They are not hidden from My face, and their guilt is not concealed from My eyes. ¹⁸And I will first repay them double their iniquity and their sin, because they have defiled My land with the carcasses of their detestable idols, and they have filled My inheritance with their abominations." ¹⁹O LORD, my strength and my fortress, my refuge in the day of distress, the nations will come to You from the ends of the earth, and they will say, "Our fathers inherited nothing but lies, worthless idols of no benefit at all. ²⁰Can man make gods for himself? Such are not gods!" ²¹"Therefore behold, I will

inform them, and this time I will make them know My power and My might; then they will know that My name is the LORD.

Chapter 17

THE SIN AND PUNISHMENT OF JUDAH

¹“The sin of Judah is written with an iron stylus, engraved with a diamond point on the tablets of their hearts and on the horns of their altars. ²Even their children remember their altars and Asherah poles by the green trees and on the high hills. ³O My mountain in the countryside, I will give over your wealth and all your treasures as plunder, because of the sin of your high places, within all your borders. ⁴And you yourself will relinquish the inheritance that I gave you. I will enslave you to your enemies in a land that you do not know, for you have kindled My anger; it will burn forever.” ⁵This is what the LORD says: “Cursed is the man who trusts in mankind, who makes mere flesh his strength and turns his heart from the LORD. ⁶He will be like a shrub in the desert; he will not see when prosperity comes. He will dwell in the parched places of the desert, in a salt land where no one lives. ⁷But blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, whose confidence is in Him. ⁸He is like a tree planted by the waters that sends out its roots toward the stream. It does not fear when the heat comes, and its leaves are always green. It does not worry in a year of drought, nor does it cease to produce fruit. ⁹The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it? ¹⁰I, the LORD, search the heart; I examine the mind to reward a man according to his way, by what his deeds deserve. ¹¹Like a partridge hatching eggs it did not lay is the man who makes a fortune unjustly. In the middle of his days his riches will desert him, and in the end he will be the fool.”

JEREMIAH’S PRAYER FOR DELIVERANCE

¹²A glorious throne, exalted from the beginning, is the place of our sanctuary. ¹³O LORD, the hope of Israel, all who abandon You will be put to shame. All who turn away will be written in the dust, for they have abandoned the LORD, the fountain of living water. ¹⁴Heal me, O LORD, and I will be healed; save me, and I will be saved, for You are my praise. ¹⁵Behold, they keep saying to me, “Where is the word of the LORD? Let it come now!” ¹⁶But I have not run away from being Your shepherd; I have not desired the day of despair. You know that the utterance of my lips was spoken in Your presence. ¹⁷Do not become a terror to me; You are my refuge in the day of disaster. ¹⁸Let my persecutors be put to shame, but do not let me be put to shame.

Let them be terrified, but do not let me be terrified. Bring upon them the day of disaster and shatter them with double destruction.

RESTORING THE SABBATH

¹⁹This is what the LORD said to me: “Go and stand at the gate of the people, through which the kings of Judah go in and out; and stand at all the other gates of Jerusalem. ²⁰Say to them, ‘Hear the word of the LORD, O kings of Judah, all people of Judah and Jerusalem who enter through these gates. ²¹This is what the LORD says: Take heed for yourselves; do not carry a load or bring it through the gates of Jerusalem on the Sabbath day. ²²You must not carry a load out of your houses or do any work on the Sabbath day, but you must keep the Sabbath day holy, just as I commanded your forefathers. ²³Yet they would not listen or incline their ear, but they stiffened their necks and would not listen or receive My discipline. ²⁴If, however, you listen carefully to Me, says the LORD, and bring no load through the gates of this city on the Sabbath day, and keep the Sabbath day holy, and do no work on it, ²⁵then kings and princes will enter through the gates of this city. They will sit on the throne of David, riding in chariots and on horses with their officials, along with the men of Judah and the residents of Jerusalem, and this city will be inhabited forever. ²⁶And people will come from the cities of Judah and the places around Jerusalem, from the land of Benjamin, and from the foothills, the hill country, and the Negev, bringing burnt offerings and sacrifices, grain offerings and frankincense, and thank offerings to the house of the LORD. ²⁷But if you do not listen to Me to keep the Sabbath day holy by not carrying a load while entering the gates of Jerusalem on the Sabbath day, then I will kindle an unquenchable fire in its gates to consume the citadels of Jerusalem.”

Chapter 18

THE POTTER AND THE CLAY

¹This is the word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD: ²“Go down at once to the potter’s house, and there I will give you My message.” ³So I went down to the potter’s house and saw him working at the wheel. ⁴But the vessel that he was shaping from the clay became flawed in his hand; so he formed it into another vessel, as it seemed best for him to do. ⁵Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying, ⁶“O house of Israel, declares the LORD, can I not treat you as this potter treats his clay? Just like clay in the potter’s hand, so are you in My hand, O house of Israel. ⁷At any time I might announce that a nation or kingdom will

be uprooted, torn down, and destroyed. ⁸But if that nation I warned turns from its evil, then I will relent of the disaster I had planned to bring. ⁹And if at another time I announce that I will build up and establish a nation or kingdom, ¹⁰and if it does evil in My sight and does not listen to My voice, then I will relent of the good I had intended for it. ¹¹Now therefore, tell the men of Judah and the residents of Jerusalem that this is what the LORD says: ‘Behold, I am planning a disaster for you and devising a plan against you. Turn now, each of you, from your evil ways, and correct your ways and deeds.’ ¹²But they will reply, ‘It is hopeless. We will follow our own plans, and each of us will act according to the stubbornness of his evil heart.’” ¹³Therefore this is what the LORD says: “Inquire among the nations: Who has ever heard things like these? Virgin Israel has done a most terrible thing. ¹⁴Does the snow of Lebanon ever leave its rocky slopes? Or do its cool waters flowing from a distance ever run dry? ¹⁵Yet My people have forgotten Me. They burn incense to worthless idols that make them stumble in their ways, leaving the ancient roads to walk on rutted bypaths instead of on the highway. ¹⁶They have made their land a desolation, a perpetual object of scorn; all who pass by will be appalled and shake their heads. ¹⁷I will scatter them before the enemy like the east wind. I will show them My back and not My face in the day of their calamity.”

ANOTHER PLOT AGAINST JEREMIAH

¹⁸Then some said, “Come, let us make plans against Jeremiah, for the law will never be lost to the priest, nor counsel to the wise, nor an oracle to the prophet. Come, let us denounce him and pay no heed to any of his words.” ¹⁹Attend to me, O LORD. Hear what my accusers are saying! ²⁰Should good be repaid with evil? Yet they have dug a pit for me. Remember how I stood before You to speak good on their behalf, to turn Your wrath from them. ²¹Therefore, hand their children over to famine; pour out the power of the sword upon them. Let their wives become childless and widowed; let their husbands be slain by disease, their young men struck down by the sword in battle. ²²Let a cry be heard from their houses when You suddenly bring raiders against them, for they have dug a pit to capture me and have hidden snares for my feet. ²³But You, O LORD, know all their deadly plots against me. Do not wipe out their guilt or blot out their sin from Your sight. Let them be overthrown before You; deal with them in the time of Your anger.

Chapter 19

THE BROKEN JAR

¹This is what the LORD says: “Go and buy a clay jar from a potter. Take some of the elders of the people and leaders of the priests, ²and go out to the Valley of Ben-hinnom near the entrance of the Potsherd Gate. Proclaim there the words I speak to you, ³saying, ‘Hear the word of the LORD, O kings of Judah and residents of Jerusalem. This is what the LORD of Hosts, the God of Israel, says: I am going to bring such disaster on this place that the ears of all who hear of it will ring, ⁴because they have abandoned Me and made this a foreign place. They have burned incense in this place to other gods that neither they nor their fathers nor the kings of Judah have ever known. They have filled this place with the blood of the innocent. ⁵They have built high places to Baal on which to burn their children in the fire as offerings to Baal—something I never commanded or mentioned, nor did it even enter My mind. ⁶So behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when this place will no longer be called Topheth or the Valley of Ben-hinnom, but the Valley of Slaughter. ⁷And in this place I will ruin the plans of Judah and Jerusalem. I will make them fall by the sword before their enemies, by the hands of those who seek their lives, and I will give their carcasses as food to the birds of the air and the beasts of the earth. ⁸I will make this city a desolation and an object of scorn. All who pass by will be appalled and will scoff at all her wounds. ⁹I will make them eat the flesh of their sons and daughters, and they will eat one another’s flesh in the siege and distress inflicted on them by their enemies who seek their lives.’ ¹⁰Then you are to shatter the jar in the presence of the men who accompany you, ¹¹and you are to proclaim to them that this is what the LORD of Hosts says: I will shatter this nation and this city, like one shatters a potter’s jar that can never again be repaired. They will bury the dead in Topheth until there is no more room to bury them. ¹²This is what I will do to this place and to its residents, declares the LORD. I will make this city like Topheth. ¹³The houses of Jerusalem and the houses of the kings of Judah will be defiled like that place, Topheth—all the houses on whose rooftops they burned incense to all the host of heaven and poured out drink offerings to other gods.” ¹⁴Then Jeremiah returned from Topheth, where the LORD had sent him to prophesy, and he stood in the courtyard of the house of the LORD and proclaimed to all the people, ¹⁵“This is what the LORD of Hosts, the God of Israel, says: ‘Behold, I am about to bring on this city and on all the villages around it every disaster I have pronounced against them, because they have stiffened their necks so as not to heed My words.’”

Chapter 20

PASHHUR PERSECUTES JEREMIAH

¹When Pashhur the priest, the son of Immer and the chief official in the house of the LORD, heard Jeremiah prophesying these things, ²he had Jeremiah the prophet beaten and put in the stocks at the Upper Gate of Benjamin, which was by the house of the LORD. ³The next day, when Pashhur released Jeremiah from the stocks, Jeremiah said to him, “The LORD does not call you Pashhur, but Magor-missabib. ⁴For this is what the LORD says: ‘I will make you a terror to yourself and to all your friends. They will fall by the sword of their enemies before your very eyes. And I will hand Judah over to the king of Babylon, and he will carry them away to Babylon and put them to the sword. ⁵I will give away all the wealth of this city—all its products and valuables, and all the treasures of the kings of Judah—to their enemies. They will plunder them, seize them, and carry them off to Babylon. ⁶And you, Pashhur, and all who live in your house, will go into captivity. You will go to Babylon, and there you will die and be buried—you and all your friends to whom you have prophesied these lies.”

JEREMIAH’S COMPLAINT

⁷You have deceived me, O LORD, and I was deceived. You have overcome me and prevailed. I am a laughingstock all day long; everyone mocks me. ⁸For whenever I speak, I cry out; I proclaim violence and destruction. For the word of the LORD has become to me a reproach and derision all day long. ⁹If I say, “I will not mention Him or speak any more in His name,” His message becomes a fire burning in my heart, shut up in my bones, and I become weary of holding it in, and I cannot prevail. ¹⁰For I have heard the whispering of many: “Terror is on every side! Report him; let us report him!” All my trusted friends watch for my fall: “Perhaps he will be deceived so that we may prevail against him and take our vengeance upon him.” ¹¹But the LORD is with me like a fearsome warrior. Therefore, my persecutors will stumble and will not prevail. Since they have not succeeded, they will be utterly put to shame, with an everlasting disgrace that will never be forgotten. ¹²O LORD of Hosts, who examines the righteous, who sees the heart and mind, let me see Your vengeance upon them, for to You I have committed my cause. ¹³Sing to the LORD! Praise the LORD! For He rescues the life of the needy from the hands of evildoers. ¹⁴Cursed be the day I was born! May the day my mother bore me never be blessed. ¹⁵Cursed be the man who brought my father the news, saying, “A son is born to you,” bringing him great joy. ¹⁶May that man be like the cities that the LORD overthrew without compassion. May

he hear an outcry in the morning and a battle cry at noon, ¹⁷because he did not kill me in the womb so that my mother might have been my grave, and her womb forever enlarged. ¹⁸Why did I come out of the womb to see only trouble and sorrow, and to end my days in shame?

Chapter 21

JERUSALEM WILL FALL TO BABYLON

¹This is the word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD when King Zedekiah sent to him Pashhur son of Malchijah and the priest Zephaniah son of Maaseiah. They said, ²“Please inquire of the LORD on our behalf, since Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon is waging war against us. Perhaps the LORD will perform for us something like all His past wonders, so that Nebuchadnezzar will withdraw from us.” ³But Jeremiah answered, “You are to tell Zedekiah that ⁴this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: ‘I will turn against you the weapons of war in your hands, with which you are fighting the king of Babylon and the Chaldeans who besiege you outside the wall, and I will assemble their forces in the center of this city. ⁵And I Myself will fight against you with an outstretched hand and a mighty arm, with anger, fury, and great wrath. ⁶I will strike down the residents of this city, both man and beast. They will die in a terrible plague.’ ⁷After that,’ declares the LORD, ‘I will hand over Zedekiah king of Judah, his officers, and the people in this city who survive the plague and sword and famine, to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and to their enemies who seek their lives. He will put them to the sword; he will not spare them or show pity or compassion.’ ⁸Furthermore, you are to tell this people that this is what the LORD says: ‘Behold, I set before you the way of life and the way of death. ⁹Whoever stays in this city will die by sword and famine and plague, but whoever goes out and surrenders to the Chaldeans who besiege you will live; he will retain his life like a spoil of war. ¹⁰For I have set My face against this city to bring disaster and not good, declares the LORD. It will be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon, who will destroy it with fire.’

A MESSAGE TO THE HOUSE OF DAVID

¹¹Moreover, tell the house of the king of Judah to hear the word of the LORD. ¹²O house of David, this is what the LORD says: ‘Administer justice every morning, and rescue the victim of robbery from the hand of his oppressor, or My wrath will go forth like fire and burn with no one to extinguish it because of their evil deeds. ¹³Behold, I am against you who dwell above the valley, atop the rocky plateau—declares the LORD—you who say, “Who can come against us?

Who can enter our dwellings?” ¹⁴I will punish you as your deeds deserve, declares the LORD. I will kindle a fire in your forest that will consume everything around you.”

Chapter 22

A WARNING TO JUDAH'S KINGS

¹This is what the LORD says: “Go down to the palace of the king of Judah and proclaim this message there, ²saying, ‘Hear the word of the LORD, O king of Judah, who sits on the throne of David—you and your officials and your people who enter these gates. ³This is what the LORD says: Administer justice and righteousness. Rescue the victim of robbery from the hand of his oppressor. Do no wrong or violence to the foreigner, the fatherless, or the widow. Do not shed innocent blood in this place. ⁴For if you will indeed carry out these commands, then kings who sit on David’s throne will enter through the gates of this palace riding on chariots and horses—they and their officials and their people. ⁵But if you do not obey these words, then I swear by Myself, declares the LORD, that this house will become a pile of rubble.”

A WARNING ABOUT THE PALACE

⁶For this is what the LORD says concerning the house of the king of Judah: “You are like Gilead to Me, like the summit of Lebanon; but I will surely turn you into a desert, like cities that are uninhabited. ⁷I will appoint destroyers against you, each man with his weapons, and they will cut down the choicest of your cedars and throw them into the fire. ⁸And many nations will pass by this city and ask one another, ‘Why has the LORD done such a thing to this great city?’ ⁹Then people will reply, ‘Because they have forsaken the covenant of the LORD their God and have worshiped and served other gods.”

A WARNING ABOUT SHALLUM

¹⁰Do not weep for him who is dead; do not mourn his loss. Weep bitterly for him who is exiled, for he will never return to see his native land. ¹¹For this is what the LORD says concerning Shallum son of Josiah, king of Judah, who succeeded his father Josiah but has gone forth from this place: “He will never return, ¹²but he will die in the place to which he was exiled; he will never see this land again.”

A WARNING ABOUT JEHOIAKIM

¹³“Woe to him who builds his palace by unrighteousness, and his upper rooms without justice, who makes his countrymen serve without pay, and fails to pay their wages, ¹⁴who says, ‘I will build myself a great palace, with spacious upper rooms.’ So he cuts windows in it, panels it with

cedar, and paints it with vermilion. ¹⁵Does it make you a king to excel in cedar? Did not your father have food and drink? He administered justice and righteousness, and so it went well with him. ¹⁶He took up the cause of the poor and needy, and so it went well with him. Is this not what it means to know Me?” declares the LORD. ¹⁷“But your eyes and heart are set on nothing except your own dishonest gain, on shedding innocent blood, on practicing extortion and oppression.” ¹⁸Therefore this is what the LORD says concerning Jehoiakim son of Josiah king of Judah: “They will not mourn for him: ‘Alas, my brother! Alas, my sister!’ They will not mourn for him: ‘Alas, my master! Alas, his splendor!’ ¹⁹He will be buried like a donkey, dragged away and thrown outside the gates of Jerusalem. ²⁰Go up to Lebanon and cry out; raise your voice in Bashan; cry out from Abarim, for all your lovers have been crushed. ²¹I warned you when you were secure. You said, ‘I will not listen.’ This has been your way from youth, that you have not obeyed My voice. ²²The wind will drive away all your shepherds, and your lovers will go into captivity. Then you will be ashamed and humiliated because of all your wickedness. ²³O inhabitant of Lebanon, nestled in the cedars, how you will groan when pangs of anguish come upon you, agony like a woman in labor.”

A WARNING TO CONIAH

²⁴“As surely as I live,” declares the LORD, “even if you, Coniah son of Jehoiakim king of Judah, were a signet ring on My right hand, I would pull you off. ²⁵In fact, I will hand you over to those you dread, who want to take your life—to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and to the Chaldeans. ²⁶I will hurl you and the mother who gave you birth into another land, where neither of you were born—and there you both will die. ²⁷You will never return to the land for which you long.” ²⁸Is this man Coniah a despised and shattered pot, a jar that no one wants? Why are he and his descendants hurled out and cast into a land they do not know? ²⁹O land, land, land, hear the word of the LORD! ³⁰This is what the LORD says: “Enroll this man as childless, a man who will not prosper in his lifetime. None of his descendants will prosper to sit on the throne of David or to rule again in Judah.”

Chapter 23

DAVID'S RIGHTEOUS BRANCH

¹“Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of My pasture!” declares the LORD. ²Therefore this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says about the shepherds who tend My people: “You have scattered My flock and driven

them away, and have not attended to them. Behold, I will attend to you for the evil of your deeds, declares the LORD. ³Then I Myself will gather the remnant of My flock from all the lands to which I have banished them, and I will return them to their pasture, where they will be fruitful and multiply. ⁴I will raise up shepherds over them who will tend them, and they will no longer be afraid or dismayed, nor will any go missing, declares the LORD. ⁵Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and He will reign wisely as King and will administer justice and righteousness in the land. ⁶In His days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely. And this is His name by which He will be called: The LORD Our Righteousness. ⁷So behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when they will no longer say, ‘As surely as the LORD lives, who brought the Israelites up out of the land of Egypt.’ ⁸Instead they will say, ‘As surely as the LORD lives, who brought and led the descendants of the house of Israel up out of the land of the north and all the other lands to which He had banished them.’ Then they will dwell once more in their own land.”

LYING PROPHETS

⁹As for the prophets: My heart is broken within me, and all my bones tremble. I have become like a drunkard, like a man overcome by wine, because of the LORD, because of His holy words. ¹⁰For the land is full of adulterers—because of the curse, the land mourns and the pastures of the wilderness have dried up—their course is evil and their power is misused. ¹¹“For both prophet and priest are ungodly; even in My house I have found their wickedness,” declares the LORD. ¹²“Therefore their path will become slick; they will be driven away into the darkness and fall into it. For I will bring disaster upon them in the year of their punishment,” declares the LORD. ¹³“Among the prophets of Samaria I saw an offensive thing: They prophesied by Baal and led My people Israel astray. ¹⁴And among the prophets of Jerusalem I have seen a horrible thing: They commit adultery and walk in lies. They strengthen the hands of evildoers, so that no one turns his back on wickedness. They are all like Sodom to Me; the people of Jerusalem are like Gomorrah.” ¹⁵Therefore this is what the LORD of Hosts says concerning the prophets: “I will feed them wormwood and give them poisoned water to drink, for from the prophets of Jerusalem ungodliness has spread throughout the land.” ¹⁶This is what the LORD of Hosts says: “Do not listen to the words of the prophets who prophesy to you. They are filling you with false hopes. They speak visions from their own minds, not from the mouth of the LORD. ¹⁷They keep saying to those who despise Me,

‘The LORD says that you will have peace,’ and to everyone who walks in the stubbornness of his own heart, ‘No harm will come to you.’ ¹⁸But which of them has stood in the council of the LORD to see and hear His word? Who has given heed to His word and obeyed it? ¹⁹Behold, the storm of the LORD has gone out with fury, a whirlwind swirling down upon the heads of the wicked. ²⁰The anger of the LORD will not turn back until He has fully accomplished the purposes of His heart. In the days to come you will understand this clearly. ²¹I did not send these prophets, yet they have run with their message; I did not speak to them, yet they have prophesied. ²²But if they had stood in My council, they would have proclaimed My words to My people and turned them back from their evil ways and deeds.” ²³“Am I only a God nearby,” declares the LORD, “and not a God far away?” ²⁴“Can a man hide in secret places where I cannot see him?” declares the LORD. “Do I not fill the heavens and the earth?” declares the LORD. ²⁵“I have heard the sayings of the prophets who prophesy lies in My name: ‘I had a dream! I had a dream!’ ²⁶How long will this continue in the hearts of these prophets who prophesy falsehood, these prophets of the delusion of their own minds? ²⁷They suppose the dreams that they tell one another will make My people forget My name, just as their fathers forgot My name through the worship of Baal. ²⁸Let the prophet who has a dream retell it, but let him who has My word speak it truthfully. For what is straw compared to grain?” declares the LORD. ²⁹“Is not My word like fire,” declares the LORD, “and like a hammer that smashes a rock?” ³⁰“Therefore behold,” declares the LORD, “I am against the prophets who steal from one another words they attribute to Me.” ³¹“Yes,” declares the LORD, “I am against the prophets who wag their own tongues and proclaim, ‘The LORD declares it.’” ³²“Indeed,” declares the LORD, “I am against those who prophesy false dreams and retell them to lead My people astray with their reckless lies. It was not I who sent them or commanded them, and they are of no benefit at all to these people,” declares the LORD.

FALSE PROPHECIES

³³“Now when this people or a prophet or priest asks you, ‘What is the burden of the LORD?’ you are to say to them, ‘What burden? I will forsake you, declares the LORD.’ ³⁴As for the prophet or priest or anyone who claims, ‘This is the burden of the LORD,’ I will punish that man and his household. ³⁵This is what each man is to say to his friend and to his brother: ‘What has the LORD answered?’ or ‘What has the LORD spoken?’ ³⁶But refer no more to the burden of the LORD, for each man’s word becomes the burden, so that you pervert the words of the living God, the LORD of

Hosts, our God. ³⁷Thus you are to say to the prophet: ‘What has the LORD answered you?’ and ‘What has the LORD spoken?’ ³⁸But if you claim, ‘This is the burden of the LORD,’ then this is what the LORD says: Because you have said, ‘This is the burden of the LORD,’ and I specifically told you not to make this claim, ³⁹therefore I will surely forget you and will cast you out of My presence, both you and the city that I gave to you and your fathers. ⁴⁰And I will bring upon you everlasting shame and perpetual humiliation that will never be forgotten.”

Chapter 24

THE GOOD AND BAD FIGS

¹After Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had carried away Jeconiah son of Jehoiakim king of Judah, as well as the officials of Judah and the craftsmen and metalsmiths from Jerusalem, and had brought them to Babylon, the LORD showed me two baskets of figs placed in front of the temple of the LORD. ²One basket had very good figs, like those that ripen early, but the other basket contained very poor figs, so bad they could not be eaten. ³“Jeremiah,” the LORD asked, “what do you see?” “Figs!” I replied. “The good figs are very good, but the bad figs are very bad, so bad they cannot be eaten.” ⁴Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying, ⁵“This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: ‘Like these good figs, so I regard as good the exiles from Judah, whom I have sent away from this place to the land of the Chaldeans. ⁶I will keep My eyes on them for good and will return them to this land. I will build them up and not tear them down; I will plant them and not uproot them. ⁷I will give them a heart to know Me, that I am the LORD. They will be My people, and I will be their God, for they will return to Me with all their heart. ⁸But like the bad figs, so bad they cannot be eaten,’ says the LORD, ‘so will I deal with Zedekiah king of Judah, his officials, and the remnant of Jerusalem—those remaining in this land and those living in the land of Egypt. ⁹I will make them a horror and an offense to all the kingdoms of the earth, a disgrace and an object of scorn, ridicule, and cursing wherever I have banished them. ¹⁰And I will send against them sword and famine and plague, until they have perished from the land that I gave to them and their fathers.”

Chapter 25

SEVENTY YEARS OF CAPTIVITY

¹This is the word that came to Jeremiah concerning all the people of Judah in the fourth year of Jehoiakim son of Josiah king of Judah, which was the first year of

Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon. ²So the prophet Jeremiah spoke to all the people of Judah and all the residents of Jerusalem as follows: ³“From the thirteenth year of Josiah son of Amon king of Judah until this very day—twenty-three years—the word of the LORD has come to me, and I have spoken to you again and again, but you have not listened. ⁴And the LORD has sent all His servants the prophets to you again and again, but you have not listened or inclined your ear to hear. ⁵The prophets told you, ‘Turn now, each of you, from your evil ways and deeds, and you can dwell in the land that the LORD has given to you and your fathers forever and ever. ⁶Do not follow other gods to serve and worship them, and do not provoke Me to anger with the works of your hands. Then I will do you no harm.’ ⁷‘But to your own harm, you have not listened to Me,’ declares the LORD, ‘so you have provoked Me to anger with the works of your hands.’ ⁸Therefore this is what the LORD of Hosts says: ‘Because you have not obeyed My words, ⁹behold, I will summon all the families of the north,’ declares the LORD, and I will send for My servant Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, whom I will bring against this land, against its residents, and against all the surrounding nations. So I will devote them to destruction and make them an object of horror and contempt, an everlasting desolation. ¹⁰Moreover, I will banish from them the sounds of joy and gladness, the voices of the bride and bridegroom, the sound of the millstones, and the light of the lamp. ¹¹And this whole land will become a desolate wasteland, and these nations will serve the king of Babylon for seventy years. ¹²But when seventy years are complete, I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation, the land of the Chaldeans, for their guilt, declares the LORD, and I will make it an everlasting desolation. ¹³I will bring upon that land all the words I have pronounced against it, all that is written in this book, which Jeremiah has prophesied against all the nations. ¹⁴For many nations and great kings will enslave them, and I will repay them according to their deeds and according to the work of their hands.”

THE CUP OF GOD’S WRATH

¹⁵This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, said 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. ¹⁶And they will drink and stagger and go out of their minds, because of the sword that I will send among them.” ¹⁷So I took the cup from the LORD’s hand and made all the nations drink from it, each one to whom the LORD had sent me, ¹⁸to make them a ruin, an object of horror and contempt and cursing, as they are to this day—Jerusalem and the cities of Judah, its kings and officials; ¹⁹Pharaoh king of

Egypt, his officials, his leaders, and all his people; ²⁰all the mixed tribes; all the kings of Uz; all the kings of the Philistines: Ashkelon, Gaza, Ekron, and the remnant of Ashdod; ²¹Edom, Moab, and the Ammonites; ²²all the kings of Tyre and Sidon; the kings of the coastlands across the sea; ²³Dedan, Tema, Buz, and all who cut the corners of their hair; ²⁴all the kings of Arabia, and all the kings of the mixed tribes who dwell in the desert; ²⁵all the kings of Zimri, Elam, and Media; ²⁶all the kings of the north, both near and far, one after another—all the kingdoms on the face of the earth. And after all of them, the king of Sheshach will drink it too. ²⁷“Then you are to tell them that this is what the LORD of Hosts, the God of Israel, says: ‘Drink, get drunk, and vomit. Fall down and never get up again, because of the sword I will send among you.’ ²⁸If they refuse to take the cup from your hand and drink it, you are to tell them that this is what the LORD of Hosts says: ‘You most certainly must drink it! ²⁹For behold, I am beginning to bring disaster on the city that bears My Name, so how could you possibly go unpunished? You will not go unpunished, for I am calling down a sword upon all the inhabitants of the earth, declares the LORD of Hosts.’ ³⁰So you are to prophesy all these words against them and say to them: ‘The LORD will roar from on high; He will raise His voice from His holy habitation. He will roar loudly over His pasture; like those who tread the grapes, He will call out with a shout against all the inhabitants of the earth. ³¹The tumult will resound to the ends of the earth because the LORD brings a charge against the nations. He brings judgment on all mankind and puts the wicked to the sword,’” declares the LORD. ³²This is what the LORD of Hosts says: “Behold! Disaster is spreading from nation to nation; a mighty storm is rising from the ends of the earth.” ³³Those slain by the LORD on that day will be spread from one end of the earth to the other. They will not be mourned, gathered, or buried. They will be like dung lying on the ground.

THE CRY OF THE SHEPHERDS

³⁴Wail, you shepherds, and cry out; roll in the dust, you leaders of the flock. For the days of your slaughter have come; you will fall and be shattered like fine pottery. ³⁵Flight will evade the shepherds, and escape will elude the leaders of the flock. ³⁶Hear the cry of the shepherds, the wailing of the leaders of the flock, for the LORD is destroying their pasture. ³⁷The peaceful meadows have been silenced because of the LORD’s burning anger. ³⁸He has left His den like a lion, for their land has been made a desolation by the sword of the oppressor, and because of the fierce anger of the LORD.

Chapter 26

A WARNING TO THE CITIES OF JUDAH

¹At the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim son of Josiah king of Judah, this word came from the LORD: ²“This is what the LORD says: Stand in the courtyard of the house of the LORD and speak all the words I have commanded you to speak to all the cities of Judah who come to worship there. Do not omit a word. ³Perhaps they will listen and turn—each from his evil way of life—so that I may relent of the disaster I am planning to bring upon them because of the evil of their deeds. ⁴And you are to tell them that this is what the LORD says: ‘If you do not listen to Me and walk in My law, which I have set before you, ⁵and if you do not listen to the words of My servants the prophets, whom I have sent you again and again even though you did not listen, ⁶then I will make this house like Shiloh, and I will make this city an object of cursing among all the nations of the earth.”

JEREMIAH THREATENED WITH DEATH

⁷Now the priests and prophets and all the people heard Jeremiah speaking these words in the house of the LORD, ⁸and as soon as he had finished telling all the people everything the LORD had commanded him to say, the priests and prophets and all the people seized him, shouting, “You must surely die! ⁹How dare you prophesy in the name of the LORD that this house will become like Shiloh and this city will be desolate and deserted!” And all the people assembled against Jeremiah in the house of the LORD. ¹⁰When the officials of Judah heard these things, they went up from the king’s palace to the house of the LORD and sat there at the entrance of the New Gate. ¹¹Then the priests and prophets said to the officials and all the people, “This man is worthy of death, for he has prophesied against this city, as you have heard with your own ears!” ¹²But Jeremiah said to all the officials and all the people, “The LORD sent me to prophesy against this house and against this city all the words that you have heard. ¹³So now, correct your ways and deeds, and obey the voice of the LORD your God, so that He might relent of the disaster He has pronounced against you. ¹⁴As for me, here I am in your hands; do to me what you think is good and right. ¹⁵But know for certain that if you put me to death, you will bring innocent blood upon yourselves, upon this city, and upon its residents; for truly the LORD has sent me to speak all these words in your hearing.”

JEREMIAH SPARED FROM DEATH

¹⁶Then the officials and all the people told the priests and prophets, “This man is not worthy of death, for he has spo-

ken to us in the name of the LORD our God!” ¹⁷Some of the elders of the land stood up and said to the whole assembly of the people, ¹⁸“Micah the Moreshite prophesied in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah and told all the people of Judah that this is what the LORD of Hosts says: ‘Zion will be plowed like a field, Jerusalem will become a heap of rubble, and the temple mount a wooded ridge.’ ¹⁹Did Hezekiah king of Judah or anyone else in Judah put him to death? Did Hezekiah not fear the LORD and seek His favor, and did not the LORD relent of the disaster He had pronounced against them? But we are about to bring great harm on ourselves!”

THE PROPHET URIAH

²⁰Now there was another man prophesying in the name of the LORD, Uriah son of Shemaiah from Kiriath-jearim. He prophesied against this city and against this land the same things that Jeremiah did. ²¹King Jehoiakim and all his mighty men and officials heard his words, and the king sought to put him to death. But when Uriah found out about it, he fled in fear and went to Egypt. ²²Then King Jehoiakim sent men to Egypt: Elnathan son of Achbor along with some other men. ²³They brought Uriah out of Egypt and took him to King Jehoiakim, who had him put to the sword and his body thrown into the burial place of the common people. ²⁴Nevertheless, Ahikam son of Shaphan supported Jeremiah, so he was not handed over to the people to be put to death.

Chapter 27

THE YOKE OF NEBUCHADNEZZAR

¹At the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah son of Josiah king of Judah, this word came to Jeremiah from the LORD. ²This is what the LORD said to me: “Make for yourself a yoke out of leather straps and put it on your neck. ³Send word to the kings of Edom, Moab, Ammon, Tyre, and Sidon through the envoys who have come to Jerusalem to Zedekiah king of Judah. ⁴Give them a message from the LORD of Hosts, the God of Israel, to relay to their masters: ⁵By My great power and outstretched arm, I made the earth and the men and beasts on the face of it, and I give it to whom I please. ⁶So now I have placed all these lands under the authority of My servant Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon. I have even made the beasts of the field subject to him. ⁷All nations will serve him and his son and grandson, until the time of his own land comes; then many nations and great kings will enslave him. ⁸As for the nation or kingdom that does not serve Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and does not place its neck under his yoke, I will punish

that nation by sword and famine and plague, declares the LORD, until I have destroyed it by his hand. ⁹But as for you, do not listen to your prophets, your diviners, your interpreters of dreams, your mediums, or your sorcerers who declare, ‘You will not serve the king of Babylon.’ ¹⁰For they prophesy to you a lie that will serve to remove you from your land; I will banish you and you will perish. ¹¹But the nation that will put its neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon and serve him, I will leave in its own land, to cultivate it and reside in it, declares the LORD.” ¹²And to Zedekiah king of Judah I spoke the same message: “Put your necks under the yoke of the king of Babylon; serve him and his people, and live! ¹³Why should you and your people die by sword and famine and plague, as the LORD has decreed against any nation that does not serve the king of Babylon? ¹⁴Do not listen to the words of the prophets who say, ‘You must not serve the king of Babylon,’ for they are prophesying to you a lie. ¹⁵For I have not sent them, declares the LORD, and yet they are prophesying falsely in My name; therefore I will banish you, and you will perish—you and the prophets who prophesy to you.” ¹⁶Then I said to the priests and to all this people, “This is what the LORD says: Do not listen to the words of your prophets who prophesy to you, saying, ‘Look, very soon now the articles from the house of the LORD will be brought back from Babylon.’ They are prophesying to you a lie. ¹⁷Do not listen to them. Serve the king of Babylon and live! Why should this city become a ruin? ¹⁸If they are indeed prophets and the word of the LORD is with them, let them now plead with the LORD of Hosts that the articles remaining in the house of the LORD, in the palace of the king of Judah, and in Jerusalem, not be taken to Babylon. ¹⁹For this is what the LORD of Hosts says about the pillars, the sea, the bases, and the rest of the articles that remain in this city, ²⁰which Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon did not take when he carried Jeconiah son of Jehoiakim king of Judah into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon, along with all the nobles of Judah and Jerusalem. ²¹Yes, this is what the LORD of Hosts, the God of Israel, says about the articles that remain in the house of the LORD, in the palace of the king of Judah, and in Jerusalem: ²²“They will be carried to Babylon and will remain there until the day I attend to them again,” declares the LORD. “Then I will bring them back and restore them to this place.”

Chapter 28

HANANIAH’S FALSE PROPHECY

¹In the fifth month of that same year, the fourth year, near the beginning of the reign of King Zedekiah of Judah, the

prophet Hananiah son of Azzur, who was from Gibeon, said to me in the house of the LORD in the presence of the priests and all the people: ²“This is what the LORD of Hosts, the God of Israel, says: ‘I have broken the yoke of the king of Babylon. ³Within two years I will restore to this place all the articles of the house of the LORD that Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon removed from here and carried to Babylon. ⁴And I will restore to this place Jeconiah son of Jehoiakim king of Judah, along with all the exiles from Judah who went to Babylon,’ declares the LORD, ‘for I will break the yoke of the king of Babylon.’” ⁵Then the prophet Jeremiah replied to the prophet Hananiah in the presence of the priests and all the people who were standing in the house of the LORD. ⁶“Amen!” Jeremiah said. “May the LORD do so! May the LORD fulfill the words you have prophesied, and may He restore the articles of His house and all the exiles back to this place from Babylon. ⁷Nevertheless, listen now to this message I am speaking in your hearing and in the hearing of all the people. ⁸The prophets of old who preceded you and me prophesied war, disaster, and plague against many lands and great kingdoms. ⁹As for the prophet who prophesies peace, only if the word of the prophet comes true will the prophet be recognized as one the LORD has truly sent.” ¹⁰Then the prophet Hananiah took the yoke off the neck of Jeremiah the prophet and broke it. ¹¹And in the presence of all the people Hananiah proclaimed, “This is what the LORD says: ‘In this way, within two years I will break the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon off the neck of all the nations.’” At this, Jeremiah the prophet went on his way. ¹²But shortly after Hananiah the prophet had broken the yoke off his neck, the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah: ¹³“Go and tell Hananiah that this is what the LORD says: ‘You have broken a yoke of wood, but in its place you have fashioned a yoke of iron.’ ¹⁴For this is what the LORD of Hosts, the God of Israel, says: ‘I have put a yoke of iron on the neck of all these nations to make them serve Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and they will serve him. I have even given him control of the beasts of the field.’” ¹⁵Then the prophet Jeremiah said to the prophet Hananiah, “Listen, Hananiah! The LORD did not send you, but you have persuaded this people to trust in a lie. ¹⁶Therefore this is what the LORD says: ‘I am about to remove you from the face of the earth. You will die this year because you have preached rebellion against the LORD.’” ¹⁷And in the seventh month of that very year, the prophet Hananiah died.

Chapter 29

JEREMIAH’S LETTER TO THE EXILES

¹This is the text of the letter that Jeremiah the prophet sent from Jerusalem to the surviving elders among the exiles and to the priests, the prophets, and all the others Nebuchadnezzar had carried into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon. ²(This was after King Jeconiah, the queen mother, the court officials, the officials of Judah and Jerusalem, the craftsmen, and the metalsmiths had been exiled from Jerusalem.) ³The letter was entrusted to Elasah son of Shaphan and Gemariah son of Hilkiah, whom Zedekiah king of Judah sent to King Nebuchadnezzar in Babylon. It stated: ⁴This is what the LORD of Hosts, the God of Israel, says to all the exiles who were carried away from Jerusalem to Babylon: ⁵“Build houses and settle down. Plant gardens and eat their produce. ⁶Take wives and have sons and daughters. Take wives for your sons and give your daughters in marriage, so that they too may have sons and daughters. Multiply there; do not decrease. ⁷Seek the prosperity of the city to which I have sent you as exiles. Pray to the LORD on its behalf, for if it prospers, you too will prosper.” ⁸For this is what the LORD of Hosts, the God of Israel, says: “Do not be deceived by the prophets and diviners among you, and do not listen to the dreams you elicit from them. ⁹For they are falsely prophesying to you in My name; I have not sent them, declares the LORD.” ¹⁰For this is what the LORD says: “When Babylon’s seventy years are complete, I will attend to you and confirm My promise to restore you to this place. ¹¹For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, to give you a future and a hope. ¹²Then you will call upon Me and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. ¹³You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart. ¹⁴I will be found by you, declares the LORD, and I will restore you from captivity and gather you from all the nations and places to which I have banished you, declares the LORD. I will restore you to the place from which I sent you into exile.” ¹⁵Because you may say, “The LORD has raised up for us prophets in Babylon,” ¹⁶this is what the LORD says about the king who sits on David’s throne and all the people who remain in this city, your brothers who did not go with you into exile— ¹⁷this is what the LORD of Hosts says: “I will send against them sword and famine and plague, and I will make them like rotten figs, so bad they cannot be eaten. ¹⁸I will pursue them with sword and famine and plague. I will make them a horror to all the kingdoms of the earth—a curse, a desolation, and an object of scorn and reproach among all the nations to which I banish them. ¹⁹I will do this because they

have not listened to My words, declares the LORD, which I sent to them again and again through My servants the prophets. And neither have you exiles listened, declares the LORD.” ²⁰So hear the word of the LORD, all you exiles I have sent away from Jerusalem to Babylon. ²¹This is what the LORD of Hosts, the God of Israel, says about Ahab son of Kolaiah and Zedekiah son of Maaseiah, who are prophesying to you lies in My name: “I will deliver them to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and he will kill them before your very eyes. ²²Because of them, all the exiles of Judah who are in Babylon will use this curse: ‘May the LORD make you like Zedekiah and Ahab, whom the king of Babylon roasted in the fire!’ ²³For they have committed an outrage in Israel by committing adultery with the wives of their neighbors and speaking lies in My name, which I did not command them to do. I am He who knows, and I am a witness, declares the LORD.”

THE MESSAGE TO SHEMAIAH

²⁴You are to tell Shemaiah the Nehelamite that ²⁵this is what the LORD of Hosts, the God of Israel, says: “In your own name you have sent out letters to all the people of Jerusalem, to the priest Zephaniah son of Maaseiah, and to all the priests. You said to Zephaniah: ²⁶The LORD has appointed you priest in place of Jehoiada, to be the chief officer in the house of the LORD, responsible for any madman who acts like a prophet—you must put him in stocks and neck irons. ²⁷So now, why have you not rebuked Jeremiah of Anathoth, who poses as a prophet among you? ²⁸For he has sent to us in Babylon, claiming: Since the exile will be lengthy, build houses and settle down; plant gardens and eat their produce.” ²⁹(Zephaniah the priest, however, had read this letter to Jeremiah the prophet.) ³⁰Then the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah: ³¹“Send a message telling all the exiles what the LORD says concerning Shemaiah the Nehelamite. Because Shemaiah has prophesied to you—though I did not send him—and has made you trust in a lie, ³²this is what the LORD says: ‘I will surely punish Shemaiah the Nehelamite and his descendants. He will have no one left among this people, nor will he see the good that I will bring to My people, declares the LORD, for he has preached rebellion against the LORD.’”

Chapter 30

THE RESTORATION OF ISRAEL AND JUDAH

¹This is the word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD: ²“This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: ‘Write in a book all the words that I have spoken to you. ³For behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will

restore from captivity My people Israel and Judah, declares the LORD. I will restore them to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they will possess it.” ⁴These are the words that the LORD spoke concerning Israel and Judah. ⁵Yes, this is what the LORD says: “A cry of panic is heard—a cry of terror, not of peace. ⁶Ask now, and see: Can a male give birth? Why then do I see every man with his hands on his stomach like a woman in labor and every face turned pale? ⁷How awful that day will be! None will be like it! It is the time of Jacob’s distress, but he will be saved out of it. ⁸On that day, declares the LORD of Hosts, I will break the yoke off their necks and tear off their bonds, and no longer will strangers enslave them. ⁹Instead, they will serve the LORD their God and David their king, whom I will raise up for them. ¹⁰As for you, O Jacob My servant, do not be afraid, declares the LORD, and do not be dismayed, O Israel. For I will surely save you out of a distant place, your descendants from the land of their captivity! Jacob will return to quiet and ease, with no one to make him afraid. ¹¹For I am with you to save you, declares the LORD. Though I will completely destroy all the nations to which I have scattered you, I will not completely destroy you. Yet I will discipline you justly, and will by no means leave you unpunished.” ¹²For this is what the LORD says: “Your injury is incurable; your wound is grievous. ¹³There is no one to plead your cause, no remedy for your sores, no recovery for you. ¹⁴All your lovers have forgotten you; they no longer seek you, for I have struck you as an enemy would, with the discipline of someone cruel, because of your great iniquity and your numerous sins. ¹⁵Why do you cry out over your wound? Your pain has no cure! Because of your great iniquity and your numerous sins I have done these things to you. ¹⁶Nevertheless, all who devour you will be devoured, and all your adversaries—every one of them—will go off into exile. Those who plundered you will be plundered, and all who raided you will be raided. ¹⁷But I will restore your health and heal your wounds, declares the LORD, because they call you an outcast, Zion, for whom no one cares.” ¹⁸This is what the LORD says: “I will restore the fortunes of Jacob’s tents and have compassion on his dwellings. And the city will be rebuilt on her own ruins, and the palace will stand in its rightful place. ¹⁹Thanksgiving will proceed from them, a sound of celebration. I will multiply them, and they will not be decreased; I will honor them, and they will not be belittled. ²⁰Their children will be as in days of old, and their congregation will be established before Me; and I will punish all their oppressors. ²¹Their leader will be one of their own, and their ruler will arise from their midst. And I will bring him near, and he will approach Me, for who would dare on his own to approach Me?” declares the

LORD. ²²“And you will be My people, and I will be your God.” ²³Behold, the storm of the LORD has gone out with fury, a whirlwind swirling down upon the heads of the wicked. ²⁴The fierce anger of the LORD will not turn back until He has fully accomplished the purposes of His heart. In the days to come you will understand this.

Chapter 31

MOURNING TURNED TO JOY

¹“At that time,” declares the LORD, “I will be the God of all the families of Israel, and they will be My people.” ²This is what the LORD says: “The people who survived the sword found favor in the wilderness when Israel went to find rest.” ³The LORD appeared to us in the past, saying: “I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have drawn you with loving devotion. ⁴Again I will build you, and you will be rebuilt, O Virgin Israel. Again you will take up your tambourines and go out in joyful dancing. ⁵Again you will plant vineyards on the hills of Samaria; the farmers will plant and enjoy the fruit. ⁶For there will be a day when watchmen will call out on the hills of Ephraim, ‘Arise, let us go up to Zion, to the LORD our God!’” ⁷For this is what the LORD says: “Sing with joy for Jacob; shout for the foremost of the nations! Make your praises heard, and say, ‘O LORD, save Your people, the remnant of Israel!’” ⁸Behold, I will bring them from the land of the north and gather them from the farthest parts of the earth, including the blind and the lame, expectant mothers and women in labor. They will return as a great assembly! ⁹They will come with weeping, and by their supplication I will lead them; I will make them walk beside streams of waters, on a level path where they will not stumble. For I am Israel’s Father, and Ephraim is My firstborn.” ¹⁰Hear, O nations, the word of the LORD, and proclaim it in distant coastlands: “The One who scattered Israel will gather them and keep them as a shepherd keeps his flock. ¹¹For the LORD has ransomed Jacob and redeemed him from the hand that had overpowered him. ¹²They will come and shout for joy on the heights of Zion; they will be radiant over the bounty of the LORD—the grain, new wine, and oil, and the young of the flocks and herds. Their life will be like a well-watered garden, and never again will they languish. ¹³Then the maidens will rejoice with dancing, young men and old as well. I will turn their mourning into joy, and give them comfort and joy for their sorrow. ¹⁴I will fill the souls of the priests abundantly, and will fill My people with My goodness,” declares the LORD. ¹⁵This is what the LORD says: “A voice is heard in Ramah, mourning and great weeping, Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to

be comforted, because they are no more.” ¹⁶This is what the LORD says: “Keep your voice from weeping and your eyes from tears, for the reward for your work will come, declares the LORD. Then your children will return from the land of the enemy. ¹⁷So there is hope for your future, declares the LORD, and your children will return to their own land. ¹⁸I have surely heard Ephraim’s moaning: ‘You disciplined me severely, like an untrained calf. Restore me, that I may return, for You are the LORD my God. ¹⁹After I returned, I repented; and after I was instructed, I struck my thigh in grief. I was ashamed and humiliated because I bore the disgrace of my youth.’ ²⁰Is not Ephraim a precious son to Me, a delightful child? Though I often speak against him, I still remember him. Therefore My heart yearns for him; I have great compassion for him,” declares the LORD. ²¹“Set up the road markers, put up the signposts. Keep the highway in mind, the road you have traveled. Return, O Virgin Israel, return to these cities of yours. ²²How long will you wander, O faithless daughter? For the LORD has created a new thing in the land—a woman will shelter a man.” ²³This is what the LORD of Hosts, the God of Israel, says: “When I restore them from captivity, they will once again speak this word in the land of Judah and in its cities: ‘May the LORD bless you, O righteous dwelling place, O holy mountain.’” ²⁴And Judah and all its cities will dwell together in the land, the farmers and those who move with the flocks, ²⁵for I will refresh the weary soul and replenish all who are weak.”

THE NEW COVENANT

²⁶At this I awoke and looked around. My sleep had been most pleasant to me. ²⁷“The days are coming,” declares the LORD, “when I will sow the house of Israel and the house of Judah with the seed of man and of beast. ²⁸Just as I watched over them to uproot and tear down, to demolish, destroy, and bring disaster, so I will watch over them to build and to plant,” declares the LORD. ²⁹“In those days, it will no longer be said: ‘The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the teeth of the children are set on edge.’ ³⁰Instead, each will die for his own iniquity. If anyone eats the sour grapes, his own teeth will be set on edge. ³¹Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. ³²It will not be like the covenant I made with their fathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt—a covenant they broke, though I was a husband to them,” declares the LORD. ³³“But this is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD. I will put My law in their minds and inscribe it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and

they will be My people. ³⁴No longer will each man teach his neighbor or his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ because they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquities and will remember their sins no more.” ³⁵Thus says the LORD, who gives the sun for light by day, who sets in order the moon and stars for light by night, who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar—the LORD of Hosts is His name: ³⁶“Only if this fixed order departed from My presence, declares the LORD, would Israel’s descendants ever cease to be a nation before Me.” ³⁷This is what the LORD says: “Only if the heavens above could be measured and the foundations of the earth below searched out would I reject all of Israel’s descendants because of all they have done,” declares the LORD. ³⁸“The days are coming,” declares the LORD, “when this city will be rebuilt for Me, from the tower of Hananel to the Corner Gate. ³⁹The measuring line will once again stretch out straight to the hill of Gareb and then turn toward Goah. ⁴⁰The whole valley of the dead bodies and ashes, and all the fields as far as the Kidron Valley, to the corner of the Horse Gate to the east, will be holy to the LORD. It will never again be uprooted or demolished.”

Chapter 32

JEREMIAH BUYS HANAMEL’S FIELD

¹This is the word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD in the tenth year of Zedekiah king of Judah, which was the eighteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar. ²At that time the army of the king of Babylon was besieging Jerusalem, and Jeremiah the prophet was imprisoned in the courtyard of the guard, which was in the palace of the king of Judah. ³For Zedekiah king of Judah had imprisoned him, saying: “Why are you prophesying like this? You claim that the LORD says, ‘Behold, I am about to deliver this city into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he will capture it. ⁴Zedekiah king of Judah will not escape from the hands of the Chaldeans, but he will surely be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon, and will speak with him face to face and see him eye to eye. ⁵He will take Zedekiah to Babylon, where he will stay until I attend to him, declares the LORD. If you fight against the Chaldeans, you will not succeed.” ⁶Jeremiah replied, “The word of the LORD came to me, saying: ⁷Behold! Hanamel, the son of your uncle Shallum, is coming to you to say, ‘Buy for yourself my field in Anathoth, for you have the right of redemption to buy it.’ ⁸Then, as the LORD had said, my cousin Hanamel came to me in the courtyard of the guard and urged me, ‘Please buy my field in Anathoth in the land of Benjamin, for you own the right of inheritance and redemption. Buy it for

yourself.” Then I knew that this was the word of the LORD. ⁹So I bought the field in Anathoth from my cousin Hanamel, and I weighed out seventeen shekels of silver. ¹⁰I signed and sealed the deed, called in witnesses, and weighed out the silver on the scales. ¹¹Then I took the deed of purchase—the sealed copy with its terms and conditions, as well as the open copy— ¹²and I gave this deed to Baruch son of Neriah, the son of Mahseiah, in the sight of my cousin Hanamel and the witnesses who were signing the purchase agreement and all the Jews sitting in the courtyard of the guard. ¹³In their sight I instructed Baruch, ¹⁴“This is what the LORD of Hosts, the God of Israel, says: Take these deeds—both the sealed copy and the open copy of the deed of purchase—and put them in a clay jar to preserve them for a long time. ¹⁵For this is what the LORD of Hosts, the God of Israel, says: Houses, fields, and vineyards will again be bought in this land.”

JEREMIAH PRAYS FOR UNDERSTANDING

¹⁶After I had given the deed of purchase to Baruch son of Neriah, I prayed to the LORD: ¹⁷“Oh, Lord GOD! You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and outstretched arm. Nothing is too difficult for You! ¹⁸You show loving devotion to thousands but lay the iniquity of the fathers into the laps of their children after them, O great and mighty God whose name is the LORD of Hosts, ¹⁹the One great in counsel and mighty in deed, whose eyes are on all the ways of the sons of men, to reward each one according to his ways and according to the fruit of his deeds. ²⁰You performed signs and wonders in the land of Egypt, and You do so to this very day, both in Israel and among all mankind. And You have made a name for Yourself, as is the case to this day. ²¹You brought Your people Israel out of the land of Egypt with signs and wonders, with a strong hand and an outstretched arm, and with great terror. ²²You gave them this land that You had sworn to give their fathers, a land flowing with milk and honey. ²³They came in and possessed it, but they did not obey Your voice or walk in Your law. They failed to perform all that You commanded them to do, and so You have brought upon them all this disaster. ²⁴See how the siege ramps are mounted against the city to capture it. And by sword and famine and plague, the city has been given into the hands of the Chaldeans who are fighting against it. What You have spoken has happened, as You now see! ²⁵Yet You, O Lord GOD, have said to me, ‘Buy for yourself the field with silver and call in witnesses, even though the city has been delivered into the hands of the Chaldeans!’”

THE LORD ANSWERS JEREMIAH

²⁶Then the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah: ²⁷“Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh. Is anything too difficult for Me? ²⁸Therefore this is what the LORD says: Behold, I am about to deliver this city into the hands of the Chaldeans and of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, who will capture it. ²⁹And the Chaldeans who are fighting against this city will come in, set it on fire, and burn it, along with the houses of those who provoked Me to anger by burning incense to Baal on their rooftops and by pouring out drink offerings to other gods. ³⁰For the children of Israel and of Judah have done nothing but evil in My sight from their youth; indeed, they have done nothing but provoke Me to anger by the work of their hands, declares the LORD. ³¹For this city has aroused My wrath and fury from the day it was built until now. Therefore I will remove it from My presence ³²because of all the evil the children of Israel and of Judah have done to provoke Me to anger—they, their kings, their officials, their priests and prophets, the men of Judah, and the residents of Jerusalem. ³³They have turned their backs to Me and not their faces. Though I taught them again and again, they would not listen or respond to discipline. ³⁴They have placed their abominations in the house that bears My Name, and so have defiled it. ³⁵They have built the high places of Baal in the Valley of Ben-hinnom to make their sons and daughters pass through the fire to Molech—something I never commanded them, nor had it ever entered My mind, that they should commit such an abomination and cause Judah to sin.

A PROMISE OF RESTORATION

³⁶Now therefore, about this city of which you say, ‘It will be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon by sword and famine and plague,’ this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: ³⁷I will surely gather My people from all the lands to which I have banished them in My furious anger and great wrath, and I will return them to this place and make them dwell in safety. ³⁸They will be My people, and I will be their God. ³⁹I will give them one heart and one way, so that they will always fear Me for their own good and for the good of their children after them. ⁴⁰I will make an everlasting covenant with them: I will never turn away from doing good to them, and I will put My fear in their hearts, so that they will never turn away from Me. ⁴¹Yes, I will rejoice in doing them good, and I will faithfully plant them in this land with all My heart and with all My soul. ⁴²For this is what the LORD says: Just as I have brought all this great disaster on this people, so I will bring on them all the good I have promised them. ⁴³And fields will be bought in this land about which you are saying, ‘It is a desolation, without

man or beast; it has been delivered into the hands of the Chaldeans.’ ⁴⁴Fields will be purchased with silver, and deeds will be signed, sealed, and witnessed in the land of Benjamin, in the areas surrounding Jerusalem, and in the cities of Judah—the cities of the hill country, the foothills, and the Negev—because I will restore them from captivity, declares the LORD.”

Chapter 33**THE EXCELLENCE OF THE RESTORED NATION**

¹While Jeremiah was still confined in the courtyard of the guard, the word of the LORD came to him a second time: ²“Thus says the LORD who made the earth, the LORD who formed it and established it, the LORD is His name: ³Call to Me, and I will answer and show you great and unsearchable things you do not know. ⁴For this is what the LORD, 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 defense against the siege ramps and the sword: ⁵The Chaldeans are coming to fight and to fill those places with the corpses of the men I will strike down in My anger and in My wrath. I have hidden My face from this city because of all its wickedness. ⁶Nevertheless, I will bring to it health and healing, and I will heal its people and reveal to them the abundance of peace and truth. ⁷I will restore Judah and Israel from captivity and will rebuild them as in former times. ⁸And I will cleanse them from all the iniquity they have committed against Me, and will forgive all their sins of rebellion against Me. ⁹So this city will bring Me renown, joy, praise, and glory before all the nations of the earth, who will hear of all the good I do for it. They will tremble in awe because of all the goodness and prosperity that I will provide for it. ¹⁰This is what the LORD says: In this place you say is a wasteland without man or beast, in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem that are deserted—inhabited by neither man nor beast—there will be heard again ¹¹the sounds of joy and gladness, the voices of the bride and bridegroom, and the voices of those bringing thank offerings into the house of the LORD, saying: ‘Give thanks to the LORD of Hosts, for the LORD is good; His loving devotion endures forever.’ For I will restore the land from captivity as in former times, says the LORD. ¹²This is what the LORD of Hosts says: In this desolate place, without man or beast, and in all its cities, there will once more be pastures for shepherds to rest their flocks. ¹³In the cities of the hill country, the foothills, and the Negev, in the land of Benjamin and the cities surrounding Jerusalem, and in the cities of Judah, the flocks will again pass under the hands of the one who counts them, says the LORD.

THE COVENANT WITH DAVID

¹⁴Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will fulfill the gracious promise that I have spoken to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. ¹⁵In those days and at that time I will cause to sprout for David a righteous Branch, and He will administer justice and righteousness in the land. ¹⁶In those days Judah will be saved, and Jerusalem will dwell securely, and this is the name by which it will be called: The LORD Our Righteousness. ¹⁷For this is what the LORD says: David will never lack a man to sit on the throne of the house of Israel, ¹⁸nor will the priests who are Levites ever fail to have a man before Me to offer burnt offerings, to burn grain offerings, and to present sacrifices.” ¹⁹And the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah: ²⁰“This is what the LORD says: If you can break My covenant with the day and My covenant with the night, so that day and night cease to occupy their appointed time, ²¹then My covenant may also be broken with David My servant and with My ministers the Levites who are priests, so that David will not have a son to reign on his throne. ²²As the hosts of heaven cannot be counted and as the sand on the seashore cannot be measured, so too will I multiply the descendants of My servant David and the Levites who minister before Me.” ²³Moreover, the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah: ²⁴“Have you not noticed what these people are saying: ‘The LORD has rejected the two families He had chosen’? So they despise My people and no longer regard them as a nation. ²⁵This is what the LORD says: If I have not established My covenant with the day and the night and the fixed order of heaven and earth, ²⁶then I would also reject the descendants of Jacob and of My servant David, so as not to take from his descendants rulers over the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. For I will restore them from captivity and will have compassion on them.”

Chapter 34

A PROPHECY AGAINST ZEDEKIAH

¹This is the word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD when Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, all his army, all the earthly kingdoms under his control, and all the other nations were fighting against Jerusalem and all its surrounding cities. ²The LORD, the God of Israel, told Jeremiah to go and speak to Zedekiah king of Judah and tell him that this is what the LORD says: “Behold, I am about to deliver this city into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he will burn it down. ³And you yourself will not escape his grasp, but will surely be captured and delivered into his hand. You will see the king of Babylon eye to eye and speak with

him face to face; and you will go to Babylon. ⁴Yet hear the word of the LORD, O Zedekiah king of Judah. This is what the LORD says concerning you: You will not die by the sword; ⁵you will die in peace. As spices were burned for your fathers, the former kings who preceded you, so people will burn spices for you and lament, ‘Alas, O master!’ For I Myself have spoken this word, declares the LORD.” ⁶In Jerusalem, then, Jeremiah the prophet relayed all these words to Zedekiah king of Judah ⁷as the army of the king of Babylon was fighting against Jerusalem and the remaining cities of Judah—against Lachish and Azekah. For these were the only fortified cities remaining in Judah.

FREEDOM FOR HEBREW SLAVES

⁸After King Zedekiah had made a covenant with all the people in Jerusalem to proclaim liberty, the word came to Jeremiah from the LORD ⁹that each man should free his Hebrew slaves, both male and female, and no one should hold his fellow Jew in bondage. ¹⁰So all the officials and all the people who entered into this covenant agreed that they would free their menservants and maidservants and no longer hold them in bondage. They obeyed and released them, ¹¹but later they changed their minds and took back the menservants and maidservants they had freed, and they forced them to become slaves again. ¹²Then the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, ¹³“This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: I made a covenant with your forefathers when I brought them out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery, saying: ¹⁴Every seventh year, each of you must free his Hebrew brother who has sold himself to you. He may serve you six years, but then you must let him go free. But your fathers did not listen or incline their ear. ¹⁵Recently you repented and did what pleased Me; each of you proclaimed freedom for his neighbor. You made a covenant before Me in the house that bears My Name. ¹⁶But now you have changed your minds and profaned My name. Each of you has taken back the menservants and maidservants whom you had set at liberty to go wherever they wanted, and you have again forced them to be your slaves. ¹⁷Therefore this is what the LORD says: You have not obeyed Me; you have not proclaimed freedom, each man for his brother and for his neighbor. So now I proclaim freedom for you, declares the LORD—freedom to fall by sword, by plague, and by famine! I will make you a horror to all the kingdoms of the earth. ¹⁸And those who have transgressed My covenant and have not fulfilled the terms of the covenant they made before Me, I will treat like the calf they cut in two in order to pass between its pieces. ¹⁹The officials of Judah and Jerusalem, the court officials, the priests, and all the peo-

ple of the land who passed between the pieces of the calf,
²⁰I will deliver into the hands of their enemies who seek their lives. Their corpses will become food for the birds of the air and the beasts of the earth. ²¹And I will deliver Zedekiah king of Judah and his officials into the hands of their enemies who seek their lives, to the army of the king of Babylon that had withdrawn from you. ²²Behold, I am going to give the command, declares the LORD, and I will bring them back to this city. They will fight against it, capture it, and burn it down. And I will make the cities of Judah a desolation, without inhabitant.”

Chapter 35

THE OBEDIENCE OF THE RECHABITES

¹This is the word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD in the days of Jehoiakim son of Josiah king of Judah: ²“Go to the house of the Rechabites, speak to them, and bring them to one of the chambers of the house of the LORD to offer them a drink of wine.” ³So I took Jaazaniah son of Jeremiah, the son of Habazziniah, and his brothers and all his sons—the entire house of the Rechabites— ⁴and I brought them into the house of the LORD, to a chamber occupied by the sons of Hanan son of Igdaliah, a man of God. This room was near the chamber of the officials, which was above the chamber of Maaseiah son of Shallum the doorkeeper. ⁵Then I set pitchers full of wine and some cups before the men of the house of the Rechabites, and I said to them, “Drink some wine.” ⁶“We do not drink wine,” they replied, “for our forefather Jonadab son of Rechab commanded us, ‘Neither you nor your descendants are ever to drink wine. ⁷Nor are you ever to build a house or sow seed or plant a vineyard. Those things are not for you. Instead, you must live in tents all your lives, so that you may live a long time in the land where you wander.’ ⁸And we have obeyed the voice of our forefather Jonadab son of Rechab in all he commanded us. So we have not drunk wine all our lives—neither we nor our wives nor our sons and daughters. ⁹Nor have we built houses in which to live, and we have not owned any vineyards or fields or crops. ¹⁰But we have lived in tents and have obeyed and done exactly as our forefather Jonadab commanded us. ¹¹So when Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon marched into the land, we said: ‘Come, let us go into Jerusalem to escape the armies of the Chaldeans and the Arameans.’ So we have remained in Jerusalem.”

JUDAH REBUKED

¹²Then the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah: ¹³“This is what the LORD of Hosts, the God of Israel, says: Go and

tell the men of Judah and the residents of Jerusalem: ‘Will you not accept discipline and obey My words?’ declares the LORD. ¹⁴The words of Jonadab son of Rechab have been carried out. He commanded his sons not to drink wine, and they have not drunk it to this very day because they have obeyed the command of their forefather. But I have spoken to you again and again, and you have not obeyed Me! ¹⁵Again and again I have sent you all My servants the prophets, proclaiming: ‘Turn now, each of you, from your wicked ways, and correct your actions. Do not go after other gods to serve them. Live in the land that I have given to you and your fathers.’ But you have not inclined your ear or listened to Me. ¹⁶Yes, the sons of Jonadab son of Rechab carried out the command their forefather gave them, but these people have not listened to Me. ¹⁷Therefore this is what the LORD God of Hosts, the God of Israel, says: ‘Behold, I will bring to Judah and to all the residents of Jerusalem all the disaster I have pronounced against them, because I have spoken to them but they have not obeyed, and I have called to them but they have not answered.’” ¹⁸Then Jeremiah said to the house of the Rechabites: “This is what the LORD of Hosts, the God of Israel, says: ‘Because you have obeyed the command of your forefather Jonadab and have kept all his commandments and have done all that he charged you to do, ¹⁹this is what the LORD of Hosts, the God of Israel, says: Jonadab son of Rechab will never fail to have a man to stand before Me.’”

Chapter 36

JEREMIAH’S SCROLL READ IN THE TEMPLE

¹In the fourth year of Jehoiakim son of Josiah king of Judah, this word came to Jeremiah from the LORD: ²“Take a scroll and write on it all the words I have spoken to you concerning Israel, Judah, and all the nations, from the day I first spoke to you during the reign of Josiah until today. ³Perhaps when the people of Judah hear about all the calamity I plan to bring upon them, each of them will turn from his wicked way. Then I will forgive their iniquity and their sin.” ⁴So Jeremiah called Baruch son of Neriah, and at the dictation of Jeremiah, Baruch wrote on a scroll all the words that the LORD had spoken to Jeremiah. ⁵Then Jeremiah commanded Baruch, “I am restricted; I cannot enter the house of the LORD; ⁶so you are to go to the house of the LORD on a day of fasting, and in the hearing of the people you are to read the words of the LORD from the scroll you have written at my dictation. Read them in the hearing of all the people of Judah who are coming from their cities. ⁷Perhaps they will bring their petition before the LORD, and each one will turn from his wicked way; for

great are the anger and fury that the LORD has pronounced against this people.”⁸ So Baruch son of Neriah did everything that Jeremiah the prophet had commanded him. In the house of the LORD he read the words of the LORD from the scroll.⁹ Now in the ninth month of the fifth year of Jehoiakim son of Josiah king of Judah, a fast before the LORD was proclaimed to all the people of Jerusalem and all who had come there from the cities of Judah.¹⁰ From the chamber of Gemariah son of Shaphan the scribe, which was in the upper courtyard at the opening of the New Gate of the house of the LORD, Baruch read from the scroll the words of Jeremiah in the hearing of all the people.

JEREMIAH’S SCROLL READ IN THE PALACE

¹¹When Micaiah son of Gemariah, the son of Shaphan, heard all the words of the LORD from the scroll, ¹²he went down to the scribe’s chamber in the king’s palace, where all the officials were sitting: Elishama the scribe, Delaiah son of Shemaiah, Elnathan son of Achbor, Gemariah son of Shaphan, Zedekiah son of Hananiah, and all the other officials. ¹³And Micaiah reported to them all the words he had heard Baruch read from the scroll in the hearing of the people. ¹⁴Then all the officials sent word to Baruch through Jehudi son of Nethaniah, the son of Shelemiah, the son of Cushi, saying, “Bring the scroll that you read in the hearing of the people, and come here.” So Baruch son of Neriah took the scroll and went to them. ¹⁵“Please sit down,” they said, “and read it in our hearing.” So Baruch read it in their hearing. ¹⁶When they had heard all these words, they turned to one another in fear and said to Baruch, “Surely we must report all these words to the king.” ¹⁷“Tell us now,” they asked Baruch, “how did you write all these words? Was it at Jeremiah’s dictation?” ¹⁸“It was at his dictation,” Baruch replied. “He recited all these words to me and I wrote them in ink on the scroll.” ¹⁹Then the officials said to Baruch, “You and Jeremiah must hide yourselves and tell no one where you are.”

JEHOIAKIM BURNS THE SCROLL

²⁰So the officials went to the king in the courtyard. And having stored the scroll in the chamber of Elishama the scribe, they reported everything to the king. ²¹Then the king sent Jehudi to get the scroll, and he took it from the chamber of Elishama the scribe. And Jehudi read it in the hearing of the king and all the officials who were standing beside him. ²²Since it was the ninth month, the king was sitting in his winter quarters with a fire burning before him. ²³And as soon as Jehudi had read three or four columns, Jehoiakim would cut them off with a scribe’s knife and throw them into the firepot, until the entire scroll had

been consumed by the fire. ²⁴Yet in hearing all these words, the king and his servants did not become frightened or tear their garments. ²⁵Even though Elnathan, Delaiah, and Gemariah urged the king not to burn the scroll, he would not listen to them. ²⁶Instead, the king commanded Jerahmeel, a son of the king, as well as Seraiah son of Azriel and Shelemiah son of Abdeel, to seize Baruch the scribe and Jeremiah the prophet. But the LORD had hidden them.

JEREMIAH REWRITES THE SCROLL

²⁷After the king had burned the scroll containing the words that Baruch had written at Jeremiah’s dictation, the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah: ²⁸“Take another scroll and rewrite on it the very words that were on the original scroll, which Jehoiakim king of Judah has burned. ²⁹You are to proclaim concerning Jehoiakim king of Judah that this is what the LORD says: You have burned the scroll and said, ‘Why have you written on it that the king of Babylon would surely come and destroy this land and deprive it of man and beast?’ ³⁰Therefore this is what the LORD says about Jehoiakim king of Judah: He will have no one to sit on David’s throne, and his body will be thrown out and exposed to heat by day and frost by night. ³¹I will punish him and his descendants and servants for their iniquity. I will bring on them, on the residents of Jerusalem, and on the men of Judah, all the calamity about which I warned them but they did not listen.” ³²Then Jeremiah took another scroll and gave it to the scribe Baruch son of Neriah, and at Jeremiah’s dictation he wrote on it all the words of the scroll that Jehoiakim king of Judah had burned in the fire. And many similar words were added to them.

Chapter 37

JEREMIAH WARNS ZEDEKIAH

¹Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon made Zedekiah son of Josiah the king of Judah, and he reigned in place of Coniah son of Jehoiakim. ²But he and his officers and the people of the land refused to obey the words that the LORD had spoken through Jeremiah the prophet. ³Yet King Zedekiah sent Jehucal son of Shelemiah and Zephaniah the priest, the son of Maaseiah, to Jeremiah the prophet with the message, “Please pray to the LORD our God for us!” ⁴Now Jeremiah was free to come and go among the people, for they had not yet put him in prison. ⁵Pharaoh’s army had left Egypt, and when the Chaldeans who were besieging Jerusalem heard the report, they withdrew from Jerusalem. ⁶Then the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet: ⁷“This is what the LORD, the God of Israel,

says that you are to tell the king of Judah, who sent you to Me: Behold, Pharaoh's army, which has marched out to help you, will go back to its own land of Egypt. ⁸Then the Chaldeans will return and fight against this city. They will capture it and burn it down. ⁹This is what the LORD says: Do not deceive yourselves by saying, 'The Chaldeans will go away for good,' for they will not! ¹⁰Indeed, if you were to strike down the entire army of the Chaldeans that is fighting against you, and only wounded men remained in their tents, they would still get up and burn this city down."

JEREMIAH IMPRISONED

¹¹When the Chaldean army withdrew from Jerusalem for fear of Pharaoh's army, ¹²Jeremiah started to leave Jerusalem to go to the land of Benjamin to claim his portion there among the people. ¹³But when he reached the Gate of Benjamin, the captain of the guard, whose name was Irijah son of Shelemiah, the son of Hananiah, seized him and said, "You are deserting to the Chaldeans!" ¹⁴"That is a lie," Jeremiah replied. "I am not deserting to the Chaldeans!" But Irijah would not listen to him; instead, he arrested Jeremiah and took him to the officials. ¹⁵The officials were angry with Jeremiah, and they beat him and placed him in jail in the house of Jonathan the scribe, for it had been made into a prison. ¹⁶So Jeremiah went into a cell in the dungeon and remained there a long time. ¹⁷Later, King Zedekiah sent for Jeremiah and received him in his palace, where he asked him privately, "Is there a word from the LORD?" "There is," Jeremiah replied. "You will be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon." ¹⁸Then Jeremiah asked King Zedekiah, "How have I sinned against you or your servants or these people, that you have put me in prison? ¹⁹Where are your prophets who prophesied to you, claiming, 'The king of Babylon will not come against you or this land'? ²⁰But now please listen, O my lord the king. May my petition come before you. Do not send me back to the house of Jonathan the scribe, or I will die there." ²¹So King Zedekiah gave orders for Jeremiah to be placed in the courtyard of the guard and given a loaf of bread daily from the street of the bakers, until all the bread in the city was gone. So Jeremiah remained in the courtyard of the guard.

Chapter 38

JEREMIAH CAST INTO THE CISTERN

¹Now Shephatiah son of Mattan, Gedaliah son of Pashhur, Jucal son of Shelemiah, and Pashhur son of Malchijah heard that Jeremiah had been telling all the people: ²"This is what the LORD says: Whoever stays in this city will die

by sword and famine and plague, but whoever surrenders to the Chaldeans will live; he will retain his life like a spoil of war, and he will live. ³This is what the LORD says: This city will surely be delivered into the hands of the army of the king of Babylon, and he will capture it." ⁴Then the officials said to the king, "This man ought to die, for he is discouraging the warriors who remain in this city, as well as all the people, by speaking such words to them; this man is not seeking the well-being of these people, but their ruin." ⁵"Here he is," replied King Zedekiah. "He is in your hands, since the king can do nothing to stop you." ⁶So they took Jeremiah and dropped him into the cistern of Malchiah, the king's son, which was in the courtyard of the guard. They lowered Jeremiah with ropes into the cistern, which had no water but only mud, and Jeremiah sank down into the mud. ⁷Now Ebed-melech the Cushite, a court official in the royal palace, heard that Jeremiah had been put into the cistern. While the king was sitting at the Gate of Benjamin, ⁸Ebed-melech went out from the king's palace and said to the king, ⁹"My lord the king, these men have acted wickedly in all that they have done to Jeremiah the prophet. They have dropped him into the cistern, where he will starve to death, for there is no more bread in the city." ¹⁰So the king commanded Ebed-melech the Cushite, "Take thirty men from here with you and pull Jeremiah the prophet out of the cistern before he dies." ¹¹Then Ebed-melech took the men with him and went to the king's palace, to a place below the storehouse. From there he took old rags and worn-out clothes and lowered them with ropes to Jeremiah in the cistern. ¹²Ebed-melech the Cushite cried out to Jeremiah, "Put these worn-out rags and clothes under your arms to pad the ropes." Jeremiah did so, ¹³and they pulled him up with the ropes and lifted him out of the cistern. And Jeremiah remained in the courtyard of the guard. ¹⁴Then King Zedekiah sent for Jeremiah the prophet and received him at the third entrance to the house of the LORD. "I am going to ask you something," said the king to Jeremiah. "Do not hide anything from me." ¹⁵"If I tell you," Jeremiah replied, "you will surely put me to death. And even if I give you advice, you will not listen to me." ¹⁶But King Zedekiah swore secretly to Jeremiah, "As surely as the LORD lives, who has given us this life, I will not kill you, nor will I deliver you into the hands of these men who are seeking your life." ¹⁷Then Jeremiah said to Zedekiah, "This is what the LORD God of Hosts, the God of Israel, says: 'If you indeed surrender to the officers of the king of Babylon, then you will live, this city will not be burned down, and you and your household will survive. ¹⁸But if you do not surrender to the officers of the king of Babylon, then this city will be delivered into the hands of the Chaldeans. They will burn it

down, and you yourself will not escape their grasp.”¹⁹ But King Zedekiah said to Jeremiah, “I am afraid of the Jews who have deserted to the Chaldeans, for the Chaldeans may deliver me into their hands to abuse me.”²⁰ “They will not hand you over,” Jeremiah replied. “Obey the voice of the LORD in what I am telling you, that it may go well with you and you may live.²¹ But if you refuse to surrender, this is the word that the LORD has shown me:²² All the women who remain in the palace of the king of Judah will be brought out to the officials of the king of Babylon, and those women will say: ‘They misled you and overcame you—those trusted friends of yours. Your feet sank into the mire, and they deserted you.’²³ All your wives and children will be brought out to the Chaldeans. And you yourself will not escape their grasp, for you will be seized by the king of Babylon, and this city will be burned down.”²⁴ Then Zedekiah warned Jeremiah, “Do not let anyone know about this conversation, or you will die.²⁵ If the officials hear that I have spoken with you, and they come and demand of you, ‘Tell us what you said to the king and what he said to you; do not hide it from us, or we will kill you,’²⁶ then tell them, ‘I was presenting to the king my petition that he not return me to the house of Jonathan to die there.’”²⁷ When all the officials came to Jeremiah and questioned him, he relayed to them the exact words the king had commanded him to say. So they said no more to him, for no one had overheard the conversation.²⁸ And Jeremiah remained in the courtyard of the guard until the day Jerusalem was captured.

Chapter 39

THE FALL OF JERUSALEM

¹In the ninth year of Zedekiah king of Judah, in the tenth month, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon marched against Jerusalem with his entire army and laid siege to the city.² And on the ninth day of the fourth month of Zedekiah’s eleventh year, the city was breached.³ Then all the officials of the king of Babylon entered and sat in the Middle Gate: Nergal-sharezer of Samgar, Nebo-sarsekim the Rabsaris, Nergal-sharezer the Rabmag, and all the rest of the officials of the king of Babylon.⁴ When Zedekiah king of Judah and all the soldiers saw them, they fled. They left the city at night by way of the king’s garden, through the gate between the two walls, and they went out along the route to the Arabah.⁵ But the army of the Chaldeans pursued them and overtook Zedekiah in the plains of Jericho. They seized him and brought him up to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon at Riblah in the land of Hamath, where he pronounced judgment on him.⁶ There at Riblah the king of Babylon slaughtered the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes,

and he also killed all the nobles of Judah.⁷ Then he put out Zedekiah’s eyes and bound him with bronze chains to take him to Babylon.⁸ The Chaldeans set fire to the palace of the king and to the houses of the people, and they broke down the walls of Jerusalem.⁹ Then Nebuzaradan captain of the guard carried away to Babylon the remnant of the people who had remained in the city, along with the deserters who had defected to him.¹⁰ But Nebuzaradan left behind in the land of Judah some of the poor people who had no property, and at that time he gave them vineyards and fields.

JEREMIAH DELIVERED

¹¹Now Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had given orders about Jeremiah through Nebuzaradan captain of the guard, saying,¹² “Take him, look after him, and do not let any harm come to him; do for him whatever he says.”¹³ So Nebuzaradan captain of the guard, Nebushazban the Rabsaris, Nergal-sharezer the Rabmag, and all the captains of the king of Babylon¹⁴ had Jeremiah brought from the courtyard of the guard, and they turned him over to Gedaliah son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, to take him home. So Jeremiah remained among his own people.¹⁵ And while Jeremiah had been confined in the courtyard of the guard, the word of the LORD had come to him:¹⁶ “Go and tell Ebed-melech the Cushite that this is what the LORD of Hosts, the God of Israel, says: ‘I am about to fulfill My words against this city for harm and not for good, and on that day they will be fulfilled before your eyes.¹⁷ But I will deliver you on that day, declares the LORD, and you will not be delivered into the hands of the men whom you fear.¹⁸ For I will surely rescue you so that you do not fall by the sword. Because you have trusted in Me, you will escape with your life like a spoil of war, declares the LORD.’”

Chapter 40

JEREMIAH REMAINS IN JUDAH

¹This is the word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD after Nebuzaradan captain of the guard had released him at Ramah, having found him bound in chains among all the captives of Jerusalem and Judah who were being exiled to Babylon.² The captain of the guard found Jeremiah and said to him, “The LORD your God decreed this disaster on this place,³ and now the LORD has fulfilled it; He has done just as He said. Because you people have sinned against the LORD and have not obeyed His voice, this thing has happened to you.⁴ But now, behold, I am freeing you today from the chains that were on your wrists. If it pleases you to come with me to Babylon, then come, and I will take care of you. But if it seems wrong to you to come with me

to Babylon, go no farther. Look, the whole land is before you. Wherever it seems good and right to you, go there.”⁵But before Jeremiah turned to go, Nebuzaradan added, “Return to Gedaliah son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, whom the king of Babylon has appointed over the cities of Judah, and stay with him among the people, or go anywhere else that seems right.” Then the captain of the guard gave him a ration and a gift and released him. ⁶So Jeremiah went to Gedaliah son of Ahikam at Mizpah and stayed with him among the people who were left in the land.

GEDALIAH GOVERNS IN JUDAH

⁷When all the commanders and men of the armies in the field heard that the king of Babylon had appointed Gedaliah son of Ahikam over the land and that he had put him in charge of the men, women, and children who were the poorest of the land and had not been exiled to Babylon, ⁸they came to Gedaliah at Mizpah—Ishmael son of Nethaniah, Johanan and Jonathan the sons of Kareah, Seraiah son of Tanhumeth, the sons of Ephai the Netophathite, and Jezaniah son of the Maacathite—they and their men. ⁹Gedaliah son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, swore an oath to them and their men, assuring them, “Do not be afraid to serve the Chaldeans. Live in the land and serve the king of Babylon, and it will go well with you. ¹⁰As for me, I will stay in Mizpah to represent you before the Chaldeans who come to us. As for you, gather wine grapes, summer fruit, and oil, place them in your storage jars, and live in the cities you have taken.” ¹¹When all the Jews in Moab, Ammon, Edom, and all the other lands heard that the king of Babylon had left a remnant in Judah and had appointed Gedaliah son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, over them, ¹²they all returned from all the places to which they had been banished and came to the land of Judah, to Gedaliah at Mizpah. And they gathered an abundance of wine grapes and summer fruit.

THE PLOT AGAINST GEDALIAH

¹³Meanwhile, Johanan son of Kareah and all the commanders of the armies in the field came to Gedaliah at Mizpah ¹⁴and said to him, “Are you aware that Baalis king of the Ammonites has sent Ishmael son of Nethaniah to take your life?” But Gedaliah son of Ahikam did not believe them. ¹⁵Then Johanan son of Kareah spoke privately to Gedaliah at Mizpah. “Let me go and kill Ishmael son of Nethaniah,” he said. “No one will know it. Why should he take your life and scatter all the people of Judah who have gathered to you, so that the remnant of Judah would perish?” ¹⁶But Gedaliah son of Ahikam said to Johanan son of Kareah,

“Do not do such a thing! What you are saying about Ishmael is a lie.”

Chapter 41

THE MURDER OF GEDALIAH

¹In the seventh month, Ishmael son of Nethaniah, the son of Elishama, who was a member of the royal family and one of the king’s chief officers, came with ten men to Gedaliah son of Ahikam at Mizpah, and they ate a meal together there. ²Then Ishmael son of Nethaniah and the ten men who were with him got up and struck down Gedaliah son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, with the sword, killing the one whom the king of Babylon had appointed to govern the land. ³Ishmael also killed all the Jews who were with Gedaliah at Mizpah, as well as the Chaldean soldiers who were there. ⁴On the second day after the murder of Gedaliah, when no one yet knew about it, ⁵eighty men who had shaved off their beards, torn their garments, and cut themselves came from Shechem, Shiloh, and Samaria, carrying grain offerings and frankincense for the house of the LORD. ⁶And Ishmael son of Nethaniah went out from Mizpah to meet them, weeping as he went. When Ishmael encountered the men, he said, “Come to Gedaliah son of Ahikam.” ⁷And when they came into the city, Ishmael son of Nethaniah and the men with him slaughtered them and threw them into a cistern. ⁸But ten of the men among them said to Ishmael, “Do not kill us, for we have hidden treasure in the field—wheat, barley, oil, and honey!” So he refrained from killing them with the others. ⁹Now the cistern into which Ishmael had thrown all the bodies of the men he had struck down along with Gedaliah was a large one that King Asa had made for fear of Baasha king of Israel. Ishmael son of Nethaniah filled it with the slain. ¹⁰Then Ishmael took captive all the remnant of the people of Mizpah—the daughters of the king along with all the others who remained in Mizpah—over whom Nebuzaradan captain of the guard had appointed Gedaliah son of Ahikam. Ishmael son of Nethaniah took them captive and set off to cross over to the Ammonites.

JOHANAN RESCUES THE CAPTIVES

¹¹When Johanan son of Kareah and all the commanders of the armies with him heard of all the crimes that Ishmael son of Nethaniah had committed, ¹²they took all their men and went to fight Ishmael son of Nethaniah. And they found him near the great pool in Gibeon. ¹³When all the people with Ishmael saw Johanan son of Kareah and all the commanders of the army with him, they rejoiced, ¹⁴and all the people whom Ishmael had taken captive at Mizpah

turned and went over to Johanan son of Kareah. ¹⁵But Ishmael son of Nethaniah and eight of his men escaped from Johanan and went to the Ammonites. ¹⁶Then Johanan son of Kareah and all the commanders of the armies with him took the whole remnant of the people from Mizpah whom he had recovered from Ishmael son of Nethaniah after Ishmael had killed Gedaliah son of Ahikam: the soldiers, women, children, and court officials he had brought back from Gibeon. ¹⁷And they went and stayed in Geruth Chimham, near Bethlehem, in order to proceed into Egypt ¹⁸to escape the Chaldeans. For they were afraid of the Chaldeans because Ishmael son of Nethaniah had struck down Gedaliah son of Ahikam, whom the king of Babylon had appointed over the land.

Chapter 42

A WARNING AGAINST GOING TO EGYPT

¹Then all the commanders of the forces, along with Johanan son of Kareah, Jezaniah son of Hoshaiah, and all the people from the least to the greatest, approached ²Jeremiah the prophet and said, “May our petition come before you; pray to the LORD your God on behalf of this entire remnant. For few of us remain of the many, as you can see with your own eyes. ³Pray that the LORD your God will tell us the way we should walk and the thing we should do.” ⁴“I have heard you,” replied Jeremiah the prophet. “I will surely pray to the LORD your God as you request, and I will tell you everything that the LORD answers. I will not withhold a word from you.” ⁵Then they said to Jeremiah, “May the LORD be a true and faithful witness against us if we do not act upon every word that the LORD your God sends you to tell us. ⁶Whether it is pleasant or unpleasant, we will obey the voice of the LORD our God to whom we are sending you, so that it may go well with us when we obey the voice of the LORD our God!” ⁷After ten days the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah, ⁸and he summoned Johanan son of Kareah, all the commanders of the forces who were with him, and all the people from the least to the greatest. ⁹Jeremiah told them, “Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, to whom you sent me to present your petition: ¹⁰‘If you will indeed stay in this land, then I will build you up and not tear you down; I will plant you and not uproot you, for I will relent of the disaster I have brought upon you. ¹¹Do not be afraid of the king of Babylon, whom you now fear; do not be afraid of him, declares the LORD, for I am with you to save you and deliver you from him. ¹²And I will show you compassion, and he will have compassion on you and restore you to your own land.’ ¹³But if you say, ‘We will not stay in this land,’ and you thus dis-

obey the voice of the LORD your God, ¹⁴and if you say, ‘No, but we will go to the land of Egypt and live there, where we will not see war or hear the sound of the ram’s horn or hunger for bread,’ ¹⁵then hear the word of the LORD, O remnant of Judah! This is what the LORD of Hosts, the God of Israel, says: ‘If you are determined to go to Egypt and reside there, ¹⁶then the sword you fear will overtake you there, and the famine you dread will follow on your heels into Egypt, and you will die there. ¹⁷So all who resolve to go to Egypt to reside there will die by sword and famine and plague. Not one of them will survive or escape the disaster I will bring upon them.’ ¹⁸For this is what the LORD of Hosts, the God of Israel, says: ‘Just as My anger and wrath were poured out on the residents of Jerusalem, so will My wrath be poured out on you if you go to Egypt. You will become an object of cursing and horror, of vilification and disgrace, and you will never see this place again.’ ¹⁹The LORD has told you, O remnant of Judah, ‘Do not go to Egypt.’ Know for sure that I have warned you today! ²⁰For you have deceived yourselves by sending me to the LORD your God, saying, ‘Pray to the LORD our God on our behalf, and as for all that the LORD our God says, tell it to us and we will do it.’ ²¹For I have told you today, but you have not obeyed the voice of the LORD your God in all He has sent me to tell you. ²²Now therefore, know for sure that by sword and famine and plague you will die in the place where you desire to go to reside.”

Chapter 43

JEREMIAH TAKEN TO EGYPT

¹When Jeremiah had finished telling all the people all the words of the LORD their God—everything that the LORD had sent him to say— ²Azariah son of Hoshaiah, Johanan son of Kareah, and all the arrogant men said to Jeremiah, “You are lying! The LORD our God has not sent you to say, ‘You must not go to Egypt to reside there.’ ³Rather, Baruch son of Neriah is inciting you against us to deliver us into the hands of the Chaldeans, so that they may put us to death or exile us to Babylon!” ⁴So Johanan son of Kareah and all the commanders of the forces disobeyed the command of the LORD to stay in the land of Judah. ⁵Instead, Johanan son of Kareah and all the commanders of the forces took the whole remnant of Judah, those who had returned to the land of Judah from all the nations to which they had been scattered, ⁶the men, the women, the children, the king’s daughters, and everyone whom Nebuzaradan captain of the guard had allowed to remain with Gedaliah son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, as well as Jeremiah the prophet and Baruch son of Neriah. ⁷So

they entered the land of Egypt because they did not obey the voice of the LORD, and they went as far as Tahpanhes. ⁸Then the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah at Tahpanhes: ⁹“In the sight of the Jews, pick up some large stones and bury them in the clay of the brick pavement at the entrance to Pharaoh’s palace at Tahpanhes. ¹⁰Then tell them that this is what the LORD of Hosts, the God of Israel, says: ‘I will send for My servant Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and I will set his throne over these stones that I have embedded, and he will spread his royal pavilion over them. ¹¹He will come and strike down the land of Egypt, bringing death to those destined for death, captivity to those destined for captivity, and the sword to those destined for the sword. ¹²I will kindle a fire in the temples of the gods of Egypt, and Nebuchadnezzar will burn those temples and take their gods as captives. So he will wrap himself with the land of Egypt as a shepherd wraps himself in his garment, and he will depart from there unscathed. ¹³He will demolish the sacred pillars of the temple of the sun in the land of Egypt, and he will burn down the temples of the gods of Egypt.”

Chapter 44

JUDGMENT ON THE JEWS IN EGYPT

¹This is the word that came to Jeremiah concerning all the Jews living in the land of Egypt—in Migdol, Tahpanhes, and Memphis—and in the land of Pathros: ²“This is what the LORD of Hosts, the God of Israel, says: You have seen all the disaster that I brought against Jerusalem and all the cities of Judah; and behold, they lie today in ruins and desolation ³because of the evil they have done. They provoked Me to anger by continuing to burn incense and to serve other gods that neither they nor you nor your fathers ever knew. ⁴Yet I sent you all My servants the prophets again and again, saying: ‘Do not do this detestable thing that I hate.’ ⁵But they did not listen or incline their ears; they did not turn from their wickedness or stop burning incense to other gods. ⁶Therefore My wrath and anger poured out and burned in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem, so that they have become the desolate ruin they are today. ⁷So now, this is what the LORD God of Hosts, the God of Israel, says: Why are you doing such great harm to yourselves by cutting off from Judah man and woman, child and infant, leaving yourselves without a remnant? ⁸Why are you provoking Me to anger by the work of your hands by burning incense to other gods in the land of Egypt, where you have gone to reside? As a result, you will be cut off and will become an object of cursing and reproach among all the nations of the earth. ⁹Have you for-

gotten the wickedness of your fathers and of the kings of Judah and their wives, as well as the wickedness that you and your wives committed in the land of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem? ¹⁰To this day they have not humbled themselves or shown reverence, nor have they followed My instruction or the statutes that I set before you and your fathers. ¹¹Therefore this is what the LORD of Hosts, the God of Israel, says: I will set My face to bring disaster and to cut off all Judah. ¹²And I will take away the remnant of Judah who have resolved to go to the land of Egypt to reside there; they will meet their end. They will all fall by the sword or be consumed by famine. From the least to the greatest, they will die by sword or famine; and they will become an object of cursing and horror, of vilification and reproach. ¹³I will punish those who live in the land of Egypt, just as I punished Jerusalem, by sword and famine and plague, ¹⁴so that none of the remnant of Judah who have gone to reside in Egypt will escape or survive to return to the land of Judah, where they long to return and live; for none will return except a few fugitives.”

THE STUBBORNNESS OF THE PEOPLE

¹⁵Then all the men who knew that their wives were burning incense to other gods, and all the women standing by—a great assembly—along with all the people living in the land of Egypt and in Pathros, said to Jeremiah, ¹⁶“As for the word you have spoken to us in the name of the LORD, we will not listen to you! ¹⁷Instead, we will do everything we vowed to do: We will burn incense to the Queen of Heaven and offer drink offerings to her, just as we, our fathers, our kings, and our officials did in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem. At that time we had plenty of food and good things, and we saw no disaster. ¹⁸But from the time we stopped burning incense to the Queen of Heaven and pouring out drink offerings to her, we have lacked everything and have been perishing by sword and famine.” ¹⁹“Moreover,” said the women, “when we burned incense to the Queen of Heaven and poured out drink offerings to her, was it without our husbands’ knowledge that we made sacrificial cakes in her image and poured out drink offerings to her?”

CALAMITY FOR THE JEWS

²⁰Then Jeremiah said to all the people, both men and women, who were answering him, ²¹“As for the incense you burned in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem—you, your fathers, your kings, your officials, and the people of the land—did the LORD not remember and bring this to mind? ²²So the LORD could no longer endure the evil deeds and detestable acts you committed, and your land became a desolation, a horror, and an object of

cursing, without inhabitant, as it is this day. ²³Because you burned incense and sinned against the LORD and did not obey the voice of the LORD or walk in His instruction, His statutes, and His testimonies, this disaster has befallen you, as you see today.” ²⁴Then Jeremiah said to all the people, including all the women, “Hear the word of the LORD, all those of Judah who are in the land of Egypt. ²⁵This is what the LORD of Hosts, the God of Israel, says: As for you and your wives, you have spoken with your mouths and fulfilled with your hands your words: ‘We will surely perform our vows that we have made to burn incense to the Queen of Heaven and to pour out drink offerings to her.’ Go ahead, then, do what you have promised! Keep your vows! ²⁶Nevertheless, hear the word of the LORD, all you people of Judah living in Egypt: Behold, I have sworn by My great name, says the LORD, that never again will any man of Judah living in the land of Egypt invoke My name or say, ‘As surely as the Lord GOD lives.’ ²⁷I am watching over them for harm and not for good, and every man of Judah who is in the land of Egypt will meet his end by sword or famine, until they are finished off. ²⁸Those who escape the sword will return from Egypt to Judah, few in number, and the whole remnant of Judah who went to dwell in the land of Egypt will know whose word will stand, Mine or theirs! ²⁹This will be a sign to you that I will punish you in this place, declares the LORD, so that you may know that My threats of harm against you will surely stand. ³⁰This is what the LORD says: Behold, I will deliver Pharaoh Hophra king of Egypt into the hands of his enemies who seek his life, just as I delivered Zedekiah king of Judah into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, the enemy who was seeking his life.”

Chapter 45

JEREMIAH’S MESSAGE TO BARUCH

“This is the word that Jeremiah the prophet spoke to Baruch son of Neriah when he wrote these words on a scroll at the dictation of Jeremiah in the fourth year of Jehoiakim son of Josiah, king of Judah: ²“This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says to you, Baruch: ³You have said, ‘Woe is me because the LORD has added sorrow to my pain! I am worn out with groaning and have found no rest.’” ⁴Thus Jeremiah was to say to Baruch: “This is what the LORD says: Throughout the land I will demolish what I have built and uproot what I have planted. ⁵But as for you, do you seek great things for yourself? Stop seeking! For I will bring disaster on every living creature, declares the LORD, but wherever you go, I will grant your life as a spoil of war.”

Chapter 46

JUDGMENT ON EGYPT

“This is the word of the LORD about the nations—the word that came to Jeremiah the prophet ²concerning Egypt and the army of Pharaoh Neco king of Egypt, which was defeated at Carchemish on the Euphrates River by Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah: ³“Deploy your shields, small and large; advance for battle! ⁴Harness the horses; mount the steeds; take your positions with helmets on! Polish your spears; put on armor! ⁵Why am I seeing this? They are terrified, they are retreating; their warriors are defeated, they flee in haste without looking back; terror is on every side!” declares the LORD. ⁶“The swift cannot flee, and the warrior cannot escape! In the north by the River Euphrates they stumble and fall. ⁷Who is this, rising like the Nile, like rivers whose waters churn? ⁸Egypt rises like the Nile, and its waters churn like rivers, boasting, ‘I will rise and cover the earth; I will destroy the cities and their people.’ ⁹Advance, O horses! Race furiously, O chariots! Let the warriors come forth—Cush and Put carrying their shields, men of Lydia drawing the bow. ¹⁰For that day belongs to the Lord GOD of Hosts, a day of vengeance against His foes. The sword will devour until it is satisfied, until it is quenched with their blood. For the Lord GOD of Hosts will hold a sacrifice in the land of the north by the River Euphrates. ¹¹Go up to Gilead for balm, O Virgin Daughter of Egypt! In vain you try many remedies, but for you there is no healing. ¹²The nations have heard of your shame, and your outcry fills the earth, because warrior stumbles over warrior and both of them have fallen together.” ¹³This is the word that the LORD spoke to Jeremiah the prophet about the coming of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon to strike the land of Egypt: ¹⁴“Announce it in Egypt, and proclaim it in Migdol; proclaim it in Memphis and Tahpanhes: ‘Take your positions and prepare yourself, for the sword devours those around you.’ ¹⁵Why have your warriors been laid low? They cannot stand, for the LORD has thrust them down. ¹⁶They continue to stumble; indeed, they have fallen over one another. They say, ‘Get up! Let us return to our people and to the land of our birth, away from the sword of the oppressor.’ ¹⁷There they will cry out: ‘Pharaoh king of Egypt was all noise; he has let the appointed time pass him by.’ ¹⁸As surely as I live, declares the King, whose name is the LORD of Hosts, there will come one who is like Tabor among the mountains and like Carmel by the sea. ¹⁹Pack your bags for exile, O daughter dwelling in Egypt! For Memphis will be laid waste, destroyed and uninhabited. ²⁰Egypt is a beautiful heifer, but a

gadfly from the north is coming against her. ²¹Even the mercenaries among her are like fattened calves. They too will turn back; together they will flee, they will not stand their ground, for the day of calamity is coming upon them—the time of their punishment. ²²Egypt will hiss like a fleeing serpent, for the enemy will advance in force; with axes they will come against her like woodsmen cutting down trees. ²³They will chop down her forest, declares the LORD, dense though it may be, for they are more numerous than locusts; they cannot be counted. ²⁴The Daughter of Egypt will be put to shame; she will be delivered into the hands of the people of the north.” ²⁵The LORD of Hosts, the God of Israel, says: “Behold, I am about to punish Amon god of Thebes, along with Pharaoh, Egypt with her gods and kings, and those who trust in Pharaoh. ²⁶I will deliver them into the hands of those who seek their lives—of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and his officers. But after this, Egypt will be inhabited as in days of old, declares the LORD. ²⁷But you, O Jacob My servant, do not be afraid, and do not be dismayed, O Israel. For I will surely save you out of a distant place, your descendants from the land of their captivity! Jacob will return to quiet and ease, with no one to make him afraid. ²⁸And you, My servant Jacob, do not be afraid, declares the LORD, for I am with you. Though I will completely destroy all the nations to which I have banished you, I will not completely destroy you. Yet I will discipline you justly, and will by no means leave you unpunished.”

Chapter 47

JUDGMENT ON THE PHILISTINES

¹This is the word of the LORD that came to Jeremiah the prophet about the Philistines before Pharaoh struck down Gaza. ²This is what the LORD says: “See how the waters are rising from the north and becoming an overflowing torrent. They will overflow the land and its fullness, the cities and their inhabitants. The people will cry out, and all who dwell in the land will wail ³at the sound of the galloping hooves of stallions, the rumbling of chariots, and the clatter of their wheels. The fathers will not turn back for their sons; their hands will hang limp. ⁴For the day has come to destroy all the Philistines, to cut off from Tyre and Sidon every remaining ally. Indeed, the LORD is about to destroy the Philistines, the remnant from the coasts of Caphtor. ⁵The people of Gaza will shave their heads in mourning; Ashkelon will be silenced. O remnant of their valley, how long will you gash yourself? ⁶Alas, O sword of the LORD, how long until you rest? Return to your sheath; cease and be still!’ ⁷How can it rest when the LORD has commanded

it? He has appointed it against Ashkelon and the shore of its coastland.”

Chapter 48

JUDGMENT ON MOAB

¹Concerning Moab, this is what the LORD of Hosts, the God of Israel, says: “Woe to Nebo, for it will be devastated. Kiriathaim will be captured and disgraced; the fortress will be shattered and dismantled. ²There is no longer praise for Moab; in Heshbon they devise evil against her: ‘Come, let us cut her off from nationhood.’ You too, O people of Madmen, will be silenced; the sword will pursue you. ³A voice cries out from Horonaim: ‘Devastation and great destruction!’ ⁴Moab will be shattered; her little ones will cry out. ⁵For on the ascent to Luhith they weep bitterly as they go, and on the descent to Horonaim cries of distress resound over the destruction: ⁶‘Flee! Run for your lives! Become like a juniper in the desert.’ ⁷Because you trust in your works and treasures, you too will be captured, and Chemosh will go into exile with his priests and officials. ⁸The destroyer will move against every city, and not one town will escape. The valley will also be ruined, and the high plain will be destroyed, as the LORD has said. ⁹Put salt on Moab, for she will be laid waste; her cities will become desolate, with no one to dwell in them. ¹⁰Cursed is the one who is remiss in doing the work of the LORD, and cursed is he who withholds his sword from bloodshed. ¹¹Moab has been at ease from youth, settled like wine on its dregs; he has not been poured from vessel to vessel or gone into exile. So his flavor has remained the same, and his aroma is unchanged. ¹²Therefore behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will send to him wanderers, who will pour him out. They will empty his vessels and shatter his jars. ¹³Then Moab will be ashamed of Chemosh, just as the house of Israel was ashamed when they trusted in Bethel. ¹⁴How can you say, ‘We are warriors, mighty men ready for battle’? ¹⁵Moab has been destroyed and its towns have been invaded; the best of its young men have gone down in the slaughter, declares the King, whose name is the LORD of Hosts. ¹⁶Moab’s calamity is at hand, and his affliction is rushing swiftly. ¹⁷Mourn for him, all you who surround him, everyone who knows his name; tell how the mighty scepter is shattered—the glorious staff! ¹⁸Come down from your glory; sit on parched ground, O daughter dwelling in Dibon, for the destroyer of Moab has come against you; he has destroyed your fortresses. ¹⁹Stand by the road and watch, O dweller of Aroer! Ask the man fleeing or the woman escaping, ‘What has happened?’ ²⁰Moab is put to shame, for it has been shattered. Wail and cry out!

Declare by the Arnon that Moab is destroyed. ²¹Judgment has come upon the high plain—upon Holon, Jahzah, and Mephaath, ²²upon Dibon, Nebo, and Beth-diblathaim, ²³upon Kiriathaim, Beth-gamul, and Beth-meon, ²⁴upon Kerioth, Bozrah, and all the towns of Moab, those far and near. ²⁵The horn of Moab has been cut off, and his arm is broken,” declares the LORD. ²⁶“Make him drunk, because he has magnified himself against the LORD; so Moab will wallow in his own vomit, and he will also become a laughingstock. ²⁷Was not Israel your object of ridicule? Was he ever found among thieves? For whenever you speak of him you shake your head. ²⁸Abandon the towns and settle among the rocks, O dwellers of Moab! Be like a dove that nests at the mouth of a cave. ²⁹We have heard of Moab’s pomposity, his exceeding pride and conceit, his proud arrogance and haughtiness of heart. ³⁰I know his insolence,” declares the LORD, “but it is futile. His boasting is as empty as his deeds. ³¹Therefore I will wail for Moab; I will cry out for all of Moab; I will moan for the men of Kir-heres. ³²I will weep for you, O vine of Sibmah, more than I weep for Jazer. Your tendrils have extended to the sea; they reach even to Jazer. The destroyer has descended on your summer fruit and grape harvest. ³³Joy and gladness are removed from the orchard and from the fields of Moab. I have stopped the flow of wine from the presses; no one treads them with shouts of joy; their shouts are not for joy. ³⁴There is a cry from Heshbon to Elealeh; they raise their voices to Jahaz, from Zoar to Horonaim and Eglath-shelishiyah; for even the waters of Nimrim have dried up. ³⁵In Moab, declares the LORD, I will bring an end to those who make offerings on the high places and burn incense to their gods. ³⁶Therefore My heart laments like a flute for Moab; it laments like a flute for the men of Kir-heres, because the wealth they acquired has perished. ³⁷For every head is shaved and every beard is clipped; on every hand is a gash, and around every waist is sackcloth. ³⁸On all the rooftops of Moab and in the public squares, everyone is mourning; for I have shattered Moab like an unwanted jar,” declares the LORD. ³⁹“How shattered it is! How they wail! How Moab has turned his back in shame! Moab has become an object of ridicule and horror to all those around him.” ⁴⁰For this is what the LORD says: “Behold, an eagle swoops down and spreads his wings against Moab. ⁴¹Kirioth has been taken, and the strongholds seized. In that day the heart of Moab’s warriors will be like the heart of a woman in labor. ⁴²Moab will be destroyed as a nation because he vaunted himself against the LORD. ⁴³Terror and pit and snare await you, O dweller of Moab,” declares the LORD. ⁴⁴“Whoever flees the panic will fall into the pit, and whoever climbs from the pit will be caught in the snare. For I will

bring upon Moab the year of their punishment,” declares the LORD. ⁴⁵“Those who flee will stand helpless in Heshbon’s shadow, because fire has gone forth from Heshbon and a flame from within Sihon. It devours the foreheads of Moab and the skulls of the sons of tumult. ⁴⁶Woe to you, O Moab! The people of Chemosh have perished; for your sons have been taken into exile and your daughters have gone into captivity. ⁴⁷Yet in the latter days I will restore Moab from captivity,” declares the LORD. Here ends the judgment on Moab.

Chapter 49

JUDGMENT ON THE AMMONITES

¹Concerning the Ammonites, this is what the LORD says: “Has Israel no sons? Is he without heir? Why then has Milcom taken possession of Gad? Why have his people settled in their cities? ²Therefore, behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will sound the battle cry against Rabbah of the Ammonites. It will become a heap of ruins, and its villages will be burned. Then Israel will drive out their dispossessors, says the LORD. ³Wail, O Heshbon, for Ai has been destroyed; cry out, O daughters of Rabbah! Put on sackcloth and mourn; run back and forth within your walls, for Milcom will go into exile together with his priests and officials. ⁴Why do you boast of your valleys—your valleys so fruitful, O faithless daughter? You trust in your riches and say, ‘Who can come against me?’ ⁵Behold, I am about to bring terror upon you, declares the Lord GOD of Hosts, from all those around you. You will each be driven headlong, with no one to regather the fugitives. ⁶Yet afterward I will restore the Ammonites from captivity,” declares the LORD.

JUDGMENT ON EDMOM

⁷Concerning Edom, this is what the LORD of Hosts says: “Is there no longer wisdom in Teman? Has counsel perished from the prudent? Has their wisdom decayed? ⁸Turn and run! Lie low, O dwellers of Dedan, for I will bring disaster on Esau at the time I punish him. ⁹If grape gatherers came to you, would they not leave some gleanings? Were thieves to come in the night, would they not steal only what they wanted? ¹⁰But I will strip Esau bare; I will uncover his hiding places, and he will be unable to conceal himself. His descendants will be destroyed along with his relatives and neighbors, and he will be no more. ¹¹Abandon your orphans; I will preserve their lives. Let your widows trust in Me.” ¹²For this is what the LORD says: “If those who do not deserve to drink the cup must drink it, can you possibly remain unpunished? You will not go unpunished, for you

must drink it too. ¹³For by Myself I have sworn, declares the LORD, that Bozrah will become a desolation, a disgrace, a ruin, and a curse, and all her cities will be in ruins forever.” ¹⁴I have heard a message from the LORD; an envoy has been sent to the nations: “Assemble yourselves to march against her! Rise up for battle!” ¹⁵“For behold, I will make you small among nations, despised among men. ¹⁶The terror you cause and the pride of your heart have deceived you, O dwellers in the clefts of the rocks, O occupiers of the mountain summit. Though you elevate your nest like the eagle, even from there I will bring you down,” declares the LORD. ¹⁷“Edom will become an object of horror. All who pass by will be appalled and will scoff at all her wounds. ¹⁸As Sodom and Gomorrah were overthrown along with their neighbors,” says the LORD, “no one will dwell there; no man will abide there. ¹⁹Behold, one will come up like a lion from the thickets of the Jordan to the watered pasture. For in an instant I will chase Edom from her land. Who is the chosen one I will appoint for this? For who is like Me, and who can challenge Me? What shepherd can stand against Me?” ²⁰Therefore hear the plans that the LORD has drawn up against Edom and the strategies He has devised against the people of Teman: Surely the little ones of the flock will be dragged away; certainly their pasture will be made desolate because of them. ²¹At the sound of their fall the earth will quake; their cry will resound to the Red Sea. ²²Look! An eagle will soar and swoop down, spreading its wings over Bozrah. In that day the hearts of Edom’s mighty men will be like the heart of a woman in labor.

JUDGMENT ON DAMASCUS

²³Concerning Damascus: “Hamath and Arpad are put to shame, for they have heard a bad report; they are agitated like the sea; their anxiety cannot be calmed. ²⁴Damascus has become feeble; she has turned to flee. Panic has gripped her; anguish and pain have seized her like a woman in labor. ²⁵How is the city of praise not forsaken, the town that brings Me joy? ²⁶For her young men will fall in the streets, and all her warriors will be silenced in that day,” declares the LORD of Hosts. ²⁷“I will set fire to the walls of Damascus; it will consume the fortresses of Ben-hadad.”

JUDGMENT ON KEDAR AND HAZOR

²⁸Concerning Kedar and the kingdoms of Hazor, which Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon defeated, this is what the LORD says: “Rise up, advance against Kedar, and destroy the people of the east! ²⁹They will take their tents and flocks, their tent curtains and all their goods. They will take their camels for themselves. They will shout to them: ‘Ter-

ror is on every side!’ ³⁰Run! Escape quickly! Lie low, O residents of Hazor,” declares the LORD, “for Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon has drawn up a plan against you; he has devised a strategy against you. ³¹Rise up, advance against a nation at ease, one that dwells securely,” declares the LORD. “They have no gates or bars; they live alone. ³²Their camels will become plunder, and their large herds will be spoil. I will scatter to the wind in every direction those who shave their temples; I will bring calamity on them from all sides,” declares the LORD. ³³“Hazor will become a haunt for jackals, a desolation forever. No one will dwell there; no man will abide there.”

JUDGMENT ON ELAM

³⁴This is the word of the LORD that came to Jeremiah the prophet concerning Elam at the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah king of Judah. ³⁵This is what the LORD of Hosts says: “Behold, I will shatter Elam’s bow, the mainstay of their might. ³⁶I will bring the four winds against Elam from the four corners of the heavens, and I will scatter them to all these winds. There will not be a nation to which Elam’s exiles will not go. ³⁷So I will shatter Elam before their foes, before those who seek their lives. I will bring disaster upon them, even My fierce anger,” declares the LORD. “I will send out the sword after them until I finish them off. ³⁸I will set My throne in Elam, and destroy its king and officials,” declares the LORD. ³⁹“Yet in the last days, I will restore Elam from captivity,” declares the LORD.

Chapter 50

A PROPHECY AGAINST BABYLON

“This is the word that the LORD spoke through Jeremiah the prophet concerning Babylon and the land of the Chaldeans: ²“Announce and declare to the nations; lift up a banner and proclaim it; hold nothing back when you say, ‘Babylon is captured; Bel is put to shame; Marduk is shattered, her images are disgraced, her idols are broken in pieces.’ ³For a nation from the north will come against her; it will make her land a desolation. No one will live in it; both man and beast will flee.”

HOPE FOR ISRAEL AND JUDAH

⁴“In those days and at that time, declares the LORD, the children of Israel and the children of Judah will come together, weeping as they come, and will seek the LORD their God. ⁵They will ask the way to Zion and turn their faces toward it. They will come and join themselves to the LORD in an everlasting covenant that will never be forgotten. ⁶My people are lost sheep; their shepherds have led them astray, causing them to roam the mountains. They have

wandered from mountain to hill; they have forgotten their resting place. ⁷All who found them devoured them, and their enemies said, 'We are not guilty, for they have sinned against the LORD, their true pasture, the LORD, the hope of their fathers.' ⁸Flee from the midst of Babylon; depart from the land of the Chaldeans; be like the he-goats that lead the flock. ⁹For behold, I stir up and bring against Babylon an assembly of great nations from the land of the north. They will line up against her; from the north she will be captured. Their arrows will be like skilled warriors who do not return empty-handed. ¹⁰Chaldea will be plundered; all who plunder her will have their fill," declares the LORD.

BABYLON'S FALL IS CERTAIN

¹¹"Because you rejoice, because you sing in triumph—you who plunder My inheritance—because you frolic like a heifer treading grain and neigh like stallions, ¹²your mother will be greatly ashamed; she who bore you will be disgraced. Behold, she will be the least of the nations, a wilderness, a dry land, and a desert. ¹³Because of the wrath of the LORD, she will not be inhabited; she will become completely desolate. All who pass through Babylon will be horrified and will hiss at all her wounds. ¹⁴Line up in formation around Babylon, all you who draw the bow! Shoot at her! Spare no arrows! For she has sinned against the LORD. ¹⁵Raise a war cry against her on every side! She has thrown up her hands in surrender; her towers have fallen; her walls are torn down. Since this is the vengeance of the LORD, take out your vengeance upon her; as she has done, do the same to her. ¹⁶Cut off the sower from Babylon, and the one who wields the sickle at harvest time. In the face of the oppressor's sword, each will turn to his own people, each will flee to his own land.

REDEMPTION FOR GOD'S PEOPLE

¹⁷Israel is a scattered flock, chased away by lions. The first to devour him was the king of Assyria; the last to crush his bones was Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon." ¹⁸Therefore this is what the LORD of Hosts, the God of Israel, says: "I will punish the king of Babylon and his land as I punished the king of Assyria. ¹⁹I will return Israel to his pasture, and he will graze on Carmel and Bashan; his soul will be satisfied on the hills of Ephraim and Gilead. ²⁰In those days and at that time, declares the LORD, a search will be made for Israel's guilt, but there will be none, and for Judah's sins, but they will not be found; for I will forgive the remnant I preserve.

THE DESTRUCTION OF BABYLON

²¹Go up against the land of Merathaim, and against the residents of Pekod. Kill them and devote them to destruction.

Do all that I have commanded you," declares the LORD. ²²"The noise of battle is in the land—the noise of great destruction. ²³How the hammer of the whole earth lies broken and shattered! What a horror Babylon has become among the nations! ²⁴I laid a snare for you, O Babylon, and you were caught before you knew it. You were found and captured because you challenged the LORD. ²⁵The LORD has opened His armory and brought out His weapons of wrath, for this is the work of the Lord GOD of Hosts in the land of the Chaldeans. ²⁶Come against her from the farthest border. Break open her granaries; pile her up like mounds of grain. Devote her to destruction; leave her no survivors. ²⁷Kill all her young bulls; let them go down to the slaughter. Woe to them, for their day has come—the time of their punishment. ²⁸Listen to the fugitives and refugees from the land of Babylon, declaring in Zion the vengeance of the LORD our God, the vengeance for His temple. ²⁹Summon the archers against Babylon, all who string the bow. Encamp all around her; let no one escape. Repay her according to her deeds; do to her as she has done. For she has defied the LORD, the Holy One of Israel. ³⁰Therefore, her young men will fall in the streets, and all her warriors will be silenced in that day," declares the LORD. ³¹"Behold, I am against you, O arrogant one," declares the Lord GOD of Hosts, "for your day has come, the time when I will punish you. ³²The arrogant one will stumble and fall with no one to pick him up. And I will kindle a fire in his cities to consume all those around him." ³³This is what the LORD of Hosts says: "The sons of Israel are oppressed, and the sons of Judah as well. All their captors hold them fast, refusing to release them. ³⁴Their Redeemer is strong; the LORD of Hosts is His name. He will fervently plead their case so that He may bring rest to the earth, but turmoil to those who live in Babylon. ³⁵A sword is against the Chaldeans, declares the LORD, against those who live in Babylon, and against her officials and wise men. ³⁶A sword is against her false prophets, and they will become fools. A sword is against her warriors, and they will be filled with terror. ³⁷A sword is against her horses and chariots and against all the foreigners in her midst, and they will become like women. A sword is against her treasuries, and they will be plundered. ³⁸A drought is upon her waters, and they will be dried up. For it is a land of graven images, and the people go mad over idols. ³⁹So the desert creatures and hyenas will live there and ostriches will dwell there. It will never again be inhabited or lived in from generation to generation. ⁴⁰As God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah along with their neighbors," declares the LORD, "no one will dwell there; no man will abide there. ⁴¹Behold, an army is coming from the north; a great nation and many kings

are stirred up from the ends of the earth. ⁴²They grasp the bow and spear; they are cruel and merciless. Their voice roars like the sea, and they ride upon horses, lined up like men in formation against you, O Daughter of Babylon. ⁴³The king of Babylon has heard the report, and his hands hang limp. Anguish has gripped him, pain like that of a woman in labor. ⁴⁴Behold, one will come up like a lion from the thickets of the Jordan to the watered pasture. For in an instant I will chase Babylon from her land. Who is the chosen one I will appoint for this? For who is like Me, and who can challenge Me? What shepherd can stand against Me?" ⁴⁵Therefore hear the plans that the LORD has drawn up against Babylon and the strategies He has devised against the land of the Chaldeans: Surely the little ones of the flock will be dragged away; certainly their pasture will be made desolate because of them. ⁴⁶At the sound of Babylon's capture the earth will quake; a cry will be heard among the nations.

Chapter 51

JUDGMENT ON BABYLON

¹This is what the LORD says: "Behold, I will stir up against Babylon and against the people of Leb-kamai the spirit of a destroyer. ²I will send strangers to Babylon to winnow her and empty her land; for they will come against her from every side in her day of disaster. ³Do not let the archer bend his bow or put on his armor. Do not spare her young men; devote all her army to destruction! ⁴And they will fall slain in the land of the Chaldeans, and pierced through in her streets. ⁵For Israel and Judah have not been abandoned by their God, the LORD of Hosts, though their land is full of guilt before the Holy One of Israel." ⁶Flee from Babylon! Escape with your lives! Do not be destroyed in her punishment. For this is the time of the LORD's vengeance; He will pay her what she deserves. ⁷Babylon was a gold cup in the hand of the LORD, making the whole earth drunk. The nations drank her wine; therefore the nations have gone mad. ⁸Suddenly Babylon has fallen and been shattered. Wail for her; get her balm for her pain; perhaps she can be healed. ⁹"We tried to heal Babylon, but she could not be healed. Abandon her! Let each of us go to his own land, for her judgment extends to the sky and reaches to the clouds." ¹⁰"The LORD has brought forth our vindication; come, let us tell in Zion what the LORD our God has accomplished." ¹¹Sharpen the arrows! Fill the quivers! The LORD has aroused the spirit of the kings of the Medes, because His plan is aimed at Babylon to destroy her, for it is the vengeance of the LORD—vengeance for His temple. ¹²Raise a banner against the walls of Babylon; post

the guard; station the watchmen; prepare the ambush. For the LORD has both devised and accomplished what He spoke against the people of Babylon. ¹³You who dwell by many waters, rich in treasures, your end has come; the thread of your life is cut. ¹⁴The LORD of Hosts has sworn by Himself: "Surely I will fill you up with men as with locusts, and they will shout in triumph over you."

PRAISE TO THE GOD OF JACOB

¹⁵The LORD made the earth by His power; He established the world by His wisdom and stretched out the heavens by His understanding. ¹⁶When He thunders, the waters in the heavens roar; He causes the clouds to rise from the ends of the earth. He generates the lightning with the rain and brings forth the wind from His storehouses. ¹⁷Every man is senseless and devoid of knowledge; every goldsmith is put to shame by his idols. For his molten images are a fraud, and there is no breath in them. ¹⁸They are worthless, a work to be mocked. In the time of their punishment they will perish. ¹⁹The Portion of Jacob is not like these, for He is the Maker of all things, and of the tribe of His inheritance—the LORD of Hosts is His name.

BABYLON'S PUNISHMENT

²⁰"You are My war club, My weapon for battle. With you I shatter nations; with you I bring kingdoms to ruin. ²¹With you I shatter the horse and rider; with you I shatter the chariot and driver. ²²With you I shatter man and woman; with you I shatter the old man and the youth; with you I shatter the young man and the maiden. ²³With you I shatter the shepherd and his flock; with you I shatter the farmer and his oxen; with you I shatter the governors and officials. ²⁴Before your very eyes I will repay Babylon and all the dwellers of Chaldea for all the evil they have done in Zion," declares the LORD. ²⁵"Behold, I am against you, O destroying mountain, you who devastate the whole earth, declares the LORD. I will stretch out My hand against you; I will roll you over the cliffs and turn you into a charred mountain. ²⁶No one shall retrieve from you a cornerstone or a foundation stone, because you will become desolate forever," declares the LORD. ²⁷"Raise a banner in the land! Blow the ram's horn among the nations! Prepare the nations against her. Summon the kingdoms against her—Ararat, Minni, and Ashkenaz. Appoint a captain against her; bring up horses like swarming locusts. ²⁸Prepare the nations for battle against her—the kings of the Medes, their governors and all their officials, and all the lands they rule. ²⁹The earth quakes and writhes because the LORD's intentions against Babylon stand: to make the land of Babylon a desolation, without inhabitant. ³⁰The warriors of Babylon have stopped fighting; they sit in their strongholds. Their

strength is exhausted; they have become like women. Babylon's homes have been set ablaze, the bars of her gates are broken. ³¹One courier races to meet another, and messenger follows messenger, to announce to the king of Babylon that his city has been captured from end to end. ³²The fords have been seized, the marshes set on fire, and the soldiers are terrified." ³³For this is what the LORD of Hosts, the God of Israel, says: "The Daughter of Babylon is like a threshing floor at the time it is trampled. In just a little while her harvest time will come." ³⁴"Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon has devoured me; he has crushed me. He has set me aside like an empty vessel; he has swallowed me like a monster; he filled his belly with my delicacies and vomited me out. ³⁵May the violence done to me and to my flesh be upon Babylon," says the dweller of Zion. "May my blood be on the dwellers of Chaldea," says Jerusalem. ³⁶Therefore this is what the LORD says: "Behold, I will plead your case and take vengeance on your behalf; I will dry up her sea and make her springs run dry. ³⁷Babylon will become a heap of rubble, a haunt for jackals, an object of horror and scorn, without inhabitant. ³⁸They will roar together like young lions; they will growl like lion cubs. ³⁹While they are flushed with heat, I will serve them a feast, and I will make them drunk so that they may revel; then they will fall asleep forever and never wake up, declares the LORD. ⁴⁰I will bring them down like lambs to the slaughter, like rams with male goats. ⁴¹How Sheshach has been captured! The praise of all the earth has been seized. What a horror Babylon has become among the nations! ⁴²The sea has come up over Babylon; she is covered in turbulent waves. ⁴³Her cities have become a desolation, a dry and arid land, a land where no one lives, where no son of man passes through. ⁴⁴I will punish Bel in Babylon. I will make him spew out what he swallowed. The nations will no longer stream to him; even the wall of Babylon will fall. ⁴⁵Come out of her, My people! Save your lives, each of you, from the fierce anger of the LORD. ⁴⁶Do not let your heart grow faint, and do not be afraid when the rumor is heard in the land; for a rumor will come one year—and then another the next year—of violence in the land and of ruler against ruler. ⁴⁷Therefore, behold, the days are coming when I will punish the idols of Babylon. Her entire land will suffer shame, and all her slain will lie fallen within her. ⁴⁸Then heaven and earth and all that is in them will shout for joy over Babylon because the destroyers from the north will come against her," declares the LORD. ⁴⁹"Babylon must fall on account of the slain of Israel, just as the slain of all the earth have fallen because of Babylon. ⁵⁰You who have escaped the sword, depart and do not linger! Remember the LORD from far away, and let Jerusalem come to mind."

⁵¹"We are ashamed because we have heard reproach; disgrace has covered our faces, because foreigners have entered the holy places of the LORD's house." ⁵²"Therefore, behold, the days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will punish her idols, and throughout her land the wounded will groan. ⁵³Even if Babylon ascends to the heavens and fortifies her lofty stronghold, the destroyers I send will come against her," declares the LORD. ⁵⁴"The sound of a cry comes from Babylon, the sound of great destruction from the land of the Chaldeans! ⁵⁵For the LORD will destroy Babylon; He will silence her mighty voice. The waves will roar like great waters; the tumult of their voices will resound. ⁵⁶For a destroyer is coming against her—against Babylon. Her warriors will be captured, and their bows will be broken, for the LORD is a God of retribution; He will repay in full. ⁵⁷I will make her princes and wise men drunk, along with her governors, officials, and warriors. Then they will fall asleep forever and not wake up," declares the King, whose name is the LORD of Hosts. ⁵⁸This is what the LORD of Hosts says: "Babylon's thick walls will be leveled, and her high gates consumed by fire. So the labor of the people will be for nothing; the nations will exhaust themselves to fuel the flames."

JEREMIAH'S MESSAGE TO SERAIAH

⁵⁹This is the message that Jeremiah the prophet gave to the quartermaster Seraiah son of Neriah, the son of Mahseiah, when he went to Babylon with King Zedekiah of Judah in the fourth year of Zedekiah's reign. ⁶⁰Jeremiah had written on a single scroll about all the disaster that would come upon Babylon—all these words that had been written concerning Babylon. ⁶¹And Jeremiah said to Seraiah, "When you get to Babylon, see that you read all these words aloud, ⁶²and say, 'O LORD, You have promised to cut off this place so that no one will remain—neither man nor beast. Indeed, it will be desolate forever.' ⁶³When you finish reading this scroll, tie a stone to it and cast it into the Euphrates. ⁶⁴Then you are to say, 'In the same way Babylon will sink and never rise again, because of the disaster I will bring upon her. And her people will grow weary.'" Here end the words of Jeremiah.

Chapter 52

THE FALL OF JERUSALEM RECOUNTED

¹Zedekiah was twenty-one years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem eleven years. His mother's name was Hamutal daughter of Jeremiah; she was from Libnah. ²And Zedekiah did evil in the sight of the LORD, just as Jehoiakim had done. ³For because of the anger of

the LORD, all this happened in Jerusalem and Judah, until He finally banished them from His presence. And Zedekiah also rebelled against the king of Babylon. ⁴So in the ninth year of Zedekiah's reign, on the tenth day of the tenth month, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon marched against Jerusalem with his entire army. They encamped outside the city and built a siege wall all around it. ⁵And the city was kept under siege until King Zedekiah's eleventh year. ⁶By the ninth day of the fourth month, the famine in the city was so severe that the people of the land had no food. ⁷Then the city was breached; and though the Chaldeans had surrounded the city, all the men of war fled the city by night by way of the gate between the two walls near the king's garden. They headed toward the Arabah, ⁸but the army of the Chaldeans pursued the king and overtook Zedekiah in the plains of Jericho, and his whole army deserted him. ⁹The Chaldeans seized the king and brought him up to the king of Babylon at Riblah in the land of Hamath, where he pronounced judgment on Zedekiah. ¹⁰There at Riblah the king of Babylon slaughtered the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes, and he also killed all the officials of Judah. ¹¹Then he put out Zedekiah's eyes, bound him with bronze shackles, and took him to Babylon, where he kept him in custody until his dying day.

THE TEMPLE DESTROYED

¹²On the tenth day of the fifth month, in the nineteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign over Babylon, Nebuzaradan captain of the guard, a servant of the king of Babylon, entered Jerusalem. ¹³He burned down the house of the LORD, the royal palace, and all the houses of Jerusalem—every significant building. ¹⁴And the whole army of the Chaldeans under the captain of the guard broke down all the walls around Jerusalem. ¹⁵Then Nebuzaradan captain of the guard carried into exile some of the poorest people and those who remained in the city, along with the deserters who had defected to the king of Babylon and the rest of the craftsmen. ¹⁶But Nebuzaradan captain of the guard left behind some of the poorest of the land to tend the vineyards and fields. ¹⁷Moreover, the Chaldeans broke up the bronze pillars and stands and the bronze Sea in the house of the LORD, and they carried all the bronze to Babylon. ¹⁸They also took away the pots, shovels, wick trimmers, sprinkling bowls, dishes, and all the articles of bronze used in the temple service. ¹⁹The cap-

tain of the guard also took away the basins, censers, sprinkling bowls, pots, lampstands, pans, and drink offering bowls—anything made of pure gold or fine silver. ²⁰As for the two pillars, the Sea, the twelve bronze bulls under it, and the movable stands that King Solomon had made for the house of the LORD, the weight of the bronze from all these articles was beyond measure. ²¹Each pillar was eighteen cubits tall and twelve cubits in circumference; each was hollow, four fingers thick. ²²The bronze capital atop one pillar was five cubits high, with a network of bronze pomegranates all around. The second pillar, with its pomegranates, was similar. ²³Each capital had ninety-six pomegranates on the sides, and a total of a hundred pomegranates were above the surrounding network.

CAPTIVES CARRIED TO BABYLON

²⁴The captain of the guard also took away Seraiah the chief priest, Zephaniah the priest of second rank, and the three doorkeepers. ²⁵Of those still in the city, he took a court official who had been appointed over the men of war, as well as seven trusted royal advisers. He also took the scribe of the captain of the army, who had enlisted the people of the land, and sixty men who were found in the city. ²⁶Nebuzaradan captain of the guard took them and brought them to the king of Babylon at Riblah. ²⁷There at Riblah in the land of Hamath, the king of Babylon struck them down and put them to death. So Judah was taken into exile, away from its own land. ²⁸These are the people Nebuchadnezzar carried away: in the seventh year, 3,023 Jews; ²⁹in Nebuchadnezzar's eighteenth year, 832 people from Jerusalem; ³⁰in Nebuchadnezzar's twenty-third year, Nebuzaradan captain of the guard carried away 745 Jews. So in all, 4,600 people were taken away.

JEHOIACHIN RELEASED FROM PRISON

³¹On the twenty-fifth day of the twelfth month of the thirty-seventh year of the exile of Jehoiachin king of Judah, in the first year of the reign of Evil-merodach king of Babylon, he pardoned Jehoiachin king of Judah and released him from prison. ³²And he spoke kindly to Jehoiachin and set his throne above the thrones of the other kings who were with him in Babylon. ³³So Jehoiachin changed out of his prison clothes, and he dined regularly at the king's table for the rest of his life. ³⁴And the king of Babylon provided Jehoiachin a daily portion for the rest of his life, until the day of his death.