

Jeremiah

The Superscription

1:1 The following is a record of what Jeremiah son of Hilkiah prophesied.¹ He was one of the priests who lived at Anathoth in the territory of the tribe of Benjamin. **1:2** The LORD² began to speak to him³ in the thirteenth year that Josiah son of Amon ruled over Judah. **1:3** The LORD also spoke to him when Jehoiakim son of Josiah ruled over Judah, and he continued to speak to him until the fifth month of the eleventh year⁴ that Zedekiah son of Josiah ruled over Judah. That was when the people of Jerusalem⁵ were taken into exile.⁶

Jeremiah's Call and Commission

1:4 The LORD said to me,

1:5 "Before I formed you in your mother's womb⁷ I chose you.⁸

Before you were born I set you apart. I appointed you to be a prophet to the nations."

1:6 I answered, "Oh, Lord God,⁹ I really¹⁰ do not know how to speak well enough for that,¹¹ for I am too young."¹² **1:7** The LORD said to me, "Do not say, 'I am too young.' But go¹³ to whomever I send you and say whatever I tell you. **1:8** Do not be afraid of those to whom I send you,¹⁴ for I will be with you to protect¹⁵ you," says the LORD. **1:9** Then the LORD reached out his hand and touched my mouth and said to me, "I will most assuredly give you the words you are to speak for me.¹⁶ **1:10** Know for certain that¹⁷ I hereby give you the authority to announce to nations and kingdoms that they will be¹⁸ uprooted and torn down, destroyed and

1 tn Or "This is a record of what Jeremiah prophesied and did"; *Heb* "The words [or affairs] of Jeremiah." The phrase could refer to either the messages of Jeremiah recorded in the book or to both his messages and the biographical (and autobiographical) narratives recorded about him in the book. Since the phrase is intended to serve as the title or superscription for the whole book and recurs again in 51:64 at the end of the book before the final appendix, it might refer to the latter. The expression "The words of [someone]" is a standard introductory formula (Deut 29:1[28:69]; 2 Sam 23:1; Amos 1:1; Eccl 1:1; Neh 1:1).

2 sn The translation reflects the ancient Jewish tradition of substituting the word for "Lord" for the proper name for Israel's God which is now generally agreed to have been Yahweh. Jewish scribes wrote the consonants YHWH but substituted the vowels for the word "Lord." The practice of calling him "Lord" rather than using his proper name is also reflected in the Greek translation which is the oldest translation of the Hebrew Bible. The meaning of the name Yahweh occurs in Exod 3:13-14 where God identifies himself as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and tells Moses that his name is "I am" (אֲנִי, *'ehyeh*). However, he instructs the Israelites to refer to him as YHWH ("Yahweh" = "He is"); see further Exod 34:5-6.

3 tn *Heb* "to whom the word of the LORD came." The present translation is more in keeping with contemporary English idiom. The idea of "began to speak" comes from the context where the conclusion of his speaking is signaled by the phrases "until the end of the eleventh year of Zedekiah" and "until the people of Jerusalem were taken into exile" in v. 3.

4 sn This would have been August, 586 B.C. according to modern reckoning.

5 map For location see Map5-B1; Map6-F3; Map7-E2; Map8-F2; Map10-B3; JP1-F4; JP2-F4; JP3-F4; JP4-F4.

6 tn *Heb* "and it [the word of the LORD] came in the days of Jehoiakim...until the end of the eleventh year of Zedekiah...until the carrying away captive of Jerusalem in the fifth month."

7 tn *Heb* "the womb." The words "your mother's" are implicit and are supplied in the translation for clarity.

8 tn *Heb* "I knew you." The parallelism here with "set you apart" and "appointed you" make clear that Jeremiah is speaking of his foreordination to be a prophet. For this same nuance of the Hebrew verb see Gen 18:19; Amos 3:2.

9 tn *Heb* "Lord Yahweh."

sn The translation follows the ancient Jewish tradition of substituting the Hebrew word for "God" for the proper name Yahweh in this compound name. See the study note on v. 2 for the substitution of "Lord" in a similar kind of situation.

10 tn *Heb* "Behold, I do not know how to speak." The particle הִנֵּה (*hinneh*, commonly rendered "behold") often introduces a speech and calls special attention to a specific word or the statement as a whole (see *BHS* 675-78 §40.2.1).

11 tn The words "well enough for that" are implicit and are supplied in the translation for clarity. Jeremiah is not claiming an absolute inability to speak.

12 tn *Heb* "I am a boy/youth." The Hebrew word can refer to an infant (Exod 2:6), a young boy (1 Sam 2:11), a teenager (Gen 21:12), or a young man (2 Sam 18:5). The translation is deliberately ambiguous since it is unclear how old Jeremiah was when he was called to begin prophesying.

13 tn Or "For you must go and say." The Hebrew particle כִּי (*ki*) is likely adversative here after a negative statement (cf. *BDB* 474 s.v. כִּי 3.e). The LORD is probably not giving a rationale for the denial of Jeremiah's objection but redirecting his focus, i.e., "do not say...but go...and say."

14 tn *Heb* "be afraid of them." The antecedent is the "whomever" in v. 7.

15 tn *Heb* "rescue."

16 tn *Heb* "Behold, I have put my words in your mouth." This is an example of the Hebrew "scheduling" perfect or the "prophetic" perfect where a future event is viewed as so certain it is spoken of as past. The Hebrew particle rendered here "assuredly" (*Heb* הִנֵּה, *hinneh*) underlines the certitude of the promise for the future. See the translator's note on v. 6.

sn The passage is reminiscent of Deut 18:18 which refers to the LORD's promise of future revelation through a line of prophets who, like Moses, would speak God's word.

17 tn *Heb* "See!" The Hebrew imperative of the verb used here (רָא, *ra'ah*) functions the same as the particle in v. 9. See the translator's note there.

18 tn *Heb* "I appoint you today over nations and kingdoms to uproot...." The phrase refers to the LORD giving Jeremiah authority as a prophet to declare what he, the LORD, will do; it does not mean that Jeremiah himself will do these things. The expression involves a figure of speech where the subject of a declaration is stated instead of the declaration about it. Compare a similar use of the same figure in Gen 41:13.

demolished, rebuilt and firmly planted.”⁴

Visions Confirming Jeremiah's Call and Commission

1:11 Later the LORD asked me, “What do you see, Jeremiah?” I answered, “I see a branch of an almond tree.” **1:12** Then the LORD said, “You have observed correctly. This means² I am watching to make sure my threats are carried out.”³

1:13 The LORD again asked me, “What do you see?” I answered, “I see a pot of boiling water; it is tipped toward us from the north.”⁴

1:14 Then the LORD said, “This means⁵ destruction will break out from the north on all who live in the land. **1:15** For I will soon summon all the peoples of the kingdoms of the north,” says the LORD. “They will come and their kings will set up their thrones⁶ near the entrances of the gates of Jerusalem.⁷ They will attack all the walls surrounding it, and all the towns in Judah.⁸

1 sn These three pairs represent the twofold nature of Jeremiah's prophecies, prophecies of judgment and restoration. For the further programmatic use of these pairs for Jeremiah's ministry see 18:7-10 and 31:27-28.

2 tn This represents the Hebrew particle (כי, *ki*) that is normally rendered “for” or “because.” The particle here is meant to give the significance of the vision, not the rationale for the statement “you have observed correctly.”

3 tn Heb “watching over my word to do it.”

sn There is a play on the Hebrew word for “almond tree” (שֶׁדֶד, *shaqed*), which blossoms in January/February and is the harbinger of spring, and the Hebrew word for “watching” (שָׂדֵד, *shaqed*), which refers to someone watching over someone or something in preparation for action. The play on words announces the certainty and imminence of the LORD carrying out the covenant curses of Lev 26 and Deut 28 threatened by the earlier prophets.

4 tn Heb “a blown upon [= heated; boiling] pot and its face from the face of the north [= it is facing away from the north].”

5 tn There is nothing in the Hebrew text for these words but it is implicit in the connection. Once again the significance of the vision is spelled out. Compare the translator's note on v. 12.

6 tn Heb “they will each set up.” The pronoun “they” refers back to the “kingdoms” in the preceding sentence. However, kingdoms do not sit on thrones; their kings do. This is an example of a figure of speech called metonymy where the kingdom is put for its king. For a similar use see 2 Chr 12:8.

7 map For location see Map5-B1; Map6-F3; Map7-E2; Map8-F2; Map10-B3; JP1-F4; JP2-F4; JP3-F4; JP4-F4.

8 tn Or “They will come and set up their thrones in the entrances of the gates of Jerusalem. They will destroy all the walls surrounding it and also destroy all the towns in Judah.” The text of v. 15b reads in Hebrew, “they will each set up his throne [near? in?] the entrance of the gates of Jerusalem and against all its walls...and against all the towns...” Commentators are divided over whether the passage refers to the kings setting up their thrones after victory in preparation for passing judgment on their defeated enemies in the city or whether it refers to setting up siege against it. There is no Hebrew preposition before the word for “the entrance” so that it could be “in” (which would imply victory) or “at/near” (which would imply siege), and the same verb + object (i.e., “they will set up their thrones”) governs all the locative statements. It is most often taken to refer to the aftermath of victory because of the supposed parallel in Jer 43:8-13 and the supposed fulfillment in Jer 39:3. Though this may fit well with the first part of the compound expression, it does not fit well with the latter part which is most naturally taken to refer to hostile attacks against Jerusalem and the other cities of Judah. The transla-

tion given in the text is intended to reflect the idea of an army setting up for siege. The alternate translation is intended to reflect the other view.

9 tn The Hebrew particle (the *vav* [ו] consecutive), which is often rendered in some English versions as “and” and in others is simply left untranslated, is rendered here exegetically, reflecting a summary statement.

10 sn The Hebrew idiom (literally “I will speak my judgments against”) is found three other times in Jeremiah (4:12; 39:5; 52:9), where it is followed by the carrying out of the sentence. Here the carrying out of the sentence precedes in v. 15.

11 tn Heb “on them.” The antecedent goes back to Jerusalem and the cities of Judah (i.e., the people in them) in v. 15.

12 tn I.e., idols.

13 tn The name “Jeremiah” is not in the text. The use of the personal pronoun followed by the proper name is an attempt to reflect the correlative emphasis between Jeremiah's responsibility noted here and the LORD's promise noted in the next verse. The emphasis in the Hebrew text is marked by the presence of the subject pronouns at the beginning of each of the two verses.

14 tn Heb “gird up your loins.” For the literal use of this idiom to refer to preparation for action see 2 Kgs 4:29; 9:1. For the idiomatic use to refer to spiritual and emotional preparation as here, see Job 38:3, 40:7, and 1 Pet 1:13 in the NT.

15 tn Heb “I will make you terrified in front of them.” There is a play on words here involving two different forms of the same Hebrew verb and two different but related prepositional phrases, “from before/of,” a preposition introducing the object of a verb of fearing, and “before, in front of,” a preposition introducing a spatial location.

16 tn See the note on “Jeremiah” at the beginning of v. 17.

17 tn Heb “today I have made you.” The Hebrew verb form here emphasizes the certainty of a yet future act; the LORD is promising to protect Jeremiah from any future attacks which may result from his faithfully carrying out his commission. See a similar use of the same Hebrew verb tense in v. 9, and see the translator's note there.

18 tn Heb “I make you a fortified city...against all the land...” The words “as strong as” and “so you will be able to stand against all the people of...” are given to clarify the meaning of the metaphor.

The Lord Recalls Israel's Earlier Faithfulness

2:1 The LORD spoke to me. He said: 2:2 “Go and declare in the hearing of the people of Jerusalem:¹ ‘This is what the LORD says: “I have fond memories of you,² how devoted you were to me in your early years.³ I remember how you loved me like a new bride; you followed me through the wilderness, through a land that had never been planted. 2:3 Israel was set apart to the LORD; they were like the first fruits of a harvest to him.⁴ All who tried to devour them were punished; disaster came upon them,” says the LORD.”

The Lord Reminds Them of the Unfaithfulness of Their Ancestors

2:4 Now listen to what the Lord has to say, you descendants⁵ of Jacob, all you family groups from the nation⁶ of Israel.

2:5 This is what the Lord says: “What fault could your ancestors⁷ have possibly found in me that they strayed so far from me?⁸ They paid allegiance to⁹ worthless idols, and so became worthless to me.¹⁰”

¹ **map** For location see Map5-B1; Map6-F3; Map7-E2; Map8-F2; Map10-B3; JP1-F4; JP2-F4; JP3-F4; JP4-F4.

² **tn** *Heb* “I remember to/for you.”

³ **tn** *Heb* “the loyal love of your youth.”

sn The Hebrew word translated “how devoted you were” (*khshed*, *khshed*) refers metaphorically to the devotion of a new bride to her husband. In typical Hebraic fashion, contemporary Israel is identified with early Israel after she first entered into covenant with (= married) the LORD. The reference to her earlier devotion is not absolute but relative. Compared to her unfaithfulness in worshipping other gods after she got into the land, the murmuring and complaining in the wilderness are ignored.

⁴ **sn** *Heb* “the first fruits of his harvest.” Many commentators see the figure here as having theological significance for the calling of the Gentiles. It is likely, however, that in this context the metaphor – here rendered as a simile – is intended to bring out the special relationship and inviolability that Israel had with God. As the first fruits were the special possession of the LORD, to be eaten only by the priests and off limits to the common people, so Israel was God’s special possession and was not to be “eaten” by the nations.

⁵ **tn** *Heb* “house.”

⁶ **tn** *Heb* “house.”

⁷ **tn** *Heb* “fathers.”

⁸ **tn** Or “I did not wrong your ancestors in any way. Yet they went far astray from me.” Both translations are an attempt to render the rhetorical question which demands a negative answer.

⁹ **tn** *Heb* “They went/followed after.” This idiom is found most often in Deuteronomy or covenant contexts. It refers to loyalty to God and to his covenant or his commandments (e.g., 1 Kgs 14:8; 2 Chr 34:31) with the metaphor of a path or way underlying it (e.g., Deut 11:28; 28:14). To “follow other gods” was to abandon this way and this loyalty (i.e., to “abandon” or “forget” God, Judg 2:12; Hos 2:13) and to follow the customs or religious traditions of the pagan nations (e.g., 2 Kgs 17:15). The classic text on “following” God or another god is 1 Kgs 18:18, 21 where Elijah taunts the people with “halting between two opinions” whether the LORD was the true God or Baal was. The idiom is often found followed by “to serve and to worship” or “they served and worshipped” such and such a god or entity (see, e.g., Jer 8:2; 11:10; 13:10; 16:11; 25:6; 35:15).

¹⁰ **tn** The words “to me” are not in the Hebrew text but are

2:6 They did not ask: ‘Where is the LORD who delivered us out of Egypt, who brought us through the wilderness, through a land of desert sands and rift valleys, through a land of drought and deep darkness,¹¹

through a land in which no one travels, and where no one lives?’¹²

2:7 I brought you¹³ into a fertile land so you could enjoy¹⁴ its fruits and its rich bounty.

But when you entered my land, you defiled it;¹⁵ you made the land I call my own¹⁶ loathsome to me.

2:8 Your priests¹⁷ did not ask, ‘Where is the LORD?’¹⁸

Those responsible for teaching my law¹⁹ did not really know me.²⁰

Your rulers rebelled against me.

implicit from the context: *Heb* “they followed after the worthless thing/things and became worthless.” There is an obvious wordplay on the verb “became worthless” and the noun “worthless thing,” which is probably to be understood collectively and to refer to idols as it does in Jer 8:19; 10:8; 14:22; Jonah 2:8.

¹¹ **tn** This word is erroneously rendered “shadow of death” in most older English versions; that translation is based on a faulty etymology. Contextual studies and comparative Semitic linguistics have demonstrated that the word is merely another word for darkness. It is confined to poetic texts and often carries connotations of danger and distress. It is associated in poetic texts with the darkness of a prison (Ps 107:10, 14), a mine (Job 28:3), and a ravine (Ps 23:4). Here it is associated with the darkness of the wasteland and ravines of the Sinai desert.

¹² **sn** The context suggests that the question is related to a lament where the people turn to God in their troubles, asking him for help and reminding him of his past benefactions. See for example Isa 63:11-19 and Ps 44. It is an implicit prayer for his intervention, cf. 2 Kgs 2:14.

¹³ **sn** Note how contemporary Israel is again identified with her early ancestors. See the study note on 2:2.

¹⁴ **tn** *Heb* “eat.”

¹⁵ **sn** I.e., made it ceremonially unclean. See Lev 18:19-30; Num 35:34; Deut 21:23.

¹⁶ **tn** *Heb* “my inheritance.” Or “the land [i.e., inheritance] I gave you,” reading the pronoun as indicating source rather than possession. The parallelism and the common use in Jeremiah of the term to refer to the land or people as the LORD’s (e.g., 12:7, 8, 9; 16:18; 50:11) make the possessive use more likely here.

sn The land belonged to the LORD; it was given to the Israelites in trust (or usufruct) as their heritage. See Lev 25:23.

¹⁷ **tn** *Heb* “The priests...the ones who grasp my law...the shepherds...the prophets...they...”

¹⁸ **sn** See the study note on 2:6.

¹⁹ **tn** *Heb* “those who handle my law.”

sn The reference is likely to the priests and Levites who were responsible for teaching the law (so Jer 18:18; cf. Deut 33:10). According to Jer 8:8 it could possibly refer to the scribes who copied the law.

²⁰ **tn** Or “were not committed to me.” The Hebrew verb rendered “know” refers to more than mere intellectual knowledge. It carries also the ideas of emotional and volitional commitment as well intimacy. See for example its use in contexts like Hos 4:1; 6:6.

Your prophets prophesied in the name of the god Baal.¹
They all worshiped idols that could not help them.²

The Lord Charges Contemporary Israel with Spiritual Adultery

2:9 “So, once more I will state my case³ against you,” says the LORD.
“I will also state it against your children and grandchildren.⁴
2:10 Go west⁵ across the sea to the coasts of Cyprus⁶ and see.
Send someone east to Kedar⁷ and have them look carefully.
See if such a thing as this has ever happened:
2:11 Has a nation ever changed its gods (even though they are not really gods at all)?
But my people have exchanged me, their glorious God,⁸
for a god that cannot help them at all!⁹

2:12 Be amazed at this, O heavens!¹⁰
Be shocked and utterly dumbfounded,” says the LORD.

2:13 “Do so because my people have committed a double wrong:
they have rejected me,
the fountain of life-giving water,¹¹
and they have dug cisterns for themselves,
cracked cisterns which cannot even hold water.”

Israel's Reliance on Foreign Alliances (not on God)

2:14 “Israel is not a slave, is he?
He was not born into slavery, was he?¹²
If not, why then is he being carried off?
2:15 Like lions his enemies roar victoriously over him;
they raise their voices in triumph.¹³
They have laid his land waste;
his cities have been burned down and deserted.¹⁴
2:16 Even the soldiers¹⁵ from Memphis and Tahpanhes
have cracked your skulls, people of Israel.¹⁶

¹ tn Heb “by Baal.”

² tn Heb “and they followed after those things [the word is plural] which do not profit.” The poetic structure of the verse, four lines in which a distinct subject appears at the beginning followed by a fifth line beginning with a prepositional phrase and no distinct subject, argues that this line is climactic and refers to all four classes enumerated in the preceding lines. See W. L. Holladay, *Jeremiah* (Hermeneia), 1:88-89. There may be a play or pun in the Hebrew text on the name for the god Baal (בעל, *ba'al*) and the verb “cannot help you” (Heb “do not profit”) which is spelled יָאֵל (*ya'al*).

³ tn Or “bring charges against you.”

⁴ sn The language used here is that of the law court. In international political contexts it was the language of a great king charging his subject with breach of covenant. See for examples in earlier prophets, Isa 1:2-20; Mic 6:1-8.

⁵ tn The words “your children and” are supplied in the translation to bring out the idea of corporate solidarity implicit in the passage.

⁶ sn The passage reflects the Hebrew concept of corporate solidarity: The actions of parents had consequences for their children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren. Compare the usage in the ten commandments, Deut 5:10, and note the execution of the children of Dathan and Abiram, Deut 11:6, and of Achan, Josh 7:24-25.

⁷ tn Heb “For go west.”

⁸ tn Heb “pass over to the coasts of Kittim.” The words “west across the sea” in this line and “east of” in the next are implicit in the text and are supplied in the translation to give geographical orientation.

⁹ sn The Hebrew term translated *Cyprus* (“Kittim”) originally referred to the island of Cyprus but later was used for the lands in the west, including Macedonia (1 Macc 1:1; 8:5) and Rome (Dan 11:30). It is used here as part of a figure called merism to denote the lands in the west as opposed to Kedar which was in the east. The figure includes polar opposites to indicate totality, i.e., everywhere from west to east.

¹⁰ sn *Kedar* is the home of the bedouin tribes in the Syro-Arabian desert. See Gen 25:18 and Jer 49:38. See also the previous note for the significance of the reference here.

¹¹ tn Heb “have exchanged their glory [i.e., the God in whom they glory].” This is a case of a figure of speech where the attribute of a person or thing is put for the person or thing. Compare the common phrase in Isaiah, the Holy One of Israel, obviously referring to the LORD, the God of Israel.

¹² tn Heb “what cannot profit.” The verb is singular and the allusion is likely to Baal. See the translator’s note on 2:8 for the likely pun or wordplay.

¹³ sn In earlier literature the heavens (and the earth) were called on to witness Israel’s commitment to the covenant (Deut 30:12) and were called to serve as witnesses to Israel’s fidelity or infidelity to it (Isa 1:2; Mic 6:1).

¹⁴ tn It is difficult to decide whether to translate “fresh, running water” which the Hebrew term for “living water” often refers to (e.g., Gen 26:19; Lev 14:5), or “life-giving water” which the idiom “fountain of life” as source of life and vitality often refers to (e.g., Ps 36:9; Prov 13:14; 14:27). The contrast with cisterns, which collected and held rain water, suggests “fresh, running water,” but the reality underlying the metaphor contrasts the LORD, the source of life, health, and vitality, with useless idols that cannot do anything.

¹⁵ tn Heb “Is Israel a slave? Or is he a house born slave?” The questions are rhetorical, expecting a negative answer.

¹⁶ sn The LORD is here contrasting Israel’s lofty status as the LORD’s bride and special possession, which he had earlier reminded her of (see 2:2-3), with her current status of servitude to Egypt and Assyria.

¹⁷ tn Heb “Lions shout over him, they give out [raise] their voices.”

¹⁸ sn The reference to *lions* is here a metaphor for the Assyrians (and later the Babylonians, see Jer 50:17). The statement about lions roaring over their prey implies that the prey has been vanquished.

¹⁹ tn Heb “without inhabitant.”

²⁰ tn Heb “the sons of...”

²¹ tc The translation follows the reading of the Syriac version. The Hebrew text reads “have grazed [= “shaved” ?] your skulls [as a sign of disgracing them].” Note that the reference shifts from third person, “him,” to second person, “you,” which is common in Hebrew style. The words “people of Israel” have been supplied in the translation to help identify the referent and ease the switch. The reading presupposes יִרְעוּ (*yir'ukh*) a Qal imperfect from the verb רָעַע (*ra'a*); see BDB 949 s.v. II רָעַע Qal.1 and compare usage in Jer 15:2; Ps 2:9). The MT reads יִרְעוּ (*yir'ukh*), a Qal imperfect from the root רָעַע (*ra'ah*); see BDB 945 s.v. I רָעַע Qal.2.b for usage). The use of the verb in the MT is unparalleled in the sense suggested, but the resultant figure, if “graze” can mean “shave,” is paralleled in Jer 47:5; 48:37; Isa 7:20. The reading of the variant is accepted on the basis that it is the rarer root; the scribe would have been more familiar with the root “graze” even though it is unparalleled in the figurative nuance implied here. The

2:17 You have brought all this on yourself, Israel,¹
 by deserting the LORD your God when he
 was leading you along the right path.²
 2:18 What good will it do you³ then⁴ to go
 down to Egypt
 to seek help from the Egyptians?⁵
 What good will it do you⁶ to go over to
 Assyria
 to seek help from the Assyrians?⁷
 2:19 Your own wickedness will bring
 about your punishment.
 Your unfaithful acts will bring down dis-
 cipline on you.⁸
 Know, then, and realize how utterly
 harmful⁹
 it was for you to reject me, the LORD your
 God,¹⁰
 to show no respect for me,¹¹
 says the Lord God who rules over all.¹²

*The Lord Expresses His Exasperation at Judah's
 Persistent Idolatry*

2:20 “Indeed,¹³ long ago you threw off my
 authority
 and refused to be subject to me.¹⁴
 You said, ‘I will not serve you.’¹⁵
 Instead, you gave yourself to other gods
 on every high hill
 and under every green tree,
 like a prostitute sprawls out before her
 lovers.¹⁶
 2:21 I planted you in the land
 like a special vine of the very best stock.
 Why in the world have you turned into
 something like a wild vine
 that produces rotten, foul-smelling
 grapes?¹⁷

noun “head/skull” is functioning as an accusative of further specification (see GKC 372 §117.11 and compare usage in Gen 3:8), i.e., “they crack you on the skull” or “they shave you on the skull.” The verb is a prefixed form and in this context is either a preterite without *vav* (h) consecutive or an iterative imperfect denoting repeated action. Some modern English versions render the verb in the future tense, “they will break [or shave] your skull.”

¹ **tn** *Heb* “Are you not bringing this on yourself.” The question is rhetorical and expects a positive answer.

² **tn** *Heb* “at the time of leading you in the way.”

³ **tn** *Heb* “What to you to the way.”

⁴ **tn** The introductory particle *v* (עַתָּה *v^o* *attah*, “and now”) carries a logical, not temporal, connotation here (cf. BDB 274 s.v. עַתָּה 2.b).

⁵ **tn** *Heb* “to drink water from the Shihor [a branch of the Nile].” The reference is to seeking help through political alliance with Egypt as opposed to trusting in God for help. This is an extension of the figure in 2:13.

⁶ **tn** *Heb* “What to you to the way.”

⁷ **tn** *Heb* “to drink water from the River [a common designation in biblical Hebrew for the Euphrates River].” This refers to seeking help through political alliance. See the preceding note.

⁸ **tn** Or “teach you a lesson”; *Heb* “rebuke/chide you.”

⁹ **tn** *Heb* “how evil and bitter.” The reference is to the consequences of their acts. This is a figure of speech (hendiadys) where two nouns or adjectives joined by “and” introduce a main concept modified by the other noun or adjective.

¹⁰ **tn** *Heb* “to leave the LORD your God.” The change in person is intended to ease the problem of the rapid transition, which is common in Hebrew style but not in English, from third to first person between this line and the next.

¹¹ **tn** *Heb* “and no fear of me was on you.”

¹² **tn** *Heb* “the Lord Yahweh, [the God of] hosts.” For the title Lord God see the study note on 1:6. For the title “who rules over all” see the following study note. The title “the LORD who rules over all” is a way of rendering the title “Yahweh of armies.” It is an abbreviation of a longer title “Yahweh the God of armies” which occurs five times in Jeremiah (see, e.g., 44:7). The abbreviated title occurs seventy-seven times in the book of Jeremiah. On thirty-two occasions it is further qualified by the title “the God of Israel,” showing his special relation to Israel. On six occasions it is preceded by the title “Lord” (see, e.g., 46:10) and twice it is preceded by the title “the King” (see, e.g., 51:17). Both titles emphasize his sovereignty. Twice it is said that he is the maker of all things (10:16; 51:19), and once it is said that he made the earth and the people and animals on it and gives them into the control of whomever he wishes (27:4-5). On two occasions it is emphasized that he also made the heavenly elements and controls the natural elements of wind, rain, thunder, and

hail (31:35; 51:14-16). All this is consistent with usage elsewhere where the “armies” over which he has charge are identified as (1) the angels which surround his throne (Isa 6:3, 5; 1 Kgs 22:19) and which he sends to protect his servants (2 Kgs 6:17), (2) the natural forces of thunder, rain, and hail (Isa 29:6; Josh 10:11; Judg 5:4, 5) through which he sends the enemy into panic and “gums” up their chariot wheels, (3) the armies of Israel (1 Sam 17:45) which he leads into battle (Num 10:34-35; Josh 5:14, 15) and for whom he fights as a mighty warrior (Exod 15:3; Isa 42:13; Ps 24:8), and even (4) the armies of the nations which he musters against his disobedient people (Isa 13:14). This title is most commonly found in the messenger formula “Thus says...” introducing both oracles of judgment (on Israel [e.g., 9:7, 15] and on the nations [e.g. 46:19; 50:18]; and see in general 25:29-32). It emphasizes his sovereignty as the king and creator, the lord of creation and of history, and the just judge who sees and knows all (11:20; 20:12) and judges each person and nation according to their actions (Jer 32:18-19). In the first instance (in the most dominant usage) this will involve the punishment of his own people through the agency of the Babylonians (cf., e.g., 25:8-9). But it will also include the punishment of all nations, including Babylon itself (cf. Jer 25:17-26, 32-38), and will ultimately result in the restoration of his people and a new relation with them (30:8; 31:35-37).

¹³ **tn** Or “For.” The *Heb* particle *כִּי* (*ki*) here introduces the evidence that they had no respect for him.

¹⁴ **tn** *Heb* “you broke your yoke...tore off your yoke ropes.” The metaphor is that of a recalcitrant ox or heifer which has broken free from its master.

¹⁵ **tc** The MT of this verse has two examples of the old second feminine singular perfect, שָׁבַרְתִּי (*shavarti*) and נִתְקַטִּי (*nit-taqtî*), which the Masoretes mistook for first singulars leading to the proposal to read אֲבַיֵּר (*e’avor*, “I will not transgress”) for אֲבַיֵּר (*e’evod*, “I will not serve”). The latter understanding of the forms is accepted in KJV but rejected by almost all modern English versions as being less appropriate to the context than the reading accepted in the translation given here.

¹⁶ **tn** *Heb* “you sprawled as a prostitute on....” The translation reflects the meaning of the metaphor.

¹⁷ **tc** *Heb* “I planted you as a choice vine, all of it true seed. How then have you turned into a putrid thing to me, a strange [or wild] vine.” The question expresses surprise and consternation. The translation is based on a redivision of the Hebrew words סוּרֵי הַגִּפְתָּן (*sure haggefen*) into סוּרֵי גֶפֶן (*soriyah gefen*) and the recognition of a hapax legomenon סוּרֵי הַגִּפְתָּן (*soriyyah*) meaning “putrid, stinking thing.” See HALOT 707 s.v. סוּרֵי.

2:22 You can try to wash away your guilt with a strong detergent.

You can use as much soap as you want. But the stain of your guilt is still there for me to see.¹

says the Lord God.²

2:23 “How can you say, ‘I have not made myself unclean.

I have not paid allegiance to³ the gods called Baal.’

Just look at the way you have behaved in the Valley of Hinnom!⁴

Think about the things you have done there!

You are like a flighty, young female camel that rushes here and there, crisscrossing its path.⁵

2:24 You are like a wild female donkey brought up in the wilderness.

In her lust she sniffs the wind to get the scent of a male.⁶

No one can hold her back when she is in heat.

None of the males need wear themselves out chasing after her.

At mating time she is easy to find.⁷

2:25 Do not chase after other gods until your shoes wear out and your throats become dry.⁸

But you say, ‘It is useless for you to try and stop me

because I love those foreign gods⁹ and want to pursue them!’

2:26 Just as a thief has to suffer dishonor when he is caught,

so the people of Israel¹⁰ will suffer dishonor for what they have done.¹¹

So will their kings and officials, their priests and their prophets.

2:27 They say to a wooden idol,¹² ‘You are my father.’

They say to a stone image, ‘You gave birth to me.’¹³

Yes, they have turned away from me instead of turning to me.¹⁴

Yet when they are in trouble, they say, ‘Come and save us!’

2:28 But where are the gods you made for yourselves?

Let them save you when you are in trouble.

The sad fact is that¹⁵ you have as many gods

as you have towns, Judah.

2:29 “Why do you try to refute me?¹⁶ All of you have rebelled against me,”

says the LORD.

2:30 “It did no good for me to punish your people.

They did not respond to such correction. You slaughtered your prophets

like a voracious lion.”¹⁷

2:31 You people of this generation, listen to what the LORD says.

“Have I been like a wilderness to you, Israel?

Have I been like a dark and dangerous land to you?¹⁸

Why then do you¹⁹ say, ‘We are free to wander.’²⁰

We will not come to you any more?’

2:32 Does a young woman forget to put on her jewels?

Does a bride forget to put on her bridal attire?

But my people have forgotten me for more days than can even be counted.

¹ *tn Heb* “Even if you wash with natron/lye, and use much soap, your sin is a stain before me.”

² *tn Heb* “Lord Yahweh.” For an explanation of this title see the study notes on 1:6.

³ *tn Heb* “I have not gone/followed after.” See the translator’s note on 2:5 for the meaning and usage of this idiom.

⁴ *tn Heb* “Look at your way in the valley.” The valley is an obvious reference to the Valley of Hinnom where Baal and Molech were worshiped and child sacrifice was practiced.

⁵ *sn* The metaphor is intended to depict Israel’s lack of clear direction and purpose without the LORD’s control.

⁶ *tn* The words “to get the scent of a male” are implicit and are supplied in the translation for clarification.

⁷ *sn* The metaphor is intended to depict Israel’s irrepresible desire to worship other gods.

⁸ *tn Heb* “Refrain your feet from being bare and your throat from being dry/thirsty.”

⁹ *tn Heb* “It is useless! No!” For this idiom, see Jer 18:12; NEB “No; I am desperate.”

¹⁰ *tn Heb* “house of Israel.”

¹¹ *tn* The words “for what they have done” are implicit in the comparison and are supplied in the translation for clarification.

¹² *tn Heb* “wood...stone...”

¹³ *sn* The reference to wood and stone is, of course, a pejorative reference to idols made by human hands. See the next verse where reference is made to “the gods you have made.”

¹⁴ *tn Heb* “they have turned [their] backs to me, not [their] faces.”

¹⁵ *tn* This is an attempt to render the Hebrew particle כִּי (*ki*, “for, indeed”) contextually.

¹⁶ *sn* This is still part of the LORD’s case against Israel. See 2:9 for the use of the same Hebrew verb. The LORD here denies their counter claims that they do not deserve to be punished.

¹⁷ *tn Heb* “Your sword devoured your prophets like a destroying lion.” However, the reference to the sword in this and many similar idioms is merely idiomatic for death by violent means.

¹⁸ *tn Heb* “a land of the darkness of Yah [= thick or deep darkness].” The idea of danger is an added connotation of the word in this context.

¹⁹ *tn Heb* “my people.”

²⁰ *tn* Or more freely, “free to do as we please.” There is some debate about the meaning of this verb (רוד, *rud*) because its usage is rare and its meaning is debated in the few passages where it does occur. The key to its meaning may rest in the emended text (reading וְרָדִיתִי [*v^hraditi*] for וְרָדִיתִי [*v^hyaraditi*]) in Judg 11:37 where it refers to the roaming of Jephthah’s daughter on the mountains of Israel.

2:33 “My, how good you have become at chasing after your lovers!¹ Why, you could even teach prostitutes a thing or two!²

2:34 Even your clothes are stained with the lifeblood of the poor who had not done anything wrong; you did not catch them breaking into your homes.³

Yet, in spite of all these things you have done,⁴

2:35 you say, ‘I have not done anything wrong, so the LORD cannot really be angry with me any more.’⁵

But, watch out!⁶ I will bring down judgment on you because you say, ‘I have not committed any sin.’⁷

2:36 Why do you constantly go about changing your political allegiances?⁸

You will get no help from Egypt just as you got no help from Assyria.⁹

2:37 Moreover, you will come away from Egypt

with your hands covering your faces in sorrow and shame⁸

because the LORD will not allow your reliance on them to be successful and you will not gain any help from them.⁹

3:1 “If a man divorces his wife and she leaves him and becomes another man’s wife, he may not take her back again.¹⁰

¹ **tn** Heb “How good you have made your ways to seek love.”

² **tn** Heb “so that even the wicked women you teach your ways.”

³ **tn** The words “for example” are implicit and are supplied in the translation for clarification. This is only one example of why their death was not legitimate.

sn Killing a thief caught in the act of breaking and entering into a person’s home was pardonable under the law of Moses, cf. Exod 22:2.

⁴ **tn** KJV and ASV read this line with 2:34. The ASV makes little sense and the KJV again erroneously reads the archaic second person feminine singular perfect as first person common singular. All the modern English versions and commentaries take this line with 2:35.

⁵ **tn** This is an attempt to render the Hebrew particle often translated “behold” (הִנֵּה, *hinneh*) in a meaningful way in this context. See further the translator’s note on the word “really” in 1:6.

⁶ **tn** Heb “changing your way.” The translation follows the identification of the Hebrew verb here as a defective writing of a form (תִּזְלִי [*tez’li*]) instead of תִּזְלִי [*te’z’li*] from a verb meaning “go/go about” (אָזַל [*azal*]; cf. BDB 23 s.v. אָזַל). Most modern English versions, commentaries, and lexicons read it from a root meaning “to treat cheaply [or lightly]” (תִּזְלִי [*tazelli*] from the root זָלַל [*zalal*]; cf. HALOT 261 s.v. זָלַל); hence, “Why do you consider it such a small matter to...”

⁷ **tn** Heb “You will be ashamed/disappointed by Egypt, just as you were ashamed/ disappointed by Assyria.”

⁸ **tn** Heb “with your hands on your head.” For the picture here see 2 Sam 13:19.

⁹ **tn** Heb “The LORD has rejected those you trust in; you will not prosper by/from them.”

¹⁰ **tn** Heb “May he go back to her again?” The question is

Doing that would utterly defile the land.¹¹

But you, Israel, have given yourself as a prostitute to many gods.¹²

So what makes you think you can return to me?¹³

says the LORD.

3:2 “Look up at the hilltops and consider this.¹⁴

You have had sex with other gods on every one of them.¹⁵

You waited for those gods like a thief lying in wait in the desert.¹⁶

You defiled the land by your wicked prostitution to other gods.¹⁷

3:3 That is why the rains have been withheld,

and the spring rains have not come.

Yet in spite of this you are obstinate as a prostitute.¹⁸

You refuse to be ashamed of what you have done.

3:4 Even now you say to me, ‘You are my father!¹⁹

You have been my faithful companion ever since I was young.

3:5 You will not always be angry with me, will you?

You will not be mad at me forever, will you?²⁰

rhetorical and expects a negative answer.

sn For the legal background for the illustration that is used here see Deut 24:1-4.

¹¹ **tn** Heb “Would the land not be utterly defiled?” The stative is here rendered actively to connect better with the preceding. The question is rhetorical and expects a positive answer.

¹² **tn** Heb “But you have played the prostitute with many lovers.”

¹³ **tn** Heb “Returning to me.” The form is the bare infinitive which the KJV and ASV have interpreted as an imperative “Yet, return to me!” However, it is more likely that a question is intended, expressing surprise in the light of the law alluded to and the facts cited. For the use of the infinitive absolute in the place of a finite verb, cf. GKC 346 §113.ee. For the introduction of a question without a question marker, cf. GKC 473 §150.a.

¹⁴ **tn** Heb “and see.”

¹⁵ **tn** Heb “Where have you not been ravished?” The rhetorical question expects the answer “nowhere,” which suggests she has engaged in the worship of pagan gods on every one of the hilltops.

¹⁶ **tn** Heb “You sat for them [the lovers, i.e., the foreign gods] beside the road like an Arab in the desert.”

¹⁷ **tn** Heb “by your prostitution and your wickedness.” This is probably an example of hendiadys where, when two nouns are joined by “and,” one expresses the main idea and the other qualifies it.

¹⁸ **tn** Heb “you have the forehead of a prostitute.”

¹⁹ **tn** Heb “Have you not just now called out to me, [‘you are] my father?’” The rhetorical question expects a positive answer.

²⁰ **tn** Heb “Will he keep angry forever? Will he maintain [it] to the end?” The questions are rhetorical and expect a negative answer. The change to direct address in the English translation is intended to ease the problem of the rapid transition, common in Hebrew style (but not in English), from second person direct address in the preceding lines to third person indirect address in these two lines. See GKC 462 §144.p.

That is what you say,
but you continually do all the evil that
you can.”¹

3:6 When Josiah was king of Judah, the LORD said to me, “Jeremiah, you have no doubt seen what wayward Israel has done.² You have seen how she went up to every high hill and under every green tree to give herself like a prostitute to other gods.³ **3:7** Yet even after she had done all that, I thought that she might come back to me.⁴ But she did not. Her sister, unfaithful Judah, saw what she did.⁵ **3:8** She also saw⁶ that I gave wayward Israel her divorce papers and sent her away because of her adulterous worship of other gods.⁷ Even after her unfaithful sister Judah had seen this,⁸ she still was not afraid, and she too went and gave herself like a prostitute to other gods.⁹ **3:9** Because she took her prostitution so lightly, she defiled the land¹⁰ through her adulterous worship of gods made of wood and stone.¹¹ **3:10** In spite of all this,¹²

¹ **tn** Heb “You do the evil and you are able.” This is an example of hendiadys, meaning “You do all the evil that you are able to do.”

² **tn** “Have you seen...” The question is rhetorical and expects a positive answer.

³ **tn** Heb “she played the prostitute there.” This is a metaphor for Israel’s worship; she gave herself to the worship of other gods like a prostitute gives herself to her lovers. There seems no clear way to completely spell out the metaphor in the translation.

⁴ **tn** Or “I said to her, ‘Come back to me!’” The verb אָמַר (*amar*) usually means “to say,” but here it means “to think,” of an assumption that turns out to be wrong (so HALOT 66.4 s.v. אָמַר; cf. Gen 44:28; Jer 3:19; Pss 82:6; 139:11; Job 29:18; Ruth 4:4; Lam 3:18).

sn Open theists suggest that passages such as this indicate God has limited foreknowledge; however, more traditional theologians view this passage as an extended metaphor in which God presents himself as a deserted husband, hoping against hope that his adulterous wife might return to him. The point of the metaphor is not to make an assertion about God’s foreknowledge, but to develop the theme of God’s heartbreak due to Israel’s unrepentance.

⁵ **tn** The words “what she did” are not in the text but are implicit from the context and are supplied in the translation for clarification.

⁶ **tc** Heb “she [‘her sister, unfaithful Judah’ from the preceding verse] saw” with one Hebrew MS, some Greek MSS, and the Syriac version. The MT reads “I saw” which may be a case of attraction to the verb at the beginning of the previous verse.

⁷ **tn** Heb “because she committed adultery.” The translation is intended to spell out the significance of the metaphor.

⁸ **tn** The words “Even after her unfaithful sister, Judah, had seen this” are not in the Hebrew text but are implicit in the connection and are supplied for clarification.

⁹ **tn** Heb “she played the prostitute there.” This is a metaphor for Israel’s worship; she gave herself to the worship of other gods like a prostitute gives herself to her lovers. There seems no clear way to completely spell out the metaphor in the translation.

¹⁰ **tc** The translation reads the form as a causative (Hiphil, תַּהֲנֵף, *tahanef*) with some of the versions in place of the simple stative (Qal, תָּהַנֵּף, *tekhenaf*) in the MT.

¹¹ **tn** Heb “because of the lightness of her prostitution, she defiled the land and committed adultery with stone and wood.”

¹² **tn** Heb “And even in all this.”

Israel’s sister, unfaithful Judah, has not turned back to me with any sincerity; she has only pretended to do so,”¹³ says the LORD. **3:11** Then the LORD said to me, “Under the circumstances, wayward Israel could even be considered less guilty than unfaithful Judah.¹⁴

The Lord Calls on Israel and Judah to Repent

3:12 “Go and shout this message to my people in the countries in the north.¹⁵ Tell them,

‘Come back to me, wayward Israel,’ says the LORD.

‘I will not continue to look on you with displeasure.¹⁶

For I am merciful,’ says the LORD.

‘I will not be angry with you forever.

3:13 However, you must confess that you have done wrong,¹⁷

and that you have rebelled against the LORD your God.

You must confess¹⁸ that you have given yourself to¹⁹ foreign gods under every green tree,

and have not obeyed my commands,’ says the LORD.

3:14 “Come back to me, my wayward sons,” says the LORD, “for I am your true master.²⁰ If you do,²¹ I will take one of you from each town and two of you from each family group, and I will bring you back to Zion. **3:15** I will give you leaders²² who will be faithful

¹³ **tn** Heb “has not turned back to me with all her heart but only in falsehood.”

¹⁴ **tn** Heb “Wayward Israel has proven herself to be more righteous than unfaithful Judah.”

sn A comparison is drawn here between the greater culpability of Judah, who has had the advantage of seeing how God disciplined her sister nation for having sinned and yet ignored the warning and committed the same sin, and the culpability of Israel who had no such advantage.

¹⁵ **tn** Heb “Go and proclaim these words to the north.” The translation assumes that the message is directed toward the exiles of northern Israel who have been scattered in the provinces of Assyria to the north.

¹⁶ **tn** Heb “I will not cause my face to fall on you.”

¹⁷ **tn** Heb “Only acknowledge your iniquity.”

¹⁸ **tn** The words “You must confess” are repeated to convey the connection. The Hebrew text has an introductory “that” in front of the second line and a coordinative “and” in front of the next two lines.

¹⁹ **tc** MT reads דְּרַחֲמַיִךְ (*d^erakhayikh*, “your ways”), but the BHS editors suggest דּוּדַיִךְ (*dodayikh*, “your breasts”) as an example of orthographic confusion. While the proposal makes sense, it remains a conjectural emendation since it is not supported by any actual manuscripts or ancient versions.

tn Heb “scattered your ways with foreign [gods]” or “spread out your breasts to strangers.”

²⁰ **tn** Or “I am your true husband.”

sn There is a wordplay between the term “true master” and the name of the pagan god Baal. The pronoun “I” is emphatic, creating a contrast between the LORD as Israel’s true master/husband versus Baal as Israel’s illegitimate lover/master. See 2:23-25.

²¹ **tn** The words, “If you do” are not in the text but are implicit in the connection of the Hebrew verb with the preceding.

²² **tn** Heb “shepherds.”

to me.¹ They will lead you with knowledge and insight. **3:16** In those days, your population will greatly increase² in the land. At that time,” says the LORD, “people will no longer talk about having the ark³ that contains the LORD’s covenant with us.⁴ They will not call it to mind, remember it, or miss it. No, that will not be done any more!⁵ **3:17** At that time the city of Jerusalem⁶ will be called the LORD’s throne. All nations will gather there in Jerusalem to honor the LORD’s name.⁷ They will no longer follow the stubborn inclinations of their own evil hearts.⁸ **3:18** At that time⁹ the nation of Judah and the nation of Israel will be reunited.¹⁰ Together they will come back from a land in the north to the land that I gave to your ancestors as a permanent possession.”¹¹

3:19 “I thought to myself¹²
‘Oh what a joy it would be for me to treat
you like a son!¹³
What a joy it would be for me to give¹⁴
you a pleasant land,
the most beautiful piece of property there
is in all the world!’¹⁵
I thought you would call me, ‘Father’¹⁶
and would never cease being loyal to
me.¹⁷
3:20 But, you have been unfaithful to me,
nation of Israel,¹⁸

like an unfaithful wife who has left her
husband,”¹⁹
says the LORD.
3:21 “A noise is heard on the hilltops.
It is the sound of the people of Israel cry-
ing and pleading to their gods.
Indeed they have followed sinful ways,²⁰
they have forgotten to be true to the LORD
their God.²¹
3:22 Come back to me, you wayward
people.
I want to cure your waywardness.²²
Say,²³ ‘Here we are. We come to you
because you are the LORD our God.
3:23 We know our noisy worship of false
gods
on the hills and mountains did not help us.²⁴
We know that the LORD our God
is the only one who can deliver Israel.²⁵
3:24 From earliest times our worship of
that shameful god, Baal,
has taken away²⁶ all that our ancestors²⁷
worked for.
It has taken away our flocks and our
herds,
and even our sons and daughters.

¹⁹ **tn** *Heb* “a wife unfaithful from her husband.”

²⁰ **tn** *Heb* “A sound is heard on the hilltops, the weeping of the supplication of the children of Israel because [or indeed] they have perverted their way.” At issue here is whether the supplication is made to Yahweh in repentance because of what they have done or whether it is supplication to the pagan gods which is evidence of their perverted ways. The reference in this verse to the hilltops where idolatry was practiced according to 3:2 and the reference to Israel’s unfaithfulness in the preceding verse make the latter more likely. For the asseverative use of the Hebrew particle (here rendered “indeed”) where the particle retains some of the explicative nuance; cf. BDB 472-73 s.v. *וַיִּ* 1.e and 3.c.

²¹ **tn** *Heb* “have forgotten the LORD their God,” but in the view of the parallelism and the context, the word “forget” (like “know” and “remember”) involves more than mere intellectual activity.

²² **tn** Or “I will forgive your apostasies.” *Heb* “I will [or want to] heal your apostasies.” For the use of the verb “heal” (*רָפָא*, *rafa*) to refer to spiritual healing and forgiveness see Hos 14:4.

²³ **tn** Or “They say.” There is an obvious ellipsis of a verb of saying here since the preceding words are those of the LORD and the following are those of the people. However, there is debate about whether these are the response of the people to the LORD’s invitation, a response which is said to be inadequate according to the continuation in 4:1-4, or whether these are the LORD’s model for Israel’s confession of repentance to which he adds further instructions about the proper heart attitude that should accompany it in 4:1-4. The former implies a dialogue with an unmarked twofold shift in speaker between 3:22b-25 and 4:1-4:4 while the latter assumes the same main speaker throughout with an unmarked instruction only in 3:22b-25. This disrupts the flow of the passage less and appears more likely.

²⁴ **tn** *Heb* “Truly in vain from the hills the noise/commotion [and from] the mountains.” The syntax of the Hebrew sentence is very elliptical here.

²⁵ **tn** *Heb* “Truly in the LORD our God is deliverance for Israel.”

²⁶ **tn** *Heb* “From our youth the shameful thing has eaten up...” The shameful thing is specifically identified as Baal in Jer 11:13. Compare also the shift in certain names such as Ishbaal (“man of Baal”) to Ishbosheth (“man of shame”).

²⁷ **tn** *Heb* “fathers” (also in v. 25).

¹ **tn** *Heb* “after/according to my [own] heart.”

² **tn** *Heb* “you will become numerous and fruitful.”

³ **tn** Or “chest.”

⁴ **tn** *Heb* “the ark of the covenant.” It is called this because it contained the tables of the law which in abbreviated form constituted their covenant obligations to the LORD, cf. Exod 31:18; 32:15; 34:29.

⁵ **tn** Or “Nor will another one be made”; *Heb* “one will not do/make [it?] again.”

⁶ **map** For location see Map5-B1; Map6-F3; Map7-E2; Map8-F2; Map10-B3; JP1-F4; JP2-F4; JP3-F4; JP4-F4.

⁷ **tn** *Heb* “will gather to the name of the LORD.”

⁸ **tn** *Heb* “the stubbornness of their evil hearts.”

⁹ **tn** *Heb* “In those days.”

¹⁰ **tn** *Heb* “the house of Judah will walk together with the house of Israel.”

¹¹ **tn** *Heb* “the land that I gave your [fore]fathers as an inheritance.”

¹² **tn** *Heb* “I, myself, said.” See note on “I thought that she might come back to me” in 3:7.

¹³ **tn** *Heb* “How I would place you among the sons.” Israel appears to be addressed here contextually as the LORD’s wife (see the next verse). The pronouns of address in the first two lines are second feminine singular as are the readings of the two verbs preferred by the Masoretes (the *Qere* readings) in the third and fourth lines. The verbs that are written in the text in the third and fourth lines (the *Kethib* readings) are second masculine plural as is the verb describing Israel’s treachery in the next verse.

¹⁴ **tn** The imagery here appears to be that of treating the wife as an equal heir with the sons and of giving her the best piece of property.

¹⁵ **tn** The words “What a joy it would be for me to” are not in the Hebrew text but are implied in the parallel structure.

¹⁶ **tn** *Heb* “the most beautiful heritage among the nations.”

¹⁷ **tn** *Heb* “my father.”

¹⁸ **tn** *Heb* “turn back from [following] after me.”

¹⁹ **tn** *Heb* “house of Israel.”

3:25 Let us acknowledge¹ our shame.
Let us bear the disgrace that we deserve.²
For we have sinned against the LORD our
God,
both we and our ancestors.
From earliest times to this very day
we have not obeyed the LORD our God.³

4:1 “If you, Israel, want to come back,”
says the LORD,
“if you want to come back to me³
you must get those disgusting idols⁴ out
of my sight
and must no longer go astray.⁵
4:2 You must be truthful, honest and up-
right
when you take an oath saying, ‘As surely
as the LORD lives!’⁶
If you do,⁷ the nations will pray to be as
blessed by him as you are
and will make him the object of their
boasting.”⁸
4:3 Yes,⁹ the LORD has this to say
to the people of Judah and Jerusalem:
“Like a farmer breaking up hard un-
plowed ground,
you must break your rebellious will and
make a new beginning;
just as a farmer must clear away thorns
lest the seed is wasted,
you must get rid of the sin that is ruining
your lives.¹⁰
4:4 Just as ritual circumcision cuts away
the foreskin
as an external symbol of dedicated cov-
enant commitment,
you must genuinely dedicate yourselves
to the LORD

¹ tn Heb “Let us lie down in....”

² tn Heb “Let us be covered with disgrace.”

³ tn Or “If you, Israel, want to turn [away from your shameful ways (that described in 3:23-25)]...then you must turn back to me.” Or perhaps, “Israel, you must turn back...Yes, you must turn back to me.”

⁴ tn Heb “disgusting things.”

⁵ tn Or possibly, “If you get those disgusting idols out of my sight, you will not need to flee.” This is less probable because the normal meaning of the last verb is “to wander,” “to stray.”

⁶ tn Heb “If you [= you must, see the translator’s note on the word “do” later in this verse] swear/take an oath, ‘As the LORD lives,’ in truth, justice, and righteousness...”

⁷ tn 4:1-2a consists of a number of “if” clauses, two of which are formally introduced by the Hebrew particle **אם** (*im*) while the others are introduced by the conjunction “and,” followed by a conjunction (“and” = “then”) with a perfect in 4:2b which introduces the consequence. The translation “You must... If you do,” was chosen to avoid a long and complicated sentence.

⁸ tn Heb “bless themselves in him and make their boasts in him.”

⁹ tn The Hebrew particle is obviously asseverative here since a causal connection appears to make little sense.

¹⁰ tn Heb “Plow up your unplowed ground and do not sow among the thorns.” The translation is an attempt to bring out the force of a metaphor. The idea seems to be that they are to plow over the thorns and make the ground ready for the seeds which will produce a new crop where none had been produced before.

and get rid of everything that hinders
your commitment to me,¹¹
people of Judah and inhabitants of Jeru-
salem.

If you do not,¹² my anger will blaze up
like a flaming fire against you
that no one will be able to extinguish.
That will happen because of the evil you
have done.”

Warning of Coming Judgment

4:5 The LORD said,¹³

“Announce¹⁴ this in Judah and proclaim
it in Jerusalem:¹⁵

“Sound the trumpet¹⁶ throughout the
land!”

Shout out loudly,

“Gather together! Let us flee into the for-
tified cities!”

4:6 Raise a signal flag that tells people to
go to Zion.¹⁷

Run for safety! Do not delay!

For I am about to bring disaster out of the
north.

It will bring great destruction.¹⁸

4:7 Like a lion that has come up from its
lair¹⁹

the one who destroys nations has set out
from his home base.²⁰

He is coming out to lay your land waste.
Your cities will become ruins and lie un-
inhabited.

4:8 So put on sackcloth!

Mourn and wail, saying,

“The fierce anger of the LORD

¹¹ tn Heb “Circumcise yourselves to the LORD and remove the foreskin of your heart.” The translation is again an attempt to bring out the meaning of a metaphor. The mention of the “foreskin of the heart” shows that the passage is obviously metaphorical and involves heart attitude, not an external rite.

¹² tn Heb “lest.”

¹³ tn The words “The LORD said” are not in the text, but it is obvious from v. 6 and v. 9 that he is the speaker. These words are supplied in the translation for clarity.

¹⁴ tn It is unclear who the addressees of the masculine plural imperatives are here. They may be the citizens of Jerusalem and Judah who are sounding the alarm to others. However, the first person reference to the LORD in v. 6 and Jeremiah’s response in v. 10 suggest that this is a word from the LORD that he is commanded to pass on to the citizens of Jerusalem and Judah. If the imperatives are not merely rhetorical plurals they may reflect the practice referred to in Jer 23:18, 22; Amos 3:7. A similar phenomenon also occurs in Jer 5:1 and also in Isa 40:1-2. This may also be the explanation for the plural imperatives in Jer 31:6. For further discussion see the translator’s note on Jer 5:1.

¹⁵ map For location see Map5-B1; Map6-F3; Map7-E2; Map8-F2; Map10-B3; JP1-F4; JP2-F4; JP3-F4; JP4-F4.

¹⁶ tn Heb “ram’s horn,” but the modern equivalent is “trumpet” and is more readily understandable.

¹⁷ tn Heb “Raise up a signal toward Zion.”

¹⁸ tn Heb “out of the north, even great destruction.”

¹⁹ tn Heb “A lion has left its lair.” The metaphor is turned into a simile for clarification. The word translated “lair” has also been understood to refer to a hiding place. However, it appears to be cognate in meaning to the word translated “lair” in Ps 10:9; Jer 25:38, a word which also refers to the abode of the LORD in Ps 76:3.

²⁰ tn Heb “his place.”

has not turned away from us!”¹

4:9 “When this happens,”² says the LORD, “the king and his officials will lose their courage.

The priests will be struck with horror, and the prophets will be speechless in astonishment.”

4:10 In response to all this³ I said, “Ah, Lord God,⁴ you have surely allowed⁵ the people of Judah and Jerusalem⁶ to be deceived by those who say, ‘You will be safe!’⁷ But in fact a sword is already at our throats.”⁸

4:11 “At that time the people of Judah and Jerusalem⁹ will be told, ‘A scorching wind will sweep down from the hilltops in the desert on¹⁰ my dear people.¹¹ It will not be a gentle breeze for winnowing the grain and blowing away the chaff.¹²

¹ **tn** Or “wail because the fierce anger of the LORD has not turned away from us.” The translation does not need to assume a shift in speaker as the alternate reading does.

² **tn** *Heb* “In that day.”

³ **tn** The words “In response to all this” are not in the text but are supplied in the translation to clarify the connection.

⁴ **tn** *Heb* “Lord Yahweh.” The translation follows the ancient Jewish tradition of substituting the Hebrew word for God for the proper name Yahweh.

⁵ **tn** Or “You have deceived.” The Hiphil of נָשָׂא (*nasha'*, “to deceive”) is understood in a tolerative sense here: “to allow [someone] to be deceived.” *IBHS* 446 §27.5c notes that this function of the hiphil describes caused activity that is welcome to the undersubject, but unacceptable or disagreeable to a third party. Jerusalem and Judah welcomed the assurances of false prophets who deceived them. Although this was detestable to God, he allowed it.

⁶ **tn** *Heb* “this people and Jerusalem.”

⁷ **tn** *Heb* “Jerusalem, saying, ‘You will have peace’; or ‘You have deceived the people of Judah and Jerusalem, saying, ‘You will have peace.’” The words “you will be safe” are, of course, those of the false prophets (cf., Jer 6:14; 8:11; 14:13; 23:16-17). It is difficult to tell whether the charge here is meant literally as the emotional outburst of the prophet (compare for example, Jer 15:18) or whether it is to be understood as a figure of speech in which a verb of direct causation is to be understood as permissive or tolerative, i.e., God did not command the prophets to say this but allowed them to do so. While it is not beyond God to use false prophets to accomplish his will (cf., e.g., 1 Kgs 22:19-23), he elsewhere in the book of Jeremiah directly denies having sent the false prophets to say such things as this (cf., e.g., Jer 14:14-15; 23:21, 32). For examples of the use of this figure of speech, see E. W. Bullinger, *Figures of Speech*, 571, 823 and compare Ezek 20:25. The translation given attempts to resolve the issue.

⁸ **tn** *Heb* “touches the throat/soul.” For this use of the word usually translated “soul” or “life” cf. HALOT 672 s.v. נָפֶשׁ 1, 2 and compare the use in Ps 105:18.

⁹ **tn** *Heb* “this people and Jerusalem.”

¹⁰ **tn** *Heb* “A scorching wind from the hilltops in the desert toward...”

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

¹¹ **tn** *Heb* “daughter of my people.” The term “daughter of” is appositional to “my people” and is supplied in the translation as a term of sympathy and endearment. Compare the common expression “daughter of Zion.”

¹² **tn** *Heb* “not for winnowing and not for cleansing.” The

4:12 No,¹³ a wind too strong for that will come at my bidding.

Yes, even now I, myself, am calling down judgment on them.¹⁴

4:13 Look! The enemy is approaching like gathering clouds.¹⁵

The roar of his chariots is like that of a whirlwind.¹⁶

His horses move more swiftly than eagles.”

I cry out,¹⁷ “We are doomed,¹⁸ for we will be destroyed!”

4:14 “Oh people of Jerusalem, purify your hearts from evil¹⁹

so that you may yet be delivered.

How long will you continue to harbor up wicked schemes within you?

4:15 For messengers are coming, heralding disaster, from the city of Dan and from the hills of Ephraim.²⁰

4:16 They are saying,²¹

‘Announce to the surrounding nations,²²

“The enemy is coming!”²³

Proclaim this message²⁴ to Jerusalem:

words “It will not be a gentle breeze” are not in the text but are implicit in the connection. They are supplied in the translation here for clarification.

¹³ **tn** The word “No” is not in the text but is carried over from the connection with the preceding line “not for...”

¹⁴ **tn** *Heb* “will speak judgments against them.”

¹⁵ **tn** *Heb* “he is coming up like clouds.” The words “The enemy” are supplied in the translation to identify the referent and the word “gathering” is supplied to try to convey the significance of the simile, i.e., that of quantity and of an approaching storm.

¹⁶ **tn** *Heb* “his chariots [are] like a whirlwind.” The words “roar” and “sound” are supplied in the translation to clarify the significance of the simile.

¹⁷ **tn** The words “I cry out” are not in the text, but the words that follow are obviously not the LORD’s. They are either those of the people or of Jeremiah. Taking them as Jeremiah’s parallels the interjection of Jeremiah’s response in 4:10 which is formally introduced.

¹⁸ **tn** *Heb* “Woe to us!” The words “woe to” are common in funeral laments and at the beginning of oracles of judgment. In many contexts they carry the connotation of hopelessness or apprehensiveness of inevitable doom.

¹⁹ **tn** *Heb* “Oh, Jerusalem, wash your heart from evil.”

²⁰ **tn** *Heb* “For a voice declaring from Dan and making heard disaster from the hills of Ephraim.”

²¹ **tn** The words “They are saying” are not in the text but are implicit in the connection and are supplied in the translation for clarification.

²² **tn** The word “surrounding” is not in the text but is implicit and is supplied in the translation for clarification.

²³ **tc** Or “Here they come!” *Heb* “Look!” or “Behold!” Or “Announce to the surrounding nations, indeed [or yes] proclaim to Jerusalem, ‘Besiegers...’” The text is very elliptical here. Some of the modern English versions appear to be emending the text from הִנֵּה (*hinneh*, “behold”) to either הִנְנֵה (*hennah*, “these things”; so NEB), or הַזֶּה (*hazzeah*, “this”; so NIV). The solution proposed here is as old as the LXX which reads, “Behold, they have come.”

²⁴ **tn** The words, “this message,” are not in the text but are supplied in the translation to make the introduction of the quote easier.

“Those who besiege cities¹ are coming
from a distant land.
They are ready to raise the battle cry
against² the towns in Judah.”

4:17 They will surround Jerusalem³
like men guarding a field⁴
because they have rebelled against me,”
says the LORD.

4:18 “The way you have lived and the
things you have done⁵
will bring this on you.
This is the punishment you deserve, and
it will be painful indeed.⁶
The pain will be so bad it will pierce your
heart.”⁷

4:19 I said,⁸

“Oh, the feeling in the pit of my stomach!⁹
I writhe in anguish.
Oh, the pain in my heart!¹⁰
My heart pounds within me.
I cannot keep silent.
For I hear the sound of the trumpet;¹¹
the sound of the battle cry pierces my
soul!¹²

4:20 I see¹³ one destruction after another
taking place,

¹ tn Heb “Besiegers.” For the use of this verb to refer to besieging a city compare Isa 1:8.

² tn Heb “They have raised their voices against.” The verb here, a vav (h) consecutive with an imperfect, continues the nuance of the preceding participle “are coming.”

³ tn Heb “will surround her.” The antecedent is Jerusalem in the preceding verse. The referent is again made explicit in the translation to avoid any possible lack of clarity. The verb form here is a form of the verb that emphasizes the fact as being as good as done (i.e., it is a prophetic perfect).

⁴ sn There is some irony involved in the choice of the simile since the men guarding a field were there to keep thieves from getting in and stealing the crops. Here the besiegers are guarding the city to keep people from getting out.

⁵ tn Heb “Your way and your deeds.”

⁶ tn Heb “How bitter!”

⁷ tn Heb “Indeed, it reaches to your heart.” The subject must be the pain alluded to in the last half of the preceding line; the verb is masculine, agreeing with the adjective translated “painful.” The only other possible antecedent “punishment” is feminine.

⁸ tn The words “I said” are not in the text. They are used to mark the shift from the LORD’s promise of judgment to Jeremiah’s lament concerning it.

⁹ tn Heb “My bowels! My bowels!”

¹⁰ tn Heb “the walls of my heart!”

¹¹ tn Heb “ram’s horn,” but the modern equivalent is “trumpet” and is more readily understandable.

¹² tc The translation reflects a different division of the last two lines than that suggested by the Masoretes. The written text (the *Kethib*) reads “for the sound of the ram’s horn I have heard [or “you have heard,” if the form is understood as the old second feminine singular perfect] my soul” followed by “the battle cry” in the last line. The translation is based on taking “my soul” with the last line and understanding an elliptical expression “the battle cry [to] my soul.” Such an elliptical expression is in keeping with the elliptical nature of the exclamations at the beginning of the verse (cf. the literal translations of the first two lines of the verse in the notes on the words “stomach” and “heart”).

¹³ tn The words, “I see” are not in the text here or at the beginning of the third line. They are supplied in the translation to show that this is Jeremiah’s vision of what will happen as a result of the invasion announced in 4:5-9, 11-17a.

so that the whole land lies in ruins.
I see our¹⁴ tents suddenly destroyed,
their¹⁵ curtains torn down in a mere instant.¹⁶

4:21 “How long must I see the enemy’s
battle flags
and hear the military signals of their
bugles?”¹⁷

4:22 The LORD answered,¹⁸

“This will happen¹⁹ because my people
are foolish.
They do not know me.
They are like children who have no sense.²⁰
They have no understanding.
They are skilled at doing evil.
They do not know how to do good.”

4:23 “I looked at the land and saw²¹ that it
was an empty wasteland.²²
I looked up at the sky, and its light had
vanished.

4:24 I looked at the mountains and saw
that they were shaking.
All the hills were swaying back and
forth!

4:25 I looked and saw that there were no
more people,²³
and that all the birds in the sky had flown
away.

¹⁴ tn Heb “my.” This is probably not a reference to Jeremiah’s own tents since he foresees the destruction of the whole land. Jeremiah so identifies with the plight of his people that he sees the destruction of their tents as though they were his very own. It would probably lead to confusion to translate literally and it is not uncommon in Hebrew laments for the community or its representative to speak of the community as an “I.” See for example the interchange between first singular and first plural pronouns in Ps 44:4-8.

¹⁵ tn Heb “my.”

¹⁶ tn It is not altogether clear what Jeremiah intends by the use of this metaphor. In all likelihood he means that the defenses of Israel’s cities and towns have offered no more resistance than nomads’ tents. However, in light of the fact that the word “tent” came to be used generically for a person’s home (cf. 1 Kgs 8:66; 12:16), it is possible that Jeremiah is here referring to the destruction of their homes and the resultant feeling of homelessness and loss of even elementary protection. Given the lack of certainty the present translation is rather literal here.

¹⁷ tn Heb “the sound of ram’s horns,” but the modern equivalent is “bugles” and is more readily understandable.

¹⁸ tn These words are not in the text but are supplied in the translation to show clearly the shift in speaker. Jeremiah has been speaking; now the LORD answers, giving the reason for the devastation Jeremiah foresees.

¹⁹ tn Heb “For....” This gives the explanation for the destruction envisaged in 4:20 to which Jeremiah responds in 4:19, 21.

²⁰ tn Heb “They are senseless children.”

²¹ tn Heb “I looked at the land and behold....” This indicates the visionary character of Jeremiah’s description of the future condition of the land of Israel.

²² tn Heb “formless and empty.” This is a case of hendiadys (two nouns joined by “and” both describe the same thing): one noun retains its full nominal force, the other functions as an adjective. The words תהו ויבנה (tohu vavohu) allude to Gen 1:2, hyperbolically picturing a reversal of creation and return to the original precreation chaos.

²³ tn Heb “there was no man/human being.”

4:26 I looked and saw that the fruitful land had become a desert and that all of the cities had been laid in ruins.

The LORD had brought this all about because of his blazing anger.¹

4:27 All this will happen because the LORD said,²

“The whole land will be desolate; however, I will not completely destroy it.

4:28 Because of this the land will mourn and the sky above will grow black.³

For I have made my purpose known⁴ and I will not relent or turn back from carrying it out.”⁵

4:29 At the sound of the approaching horsemen and archers

the people of every town will flee.

Some of them will hide in the thickets.

Others will climb up among the rocks. All the cities will be deserted.

No one will remain in them.

4:30 And you, Zion, city doomed to destruction,⁶

you accomplish nothing⁷ by wearing a beautiful dress,⁸

decking yourself out in jewels of gold, and putting on eye shadow!⁹

You are making yourself beautiful for nothing.

Your lovers spurn you.

They want to kill you.¹⁰

4:31 In fact,¹¹ I hear a cry like that of a woman in labor,

a cry of anguish like that of a woman giving birth to her first baby.

It is the cry of Daughter Zion¹² gasping for breath,

reaching out for help,¹³ saying, “I am done in!”¹⁴

My life is ebbing away before these murderers!”

Judah is Justly Deserving of Coming Judgment

5:1 The LORD said,¹⁵

“Go up and down¹⁶ through the streets of Jerusalem.¹⁷

Look around and see for yourselves.

Search through its public squares.

See if any of you can find a single person who deals honestly and tries to be truthful.¹⁸

If you can,¹⁹ then I will not punish this city.²⁰

5:2 These people make promises in the name of the LORD.²¹

But the fact is,²² what they swear to is really a lie.”²³

5:3 LORD, I know you look for faithfulness.²⁴

But even when you punish these people, they feel no remorse.²⁵

Even when you nearly destroy them, they refuse to be corrected.

They have become as hardheaded as a rock.²⁶

4:13 for the usage of “Woe to...”

¹⁵ **tn** These words are not in the text, but since the words at the end are obviously those of the LORD, they are supplied in the translation here to mark the shift in speaker from 4:29-31 where Jeremiah is the obvious speaker.

¹⁶ **tn** It is not clear who is being addressed here. The verbs are plural so they are not addressed to Jeremiah per se. Since the passage is talking about the people of Jerusalem, it is unlikely they are addressed here except perhaps rhetorically. Some have suggested that the heavenly court is being addressed here as in Job 1:6-8; 2:1-3. It is clear from Jer 23:18, 22; Amos 3:7 that the prophets had access to this heavenly counsel through visions (cf. 1 Kgs 22:19-23), so Jeremiah could have been privy to this speech through that means. Though these are the most likely addressee, it is too presumptuous to supply such an explicit addressee without clearer indication in the text. The translation will just have to run the risk of the probable erroneous assumption by most English readers that the addressee is Jeremiah.

¹⁷ **map** For location see Map5-B1; Map6-F3; Map7-E2; Map8-F2; Map10-B3; JP1-F4; JP2-F4; JP3-F4; JP4-F4.

¹⁸ **tn** *Heb* “who does justice and seeks faithfulness.”

¹⁹ **tn** *Heb* “squares. If you can find...if there is one person... then I will...”

²⁰ **tn** *Heb* “forgive [or pardon] it.”

²¹ **tn** *Heb* “Though they say, ‘As surely as the LORD lives.’ The idea of “swear on oath” comes from the second line.

²² **tc** The translation follows many Hebrew mss and the Syriac version in reading “surely” (אֲכֵן, *’akhen*) instead of “therefore” (לָכֵן, *lakhen*) in the MT.

tn *Heb* “Surely.”

²³ **tn** *Heb* “they swear falsely.”

²⁴ **tn** *Heb* “O LORD, are your eyes not to faithfulness?” The question is rhetorical and expects a positive answer.

²⁵ **tn** Commentaries and lexicons debate the meaning of the verb here. The MT is pointed as though from a verb meaning “to writhe in anguish or contrition” (חָלַהּ [chalah]; see, e.g., BDB 297 s.v. חָלַהּ 2.c), but some commentaries and lexicons reprint the text as though from a verb meaning “to be sick,” thus “to feel pain” (חָלַהּ [khalah]; see, e.g., HALOT 304 s.v. חָלַהּ 3). The former appears more appropriate to the context.

²⁶ **tn** *Heb* “They made their faces as hard as a rock.”

¹ **tn** *Heb* “because of the LORD, because of his blazing anger.”

² **tn** *Heb* “For this is what the LORD said.”

³ **sn** The *earth* and the *heavens* are personified here and depicted in the act of mourning and wearing black clothes because of the destruction of the land of Israel.

⁴ **tn** *Heb* “has spoken and purposed.” This is an example of hendiadys where two verbs are joined by “and” but one is meant to serve as a modifier of the other.

⁵ **tn** *Heb* “will not turn back from it.”

⁶ **tn** *Heb* “And you that are doomed to destruction.” The referent is supplied from the following context and the fact that Zion/Jerusalem represents the leadership which was continually making overtures to foreign nations for help.

⁷ **tn** *Heb* “What are you accomplishing...?” The rhetorical question assumes a negative answer, made clear by the translation in the indicative.

⁸ **tn** *Heb* “clothing yourself in scarlet.”

⁹ **tn** *Heb* “enlarging your eyes with antimony.” Antimony was a black powder used by women as eyeliner to make their eyes look larger.

¹⁰ **tn** *Heb* “they seek your life.”

¹¹ **tn** The particle כִּי (*ki*) is more likely asseverative here than causal.

¹² **sn** Jerusalem is personified as a helpless young woman giving birth.

¹³ **tn** *Heb* “spreading out her hands.” The idea of asking or pleading for help is implicit in the figure.

¹⁴ **tn** *Heb* “Woe, now to me!” See the translator’s note on

They refuse to change their ways.¹

5:4 I thought, “Surely it is only the ignorant poor who act this way.²

They act like fools because they do not know what the LORD demands.³

They do not know what their God requires of them.⁴

5:5 I will go to the leaders⁵ and speak with them.

Surely they know what the LORD demands.⁶

Surely they know what their God requires of them.⁷

Yet all of them, too, have rejected his authority and refuse to submit to him.⁸

5:6 So like a lion from the thicket their enemies will kill them.

Like a wolf from the desert they will destroy them.

Like a leopard they will lie in wait outside their cities and totally destroy anyone who ventures out.⁹

For they have rebelled so much and done so many unfaithful things.¹⁰

5:7 The LORD asked,¹¹

“How can I leave you unpunished, Jerusalem?¹²

Your people¹³ have rejected me and have worshiped gods that are not gods at all.¹⁴

Even though I supplied all their needs,¹⁵ they were like an unfaithful wife to me.¹⁶

They went flocking¹⁷ to the houses of prostitutes.¹⁸

5:8 They are like lusty, well-fed¹⁹ stallions.

Each of them lusts after²⁰ his neighbor’s wife.

5:9 I will surely punish them for doing such things!²¹ says the LORD.

“I will surely bring retribution on such a nation as this!”²²

¹⁵ tn Heb “I satisfied them to the full.”

¹⁶ tn Heb “they committed adultery.” It is difficult to decide whether literal adultery with other women or spiritual adultery with other gods is meant. The word for adultery is used for both in the book of Jeremiah. For examples of its use for spiritual adultery see 3:8, 9; 9:2. For examples of its use for literal adultery see 7:9; 23:14. The context here could argue for either. The swearing by other gods and the implicit contradiction in their actions in contrast to the expected gratitude for supplying their needs argues for spiritual adultery. However, the reference to prostitution in the next line and the reference to chasing after their neighbor’s wives argues for literal adultery. The translation opts for spiritual adultery because of the contrast implicit in the concessive clause.

¹⁷ tn There is a great deal of debate about the meaning of this word. Most of the modern English versions follow the lead of lexicographers who relate this word to a noun meaning “troop” and understand it to mean “they trooped together” (cf. BDB 151 s.v. נָדַד Hithpo.2 and compare the usage in Mic 5:1 [4:14 HT]). A few of the modern English versions and commentaries follow the reading of the Greek and read a word meaning “they lodged” (reading יתגוררו [yitggorru] from גור [gur]; cf. HALOT 177 s.v. Hithpo. and compare the usage in 1 Kgs 17:20] instead of יתגודדו [yitggodadu]). W. L. Holladay (*Jeremiah* [Hermeneia], 1:180) sees a reference here to the cultic practice of cutting oneself in supplication to pagan gods (cf. BDB 151 s.v. נָדַד Hithpo.1 and compare the usage in 1 Kgs 18:28). The houses of prostitutes would then be a reference to ritual prostitutes at the pagan shrines. The translation follows BDB and the majority of modern English versions.

¹⁸ tn Heb “to a house of a prostitute.”

^{sn} This could be a reference to cultic temple prostitution connected with the pagan shrines. For allusion to this in the OT, see, e.g., Deut 23:17 and 2 Kgs 23:7.

¹⁹ tn The meanings of these two adjectives are uncertain. The translation of the first adjective is based on assuming that the word is a defectively written participle related to the noun “testicle” (a Hiphil participle מַאֲשִׁיכִים [ma’ashikhim] from a verb related to אִשְׁכַּח [’eshekh, “testicle”]; cf. Lev 21:20) and hence “having testicles” (cf. HALOT 1379 s.v. נִשְׂכָּה in- stead of the Masoretic form מַשְׁכִּים [mashkim] from a root שָׁכַח [shakhah], which is otherwise unattested in either verbal or nominal forms. The second adjective is best derived from a verb root meaning “to feed” (a Hophal participle נוֹרֵי נִימ [nuzanim, the Kethib] from a root זָנַן [zan]; cf. BDB 266 s.v. זָנַן) for which there is the cognate noun נוֹזֵן [mazan]; cf. 2 Chr 11:23). This is more likely than the derivation from a root יָזַן [yazan] reading מְיָזַנִּים [m’yuzzanim], a Pual participle with the (Qere) which is otherwise unattested in verbal or nominal forms and whose meaning is dependent only on a supposed Arabic cognate (cf. HALOT 387 s.v. יָזַן).

²⁰ tn Heb “neighs after.”

²¹ tn Heb “Should I not punish them...? Should I not bring retribution...?” The rhetorical questions have the force of strong declarations.

¹ tn Or “to repent”; Heb “to turn back.”

² tn Heb “Surely they are poor.” The translation is intended to make clear the explicit contrasts and qualifications drawn in this verse and the next.

³ tn Heb “the way of the LORD.”

⁴ tn Heb “the judgment [or ordinance] of their God.”

⁵ tn Or “people in power”; Heb “the great ones.”

⁶ tn Heb “the way of the LORD.”

⁷ tn Heb “the judgment [or ordinance] of their God.”

⁸ tn Heb “have broken the yoke and torn off the yoke ropes.” Compare Jer 2:20 and the note there.

⁹ tn Heb “So a lion from the thicket will kill them. A wolf from the desert will destroy them. A leopard will watch outside their cities. Anyone who goes out from them will be torn in pieces.” However, it is unlikely that, in the context of judgment that Jeremiah has previously been describing, literal lions are meant. The animals are metaphorical for their enemies. Compare Jer 4:7.

¹⁰ tn Heb “their rebellions are so many and their unfaithful acts so numerous.”

¹¹ tn These words are not in the text, but are supplied in the translation to make clear who is speaking.

¹² tn Heb “How can I forgive [or pardon] you.” The pronoun “you” is second feminine singular, referring to the city. See v. 1.

¹³ tn Heb “your children.”

¹⁴ tn Heb “and they have sworn [oaths] by not-gods.”

5:10 The LORD commanded the enemy,¹
 “March through the vineyards of Israel
 and Judah and ruin them.²
 But do not destroy them completely.
 Strip off their branches
 for these people do not belong to the LORD.³
5:11 For the nations of Israel and Judah⁴
 have been very unfaithful to me,”
 says the LORD.
5:12 “These people have denied what the
 LORD says.⁵
 They have said, ‘That is not so!’⁶
 No harm will come to us.
 We will not experience war and famine.⁷
5:13 The prophets will prove to be full of
 wind.⁸
 The LORD has not spoken through them.⁹
 So, let what they say happen to them.”⁹

5:14 Because of that,¹⁰ the LORD, the God who
 rules over all,¹¹ said to me,¹²

¹ **tn** These words do not appear in the Hebrew text but have been added in the translation for the sake of clarity to identify the implied addressee.

² **tn** *Heb* “through her vine rows and destroy.” No object is given but “vineyards” must be implicit. The word for “vineyards” (or “vine rows”) is a *hapax legomenon* and its derivation is debated. BDB 1004 s.v. שָׂדֵי־הַיַּיִן repoints שְׂרוּתֵיהֶן (*sharoteha*) to שְׂרוּתֵיהֶן (*shuroteha*) and relates it to a Mishnaic Hebrew and Palestinian Aramaic word meaning “row.” HALOT 1348 s.v. שָׂדֵי־הַיַּיִן also repoints שְׂרוּתֵיהֶן and relates it to a noun meaning “wall,” preferring to see the reference here to the walled terraces on which the vineyards were planted. The difference in meaning is minimal.

³ **tn** *Heb* “for they do not belong to the LORD.” In the light of the context and Jeremiah’s identification of Israel as a vine (cf., e.g., 2:21) and a vineyard (cf., e.g., 12:10), it is likely that this verse has a totally metaphorical significance. The enemy is to go through the vineyard that is Israel and Judah and destroy all those who have been unfaithful to the LORD. It is not impossible, however, that the verse has a double meaning, a literal one and a figurative one: the enemy is not only to destroy Israel and Judah’s vines but to destroy Israel and Judah, lopping off the wicked Israelites who, because of their covenant unfaithfulness, the LORD has disowned. If the verse is totally metaphorical one might translate: “Pass through my vineyard, Israel and Judah, wreaking destruction. But do not destroy all of the people. Cut down like branches those unfaithful people because they no longer belong to the LORD.”

⁴ **tn** *Heb* “the house of Israel and the house of Judah.”

⁵ **tn** *Heb* “have denied the LORD.” The words “What...says” are implicit in what follows.

⁶ **tn** Or “he will do nothing”; *Heb* “Not he [or it]!”

⁷ **tn** *Heb* “we will not see the sword and famine.”

⁸ **tn** *Heb* “will be wind.”

sn There is a wordplay on the Hebrew word translated “wind” (רוּחַ, *ruakh*) which also means “spirit.” The prophets spoke by inspiration of the Spirit of the LORD (cf., e.g., 2 Chr 20:14); hence the prophet was sometimes called “the man of the spirit” (cf. Hos 9:7). The people were claiming that the prophets were speaking lies and hence were full of wind, not the Spirit.

⁹ **tc** *Heb* “the word is not in them.” The MT has a highly unusual form here, the Piel perfect with the definite article (הַדְּבָרִים, *haddibber*). It is undoubtedly best to read with the LXX (Greek version) and one Hebrew MS the article on the noun (הַדְּבָרִים, *haddavar*).

¹⁰ **tn** *Heb* “Therefore.”

¹¹ **tn** *Heb* “The LORD God of armies.” See the translator’s note at 2:19.

sn Here the emphasis appears to be on the fact that the LORD is in charge of the enemy armies whom he will use to punish Israel for their denial of his prior warnings through the

“Because these people have spoken¹³ like this,¹⁴

I will make the words that I put in your mouth like fire.

And I will make this people like wood which the fiery judgments you speak will burn up.”¹⁵

5:15 The LORD says,¹⁶ “Listen,¹⁷ nation of Israel!¹⁸

I am about to bring a nation from far away to attack you.

It will be a nation that was founded long ago

and has lasted for a long time.

It will be a nation whose language you will not know.

Its people will speak words that you will not be able to understand.

5:16 All of its soldiers are strong and mighty.¹⁹

Their arrows will send you to your grave.²⁰

5:17 They will eat up your crops and your food.

They will kill off²¹ your sons and your daughters.

They will eat up your sheep and your cattle.

They will destroy your vines and your fig trees.²²

Their weapons will batter down²³ the fortified cities you trust in.

5:18 Yet even then²⁴ I will not completely destroy you,” says the LORD. **5:19** “So then,

prophets.

¹² **tn** The words, “to me” are not in the text but are implicit in the connection. They are supplied in the translation for clarification.

¹³ **tn** *Heb* “you have spoken.” The text here דַּבְּרֵכֶם (*dabberkhem*, “you have spoken”) is either a case of a scribal error for דַּבְּרָם (*dabberam*, “they have spoken”) or an example of the rapid shift in addressee which is common in Jeremiah.

¹⁴ **tn** *Heb* “this word.”

¹⁵ **tn** *Heb* “like wood and it [i.e., the fire I put in your mouth] will consume them.”

¹⁶ **tn** *Heb* “oracle of the LORD.”

¹⁷ **tn** *Heb* “Behold!”

¹⁸ **tn** *Heb* “house of Israel.”

¹⁹ **tn** *Heb* “All of them are mighty warriors.”

²⁰ **tn** *Heb* “his quiver [is] an open grave.” The order of the lines has been reversed to make the transition from “nation” to “their arrows” easier.

²¹ **tn** *Heb* “eat up.”

²² **tn** Or “eat up your grapes and figs”; *Heb* “eat up your vines and your fig trees.”

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

²³ **tn** *Heb* “They will beat down with the sword.” The term “sword” is a figure of speech (synecdoche) for military weapons in general. Siege ramps, not swords, beat down city walls; swords kill people, not city walls.

²⁴ **tn** *Heb* “in those days.”

Jeremiah,¹ when your people² ask, ‘Why has the LORD our God done all this to us?’ tell them, ‘It is because you rejected me and served foreign gods in your own land. So³ you must serve foreigners⁴ in a land that does not belong to you.’

5:20 “Proclaim⁵ this message among the descendants of Jacob.⁶

Make it known throughout Judah.

5:21 Tell them: ‘Hear this, you foolish people who have no understanding,

who have eyes but do not discern, who have ears but do not perceive;⁷

5:22 “You should fear me!” says the LORD.

“You should tremble in awe before me!⁸ I made the sand to be a boundary for the sea, a permanent barrier that it can never cross.

Its waves may roll, but they can never prevail.

They may roar, but they can never cross beyond that boundary.”⁹

5:23 But these people have stubborn and rebellious hearts.

They have turned aside and gone their own way.¹⁰

5:24 They do not say to themselves,¹¹

“Let us revere the LORD our God.

It is he who gives us the autumn rains and the spring rains at the proper time.

It is he who assures us of the regular weeks of harvest.”¹²

5:25 Your misdeeds have stopped these things from coming.¹³

Your sins have deprived you of my bounty.¹⁴

5:26 “Indeed, there are wicked scoundrels among my people.

They lie in wait like bird catchers hiding in ambush.¹⁵

They set deadly traps¹⁶ to catch people.

5:27 Like a cage filled with the birds that have been caught,¹⁷

their houses are filled with the gains of their fraud and deceit.¹⁸

That is how they have gotten so rich and powerful.¹⁹

5:28 That is how²⁰ they have grown fat and sleek.²¹

There is no limit to the evil things they do.²²

They do not plead the cause of the fatherless in such a way as to win it.

They do not defend the rights of the poor.

5:29 I will certainly punish them for doing such things!” says the LORD.

“I will certainly bring retribution on such a nation as this!”²³

¹³ *tn* Heb “have turned these things away.”

¹⁴ *tn* Heb “have withheld the good from you.”

¹⁵ *tn* The meaning of the last three words is uncertain. The pointing and meaning of the Hebrew word rendered “hiding in ambush” is debated. BDB relates the form (בַּשֵּׁךְ, *k^cshakh*) to a root שָׁכַח (*shakhakh*), which elsewhere means “decrease, abate” (cf. BDB 1013 s.v. שָׁכַח), and notes that this is usually understood as “like the crouching of fowlers,” but they say this meaning is dubious. HALOT 1345 s.v. שָׁכַח questions the validity of the text and offers three proposals; the second appears to create the least textual modification, i.e., reading בַּשֵּׁךְ (*kesakh*, “as in the hiding place of (bird catchers)”; for the word שָׁךְ (*sakh*) see HALOT 1236 s.v. שָׁךְ 4 and compare Lam 2:6 for usage. The versions do not help. The Greek does not translate the first two words of the line. The proposal given in HALOT is accepted with some hesitancy.

¹⁶ *tn* Heb “a destroying thing.”

¹⁷ *tn* The words, “that have been caught” are not in the text but are implicit in the comparison.

¹⁸ *tn* Heb “are filled with deceit.” The translation assumes a figure of speech of cause for effect (metonymy). Compare the same word in the same figure in Zeph 1:9.

¹⁹ *tn* Heb “therefore they have gotten great and rich.”

²⁰ *tn* These words are not in the text but are supplied in the translation to show that this line is parallel with the preceding.

²¹ *tn* The meaning of this word is uncertain. This verb occurs only here. The lexicons generally relate it to the word translated “plate” in Song 5:14 and understand it to mean “smooth, shiny” (so BDB 799 s.v. נִישֵׂת) or “fat” (so HALOT 850 s.v. II נִישֵׂת). The word in Song 5:14 more likely means “smooth” than “plate” (so TEV). So “sleek” is most likely here.

²² *tn* Heb “they cross over/transgress with respect to matters of evil.”

sn There is a wordplay in the use of this word which has twice been applied in v. 22 to the sea not crossing the boundary set for it by God.

²³ *tn* Heb “Should I not punish...? Should I not bring retribution...?” The rhetorical questions function as emphatic declarations.

sn These words are repeated from 5:9 to give a kind of refrain justifying again the necessity of punishment in the light of such sins.

¹ *tn* The word, “Jeremiah,” is not in the text but the second person address in the second half of the verse is obviously to him. The word is supplied in the translation here for clarity.

² *tn* The MT reads the second masculine plural; this is probably a case of attraction to the second masculine plural pronoun in the preceding line. An alternative would be to understand a shift from speaking first to the people in the first half of the verse and then speaking to Jeremiah in the second half where the verb is second masculine singular. E.g., “When you [people] say, “Why...?” then you, Jeremiah, tell them...”

³ *tn* Heb “As you left me and..., so you will...” The translation was chosen so as to break up a rather long and complex sentence.

⁴ *sn* This is probably a case of deliberate ambiguity (double entendre). The adjective “foreigners” is used for both foreign people (so Jer 30:8; 51:51) and foreign gods (so Jer 2:25; 3:13). See also Jer 16:13 for the idea of having to serve other gods in the lands of exile.

⁵ *sn* The verbs are second plural here. Jeremiah, speaking for the LORD, addresses his people, calling on them to make the message further known.

⁶ *tn* Heb “in the house of Jacob.”

⁷ *tn* Heb “they have eyes but they do not see, they have ears but they do not hear.”

⁸ *tn* Heb “Should you not fear me? Should you not tremble in awe before me?” The rhetorical questions expect the answer explicit in the translation.

⁹ *tn* Heb “it.” The referent is made explicit to avoid any possible confusion.

¹⁰ *tn* The words, “their own way” are not in the text but are implicit and are supplied in the translation for clarity.

¹¹ *tn* Heb “say in their hearts.”

¹² *tn* Heb “who keeps for us the weeks appointed for harvest.”

5:30 “Something horrible and shocking is going on in the land of Judah:

5:31 The prophets prophesy lies.

The priests exercise power by their own authority.¹

And my people love to have it this way.
But they will not be able to help you
when the time of judgment comes!²

The Destruction of Jerusalem Depicted

6:1 “Run for safety, people of Benjamin!
Get out of Jerusalem!³

Sound the trumpet⁴ in Tekoa!

Light the signal fires at Beth Hakkerem!

For disaster lurks⁵ out of the north;
it will bring great destruction.⁶

6:2 I will destroy⁷ Daughter Zion,⁸
who is as delicate and defenseless as a
young maiden.⁹

6:3 Kings will attack it with their armies.¹⁰

They will encamp in siege all around it.¹¹

Each of them will devastate the portion
assigned to him.¹²

6:4 They will say,¹³ ‘Prepare to do battle¹⁴
against it!

Come on! Let’s attack it at noon!’

But later they will say,¹⁵ ‘Oh, oh! Too
bad!¹⁶

The day is almost over

and the shadows of evening are getting
long.

6:5 So come on, let’s go ahead and attack
it by night

and destroy all its fortified buildings.’

6:6 All of this is because¹⁷ the LORD who
rules over all¹⁸ has said:

‘Cut down the trees around Jerusalem

¹ **tn** Heb “they shall rule at their hands.” Since the word “hand” can be used figuratively for authority or mean “side” and the pronoun “them” can refer to the priests themselves or the prophets, the following translations have also been suggested: “the priests rule under their [the prophets] directions,” or “the priests rule in league with them [the prophets].” From the rest of the book it would appear that the prophets did not exercise authority over the priests nor did they exercise the same authority over the people that the priests did. Hence it probably mean “by their own hand/power/authority.”

² **tn** Heb “But what will you do at its end?” The rhetorical question implies a negative answer: “Nothing!”

³ **tn** Heb “Flee for safety, people of Benjamin, out of the midst of Jerusalem.”

sn Compare and contrast Jer 4:6. There people in the outlying areas were warned to seek safety in the fortified city of Jerusalem. Here they are told to flee it because it was about to be destroyed.

map For location see Map5-B1; Map6-F3; Map7-E2; Map8-F2; Map10-B3; JP1-F4; JP2-F4; JP3-F4; JP4-F4.

⁴ **tn** Heb “ram’s horn,” but the modern equivalent is “trumpet” and is more readily understandable.

⁵ **tn** Heb “leans down” or “looks down.” This verb personifies destruction leaning/looking down from its window in the sky, ready to attack.

⁶ **tn** Heb “[It will be] a severe fracture.” The nation is pictured as a limb being fractured.

sn This passage is emotionally charged. There are two examples of assonance or wordplay in the verse: “sound” (Heb *tiq’u*, “blow”), which has the same consonants as “Tekoa” (Heb *uwtqoa*), and “signal fire,” which comes from the same root as “light” (Heb *s’u mas’et*, “lift up”). There is also an example of personification where disaster is said to “lurk” (Heb “look down on”) out of the north. This gives a sense of urgency and concern for the coming destruction.

⁷ **tn** The verb here is another example of the Hebrew verb form that indicates the action is as good as done (a Hebrew prophetic perfect).

⁸ **sn** Jerusalem is personified as a young maiden who is helpless in the hands of her enemies.

⁹ **tn** Heb “The beautiful and delicate one I will destroy, the daughter of Zion. The English versions and commentaries are divided over the rendering of this verse because (1) there are two verbs with these same consonants, one meaning “to be like” and the other meaning “to be destroyed” (intransitive) or “to destroy” (transitive), and (2) the word rendered “beautiful” (Heb *navah*, *navah*) can be understood as a noun meaning “pasture” or as a defective writing of an adjective meaning “beautiful, comely” (Heb *na’vah*). Hence some render “Fair Zion, you are like a lovely pasture,” reading the verb form as an example of the old second feminine singular perfect. Although this may fit the imagery of the next verse, that rendering ignores the

absence of a preposition (לְ or לָ, *le* or *el*, both of which can be translated “to”) that normally goes with the verb “be like” and drops the conjunction in front of the adjective “delicate.” The parallel usage of the verb in Hos 4:5 argues for the meaning “destroy.”

¹⁰ **tn** Heb “Shepherds and their flocks will attack it.” Rulers are often depicted as shepherds; see BDB 945 s.v. רָקַע 1.d(2) (cf. Jer 12:10). The translation of this verse attempts to clarify the point of this extended metaphor.

¹¹ **tn** Heb “They will thrust [= pitch] tents around it.” The shepherd imagery has a surprisingly ominous tone. The beautiful pasture filled with shepherds grazing their sheep is in reality a city under siege from an attacking enemy.

¹² **tn** Heb “They will graze each one his portion.” For the use of the verb “graze” to mean “strip” or “devastate” see BDB 945 s.v. רָקַע 2.c. For a similar use of the word normally meaning “hand” to mean portion compare 2 Sam 19:43 (19:44 HT).

sn There is a wordplay involving “sound...in Tekoa” mentioned in the study note on “destruction” in v. 1. The Hebrew verb “they will pitch” is from the same root as the word translated “sound” (*taq’u* [תִּקְאוּ] here and *tiq’u* [תִּקְאוּ] in v. 1).

¹³ **tn** These words are not in the text but are implicit in the connection. They are supplied in the translation for clarity.

¹⁴ **tn** Heb “Sanctify war.” This is probably an idiom from early Israel’s holy wars in which religious rites were to precede the battle.

¹⁵ **tn** These words are not in the text but are supplied in the translation for clarity. Some commentaries and English versions see these not as the words of the enemy but as those of the Israelites expressing their fear that the enemy will launch a night attack against them and further destroy them. The connection with the next verse, however, fits better with them if they are the words of the enemy.

¹⁶ **tn** Heb “Woe to us!” For the usage of this phrase see the translator’s note on 4:13. The usage of this particle here is a little exaggerated. They have lost the most advantageous time for attack but they are scarcely in a hopeless or doomed situation. The equivalent in English slang is “Bad news!”

¹⁷ **tn** Heb “For.” The translation attempts to make the connection clearer.

¹⁸ **tn** Heb “Yahweh of armies.”

sn For an explanation of the significance of this title see the study note on 2:19.

and build up a siege ramp against its walls.¹

This is the city which is to be punished.²

Nothing but oppression happens in it.³

6:7 As a well continually pours out fresh water

so it continually pours out wicked deeds.⁴

Sounds of violence and destruction echo throughout it.⁵

All I see are sick and wounded people.⁶

6:8 So⁷ take warning, Jerusalem, or I will abandon you in disgust⁸ and make you desolate, a place where no one can live.”

6:9 This is what the LORD who rules over all⁹ said to me.¹⁰

“Those who remain in Israel will be like the grapes thoroughly gleaned¹¹ from

¹ **tn** *Heb* “Cut down its trees and build up a siege ramp against Jerusalem.” The referent has been moved forward from the second line for clarity.

² **tn** Or “must be punished.” The meaning of this line is uncertain. The LXX reads, “Woe, city of falsehood!” The MT presents two anomalies: a masculine singular verb with a feminine singular subject in a verbal stem (Hophal) that elsewhere does not have the meaning “is to be punished.” Hence many follow the Greek which presupposes הַיְיָ הַשֵּׁקֶר (hoy 'ir hasheqer) instead of הַיְיָ הַנִּיחַר הַבְּקָר (hi' ha'ir hofqad). The Greek is the easier reading in light of the parallelism, and it would be hard to explain how the MT arose from it. KBL suggests reading a noun meaning “licentiousness” which occurs elsewhere only in Mishnaic Hebrew, hence “this is the city, the licentious one” (attributive apposition; cf. KBL 775 s.v. פִּקְרָה). Perhaps the Hophal perfect (הַבְּקָר, hofqad) should be revocalized as a Niphal infinitive absolute (הַפְּקָד, hippaqod); this would solve both anomalies in the MT since the Niphal is used in this nuance and the infinitive absolute can function in place of a finite verb (cf. GKC 346 §113.ee and ff). This, however, is mere speculation and is supported by no Hebrew ms.

³ **tn** *Heb* “All of it oppression in its midst.”

⁴ **tc** *Heb* “As a well makes cool/fresh its water, she makes cool/fresh her wickedness.” The translation follows the reading proposed by the Masoretes (Qere) which reads a rare form of the word “well” (בַּיִר [bayir] בְּאֵר [be'er]) in place of the form written in the text (Kethib, בּוֹר [bor]), which means “cistern.” The latter noun is masculine and the pronoun “its” is feminine. If indeed בַּיִר (bayir) is a byform of בְּאֵר (be'er), which is feminine, it would agree in gender with the pronoun. It also forms a more appropriate comparison since cisterns do not hold fresh water.

⁵ **tn** *Heb* “Violence and destruction are heard in it.”

⁶ **tn** *Heb* “Sickness and wound are continually before my face.”

⁷ **tn** This word is not in the text but is supplied in the translation. Jeremiah uses a figure of speech (enallage) where the speaker turns from talking about someone to address him/her directly.

⁸ **tn** *Heb* “lest my soul [= I] becomes disgusted with you.”

sn The wordplay begun with “sound...in Tekoa” in v. 1 and continued with “they will pitch” in v. 3 is concluded here with “turn away” (וּבְתִקּוֹא תִקְאוּ [uvitqoa' tiq'u] in v. 1, תִּקְאוּ [taq'u] in v. 3 and תִּקְאוּ [teq'a'] here).

⁹ **tn** *Heb* “Yahweh of armies.”

sn For an explanation of the significance of this title see the study note on 2:19.

¹⁰ **tn** The words “to me” are not in the text but are supplied in the translation for clarity.

¹¹ **tn** *Heb* “They will thoroughly glean those who are left in Israel like a vine.” That is, they will be carried off by judgment. It is not necessary to read the verb forms here as two imperatives or an infinitive absolute followed by an imperative as

a vine.

So go over them again, as though you were a grape harvester passing your hand over the branches one last time.”¹²

6:10 I answered,¹³

“Who would listen if I spoke to them and warned them?¹⁴

Their ears are so closed¹⁵

that they cannot hear!

Indeed,¹⁶ what the LORD says is offensive to them.

They do not like it at all.¹⁷

6:11 I am as full of anger as you are, LORD,¹⁸

I am tired of trying to hold it in.”

The LORD answered,¹⁹

“Vent it, then,²⁰ on the children who play in the street and on the young men who are gathered together.

Husbands and wives are to be included,²¹ as well as the old and those who are advanced in years.

6:12 Their houses will be turned over to others

as will their fields and their wives.

For I will unleash my power²² against those who live in this land,”

says the LORD.

6:13 “That is because, from the least important to the most important of them, all of them are greedy for dishonest gain. Prophets and priests alike, all of them practice deceit.

6:14 They offer only superficial help for the harm my people have suffered.”²³

some English versions and commentaries do. This is an example of a third plural verb used impersonally and translated as a passive (cf. GKC 460 §144.g).

¹² **tn** *Heb* “Pass your hand back over the branches like a grape harvester.” The translation is intended to clarify the metaphor that Jeremiah should try to rescue some from the coming destruction.

¹³ **tn** These words are not in the text but are supplied in the translation for clarity.

¹⁴ **tn** Or “To whom shall I speak? To whom shall I give warning? Who will listen?” *Heb* “Unto whom shall I speak and give warning that they may listen?”

¹⁵ **tn** *Heb* “are uncircumcised.”

¹⁶ **tn** *Heb* “Behold!”

¹⁷ **tn** *Heb* “They do not take pleasure in it.”

¹⁸ **tn** *Heb* “I am full of the wrath of the LORD.”

¹⁹ **tn** These words are not in the text but are implicit from the words that follow. They are supplied in the translation for clarity.

²⁰ **tn** *Heb* “Pour it out.”

²¹ **tn** *Heb* “are to be captured.”

²² **tn** *Heb* “I will reach out my hand.” This figure involves both comparing God to a person (anthropomorphism) and substitution (metonymy) where hand is put for the actions or exertions of the hand. A common use of “hand” is for the exertion of power or strength (cf. BDB 290 s.v. יָד; 2 and 289-90 s.v. יָד; 1.e(2); cf. Deut 34:12; Ps 78:42; Jer 16:21).

²³ **tn** *Heb* “They heal [= bandage] the wound of my people lightly”; TEV “They act as if my people’s wounds were only scratches.”

They say, ‘Everything will be all right!’
But everything is not all right!¹

6:15 Are they ashamed because they have
done such shameful things?

No, they are not at all ashamed.
They do not even know how to blush!
So they will die, just like others have died.²
They will be brought to ruin when I punish
them.”

says the LORD.

6:16 The LORD said to his people:³

“You are standing at the crossroads. So
consider your path.⁴

Ask where the old, reliable paths⁵ are.
Ask where the path is that leads to bless-
ing⁶ and follow it.

If you do, you will find rest for your
souls.”

But they said, “We will not follow it!”

6:17 The LORD said,⁷

“I appointed prophets as watchmen to
warn you,⁸ saying:

‘Pay attention to the warning sound of
the trumpet!’⁹

But they said, “We will not pay attention!”

6:18 So the LORD said,¹⁰

“Hear, you nations!
Be witnesses and take note of what will
happen to these people.¹¹

6:19 Hear this, you peoples of the earth:¹²

¹ **tn** *Heb* “They say, ‘Peace! Peace!’ and there is no peace!”

² **tn** *Heb* “They will fall among the fallen.”

³ **tn** The words, “to his people” are not in the text but are implicit in the interchange of pronouns in the Hebrew of vv. 16-17. They are supplied in the translation here for clarity.

⁴ **tn** *Heb* “Stand at the crossroads and look.”

⁵ **tn** *Heb* “the ancient path,” i.e., the path the LORD set out in ancient times (cf. Deut 32:7).

⁶ **tn** *Heb* “the way of/to the good.”

⁷ **tn** These words are not in the text but are implicit in the interchange of pronouns in the Hebrew of vv. 16-17. They are supplied in the translation here for clarity.

⁸ **tn** *Heb* “I appointed watchmen over you.”

⁹ **tn** *Heb* “Pay attention to the sound of the trumpet.” The word “warning” is not in the Hebrew text, but is implied.

¹⁰ **tn** These words are not in the text but are implicit from the flow of the context. They are supplied in the translation for clarity.

¹¹ **tn** *Heb* “Know, congregation [or witness], what in [or against] them.” The meaning of this line is somewhat uncertain. The meaning of the noun of address in the second line (“witness,” rendered as an imperative in the translation, “Be witnesses”) is greatly debated. It is often taken as “congregation” but the lexicons and commentaries generally question the validity of reading that word since it is nowhere else applied to the nations. BDB 417 s.v. עֵדָה 3 says that the text is dubious. HALOT 747 s.v. עֵדָה, 4 emends the text to דְּעֵה (de’ah). Several modern English versions (e.g., NIV, NCV, God’s Word) take it as the feminine singular noun “witness” (cf. BDB 729 s.v. II עֵדָה) and understand it as a collective. This solution is also proposed by J. A. Thompson (*Jeremiah* [NICOT], 259, n. 3) and appears to make the best sense in the context. The end of the line is very elliptical but is generally taken as either, “what I will do with/to them,” or “what is coming against them” (= “what will happen to them”) on the basis of the following context.

¹² **tn** *Heb* “earth.”

‘Take note!¹³ I am about to bring disaster
on these people.

It will come as punishment for their
scheming.¹⁴

For they have paid no attention to what I
have said,¹⁵

and they have rejected my law.

6:20 I take no delight¹⁶ when they offer up
to me¹⁷

frankincense that comes from Sheba
or sweet-smelling cane imported from a
faraway land.

I cannot accept the burnt offerings they
bring me.

I get no pleasure from the sacrifices they
offer to me.¹⁸

6:21 So, this is what the LORD says:

‘I will assuredly¹⁹ make these people
stumble to their doom.²⁰

Parents and children will stumble and fall
to their destruction.²¹

Friends and neighbors will die.’

6:22 “This is what the LORD says:

‘Beware! An army²² is coming from a
land in the north.

A mighty nation is stirring into action in
faraway parts of the earth.

6:23 Its soldiers are armed with bows and
spears.

They are cruel and show no mercy.

They sound like the roaring sea
as they ride forth on their horses.

Lined up in formation like men going
into battle

to attack you, Daughter Zion.”²³

6:24 The people cry out,²⁴ “We have heard
reports about them!”

¹³ **tn** *Heb* “Behold!”

¹⁴ **tn** *Heb* “disaster on these people, the fruit of their schemes.”

¹⁵ **tn** *Heb* “my word.”

¹⁶ **tn** *Heb* “To what purpose is it to me?” The question is rhetorical and expects a negative answer.

¹⁷ **tn** The words “when they offer up to me” are not in the text but are implicit from the following context. They are supplied in the translation for clarity.

¹⁸ **tn** *Heb* “Your burnt offerings are not acceptable and your sacrifices are not pleasing to me.” “The shift from “your” to “their” is an example of the figure of speech (apostrophe) where the speaker turns from talking about someone to addressing him/her directly. Though common in Hebrew style, it is not common in English. The shift to the third person in the translation is an accommodation to English style.

¹⁹ **tn** This is an attempt to render the Hebrew particle rendered “behold” joined to the first person pronoun.

²⁰ **tn** *Heb* “I will put stumbling blocks in front of these people.” In this context the stumbling blocks are the invading armies.

²¹ **tn** The words “and fall to their destruction” are implicit in the metaphor and are supplied in the translation for clarity.

²² **tn** *Heb* “people.”

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

²⁴ **tn** These words are not in the text, but, from the context, someone other than God is speaking and is speaking for and to the people (either Jeremiah or the people themselves). These words are supplied in the translation for clarity.

We have become helpless with fear!¹
 Anguish grips us,
 agony like that of a woman giving birth
 to a baby!

6:25 Do not go out into the countryside.
 Do not travel on the roads.
 For the enemy is there with sword in
 hand.²

They are spreading terror everywhere.³
 6:26 So I said,⁴ “Oh, my dear people,⁵ put
 on sackcloth
 and roll in ashes.
 Mourn with painful sobs
 as though you had lost your only child.
 For any moment now⁶ that destructive
 army⁷
 will come against us.”

6:27 The LORD said to me,⁸

“I have made you like a metal assayer
 to test my people like ore.⁹
 You are to observe them
 and evaluate how they behave.”¹⁰

6:28 I reported,¹¹

“All of them are the most stubborn of
 rebels!¹²

They are as hard as bronze or iron.
 They go about telling lies.
 They all deal corruptly.

6:29 The fiery bellows of judgment burn
 fiercely.

But there is too much dross to be re-
 moved.¹³

The process of refining them has proved
 useless.¹⁴

The wicked have not been purged.

6:30 They are regarded as ‘rejected sil-
 ver’¹⁵
 because the LORD rejects them.”

*Faulty Religion and Unethical Behavior Will
 Lead to Judgment*

7:1 The LORD said to Jeremiah:¹⁶ 7:2 “Stand
 in the gate of the LORD’s temple and proclaim¹⁷
 this message: ‘Listen, all you people of Judah
 who have passed through these gates to wor-
 ship the LORD.¹⁸ Hear what the LORD has to say.
 7:3 The LORD God of Israel who rules over all¹⁹
 says: Change the way you have been living and
 do what is right.²⁰ If you do, I will allow you to

¹ **tn** Or “We have lost our strength to do battle”; *Heb* “Our hands hang limp [or helpless at our sides].” According to BDB 951 s.v. קָהָה Qal.2, this idiom is used figuratively for losing heart or energy. The best example of its figurative use of loss of strength or the feeling of helplessness is in Ezek 21:12 where it appears in the context of the heart (courage) melting, the spirit sinking, and the knees becoming like water. For other examples compare 2 Sam 4:1; Zeph 3:16. In Neh 6:9 it is used literally of the builders “dropping their hands from the work” out of fear. The words “with fear” are supplied in the translation because they are implicit in the context.

² **tn** *Heb* “For the enemy has a sword.”

³ **tn** *Heb* “Terror is all around!”

⁴ **tn** These words are not in the text but are implicit from the context.

⁵ **tn** *Heb* “daughter of my people.” For the translation given here see 4:11 and the translator’s note there.

⁶ **tn** *Heb* “suddenly.”

⁷ **tn** *Heb* “the destroyer.”

⁸ **tn** These words are not in the text but are supplied in the translation for clarity. Note “I have appointed you.” Compare Jer 1:18.

⁹ **tn** *Heb* “I have made you an assayer of my people, a tester [?].” The meaning of the words translated “assayer” (בִּירוֹן, *bakhon*) and “tester” (מִיבְּסָר, *mivtsar*) is uncertain. The word בִּירוֹן (*bakhon*) can mean “tower” (cf. BDB 103 s.v. בִּירוֹן; cf. Isa 23:13 for the only other use) or “assayer” (cf. BDB 103 s.v. בִּירוֹן). The latter would be the more expected nuance because of the other uses of nouns and verbs from this root. The word מִיבְּסָר (*mivtsar*) normally means “fortress” (cf. BDB 131 s.v. מִיבְּסָר), but most modern commentaries and lexicons deem that nuance inappropriate here. HALOT follows a proposal that the word is to be reappointed to מִבְּסָר (*mivtsar*) and derived from a root בִּצָר (*batsar*) meaning “to test” (cf. HALOT 143 s.v. בִּצָר). That proposal makes the most sense in the context, but the root appears nowhere else in the OT.

¹⁰ **tn** *Heb* “test their way.”

¹¹ **tn** These words are not in the text but are supplied in the translation for clarity. Some takes these words to be the continuation of the LORD’s commission of Jeremiah to the task of testing them. However, since this is the evaluation, the task appears to be complete. The words are better to be taken as Jeremiah’s report after he has completed the task.

¹² **tn** Or “arch rebels,” or “hardened rebels.” Literally “rebels of rebels.”

¹³ **tn** *Heb* “The bellows blow fiercely; the lead is consumed by the fire.” The translation tries to clarify a metaphor involving ancient metallurgy. In the ancient refining process lead was added as a flux to remove impurities from silver ore in the process of oxidizing the lead. Jeremiah says that the lead has been used up and the impurities have not been removed. The translation is based on the recognition of an otherwise unused verb root meaning “blow” (נָחַר [nakhar]; cf. BDB 1123 s.v. נָחַר and HALOT 651 s.v. נָחַר) and the Masoretes’ suggestion that the consonants מֵאֵשׁ תָּם be read פֵּאֵשׁ תָּם (*me’esh tam*) rather than as מֵאֵשׁ תָּם (*me’eshatam*, “from their fire”) from an otherwise unattested noun אֵשָׁה (*eshah*).

¹⁴ **tn** *Heb* “The refiner refines them in vain.”

¹⁵ **tn** This translation is intended to reflect the wordplay in the Hebrew text where the same root word is repeated in the two lines.

¹⁶ **tn** *Heb* “The word which came to Jeremiah from the LORD.”

¹⁷ **tn** *Heb* “Proclaim there...” The adverb is unnecessary in English style.

¹⁸ **sn** That is, all those who have passed through the gates of the outer court and are standing in the courtyard of the temple.

¹⁹ **tn** *Heb* “Yahweh of armies, the God of Israel.”

sn Compare the use of similar titles in 2:19; 5:14; 6:6 and see the explanation in the study note at 2:19. In this instance the title appears to emphasize the LORD as the heavenly King who drags his disobedient vassals into court (and threatens them with judgment).

²⁰ **tn** Or “Make good your ways and your actions.” J. Bright’s translation (“Reform the whole pattern of your conduct”; *Jeremiah* [AB], 52) is excellent.

continue to live in this land.⁴ 7:4 Stop putting your confidence in the false belief that says,² “We are safe!”³ The temple of the LORD is here! The temple of the LORD is here! The temple of the LORD is here!”⁴ 7:5 You must change⁵ the way you have been living and do what is right. You must treat one another fairly.⁶ 7:6 Stop oppressing foreigners who live in your land, children who have lost their fathers, and women who have lost their husbands.⁷ Stop killing innocent people⁸ in this land. Stop paying allegiance to⁹ other gods. That will only bring about your ruin.¹⁰ 7:7 If you stop doing these things,¹¹ I will allow you to continue to live in this land¹² which I gave to your ancestors as a lasting possession.¹³

7:8 “But just look at you!”¹⁴ You are putting your confidence in a false belief¹⁵ that will not deliver you.¹⁶ 7:9 You steal.¹⁷ You murder. You commit adultery. You lie when you swear on oath. You sacrifice to the god Baal. You pay allegiance to¹⁸ other gods whom you have not previously known. 7:10 Then you come and stand in my presence in this temple I have

claimed as my own¹⁹ and say, “We are safe!” You think you are so safe that you go on doing all those hateful sins!²⁰ 7:11 Do you think this temple I have claimed as my own²¹ is to be a hideout for robbers?²² You had better take note!²³ I have seen for myself what you have done! says the LORD. 7:12 So, go to the place in Shiloh where I allowed myself to be worshiped²⁴ in the early days. See what I did to it²⁵ because of the wicked things my people Israel did. 7:13 You also have done all these things, says the LORD, and I have spoken to you over and over again.²⁶ But you have not listened! You have refused to respond when I called you to repent!²⁷ 7:14 So I will destroy this temple which I have claimed as my own,²⁸ this temple that you are trusting to protect you. I will destroy this place that I gave to you and your ancestors,²⁹ just like I

¹ **tn** Heb “place” but this might be misunderstood to refer to the temple.

² **tn** Heb “Stop trusting in lying words which say.”

³ **tn** The words “We are safe!” are not in the text but are supplied in the translation for clarity.

⁴ **tn** Heb “The temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD are these (i.e., these buildings).” Elsewhere triple repetition seems to mark a kind of emphasis (cf. Isa 6:3; Jer 22:29; Ezek 21:27 [32 HT]). The triple repetition that follows seems to be Jeremiah’s way of mocking the (false) sense of security that people had in the invincibility of Jerusalem because God dwelt in the temple. They appeared to be treating the temple as some kind of magical charm. A similar feeling had grown up around the ark in the time of the judges (cf. 1 Sam 3:3) and the temple and city of Jerusalem in Micah’s day (cf. Mic 3:11). It is reflected also in some of the Psalms (cf., e.g., Ps 46, especially v. 5).

⁵ **tn** The infinitive absolute precedes the finite verb for emphasis.

⁶ **tn** Heb “you must do justice between a person and his fellow/neighbor.” The infinitive absolute precedes the finite verb for emphasis.

⁷ **tn** Heb “Stop oppressing foreigner, orphan, and widow.”

⁸ **tn** Heb “Stop shedding innocent blood.”

⁹ **tn** Heb “going/following after.” See the translator’s note at 2:5 for an explanation of the idiom involved here.

¹⁰ **tn** Heb “going after other gods to your ruin.”

¹¹ **tn** The translation uses imperatives in vv. 5-6 followed by the phrase, “If you do all this,” to avoid the long and complex sentence structure of the Hebrew sentence which has a series of conditional clauses in vv. 5-6 followed by a main clause in v. 7.

¹² **tn** Heb “live in this place, in this land.”

¹³ **tn** Heb “gave to your fathers [with reference to] from ancient times even unto forever.”

¹⁴ **tn** Heb “Behold!”

¹⁵ **tn** Heb “You are trusting in lying words.” See the similar phrase in v. 4 and the note there.

¹⁶ **tn** Heb “not profit [you].”

¹⁷ **tn** Heb “Will you steal...then say, ‘We are safe?’” Verses 9-10 are one long sentence in the Hebrew text.

¹⁸ **tn** Heb “You go/follow after.” See the translator’s note at 2:5 for an explanation of the idiom involved here.

¹⁹ **tn** Heb “over which my name is called.” For this nuance of this idiom cf. BDB 896 s.v. נָקָה Niph.2.d(4) and see the usage in 2 Sam 12:28.

²⁰ **tn** Or “‘We are safe!’ – safe, you think, to go on doing all those hateful things.” Verses 9-10 are all one long sentence in the Hebrew text. It has been broken up for English stylistic reasons. Somewhat literally it reads “Will you steal...then come and stand...and say, ‘We are safe’ so as to/in order to do...” The Hebrew of v. 9 has a series of infinitives which emphasize the bare action of the verb without the idea of time or agent. The effect is to place a kind of staccato like emphasis on the multitude of their sins all of which are violations of one of the Ten Commandments. The final clause in v. 8 expresses purpose or result (probably result) through another infinitive. This long sentence is introduced by a marker (הַ interrogative in Hebrew) introducing a rhetorical question in which God expresses his incredulity that they could do these sins, come into the temple and claim the safety of his protection, and then go right back out and commit the same sins. J. Bright (*Jeremiah* [AB], 52) catches the force nicely: “What? You think you can steal, murder...and then come and stand...and say, ‘We are safe...’ just so that you can go right on...”

²¹ **tn** Heb “over which my name is called.” For this nuance of this idiom cf. BDB 896 s.v. נָקָה Niph.2.d(4) and see the usage in 2 Sam 12:28.

²² **tn** Heb “Is this house...a den/cave of robbers in your eyes?”

²³ **tn** Heb “Behold!”

²⁴ **tn** Heb “where I caused my name to dwell.” The translation does not adequately represent the theology of the LORD’s deliberate identification with a place where he chose to manifest his presence and desired to be worshiped (cf. Exod 20:25; Deut 16:2, 6, 11).

²⁵ **sn** *The place in Shiloh...see what I did to it.* This refers to the destruction of Shiloh by the Philistines circa 1050 B.C. (cf. Ps 78:60). The destruction of Shiloh is pertinent to the argument. The presence of the tabernacle and ark of the covenant did not prevent Shiloh from being destroyed when Israel sinned. The people of Israel used the ark as a magic charm but it did not prevent them from being defeated or the ark being captured (1 Sam 4:3, 11, 21-22).

²⁶ **tn** This reflects a Hebrew idiom (e.g., 7:25; 11:7; 25:3, 4), i.e., an infinitive of a verb meaning “to do something early [or eagerly]” followed by an infinitive of another verb of action. Cf. HALOT 1384 s.v. מִבְּרֵי Hiph.2.

²⁷ **tn** Heb “I called to you and you did not answer.” The words “to repent” are not in the text but are supplied in the translation for clarity.

²⁸ **tn** Heb “over which my name is called.” For this nuance of this idiom cf. BDB 896 s.v. נָקָה Niph.2.d(4) and see the usage in 2 Sam 12:28.

²⁹ **tn** Heb “fathers” (also in vv. 22, 25, 26).

destroyed Shiloh.¹ 7:15 And I will drive you out of my sight just like I drove out your relatives, the people of Israel.”²

7:16 Then the LORD said,³ “As for you, Jeremiah,⁴ do not pray for these people! Do not cry out to me or petition me on their behalf! Do not plead with me to save them,⁵ because I will not listen to you. 7:17 Do you see⁶ what they are doing in the towns of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem?⁷ 7:18 Children are gathering firewood, fathers are building fires with it, and women are mixing dough to bake cakes to offer to the goddess they call the Queen of Heaven.⁸ They are also pouring out drink offerings to other gods. They seem to do all this just⁹ to trouble me. 7:19 But I am not really the one being troubled!”¹⁰ says the LORD. “Rather they are bringing trouble on themselves to their own shame!¹¹ 7:20 So,” the Lord God¹² says, “my raging fury will be poured out on this land.¹³ It

will be poured out on human beings and animals, on trees and crops.¹⁴ And it will burn like a fire which cannot be extinguished.”

7:21 The LORD said to the people of Judah,¹⁵ “The LORD God of Israel who rules over all¹⁶ says: ‘You might as well go ahead and add the meat of your burnt offerings to that of the other sacrifices and eat it, too!’¹⁷ 7:22 Consider this:¹⁸ When I spoke to your ancestors after I brought them out of Egypt, I did not merely give them commands about burnt offerings and sacrifices. 7:23 I also explicitly commanded them:¹⁹ ‘Obey me. If you do, I²⁰ will be your God and you will be my people. Live exactly the way I tell you²¹ and things will go well with you.’ 7:24 But they did not listen to me or pay any attention to me. They followed the stubborn inclinations of their own wicked hearts. They acted worse and worse instead of better.²² 7:25 From the time your an-

¹ tn Heb “I will do to this house which I...in which you put... and to this place which...as I did to Shiloh.”

² tn Heb “the descendants of Ephraim.” However, Ephraim here stands (as it often does) for all the northern tribes of Israel.

³ tn The words “Then the LORD said” are not in the text but are supplied in the translation for clarity.

⁴ tn Heb “As for you.” The personal name Jeremiah is supplied in the translation for clarity.

⁵ tn The words “to save them” are not in the text but are implicit from the context. They are supplied in the translation for clarity.

⁶ tn Or “Just look at...” The question is rhetorical and expects a positive answer.

⁷ map For location see Map5-B1; Map6-F3; Map7-E2; Map8-F2; Map10-B3; JP1-F4; JP2-F4; JP3-F4; JP4-F4.

⁸ tn The form for “queen” is unusual. It is pointed (מַלְכָּה) [m^llekhet] instead of מַלְכָּה (malkat) as though the Masoretes wanted to read the word for “work” (מְלָכֶת [m^lle'khet]), i.e., the “hosts of,” a word that several Hebrew mss read and an understanding the LXX reflects. The other ancient and modern versions generally, however, accept it as a biform for the word “queen.”

⁹ sn The Queen of Heaven is probably a reference to the goddess known as Ishtar in Mesopotamia, Anat in Canaan, Ash-toreth in Israel. She was the goddess of love and fertility. For further discussion, see G. L. Keown, P. J. Scalise, T. G. Smothers, *Jeremiah 26-52* (WBC), 266-68.

¹⁰ tn Heb “to provoke me.” There is debate among grammarians and lexicographers about the nuance of the Hebrew particle לְמַעַן (l^mma'an). Some say it always denotes purpose, while others say it may denote either purpose or result, depending on the context. For example, BDB 775 s.v. לְמַעַן note 1 says that it always denotes purpose, never result, but that sometimes what is really a result is represented ironically as though it were a purpose. That explanation fits nicely here in the light of the context of the next verse. The translation is intended to reflect some of that ironic sarcasm.

¹¹ tn Heb “Is it I whom they provoke?” The rhetorical question expects a negative answer which is made explicit in the translation.

¹² tn Heb “Is it not themselves to their own shame?” The rhetorical question expects a positive answer which is made explicit in the translation.

¹³ tn Heb “Lord Yahweh.” The translation follows the ancient Jewish tradition of substituting the Hebrew word for God for the proper name Yahweh.

¹⁴ tn Heb “this place.” Some see this as a reference to the temple but the context has been talking about what goes on in the towns of Judah and Jerusalem and the words that follow, meant as a further explanation, are applied to the whole land.

¹⁴ tn Heb “the trees of/in the field and the fruit of/in the ground.”

¹⁵ tn The words “The LORD said to the people of Judah” are not in the text but are implicit in the shift in addressee between vv. 16-20 and vv. 21-26.

¹⁶ tn Heb “Yahweh of armies, the God of Israel.”

¹⁷ sn See the study notes on 2:19 and 7:3.

¹⁷ tn Heb “Add your burnt offerings to your [other] sacrifices and eat the meat!” See the following sn for explanation. This is an example of the rhetorical use of the imperative for a sarcastic challenge. Cf. GKC 324 §110.a; cf. Amos 4:4, “Go to Bethel and sin!”

¹⁸ sn All of the burnt offering, including the meat, was to be consumed on the altar (e.g., Lev 1:6-9). The meat of the other sacrifices could be eaten by the priest who offered the sacrifice and the person who brought it (e.g., Lev 7:16-18, 32). Since, however, the people of Judah were making a mockery of the sacrificial system by offering sacrifices while disobeying the law, the LORD rejected the sacrifices (cf. 6:20). Since they were violating the moral law they might as well go ahead and violate the cultic law by eating the meat dedicated to God because he rejected it anyway.

¹⁹ tn Heb “For” but this introduces a long explanation about the relative importance of sacrifice and obedience.

²⁰ tn Verses 22-23a read in Hebrew, “I did not speak with your ancestors and I did not command them when I brought them out of Egypt about words/matters concerning burnt offering and sacrifice, but I commanded them this word.” Some modern commentators have explained this passage as an evidence for the lateness of the Pentateuchal instruction regarding sacrifice or a denial that sacrifice was practiced during the period of the wilderness wandering. However, it is better explained as an example of what R. de Vaux calls a dialectical negative, i.e., “not so much this as that” or “not this without that” (*Ancient Israel*, 454-56). For other examples of this same argument see Isa 1:10-17; Hos 6:4-6; Amos 5:21-25.

²¹ tn Heb “Obey me and I will be.” The translation is equivalent syntactically but brings out the emphasis in the command.

²² tn Heb “Walk in all the way that I command you.”

²² tn Or “They went backward and not forward”; Heb “They were to the backward and not to the forward.” The two phrases used here appear nowhere else in the Bible and the latter preposition plus adverb elsewhere is used temporally meaning “formerly” or “previously.” The translation follows the proposal of J. Bright, *Jeremiah* (AB), 57. Another option is “they turned their backs to me, not their faces,” understanding the line as a variant of a line in 2:27.

cestors departed the land of Egypt until now,¹ I sent my servants the prophets to you again and again,² day after day.³ 7:26 But your ancestors⁴ did not listen to me nor pay attention to me. They became obstinate⁵ and were more wicked than even their own forefathers.”⁶

7:27 Then the LORD said to me,⁶ “When you tell them all this, they will not listen to you. When you call out to them, they will not respond to you. 7:28 So tell them: ‘This is a nation that has not obeyed the LORD their God and has not accepted correction. Faithfulness is nowhere to be found in it. These people do not even profess it anymore.’⁷ 7:29 So, mourn,⁸ you people of this nation.⁹ Cut off your hair and throw it away. Sing a song of mourning on the hilltops. For the LORD has decided to reject¹⁰ and forsake this generation that has provoked his wrath!”¹¹

¹ **tn** *Heb* “from the day your ancestors...until this very day.” However, “day” here is idiomatic for “the present time.”

² **tn** On the Hebrew idiom see the note at 7:13.

³ **tc** There is some textual debate about the legitimacy of this expression here. The text reads merely “day” (יֹמִי, *yomi*). *BHS* suggests the word is to be deleted as a dittography of the plural ending of the preceding word. The word is in the Greek and Latin, and the Syriac represents the typical idiom “day after day” as though the noun were repeated. Either יֹמִי has dropped out by haplography or a ם (*mem*) has been left out, i.e., reading יֹמִיָּם (*yomam*, “daily”).

⁴ **tn** Or “But your predecessors...”; *Heb* “But they....” There is a confusing interchange in the pronouns in vv. 25-26 which has led to some leveling in the ancient versions and the modern English versions. What is involved here are four levels of referents, the “you” of the present generation (vv. 21-22a), the ancestors who were delivered from Egypt (i.e., the “they” of vv. 22b-24), the “you” of v. 25 which involves all the Israelites from the Exodus to the time of speaking, and the “they” of v. 26 which cannot be the ancestors of vv. 22-24 (since they cannot be more wicked than themselves) but must be an indefinite entity which is a part of the “you” of v. 25, i.e., the more immediate ancestors of the present generation. If this is kept in mind, there is no need to level the pronouns to “they” and “them” or to “you” and “your” as some of the ancient versions and modern English versions have done.

⁵ **tn** *Heb* “hardened [or made stiff] their neck.”

⁶ **tn** The words, “Then the LORD said to me” are not in the text but are implicit in the shift from the second and third person plural pronouns in vv. 21-26 and the second singular in this verse. The words are supplied in the translation for clarity.

⁷ **tn** *Heb* “Faithfulness has vanished. It is cut off from their lips.”

⁸ **tn** For the need for faithfulness see 5:1, 3.

⁹ **tn** The word “mourn” is not in the text. It is supplied in the translation for clarity to explain the significance of the words “Cut your hair and throw it away.”

¹⁰ **tn** Cf. Mic 1:16; Job 1:20 for other examples of this practice which was involved in mourning.

¹¹ **tn** The words, “you people of this nation” are not in the text. Many English versions supply, “Jerusalem.” The address shifts from second masculine singular addressing Jeremiah (vv. 27-28a) to second feminine singular. It causes less disruption in the flow of the context to see the nation as a whole addressed here as a feminine singular entity (as, e.g., in 2:19, 23; 3:2, 3; 6:26) than to introduce a new entity, Jerusalem.

¹² **tn** The verbs here are the Hebrew scheduling perfects. For this use of the perfect see GKC 312 §106.m.

¹³ **tn** *Heb* “the generation of his wrath.”

7:30 The LORD says, “I have rejected them because¹² the people of Judah have done what I consider evil.¹³ They have set up their disgusting idols in the temple¹⁴ which I have claimed for my own¹⁵ and have defiled it. 7:31 They have also built places of worship¹⁶ in a place called Topheth¹⁷ in the Valley of Ben Hinnom so that they can sacrifice their sons and daughters by fire. That is something I never commanded them to do! Indeed, it never even entered my mind to command such a thing!¹⁸ 7:32 So, watch out!”¹⁹ says the LORD. “The time will soon come when people will no longer call those places Topheth or the Valley of Ben Hinnom. But they will call that valley²⁰ the Valley of Slaughter and they will bury so many people in Topheth they will run out of room.²¹ 7:33 Then the dead bodies of these people will be left on the ground for the birds and wild animals to eat.²² There will not be any survivors to scare them away. 7:34 I will put an end to the sounds of joy and gladness, or the

¹² **tn** The words “I have rejected them” are not in the Hebrew text, which merely says “because.” These words are supplied in the translation to show more clearly the connection to the preceding.

¹³ **tn** *Heb* “have done the evil in my eyes.”

¹⁴ **sn** Compare, e.g., 2 Kgs 21:3, 5, 7; 23:4, 6; Ezek 8:3, 5, 10-12, 16. Manasseh had desecrated the temple by building altars, cult symbols, and idols in it. Josiah had purged the temple of these pagan elements. But it is obvious from both Jeremiah and Ezekiel that they had been replaced shortly after Josiah’s death. They were a primary cause of Judah’s guilt and punishment (see beside this passage, 19:5; 32:34-35).

¹⁵ **tn** *Heb* “the house which is called by my name.” Cf. 7:10, 11, 14 and see the translator’s note 7:10 for the explanation for this rendering.

¹⁶ **tn** *Heb* “high places.”

sn These places of worship were essentially open air shrines often located on hills or wooded heights. They were generally connected with pagan worship and equipped with altars of sacrifice and of incense and cult objects such as wooden poles and stone pillars which were symbols of the god and/or goddess worshipped at the sight. The Israelites were commanded to tear down these Canaanite places of worship (Num 33:52) but they did not do so, often taking over the site for the worship of Yahweh but even then incorporating some of the pagan cult objects and ritual into their worship of Yahweh (1 Kgs 12:31, 32; 14:23). The prophets were especially opposed to these places and to this kind of syncretism (Hos 10:8; Amos 7:9) and to the pagan worship that was often practiced at them (Jer 7:31; 19:5; 32:35).

¹⁷ **tn** *Heb* “the high places of [or in] Topheth.”

sn The noun *Topheth* is generally explained as an artificial formation of a word related to the Aramaic word for “cooking stove” combined with the vowels for the word for “shame.” Hence, Jewish piety viewed it as a very shameful act, one that was contrary to the law (see Lev 18:21; 20:2-6). Child sacrifice was practiced during the reigns of the wicked kings Ahaz and Manasseh and apparently during Jeremiah’s day (cf. 2 Kgs 16:3; 21:6; Jer 32:35).

¹⁸ **tn** *Heb* “It never entered my heart.” The words “to command such a thing” do not appear in the Hebrew but are added for the sake of clarity.

¹⁹ **tn** *Heb* “Therefore, behold!”

²⁰ **tn** *Heb* “it will no longer be said ‘Topheth’ or ‘the Valley of Ben Hinnom’ but ‘the valley of slaughter.’”

²¹ **tn** *Heb* “And they will bury in Topheth so there is not room.”

²² **tn** *Heb* “Their dead bodies will be food for the birds of the air and the beasts of the earth.”

glad celebration of brides and grooms throughout the towns of Judah and the streets of Jerusalem. For the whole land will become a desolate wasteland.”

8:1 The LORD says, “When that time comes,¹ the bones of the kings of Judah and its leaders, the bones of the priests and prophets and of all the other people who lived in Jerusalem will be dug up from their graves. **8:2** They will be spread out and exposed to the sun, the moon and the stars.² These are things they³ adored and served, things to which they paid allegiance,⁴ from which they sought guidance, and worshiped. The bones of these people⁵ will never be regathered and reburied. They will be like manure used to fertilize the ground.⁶

8:3 However, I will leave some of these wicked people alive and banish them to other places. But wherever these people who survive may go, they will wish they had died rather than lived,⁷” says the LORD who rules over all.⁸

Willful Disregard of God Will Lead to Destruction

8:4 The LORD said to me,⁹

“Tell them, ‘The LORD says,
Do people not get back up when they fall down?
Do they not turn around when they go the wrong way?’¹⁰

8:5 Why, then, do these people of Jerusalem¹¹

continually turn away from me in apostasy?

They hold fast to their deception.¹²
They refuse to turn back to me.¹³

8:6 I have listened to them very carefully,¹⁴ but they do not speak honestly.
None of them regrets the evil he has done.

None of them says, “I have done wrong!”¹⁵

All of them persist in their own wayward course¹⁶
like a horse charging recklessly into battle.

8:7 Even the stork knows when it is time to move on.¹⁷

The turtle dove, swallow, and crane¹⁸ recognize¹⁹ the normal times for their migration.

But my people pay no attention

¹ *tn* Heb “At that time.”

² *tc* MT, 4QJer^a and LXX read “the sun and the moon and all the host of heaven,” but 4QJer^c reads “the sun and all the stars.”

tn Heb “the host of heaven.”

³ *tn* Heb “the sun, moon, and host of heaven which they...”

⁴ *tn* Heb “followed after.” See the translator’s note at 2:5 for the idiom.

⁵ *tn* Heb “they will not” but the referent is far enough removed that it might be ambiguous.

⁶ *tn* Heb “like dung/manure on the surface of the ground.”

⁷ *tn* Heb “Death will be chosen rather than life by the remnant who are left from this wicked family in all the places where I have banished them.” The sentence is broken up and restructured to avoid possible confusion because of the complexity of the English to some modern readers. There appears to be an extra “those who are left” that was inadvertently copied from the preceding line. It is missing from one Hebrew *ms* and from the Greek and Syriac versions and is probably not a part of the original text.

⁸ *tn* Heb “Yahweh of armies.”

⁹ *sn* For the significance of this title see the notes at 2:19 and 7:3.

¹⁰ *tn* The words “the LORD said to me” are not in the text but are implicit from the context. They are supplied in the translation to make clear who is speaking and who is being addressed.

¹¹ *sn* There is a play on two different nuances of the same Hebrew word that means “turn” and “return,” “turn away” and “turn back.”

¹² *tc* The text is quite commonly emended, changing שׁוֹבְבָה הָעַם (*shovavah ha’am*) שׁוֹבְבֵי הָעַם (*shovav ha’am*) and omitting יְרוּשָׁלַיִם (*Yrushalaim*); this is due to the availability of a feminine singular verb with a masculine singular subject and the fact that the word “Jerusalem” is absent from one Hebrew *ms* and the LXX. However, it is possible that this is a case where the noun “Jerusalem” is a defining apposition to the word “these

people,” an apposition which GKC 425 §131.k calls “permutation.” In this case the verb could be attracted to the appositional noun and there would be no reason to emend the text. The MT is undoubtedly the harder reading and is for that reason to be preferred.

map For location see Map5-B1; Map6-F3; Map7-E2; Map8-F2; Map10-B3; JP1-F4; JP2-F4; JP3-F4; JP4-F4.

¹² *tn* Or “to their allegiance to false gods,” or “to their false professions of loyalty”; Heb “to deceit.” Either “to their mistaken beliefs” or “to their allegiance to false gods” would fit the preceding context. The former is more comprehensive than the latter and was chosen for that reason.

¹³ *sn* There is a continuing play on the same root word used in the preceding verse. Here the words “turn away from me,” “apostasy,” and “turn back to me” are all forms from the root that was translated “go the wrong way” and “turn around” in v. 4. The intended effect is to contrast Judah’s recalcitrant apostasy with the usual tendency to try and correct one’s mistakes.

¹⁴ *tn* Heb “I have paid attention and I have listened.” This is another case of two concepts being joined by “and” where one expresses the main idea and the other acts as an adverbial or adjectival modifier (a figure called hendiadys).

¹⁵ *tn* Heb “What have I done?” The addition of the word “wrong” is implicit in the context and is supplied in the translation for clarity. The rhetorical question does not function as a denial of wrongdoing, but rather as contrite shock at one’s own wrongdoing. It is translated as a declaration for the sake of clarity.

¹⁶ *tn* Heb “each one of them turns aside into their own running course.”

sn The wordplay begun in v. 4 is continued here. The word translated “turns aside” in the literal translation and “wayward” in the translation is from the same root as “go the wrong way,” “turn around,” “turn away from me,” “apostasy,” “turn back to me.” What God hoped for were confessions of repentance and change of behavior; what he got was denial of wrongdoing and continued turning away from him.

¹⁷ *tn* Heb “its appointed time.” The translation is contextually motivated to avoid lack of clarity.

¹⁸ *tn* There is debate in the commentaries and lexicons about the identification of some of these birds, particularly regarding the identification of the “swallow” which is more likely the “swift” and the “crane” which some identify with the “thrush.” For a discussion see the Bible encyclopedias and the UBS handbook *Fauna and Flora of the Bible*. The identity of the individual birds makes little difference to the point being made and “swallow” is more easily identifiable to the average reader than the “swift.”

¹⁹ *tn* Heb “keep.” Ironically birds, which do not think, obey the laws of nature, but Israel does not obey the laws of God.

to¹ what I, the LORD, require of them.²

8:8 How can you say, “We are wise! We have the law of the LORD?”³ The truth is,³ those who teach it⁴ have used their writings

to make it say what it does not really mean.⁵

8:9 Your wise men will be put to shame. They will be dumbfounded and be brought to judgment.⁶

Since they have rejected the word of the LORD,⁷ what wisdom do they really have?

8:10⁷ So I will give their wives to other men and their fields to new owners. For from the least important to the most important of them, all of them are greedy for dishonest gain. Prophets and priests alike, all practice deceit.

8:11 They offer only superficial help for the hurt my dear people⁸ have suffered.⁹

They say, “Everything will be all right!” But everything is not all right!¹⁰

8:12 Are they ashamed because they have done such disgusting things?

No, they are not at all ashamed! They do not even know how to blush! So they will die just like others have died.¹¹

They will be brought to ruin when I punish them,
says the LORD.

8:13 I will take away their harvests,¹² says the LORD.

There will be no grapes on their vines. There will be no figs on their fig trees. Even the leaves on their trees will wither. The crops that I gave them will be taken away.¹³

Jeremiah Laments over the Coming Destruction

8:14 The people say,¹⁴

“Why are we just sitting here?
Let us gather together inside the fortified cities.¹⁵

Let us at least die there fighting.¹⁶

¹² **tn** Or “I will completely destroy them.” The translation which is adopted is based on the revocalization of the MT which appears to mean literally “gathering I will sweep them away,” a rather improbable grammatical combination. It follows the suggestion found in HALOT 705 s.v. הִיפָּה (Hiph) of reading אֶתְּהִיבֶם אֶתְּהִיבֶם (*ose*, a first singular Qal imperfect of אָבַהּ [ʾasaf] followed by a noun אֶתְּהִיבֶם [ʾasif] with possessive suffix) instead of the MT’s אֶתְּהִיבֶם אֶתְּהִיבֶם (*aspf* ʾasifem, a Qal infinitive absolute of אָבַהּ [ʾasaf] followed by the Hiphil imperfect of אָבַהּ [ʾasf] plus suffix). For parallel usage of the verb אָבַהּ (*asaf*) see BDB 62 s.v. אָבַהּ Qal.4, and for a similar form of the verb see Mic 4:6. The alternate translation follows the suggestion in BDB 692 s.v. הִיפָּה Hiph: אָבַהּ (*asof*) is to be interpreted as a form of the Hiphil infinitive absolute הִיבֶהּ [hasef] would be expected) chosen for assonance with the following form. This suggestion would gain more credence if the MT is to be retained in Zeph 1:2 where parallel forms are found. However, that text too has been questioned on lexical and grammatical grounds. The translation adopted fits the following context better than the alternate one and is based on less questionable lexical and grammatical parallels. The Greek translation which reads “they shall gather their fruits” supports the translation chosen.

¹³ **tn** The meaning of this line is very uncertain. A possible alternate translation is: “They have broken the laws that I gave them.” The line reads rather literally “And I gave them they passed over them.” The translation adopted treats the first expression as a noun clause (cf. GK 488-89 §155.n) which is the subject of the following verb, i.e., “the things I gave them [contextually, the grapes, etc.] passed over from them.” The alternate translation treats the expression as a dangling object (a Hebrew *casus pendens*) resumed by the pronoun “them” and understands “the things that I gave them” to be the law or some related entity which is often the object of this verb (see BDB 717 s.v. קָבַח Qal.1.1). Neither of these translations is without its weakness. The weakness of the translation which has been adopted is the unusual use it assigns to the object suffix of the verb translated “pass over.” The weakness of the alternate translation is the rather abrupt and opaque introduction of a new topic of reference (i.e., the laws) into the context. On the whole the latter weakness would appear to outweigh the former. This line is missing from the Greek version and J. Bright (*Jeremiah* [AB]) and J. A. Thompson (*Jeremiah* [NICOT]) despair of giving a translation. For other possible suggestions see, W. L. Holladay, *Jeremiah* (Hermeneia), 1:285-86.

¹⁴ **tn** The words “The people say” are not in the text but are implicit in the shift of speakers between vv. 4-13 and vv. 14-16. They are supplied in the translation for clarity.

¹⁵ **tn** *Heb* “Gather together and let us enter into the fortified cities.”

¹⁶ **tn** *Heb* “Let us die there.” The words “at least” and “fighting” are intended to bring out the contrast of passive surrender to death in the open country and active resistance to the death implicit in the context.

¹ **tn** *Heb* “do not know.” But here as elsewhere the word “know” is more than an intellectual matter. It is intended here to summarize both “know” and “follow” (*Heb* “observe”) in the preceding lines.

² **tn** *Heb* “the ordinance/requirement of the LORD.”

³ **tn** *Heb* “Surely, behold!”

⁴ **tn** *Heb* “the scribes.”

⁵ **tn** *Heb* “The lying pen of the scribes has made [it] into a lie.” The translation is an attempt to make the most common interpretation of this passage understandable for the average reader. This is, however, a difficult passage whose interpretation is greatly debated and whose syntax is capable of other interpretations. The interpretation of the NJPS, “Assuredly, for naught has the pen labored, for naught the scribes,” surely deserves consideration within the context; i.e. it hasn’t done any good for the scribes to produce a reliable copy of the law, which the people have refused to follow. That interpretation has the advantage of explaining the absence of an object for the verb “make” or “labored” but creates a very unbalanced poetic couplet.

⁶ **tn** *Heb* “be trapped.” However, the word “trapped” generally carries with it the connotation of divine judgment. See BDB 540 s.v. לָכַד Niph.2, and compare usage in Jer 6:11 for support. The verbs in the first two lines are again the form of the Hebrew verb that emphasizes that the action is as good as done (Hebrew prophetic perfects).

⁷ **sn** See Jer 6:12-15 for parallels to 8:10-12. The words of Jeremiah to the people may have been repeated on more than one occasion or have been found appropriate to more than one of his collection of messages in written and edited form. See Jer 36:4 and Jer 36:28 for reference to at least two of these collections.

⁸ **tn** *Heb* “daughter of my people.” For the translation given here see 4:11 and the note on the phrase “dear people” there.

⁹ **tn** *Heb* “They heal the wound of my people lightly.”

¹⁰ **tn** *Heb* “They say, ‘Peace! Peace!’ and there is no peace!”

¹¹ **tn** *Heb* “They will fall among the fallen.”

since the LORD our God has condemned us to die.
 He has condemned us to drink the poison waters of judgment¹ because we have sinned against him.²
8:15 We hoped for good fortune, but nothing good has come of it.
 We hoped for a time of relief, but instead we experience terror.³
8:16 The snorting of the enemy's horses is already being heard in the city of Dan. The sound of the neighing of their stallions⁴ causes the whole land to tremble with fear.
 They are coming to destroy the land and everything in it!
 They are coming to destroy⁵ the cities and everyone who lives in them!"

8:17 The LORD says,⁶

"Yes indeed,⁷ I am sending an enemy against you that will be like poisonous snakes which cannot be charmed away.⁸ And they will inflict fatal wounds on you."⁹

8:18 Then I said,¹⁰

"There is no cure¹¹ for my grief!

I am sick at heart!

8:19 I hear my dear people¹² crying out¹³ throughout the length and breadth of the land.¹⁴

They are crying, 'Is the LORD no longer in Zion?

Is her divine King¹⁵ no longer there?'"

The LORD answers,¹⁶

"Why then do they provoke me to anger with their images, with their worthless foreign idols?"¹⁷

8:20 "They cry,¹⁸ 'Harvest time has come and gone, and the summer is over,¹⁹ and still we have not been delivered.'

8:21 My heart is crushed because my dear people²⁰ are being crushed.²¹

I go about crying and grieving. I am overwhelmed with dismay.²²

8:22 There is still medicinal ointment²³ available in Gilead!

There is still a physician there!²⁴

to יָבֵט (mibb^{eli} g^{ehot}) which is a Qal infinitive from a verb meaning "to heal" preceded by a compound negative "for lack of, to be at a loss for" (cf., e.g., HALOT 514 s.v. מְבִלְיָה and 174 s.v. בָּהָה). This reading is supported by the Greek text which has an adjective meaning "incurable," which is, however, connected with the preceding verse, i.e., "they will bite you incurably."

¹ **tn** Heb "daughter of my people." For the translation given here see 4:11 and the note on the phrase "dear people" there.

² **tn** Heb "Behold the voice of the crying of the daughter of my people."

³ **tn** Heb "Land of distances, i.e., of wide extent." For parallel usage cf. Isa 33:17.

⁴ **tn** Heb "her King" but this might be misunderstood by some to refer to the Davidic ruler even with the capitalization.

⁵ **tn** The words, "The LORD would answer" are not in the text but are implicit from the words that follow. They are supplied in the translation for clarity. Another option would be to add "And I can just hear the LORD reply."

⁶ **sn** The people's cry and the LORD's interruption reflect the same argument that was set forth in the preceding chapter. They have misguided confidence that the LORD is with them regardless of their actions and he responds that their actions have provoked him to the point of judging them. See especially 7:4 and 7:30.

⁷ **tn** The words "They say" are not in the text; they are supplied in the translation to make clear that the lament of the people begun in v. 19b is continued here after the interruption of the LORD's words in v. 19c.

⁸ **tn** Heb "Harvest time has passed, the summer is over."

sn This appears to be a proverbial statement for "time marches on." The people appear to be expressing their frustration that the LORD has not gone about his business of rescuing them as they expected. For a similar misguided feeling based on the offering of shallow repentance see Hos 6:1-3 (and note the LORD's reply in 6:4-6).

⁹ **tn** Heb "daughter of my people." For the translation given here see 4:11 and the note on the phrase "dear people" there.

¹⁰ **tn** Heb "Because of the crushing of the daughter of my people I am crushed."

¹¹ **tn** Heb "I go about in black [i.e., mourning clothes]. Dismay has seized me."

¹² **tn** Heb "balm." The more familiar "ointment" has been used in the translation, supplemented with the adjective "medicinal."

sn This medicinal ointment (Heb "balm") consisted of the gum or resin from a tree of uncertain identification thought to have medicinal value (see also Jer 46:11).

¹³ **tn** Heb "Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician

¹ **tn** The words "of judgment" are not in the text but are intended to show that "poison water" is not literal but figurative of judgment at the hands of God through the agency of the enemy mentioned in v. 16.

² **tn** Heb "against the LORD." The switch is for the sake of the smoothness in English.

³ **tn** Heb "[We hoped] for a time of healing but behold terror."

⁴ **tn** Heb "his stallions."

⁵ **tn** The words "They are coming to destroy" are not in the text. They are inserted to break up a long sentence in conformity with contemporary English style.

⁶ **tn** These words which are at the end of the Hebrew verse are brought forward to show at the outset the shift in speaker.

⁷ **tn** Heb "Indeed [or For] behold!" The translation is intended to convey some of the connection that is suggested by the Hebrew particle כִּי (ki) at the beginning of the verse.

⁸ **tn** Heb "I am sending against you snakes, poisonous ones which cannot be charmed." In the light of the context literal snakes are scarcely meant. So the metaphor is turned into a simile to prevent possible confusion. For a similar metaphorical use of animals for enemies see 5:6.

⁹ **tn** Heb "they will bite you." There does not appear to be any way to avoid the possible confusion that literal snakes are meant here except to paraphrase. Possibly one could say "And they will attack you and 'bite' you," but the enclosing of the word "bite" in quotations might lead to even further confusion.

¹⁰ **tn** The words, "Then I said" are not in the text but there is a general consensus that the words of vv. 18-19a are the words of Jeremiah. These words are supplied in the translation for clarity.

¹¹ **tn** The meaning of this word is uncertain. The translation is based on the redivision and repointing of a word that occurs only here in the MT and whose pattern of formation is unparalleled in the Hebrew Bible. The MT reads מְבִלְיָהּ (mavligiti) which BDB provisionally derives from a verb root meaning "to gleam" or "to shine." However, BDB notes that the text is dubious (cf. BDB 114 s.v. מְבִלְיָהּ). The text is commonly emended

Why then have my dear people⁴
not been restored to health?²
9:1 (8:23)³ I wish that my head were a well
full of water⁴
and my eyes were a fountain full of tears!
If they were, I could cry day and night
for those of my dear people⁵ who have
been killed.
9:2 (9:1) I wish I had a lodging place in the
desert
where I could spend some time like a
weary traveler.⁶
Then I would desert my people
and walk away from them
because they are all unfaithful to God,
a congregation⁷ of people that has been
disloyal to him.⁸

The Lord Laments That He Has No Choice But to Judge Them

9:3 The LORD says,⁹

“These people are like soldiers who have
readied their bows.
Their tongues are always ready to shoot
out lies.¹⁰
They have become powerful in the land,
but they have not done so by honest
means.¹¹
Indeed, they do one evil thing after an-
other¹²

there?” In this context the questions are rhetorical and expect a positive answer, which is made explicit in the translation.

sn The prophet means by this metaphor that there are still means available for healing the spiritual ills of his people, mainly repentance, obedience to the law, and sole allegiance to God, and still people available who will apply this medicine to them, namely prophets like himself.

1 tn *Heb* “daughter of my people.” For the translation given here see 4:11 and the note on the phrase “dear people” there.

2 tn Or more clearly, “restored to spiritual health”; *Heb* “Why then has healing not come to my dear people?”

sn Jeremiah is lamenting that though there is a remedy available for the recovery of his people they have not availed themselves of it.

3 sn Beginning with 9:1, the verse numbers through 9:26 in the English Bible differ from the verse numbers in the Hebrew text (*BHS*), with 9:1 ET = 8:23 HT, 9:2 ET = 9:1 HT, 9:3 ET = 9:2 HT, etc., through 9:26 ET = 9:25 HT. Beginning with 10:1 the verse numbers in the ET and HT are again the same.

4 tn *Heb* “I wish that my head were water.”

5 tn *Heb* “daughter of my people.” For the translation given here see 4:11 and the note on the phrase “dear people” there.

6 tn *Heb* “I wish I had in the desert a lodging place [inn, or place to spend the night] for travelers.”

7 tn Or “bunch,” but this loses the irony; the word is used for the solemn assemblies at the religious feasts.

8 tn *Heb* “they are all adulterers, a congregation of unfaithful people.” However, spiritual adultery is, of course, meant, not literal adultery. So the literal translation would be misleading.

9 tn The words “The LORD says” have been moved up from the end of the verse to make clear that a change in speaker has occurred.

10 tn *Heb* “They have readied [or strung] their tongue as their bow for lies.”

11 tn *Heb* “but not through honesty.”

12 tn *Heb* “they go from evil to evil.”

and do not pay attention to me.¹³

9:4 Everyone must be on his guard around
his friends.

He must not even trust any of his rela-
tives.¹⁴

For every one of them will find some way
to cheat him.¹⁵

And all of his friends will tell lies about
him.

9:5 One friend deceives another
and no one tells the truth.

These people have trained themselves¹⁶
to tell lies.

They do wrong and are unable to repent.

9:6 They do one act of violence after an-
other,
and one deceitful thing after another.¹⁷

13 tn Or “do not acknowledge me”; *Heb* “do not know me.” But “knowing” in Hebrew thought often involves more than intellectual knowledge; it involves emotional and volitional commitment as well. For יָדַע meaning “acknowledge” see 1 Chr 28:9; Isa 29:21; Hos 2:20; Prov 3:6. This word is also found in ancient Near Eastern treaty contexts where it has the idea of a vassal king acknowledging the sovereignty of a greater king (cf. H. Huffmon, “The Treaty Background of Hebrew yada,” *BASOR* 181 [1966]: 31-37).

14 tn *Heb* “Be on your guard...Do not trust.” The verbs are second masculine plural of direct address and there seems no way to translate literally and not give the mistaken impression that Jeremiah is being addressed. This is another example of the tendency in Hebrew style to turn from description to direct address (a figure of speech called apostrophe).

15 tn *Heb* “cheating, each of them will cheat.”

sn There is perhaps an intentional pun and allusion here to Gen 27:36 and the wordplay on the name Jacob there. The text here reads יַעֲקֹב יַעֲקֹב (*‘aqob ya’qob*).

16 tn *Heb* “their tongues.” However, this is probably not a natural idiom in contemporary English and the tongue may stand as a part for the whole anyway.

17 tc An alternate reading for vv. 5d-6b is: “They wear themselves out doing wrong. Jeremiah, you live in the midst of deceitful people. They deceitfully refuse to take any thought of/acknowledge me.” The translation which has been adopted is based on a redivision of the lines, a redivision of some of the words, and a revocalization of some of the consonants. The MT reads literally “doing wrong they weary themselves. Your sitting in the midst of deceit; in deceit they refuse to know me” (הַעֲשֶׂה נִלְאוּ שְׁבִתָּךְ בְּתוֹךְ מַרְמֵה בְּמַרְמֵה מֵאֵי דַעַת־אוֹתִי). The Greek version reads literally “they do wrong and they do not cease to turn themselves around. Usury upon usury and deceit upon deceit. They do not want to know me.” This suggests that one should read the Hebrew text as שָׁבִי הֵךְ בְּרוֹךְ מַרְמֵה בְּמַרְמֵה מֵאֵי דַעַת־אוֹתִי וְנִלְאוּ, which translated literally yields “doing evil [= “they do evil”] using the Hiphil infinitive absolute as a finite verb (cf. GKC 346 §113.ff) they are not able [cf. KBL 468 s.v. לָאוּ Niph.3 and see Exod 7:18 for parallel use] to repent. Oppression on oppression [cf. BDB 1067 s.v. הֵךְ, תֵּךְ, וּ, הֵךְ, תֵּךְ]; deceit on deceit. They refuse to know me.” This reading has ancient support and avoids the introduction of an unexpected second masculine suffix into the context. It has been adopted here along with a number of modern commentaries (cf., e.g., W. McKane, *Jeremiah* [ICC], 1:201) and English versions as the more likely reading.

They refuse to pay attention to me,"¹ says the LORD.

9:7 Therefore the LORD who rules over all says,²

"I will now purify them in the fires of affliction³ and test them. The wickedness of my dear people⁴ has left me no choice. What else can I do?⁵

9:8 Their tongues are like deadly arrows.⁶ They are always telling lies.⁷ Friendly words for their neighbors come from their mouths.

But their minds are thinking up ways to trap them.⁸

9:9 I will certainly punish them for doing such things!" says the LORD.

"I will certainly bring retribution on such a nation as this!"⁹

The Coming Destruction Calls For Mourning

9:10 I said,¹⁰

"I will weep and mourn¹¹ for the grasslands on the mountains.¹²

I will sing a mournful song for the pastures in the wilderness because they are so scorched no one travels through them.

The sound of livestock is no longer heard there.

Even the birds in the sky and the wild animals in the fields have fled and are gone."

9:11 The LORD said,¹³

"I will make Jerusalem¹⁴ a heap of ruins. Jackals will make their home there.¹⁵

I will destroy the towns of Judah so that no one will be able to live in them."

9:12 I said,¹⁶

"Who is wise enough to understand why this has happened?¹⁷

Who has a word from the LORD that can explain it?¹⁸

Why does the land lie in ruins?

Why is it as scorched as a desert through which no one travels?"

9:13 The LORD answered, "This has happened because these people have rejected my laws which I gave them. They have not obeyed me or followed those laws.¹⁹ 9:14 Instead they have followed the stubborn inclinations of their own hearts. They have paid allegiance to²⁰ the

¹ tn Or "do not acknowledge me"; Heb "do not know me." See the note on the phrase "do not take any thought of me" in 9:3.

² tn Heb "Yahweh of armies."

sn For the significance of this title see the notes at 2:19 and 7:3.

³ tn Heb "I will refine/purify them." The words "in the fires of affliction" are supplied in the translation to give clarity to the metaphor.

⁴ tn Heb "daughter of my people." For the translation given here see 4:11 and the note on the phrase "dear people" there.

⁵ tc Heb "For how else shall I deal because of the wickedness of the daughter of my people." The MT does not have the word "wickedness." The word, however, is read in the Greek version. This is probably a case of a word dropping out because of its similarities to the consonants preceding or following it (i.e., haplography). The word "wickedness" (רעת, *ra'at*) has dropped out before the words "my dear people" (בתי-אממי, *bat-'ammi*). The causal nuance which is normal for מִיִּפְּנֵי (*mipp'ne*) does not make sense without some word like this, and the combination of מִיִּפְּנֵי רעת (*mipp'ne ra'at*) does occur in Jer 7:12 and one very like it occurs in Jer 26:3.

⁶ tc This reading follows the Masoretic consonants (the *Kethib*, a Qal active participle from שָׁחַט, *shakhat*). The Masoretes preferred to read "a sharpened arrow" (the *Qere*, a Qal passive participle from the same root or a homonym, meaning "hammered, beaten"). See HALOT 1354 s.v. II שָׁחַט for discussion. The exact meaning of the word makes little difference to the meaning of the metaphor itself.

⁷ tn Heb "They speak deceit."

⁸ tn Heb "With his mouth a person speaks peace to his neighbor, but in his heart he sets an ambush for him."

⁹ tn Heb "Should I not punish them...? Should I not bring retribution...?" The rhetorical questions function as emphatic declarations.

sn See 5:9, 29. This is somewhat of a refrain at the end of a catalog of Judah's sins.

¹⁰ tn The words "I said" are not in the text, but there is general agreement that Jeremiah is the speaker. Cf. the lament in 8:18-9:1. These words are supplied in the translation for clarity. Some English versions follow the Greek text which reads a plural imperative here. Since this reading would make the transition between 9:10 and 9:11 easier it is probably not original but a translator's way of smoothing over a difficulty.

¹¹ tn Heb "I will lift up weeping and mourning."

¹² tn Heb "for the mountains." However, the context makes clear that it is the grasslands or pastures on the mountains that are meant. The words "for the grasslands" are supplied in the translation for clarity.

¹³ tn The words "the LORD said" are not in the text, but it is obvious from the content that he is the speaker. These words are supplied in the translation for clarity.

¹⁴ map For location see Map5-B1; Map6-F3; Map7-E2; Map8-F2; Map10-B3; JP1-F4; JP2-F4; JP3-F4; JP4-F4.

¹⁵ tn Heb "a heap of ruins, a haunt for jackals."

¹⁶ tn The words, "I said" are not in the text. It is not clear that a shift in speaker has taken place. However, the words of the verse are very unlikely to be a continuation of the LORD's threat. It is generally assumed that these are the words of Jeremiah and that a dialogue is going on between him and the LORD in vv. 9-14. That assumption is accepted here.

¹⁷ tn Heb "Who is the wise man that he may understand this?"

¹⁸ tn Heb "And [who is the man] to whom the mouth of the LORD has spoken that he may explain it?"

¹⁹ tn Heb "and they have not walked in it (with "it" referring to "my law")."

²⁰ tn Heb "they have gone/followed after." See the translator's note at 2:5 for the idiom.

gods called Baal,¹ as their fathers² taught them to do. **9:15** So then, listen to what I, the LORD God of Israel who rules over all,³ say.⁴ ‘I will make these people eat the bitter food of suffering and drink the poison water of judgment.’⁵ **9:16** I will scatter them among nations that neither they nor their ancestors⁶ have known anything about. I will send people chasing after them with swords⁷ until I have destroyed them.”⁸

9:17 The LORD who rules over all⁹ told me to say to this people,¹⁰

“Take note of what I say.¹¹
Call for the women who mourn for the dead!
Summon those who are the most skilled at it!”¹²

1 tn Heb “the Baals,” referring either to the pagan gods called “Baals” or the images of Baal (so NLT).

2 tn Or “forefathers,” or “ancestors.” Here the referent could be the immediate parents or, by their example, more distant ancestors.

3 tn Heb “Yahweh of armies, the God of Israel.”

sn See the study notes on 2:9 and 7:3.

4 tn Heb “Therefore, thus says the LORD...” The person is shifted from third to first to better conform with English style.

5 tn Heb “I will feed this people wormwood and make them drink poison water.” “Wormwood” and “poison water” are not to be understood literally here but are symbolic of judgment and suffering. See, e.g., BDB 542 s.v. חֲמֵדָה.

6 tn Heb “fathers.”

7 tn Heb “I will send the sword after them.” The sword here is probably not completely literal but refers to death by violent means, including death by the sword.

8 sn He will destroy them but not completely. See Jer 5:18; 30:11; 46:28.

9 tn Heb “Yahweh of armies.”

sn For the significance of this title see the notes at 2:19 and 7:3.

10 tn Heb “Thus says Yahweh of armies.” However, without some addition it is not clear to whom the command is addressed. The words are supplied in the translation for clarity and to help resolve a rather confusing issue of who is speaking throughout vv. 16-21. As has been evident throughout the translation, the speaker is not always indicated. Sometimes it is not even clear who the speaker is. In general the translation and the notes have reflected the general consensus in identifying who it is. Here, however, there is a good deal of confusion about who is speaking in vv. 18, 20-21. The Greek translation has the LORD speaking throughout with second plural pronouns in vv. 18, 21 and the absence of the first line in v. 22. It would be hard to explain how the MT arose if it were the original text. Critical commentators such as J. Bright, W. Holladay, and W. McKane resolve the issue by dropping out the introductory formula in v. 17 and the first line of v. 22 and assigning the whole lament to Jeremiah. It seems obvious from the first plural pronouns and the content of v. 18 (and probably v. 21 as well) and the fact that the LORD is referred to in other than the first person in v. 20 that he is not the speaker of those verses. The translation attempts to resolve the issue by having Jeremiah report the LORD’s command in v. 17 and have the rest of the speech be essentially that of Jeremiah. It should be admitted, however, that the issue is far from resolved. Most English versions simply ignore the problem. The GNB (= TEV) is a rare exception.

11 tn Heb “Consider!”

12 tn Heb “Call for the mourning women that they may come and send for the wise/skilled women that they may come.” The verbs here are masculine plural, addressed to the people.

9:18 I said, “Indeed,¹³ let them come quickly and sing a song of mourning for us.

Let them wail loudly until tears stream from our own eyes and our eyelids overflow with water.

9:19 For the sound of wailing is soon to be heard in Zion.

They will wail,¹⁴ ‘We are utterly ruined!¹⁵ We are completely disgraced!

For our houses have been torn down and we must leave our land.”¹⁶

9:20 I said,¹⁷

“So now,¹⁸ you wailing women, hear what the LORD says.¹⁹

Open your ears to the words from his mouth.

Teach your daughters this mournful song, and each of you teach your neighbor²⁰ this lament.

9:21 ‘Death has climbed in²¹ through our windows.

It has entered into our fortified houses.

It has taken away our children who play in the streets.

It has taken away our young men who gather in the city squares.’

13 tn The words “And I said, ‘Indeed’ are not in the text. They have been supplied in the translation to try and help clarify who the speaker is who identifies with the lament of the people.

14 tn The words “They will wail” are not in the text. They are supplied in the translation to make clear that this is the wailing that will be heard.

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

15 tn Heb “How we are ruined!”

16 tn The order of these two lines has been reversed for English stylistic reasons. The text reads in Hebrew “because we have left our land because they have thrown down our dwellings.” The two clauses offer parallel reasons for the cries “How ruined we are! [How] we are greatly disgraced!” But the first line must contain a prophetic perfect (because the lament comes from Jerusalem) and the second a perfect referring to a destruction that is itself future. This seems the only way to render the verse that would not be misleading.

17 tn The words “I said” are not in the text. The text merely has “Indeed, yes.” The words are supplied in the translation to indicate that the speaker is still Jeremiah though he now is not talking about the mourning woman but is talking to them. See the notes on 9:17-18 for further explanation.

18 tn It is a little difficult to explain how the Hebrew particle כי (*ki*) is functioning here. W. L. Holladay (*Jeremiah* [Hermeneia], 1:311) may be correct in seeing it as introducing the contents of what those who call for the mourning women are to say. In this case, Jeremiah picks up the task as representative of the people.

19 tn Heb “Listen to the word of the LORD.”

sn In this context the “word of the LORD” that they are to listen for is the word of the lament that they are to teach their daughters and neighbors.

20 tn Heb “Teach...mournful song, and each woman her neighbor lady...”

21 sn Here *Death* is personified (treated as though it were a person). Some have seen as possible background to this lament an allusion to Mesopotamian mythology where the demon Lamastu climbs in through the windows of houses and over their walls to kill children and babies.

9:22 Tell your daughters and neighbors,
 ‘The LORD says,
 “The dead bodies of people will lie scattered everywhere
 like manure scattered on a field.
 They will lie scattered on the ground
 like grain that has been cut down but has
 not been gathered.”’¹

9:23² The LORD says,
 “Wise people should not boast that they are wise.
 Powerful people should not boast that they are powerful.³
 Rich people should not boast that they are rich.⁴
 9:24 If people want to boast, they should boast about this:
 They should boast that they understand and know me.
 They should boast that they know and understand
 that I, the LORD, act out of faithfulness, fairness, and justice in the earth
 and that I desire people to do these things.”⁵

¹ **tn** Or “Death has climbed...city squares. And the dead bodies of people lie scattered...They lie scattered...but has not been gathered. The LORD has told me to tell you this.” Or “For death will climb...It will enter...It will take away...who gather in the city squares. So tell your daughters and neighbors, ‘The LORD wants you to say, “The dead bodies of people lie scattered...They lie scattered...has not been gathered.”’” The main causes of ambiguity are the particle *כִּי* (*ki*) introducing v. 21 and the verb form *דַּבֵּר* (*dabber*) at the beginning of v. 22. *כִּי* may be interpreted as introducing a causal sentence giving Jeremiah’s grounds for the commands of v. 19 in which case the verbs would best be understood as prophetic perfects (as in the second alternate translation). Or it may be interpreted as introducing the content of the lament the women are to teach their daughters and neighbors (as in the translation adopted and in the first alternate translation). The form *דַּבֵּר* may be interpreted as a Piel masculine singular imperative addressed to Jeremiah (as in the first alternate translation where it is placed at the end for the sake of clarity) or as a Piel infinitive absolute either explaining what the women are to teach their daughters and neighbors (as in the second alternate translation; cf. GKC 341 §113.h, *i* for this use of the infinitive absolute) or as equivalent to an imperative addressed to the women telling them to tell their daughters and neighbors the reason for the lament, i.e., the LORD’s promise of widespread death (cf. GKC 346 §113.bb for this use of the infinitive absolute). The translation chosen has opted for v. 21 as the content of the lament and v. 22 as the further explanation that Jeremiah has the women pass on to their neighbors and daughters. This appears to this interpreter to create the least confusion and dislocation in the flow of the passage.

² **sn** It is not always clear why verses were placed in their present position in the editorial process of collecting Jeremiah’s sermons and the words the LORD spoke to him (see Jer 36:4, 32 for reference to two of these collections). Here it is probable that vv. 23-26 were added as a further answer to the question raised in v. 12.

³ **tn** Or “Strong people should not brag that they are strong.”

⁴ **tn** *Heb* “...in their wisdom...in their power...in their riches.”

⁵ **tn** Or “fairness and justice, because these things give me pleasure.” Verse 24 reads in Hebrew, “But let the one who brags brag in this: understanding and knowing me that I, the LORD, do faithfulness, justice, and righteousness in the earth for/that I delight in these.” It is uncertain whether the Hebrew

says the LORD.

9:25 The LORD says, “Watch out!⁶ The time is soon coming when I will punish all those who are circumcised only in the flesh.⁷ 9:26 That is, I will punish the Egyptians, the Judeans, the Edomites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, and all the desert people who cut their hair short at the temples.⁸ I will do so because none of the people of those nations are really circumcised in the LORD’s sight.⁹ Moreover, none of the people of Israel¹⁰ are circumcised when it comes to their hearts.”¹¹

The Lord, not Idols, is the Only Worthy Object of Worship

10:1 You people of Israel,¹² listen to what the LORD has to say to you.

10:2 The LORD says,

“Do not start following pagan religious practices.¹³
 Do not be in awe of signs that occur¹⁴ in

particle *כִּי* (*ki*) before the clause “I delight in these things” is parallel to the *כִּי* introducing the clause “that I, the LORD, act...” or causal giving the grounds for the LORD acting the way he does. In the light of the contrasts in the passage and the emphasis that Jeremiah has placed on obedience to the covenant and ethical conduct in conjunction with real allegiance to the LORD not mere lip service, it is probable that the clauses are parallel. For the use of *כִּי* to introduce clauses of further definition after a direct object as here see GKC 365 §117.h and see BDB 393 s.v. *כִּי*; Qal.1.a. For parallels to the idea of Yahweh requiring these characteristics in people see Hos 6:6, Mic 6:8.

⁶ **tn** *Heb* “Behold!”

⁷ **tn** *Heb* “punish all who are circumcised in the flesh.” The translation is contextually motivated to better bring out the contrast that follows.

⁸ **tn** *Heb* “all those who are cut off on the side of the head who live in the desert.” KJV and some other English versions (e.g., NIV “who live in the desert in distant places”; NLT “who live in distant places”) have followed the interpretation that this is a biform of an expression meaning “end or remote parts of the [far] corners [of the earth].” This interpretation is generally abandoned by the more recent commentaries and lexicons (see, e.g., BDB 802 s.v. *פְּתָיִם* 1 and HALOT 858 s.v. *פְּתָיִם* 1.β). It occurs also in 25:33; 49:32.

⁹ **tn** *Heb* “For all of these nations are uncircumcised.” The words “I will do so” are supplied in the translation to indicate the connection with the preceding statement.

sn A contrast is drawn here between circumcision as a mere external cutting of the flesh and a sign of commitment to the covenant and the God of the covenant. The people of these nations practiced circumcision but not as a sign of the covenant. The people of Israel engaged in it as a religious practice but without any obedience to the covenant that it was a sign of or any real commitment to the LORD.

¹⁰ **tn** *Heb* “house of Israel.”

¹¹ **tn** *Heb* “And all the house of Israel is uncircumcised of heart.”

¹² **tn** *Heb* “house of Israel.”

¹³ **tn** *Heb* “Do not learn the way of the nations.” For this use of the word “ways” (*דַּרְכֵי*, *derekh*) compare for example Jer 12:16 and Isa 2:6.

¹⁴ **tn** *Heb* “signs.” The words “that occur” are supplied in the translation for clarity.

sn The Hebrew word translated here “things that go on in the sky” (*אוֹרוֹת*, *’otor*) refers both to unusual disturbances such as eclipses, comets, meteors, etc., but also to such things as the changes in the position of the sun, moon, and stars in conjunction with the changes in seasons (cf. Gen 1:14). The

the sky
 even though the nations hold them in
 awe.
10:3 For the religion¹ of these people is
 worthless.
 They cut down a tree in the forest,
 and a craftsman makes it into an idol with
 his tools.²
10:4 He decorates it with overlays of sil-
 ver and gold.
 He uses hammer and nails to fasten it³
 together
 so that it will not fall over.
10:5 Such idols are like scarecrows in a
 cucumber field.
 They cannot talk.
 They must be carried
 because they cannot walk.
 Do not be afraid of them
 because they cannot hurt you.
 And they do not have any power to help
 you.⁴
10:6 I said,⁵
 “There is no one like you, LORD.⁶
 You are great.
 And you are renowned for your power.⁷
10:7 Everyone should revere you, O King
 of all nations,⁸

people of Assyria and Babylonia worshiped the sun, moon, and stars, thinking that these heavenly bodies had some hold over them.

¹ **tn** *Heb* “statutes.” According to BDB 350 s.v. חָקָה 2.b it refers to the firmly established customs or practices of the pagan nations. Compare the usage in Lev 20:23; 2 Kgs 17:8. Here it is essentially equivalent to דֶּרֶךְ (*derekh*) in v. 1, which has already been translated “religious practices.”

² **sn** This passage is dripping with sarcasm. It begins by talking about the “statutes” of the pagan peoples as a “vapor” using a singular copula and singular predicate. Then it suppresses the subject, the idol, as though it were too horrible to mention, using only the predications about it. The last two lines read literally: “[it is] a tree which one cuts down from the forest; the work of the hands of a craftsman with his chisel.”

³ **tn** The pronoun is plural in Hebrew, referring to the parts.

⁴ **tn** *Heb* “And it is not in them to do good either.”

⁵ **tn** The words “I said” are not in the Hebrew text, but there appears to be a shift in speaker. Someone is now addressing the LORD. The likely speaker is Jeremiah, so the words “I said” are supplied in the translation for clarity.

⁶ **tn** The form that introduces this line has raised debate. The form מֵעַן (*me'en*) normally means “without” and introduces a qualification of a term expressing desolation or “so that not” and introduces a negative result (cf. BDB 35 s.v. II מֵעַן 6.b). Neither of these nuances fit either this verse or the occurrence in v. 7. BDB 35 s.v. II מֵעַן 6.b.γ notes that some have explained this as a strengthened form of אֵין (*ayin*) which occurs in a similar phrase five other times (cf., e.g., 1 Kgs 8:23). Though many including BDB question the validity of this solution it is probably better than the suggestion that BDB gives of pointing to מֵעַן (*me'ayin*, “whence”), which scarcely fits the context of v. 7, or the solution of HALOT 41 s.v. I מֵעַן, which suggests that the מ (*mem*) is a double writing (dittograph) of the final consonant from the preceding word. That would assume that the scribe made the same error twice or was influenced the second time by the first erroneous writing.

⁷ **tn** *Heb* “Great is your name in power.”

⁸ **tn** *Heb* “Who should not revere you...?” The question is rhetorical and expects a negative answer.

because you deserve to be revered.⁹
 For there is no one like you
 among any of the wise people of the na-
 tions nor among any of their kings.¹⁰
10:8 The people of those nations¹¹ are
 both stupid and foolish.
 Instruction from a wooden idol is worth-
 less!¹²
10:9 Hammered-out silver is brought from
 Tarshish¹³
 and gold is brought from Ufaz¹⁴ to cover
 those idols.¹⁵
 They are the handiwork of carpenters and
 goldsmiths.¹⁶
 They are clothed in blue and purple
 clothes.¹⁷
 They are all made by skillful workers.¹⁸
10:10 The LORD is the only true God.
 He is the living God and the everlasting
 King.
 When he shows his anger the earth
 shakes.
 None of the nations can stand up to his
 fury.

⁹ **tn** *Heb* “For it is fitting to you.”

¹⁰ **tn** *Heb* “their royalty/dominion.” This is a case of substitution of the abstract for the concrete “royalty, royal power” for “kings” who exercise it.

¹¹ **tn** Or “Those wise people and kings are...” It is unclear whether the subject is the “they” of the nations in the preceding verse, or the wise people and kings referred to. The text merely has “they.”

¹² **tn** *Heb* “The instruction of vanities [worthless idols] is wood.” The meaning of this line is a little uncertain. Various proposals have been made to make sense, most of which involve radical emendation of the text. For some examples see J. A. Thompson, *Jeremiah* (NICOT), 323-24, fn 6. However, this is probably a case of the bold predication that discussed in GKC 452 §141.d, some examples of which may be seen in Ps 109:4 “I am prayer,” and Ps 120:7 “I am peace.”

¹³ **tc** Two Qumran scrolls of Jeremiah (4QJer^a and 4QJer^b) reflect a Hebrew text that is very different than the traditional MT from which modern Bibles have been translated. The Hebrew text in these two manuscripts is similar to that from which LXX was translated. This is true both in small details and in major aspects where the LXX differs from MT. Most notably, 4QJer^a, 4QJer^b and LXX present a version of Jeremiah about 13% shorter than the longer version found in MT. One example of this shorter text is Jer 10:3-11 in which MT and 4QJer^a both have all nine verses, while LXX and 4QJer^b both lack vv. 6-8 and 10, which extol the greatness of God. In addition, the latter part of v. 9 is arranged differently in LXX and 4QJer^b. The translation here follows MT which is supported by 4QJer^a.

¹⁴ **tn** This is a place of unknown location. It is mentioned again in Dan 10:5. Many emend the word to “Ophir” following the Syriac version and the Aramaic Targum. Ophir was famous for its gold (cf. 1 Kgs 9:28; Job 28:16).

¹⁵ **tn** The words “to cover those idols” are not in the text but are implicit from the context. They are supplied in the translation for clarity.

¹⁶ **tn** The words “They are” are not in the text. The text reads merely, “the work of the carpenter and of the hands of the goldsmith.” The words are supplied in the translation for clarity.

¹⁷ **tn** *Heb* “Blue and purple their clothing.”

¹⁸ **sn** There is an ironic pun in this last line. The Hebrew word translated “skillful workers” is the same word that is translated “wise people” in v. 7. The artisans do their work skillfully but they are not “wise.”

10:11 You people of Israel should tell those nations this:
 ‘These gods did not make heaven and earth.
 They will disappear¹ from the earth and from under the heavens.’²
10:12 The LORD is the one who³ by his power made the earth.
 He is the one who by his wisdom established the world.
 And by his understanding he spread out the skies.
10:13 When his voice thunders,⁴ the heavenly ocean roars.
 He makes the clouds rise from the far-off horizons.⁵
 He makes the lightning flash out in the midst of the rain.
 He unleashes the wind from the places where he stores it.⁶
10:14 All these idolaters⁷ will prove to be stupid and ignorant.

Every goldsmith will be disgraced by the idol he made.
 For the image he forges is merely a sham.⁸
 There is no breath in any of those idols.⁹
10:15 They are worthless, mere objects to be mocked.¹⁰
 When the time comes to punish them, they will be destroyed.
10:16 The LORD, who is the inheritance¹¹ of Jacob’s descendants,¹² is not like them.
 He is the one who created everything.
 And the people of Israel are those he claims as his own.¹³
 He is known as the LORD who rules over all.’¹⁴

Jeremiah Laments for and Prays for the Soon-to-be-Judged People

10:17 Gather your belongings together and prepare to leave the land,
 you people of Jerusalem¹⁵ who are being besieged.¹⁶
10:18 For the LORD says, “I will now throw out
 those who live in this land.
 I will bring so much trouble on them
 that they will actually feel it.”¹⁷

¹ **tn** *Aram* “The gods who did not make...earth will disappear...” The sentence is broken up in the translation to avoid a long, complex English sentence in conformity with contemporary English style.

² **tn** This verse is in Aramaic. It is the only Aramaic sentence in Jeremiah. Scholars debate the appropriateness of this verse to this context. Many see it as a gloss added by a postexilic scribe which was later incorporated into the text. Both R. E. Clendenen (“Discourse Strategies in Jeremiah 10,” *JBL* 106 [1987]: 401-8) and W. L. Holladay (*Jeremiah* [Hermeneia], 1:324-25, 334-35) have given detailed arguments that the passage is not only original but the climax and center of the contrast between the LORD and idols in vv. 2-16. Holladay shows that the passage is a very carefully constructed chiasm (see accompanying study note) which argues that “these” at the end is the subject of the verb “will disappear” not the attributive adjective modifying heaven. He also makes a very good case that the verse is poetry and not prose as it is rendered in the majority of modern English versions.

³ **tn** This passage is carefully structured and placed to contrast the LORD who is living and eternal (v. 10) and made the heavens and earth (v. 12) with the idols who did not and will disappear. It also has a very careful concentric structure in the original text where “the gods” is balanced by “these,” “heavens” is balanced by “from under the heavens,” “the earth” is balanced by “from the earth,” and “did not make” is balanced and contrasted in the very center by “will disappear.” The structure is further reinforced by the sound play/wordplay between “did not make” (*Aram* לֹא עָשָׂה [la’ avadu]) and “will disappear” (*Aram* יִאבְדוּ [ye’avadu]). This is the rhetorical climax of Jeremiah’s sarcastic attack on the folly of idolatry.

⁴ **tn** The words “The LORD is” are not in the text. They are implicit from the context. They are supplied in the translation here because of the possible confusion of who the subject is due to the parenthetical address to the people of Israel in v. 11. The first two verbs are participles and should not merely be translated as the narrative past. They are predicate nominatives of an implied copula intending to contrast the LORD as the one who made the earth with the idols which did not.

⁵ **tn** *Heb* “At the voice of his giving.” The idiom “to give the voice” is often used for thunder (cf. BDB 679 s.v. בָּהַן; Qal.1.x).

⁶ **tn** *Heb* “from the ends of the earth.”

⁷ **tn** *Heb* “he brings out the winds from his storehouses.”

⁸ **tn** *Heb* “Every man.” But in the context this is not a reference to all people without exception but to all idolaters. The referent is made explicit for the sake of clarity.

⁹ **tn** Or “nothing but a phony god”; *Heb* “a lie/falsehood.”

¹⁰ **tn** *Heb* “There is no breath in them.” The referent is made explicit so that no one will mistakenly take it to refer to the idolaters or goldsmiths.

¹¹ **tn** Or “objects of mockery.”

¹² **tn** The words “The LORD who is” are not in the text. They are supplied in the translation for clarity. For the significance of the words that follow them see the study note that follows.

¹³ **tn** The phrase *the portion of Jacob’s descendants*, which is applied to God here, has its background in the division of the land where each tribe received a portion of the land of Palestine except the tribe of Levi whose “portion” was the LORD. As the other tribes lived off what their portion of the land provided, the tribe of Levi lived off what the LORD provided, i.e., the tithes and offerings dedicated to him. Hence to have the LORD as one’s portion is to have him provide for all one’s needs (see Ps 16:5 in the context of vv. 2, 6 and Lam 3:24 in the context of vv. 22-23).

¹⁴ **tn** *Heb* “The Portion of Jacob.” “Descendants” is implied, and is supplied in the translation for clarity.

¹⁵ **tn** *Heb* “And Israel is the tribe of his possession.”

¹⁶ **tn** *Heb* “Yahweh of armies is his name.”

¹⁷ **tn** For this rendering of the name for God and its significance see 2:19 and the study note there.

¹⁸ **map** For location see Map5-B1; Map6-F3; Map7-E2; Map8-F2; Map10-B3; JP1-F4; JP2-F4; JP3-F4; JP4-F4.

¹⁹ **tn** *Heb* “you who are living in/under siege.” The pronouns in this verse are feminine singular in Hebrew. Jerusalem is being personified as a single woman. This personification carries on down through v. 19 where she speaks in the first person. It is difficult, however, to reflect this in a translation that conveys any meaning without being somewhat paraphrastic like this.

²⁰ **tn** The meaning of this last line is somewhat uncertain: *Heb* “I will cause them distress in order that [or with the result that] they will find.” The absence of an object for the verb “find” has led to conjecture that the text is wrong. Some commentators follow the lead of the Greek and Latin versions which read the verb as a passive: “they will be found,” i.e., be caught and captured. Others follow a suggestion by G. R. Driver (“Linguistic and Textual Problems: Jeremiah,” *JQR* 28

10:19 And I cried out,¹ “We are doomed!²
Our wound is severe!
We once thought, ‘This is only an illness.
And we will be able to bear it!’³
10:20 But our tents have been destroyed.
The ropes that held them in place have
been ripped apart.⁴
Our children are gone and are not coming
back.⁵

[1937-38]: 107) that the verb be read not as “they will find” (מֵצְאוּ [yimitsa’u] from מָצָא [matsa’]) but “they will be squeezed/drain” (יִמְצָאוּ [yimitsu] from מָצָה [matsah]). The translation adopted assumes that this is an example of the ellipsis of the object supplied from the context (cf. E. W. Bullinger, *Figures of Speech*, 8-12). For a similar nuance for the verb “find” = “feel/experience” see BDB 592 s.v. מָצָא Qal.1.f and compare the usage in Ps 116:3.

1 **tn** The words, “And I cried out” are not in the text. It is not altogether clear who the speaker is in vv. 19-25. The words of vv. 19-20 would best be assigned to a personified Jerusalem who laments the destruction of her city (under the figure of a tent) and the exile of her children (under the figure of children). However, the words of v. 21 which assign responsibility to the rulers do not fit well in the mouth of the people but do fit Jeremiah. The words of v. 22 are very appropriate to Jeremiah being similar to the report in 4:19-20. Likewise the words of v. 23 which appear to express man’s incapacity to control his own destiny and his resignation to the fate which awaits him in the light of v. 24 seem more appropriate to Jeremiah than to the people. There has been no indication elsewhere that the people have shown any indication of being resigned to their fate or willing to accept their punishment. Though the issue is far from resolved a majority of commentators see Jeremiah as the speaker so identifying himself with their fate that he speaks as though he were this personified figure. It is not altogether out of the question, however, that the speaker throughout is personified Jerusalem though no known commentator takes that view. For those who are interested, the most thorough discussion of the issue is probably to be found in W. McKane, *Jeremiah* (ICC), 1:230-35, especially 233-35. Rendering the pronouns throughout as “we” and “our” alleviates some of the difficulty but some speaker needs to be identified in the introduction to allay any possible confusion. Hence I have opted for what is the majority view.

2 **tn** *Heb* “Woe to me on account of my wound.” The words “woe to” in many contexts carry the connotation of hopelessness and of inevitable doom (cf. 1 Sam 4:7, 8; Isa 6:5), hence a “deadly blow.” See also the usage in 4:13, 31; 6:4 and the notes on 4:13. For the rendering of the pronoun as “we” and “our” here and in the verses to follow see the preceding note.

3 **tn** Some interpret this as a resignation to the punishment inflicted and translate “But I said, ‘This is my punishment and I will just need to bear it.’” This is unlikely given the meaning and usage of the word rendered “sickness” (כְּחָלִי, *khali*), the absence of the pronoun “my,” and the likelihood that the particle אֲנִי means “only” not “indeed” (cf. BDB s.v. אֲנִי 2.b and compare its usage in v. 24).

sn What is being referred to here is the feeling that was encouraged by the false prophets that the ill fortunes of the nation were just temporary setbacks and everything would soon get better (cf. 6:14; 8:11).

4 **tn** *Heb* “My tent has been destroyed and my tent cords have been ripped apart.” For a very similar identification of Jeremiah’s plight with the plight of the personified community see 4:20 and the notes there.

5 **tn** *Heb* “my children have gone from me and are no more.”

sn What is being referred to is the exile of the people of the land. This passage could refer to the exiles of 605 b.c., 597 a.c., or more probably be anticipatory of the exile of 588 b.c. since the “tent,” (i.e., the city) is pictured as torn down. The picture of devastation and desolation here should be contrasted with that in Isa 54:2-3.

There is no survivor to put our tents back up,
no one left to hang their tent curtains in place.

10:21 For our leaders⁶ are stupid.
They have not sought the LORD’s advice.⁷
So they do not act wisely,
and the people they are responsible for⁸
have all been scattered.

10:22 Listen! News is coming even now.⁹
The rumble of a great army is heard approaching¹⁰
from a land in the north.¹¹
It is coming to turn the towns of Judah
into rubble,
places where only jackals live.

10:23 LORD, we know that people do not
control their own destiny.¹²

It is not in their power to determine what
will happen to them.¹³

10:24 Correct us, LORD, but only in due
measure.¹⁴

Do not punish us in anger or you will
reduce us to nothing.¹⁵

10:25 Vent your anger on the nations that
do not acknowledge you.¹⁶

Vent it on the peoples¹⁷ who do not worship
you.¹⁸

6 **tn** *Heb* “the shepherds.”

7 **tn** *Heb* “They have not sought the LORD.”

sn The idiom translated *sought the LORD’s advice* quite commonly refers to inquiring for the LORD’s guidance through a prophet. See for example Exod 18:15; 1 Sam 9:9; 1 Kgs 22:8. It would not exclude consulting the law.

8 **tn** *Heb* “all their flock (or “pasturage”).”

sn This verse uses the figure of rulers as shepherds and the people they ruled as sheep. It is a common figure in the Bible. See Ezek 34 for an extended development of this metaphor.

9 **tn** *Heb* “The sound of a report, behold, it is coming.”

10 **tn** *Heb* “coming, even a great quaking.”

11 **sn** Compare Jer 6:22.

12 **tn** *Heb* “Not to the man his way.” For the nuance of “fate, destiny, or the way things turn out” for the Hebrew word “way” see Hag 1:5; Isa 40:27 and probably Ps 49:13 (cf. KBL 218 s.v. דֶּרֶךְ 5). For the idea of “control” or “hold in one’s power” for the preposition “to” see Ps 3:8 (cf. BDB 513 s.v. לָ 5.b[a]).

13 **tn** *Heb* “Not to a man the walking and the establishing his step.”

14 **tn** *Heb* “with justice.”

15 **tn** The words, “to almost nothing” are not in the text. They are implicit from the general context and are supplied by almost all English versions.

16 **tn** *Heb* “know you.” For this use of the word “know” (יָדַע, *yada*) see the note on 9:3.

17 **tn** *Heb* “tribes/clans.”

18 **tn** *Heb* “who do not call on your name.” The idiom “to call on your name” (directed to God) refers to prayer (mainly) and praise. See 1 Kgs 18:24-26 and Ps 116:13, 17. Here “calling on your name” is parallel to “acknowledging you.” In many locations in the OT “name” is equivalent to the person. In the OT, the “name” reflected the person’s character (cf. Gen 27:36; 1 Sam 25:25) or his reputation (Gen 11:4; 2 Sam 8:13). To speak in a person’s name was to act as his representative or carry his authority (1 Sam 25:9; 1 Kgs 21:8). To call someone’s name over something was to claim it for one’s own (2 Sam 12:28).

For they have destroyed the people of
Jacob.⁴
They have completely destroyed them²
and left their homeland in utter ruin.

*The People Have Violated Their Covenant with
God*

11:1 The LORD said to Jeremiah:³ **11:2** “Hear⁴
the terms of the covenant⁵ I made with Israel⁶
and pass them on⁷ to the people of Judah and

¹ **tn** *Heb* “have devoured Jacob.”

² **tn** Or “have almost completely destroyed them”; *Heb* “they have devoured them and consumed them.” The figure of hyperbole is used here; elsewhere Jeremiah and God refer to the fact that they will not be completely consumed. See for example 4:27; 5:10, 18.

³ **tn** *Heb* “The word which came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying.” The proposed translation is more in keeping with contemporary English idiom. Cf. 1:2 and 7:1 and footnotes there.

⁴ **tn** The form is a second masculine plural which is followed in the MT of vv. 2-3 by second masculine singulars. This plus the fact that the whole clause “listen to the terms of this covenant” is nearly repeated at the end of v. 3 has led many modern scholars to delete the whole clause (cf., e.g. W. McKane, *Jeremiah* [ICC], 1:236-37). However, this only leads to further adjustments in the rest of the verse which are difficult to justify. The form has also led to a good deal of speculation about who these others were that are initially addressed here. The juxtaposition of second plural and singular forms has a precedent in Deuteronomy, where the nation is sometimes addressed with the plural and at other times with a collective singular.

⁵ **sn** *The covenant I made with Israel.* Apart from the legal profession and Jewish and Christian tradition the term “covenant” may not be too familiar. There were essentially three kinds of “covenants” that were referred to under the Hebrew term used here: (1) “Parity treaties” or “covenants” between equals in which each party pledged itself to certain agreed upon stipulations and took an oath to it in the name of their god or gods (cf. Gen 31:44-54); (2) “Suzerain-vassal treaties” or “covenants” in which a great king pledged himself to protect the vassal’s realm and his right to rule over his own domain in exchange for sovereignty over the vassal, including the rendering of absolute loyalty and submission to the great king’s demands spelled out in detailed stipulations; (3) “Covenants of grant” in which a great king granted to a loyal servant or vassal king permanent title to a piece of land or dominion over a specified realm in recognition of past service. It is generally recognized that the Mosaic covenant which is being referred to here is of the second type and that it resembles in kind the ancient Near Eastern suzerain-vassal treaties. These treaties typically contained the following elements: (1) a preamble identifying the great king (cf. Exod 20:2a; Deut 1:1-4); (2) a historical prologue summarizing the great king’s past benefactions as motivation for future loyalty (cf. Exod 20:2b; Deut 1:5-4:43); (3) the primary stipulation of absolute and unconditional loyalty (cf. Exod 20:3-8; Deut 5:1-11:32); (4) specific stipulations governing future relations between the vassal and the great king and the vassal’s relation to other vassals (cf. Exod 20:22-23:33; Deut 12:1-26:15); (5) the invoking of curses on the vassal for disloyalty and the pronouncing of blessing on him for loyalty (cf. Lev 26; Deut 27-28); (6) the invoking of witnesses to the covenant, often the great king’s and the vassal’s gods (cf. Deut 30:19; 31:28 where the reference is to the “heavens and the earth” as enduring witnesses). It is also generally agreed that the majority of the threats of punishment by the prophets refer to the invocation of these covenant curses for disloyalty to the basic stipulation, that of absolute loyalty.

⁶ **tn** *Heb* “this covenant.” The referent of “this” is left dangling until it is further defined in vv. 3-4. Leaving it undefined in the translation may lead to confusion hence the anticipatory nature of the demonstrative is spelled out explicitly in the translation.

⁷ **tn** *Heb* “and speak/tell them.” However, the translation

the citizens of Jerusalem.⁸ **11:3** Tell them that the LORD, the God of Israel, says, ‘Anyone who does not keep the terms of the covenant will be under a curse.’⁹ **11:4** Those are the terms that I charged your ancestors¹⁰ to keep¹¹ when I brought them out of Egypt, that place which was like an iron-smelting furnace.¹² I said at that time,¹³ “Obey me and carry out the terms of the agreement¹⁴ exactly as I commanded you. If you do,¹⁵ you will be my people and I will be your God.¹⁶ **11:5** Then I will keep the promise I swore on oath to your ancestors to give them a land flowing with milk and honey.”¹⁷ That is the very

chosen is more appropriate to modern idiom.

⁸ **tn** Or “those living in Jerusalem”; *Heb* “inhabitants of.”

map For location see Map5-B1; Map6-F3; Map7-E2; Map8-F2; Map10-B3; JP1-F4; JP2-F4; JP3-F4; JP4-F4.

⁹ **tn** *Heb* “Cursed is the person who does not listen to the terms of this covenant.” “This covenant” is further qualified in the following verse by a relative clause. The form of the sentence and the qualification “my” before covenant were chosen for better English idiom and to break up a long sentence which really extends to the middle of v. 5.

¹⁰ **tn** *Heb* “fathers” (also in vv. 5, 7, 10).

¹¹ **tn** *Heb* “does not listen...this covenant which I commanded your fathers.” The sentence is broken up this way in conformity with contemporary English style.

¹² **tn** *Heb* “out of the land of Egypt, out of the iron-smelting furnace.”

¹³ **tn** In place of the words “I said at that time” the Hebrew text has “saying.” The sentence is again being restructured in English to avoid the long, confusing style of the Hebrew original.

¹⁴ **tn** *Heb* “Obey me and carry them out.” The “them” refers back to the terms of the covenant which they were charged to keep according to the preceding. The referent is made specific to avoid ambiguity.

¹⁵ **tn** The words, “If you do” are not in the text. They have been supplied in the translation to break up a long sentence consisting of an imperative followed by a consequential sentence.

¹⁶ **sn** *Obey me and carry out the terms of the agreement... and I will be your God.* This refers to the Mosaic law which was instituted at Sinai and renewed on the Plains of Moab before Israel entered into the land. The words “the terms of the covenant” are explicitly used for the Ten Commandments in Exod 34:28 and for the additional legislation given in Deut 29:1, 9. The formulation here is reminiscent of Deut 29:9-14 (29:10-15 HT). The book of Deuteronomy is similar in its structure and function to an ancient Near Eastern treaty. In these the great king reminded his vassal of past benefits that he had given to him, charged him with obligations (the terms or stipulations of the covenant) chief among which was absolute loyalty and sole allegiance, promised him future benefits for obeying the stipulations (the blessings), and placed him under a curse for disobeying them. Any disobedience was met with stern warnings of punishment in the form of destruction and exile. Those who had witnessed the covenant were called in to confirm the continuing goodness of the great king and the disloyalty of the vassal. The vassal was then charged with a list of particular infringements of the stipulations and warned to change his actions or suffer the consequences. This is the background for Jer 11:1-9. Jeremiah is here functioning as a messenger from the LORD, Israel’s great king, and charging both the fathers and the children with breach of covenant.

¹⁷ **tn** The phrase “a land flowing with milk and honey” is very familiar to readers in the Jewish and Christian traditions as a proverbial description of the agricultural and pastoral abundance of the land of Israel. However, it may not mean too much to readers outside those traditions; an equivalent expression would be “a land of fertile fields and fine pastures.” E. W. Bullinger (*Figures of Speech*, 626) identifies this as a figure of speech called synecdoche where the species

land that you still live in today."¹¹ And I responded, "Amen! Let it be so,² LORD!"

11:6 The LORD said to me, "Announce all the following words in the towns of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem: 'Listen to the terms of my covenant with you³ and carry them out! **11:7** For I solemnly warned your ancestors to obey me.⁴ I warned them again and again,⁵ ever since I delivered them out of Egypt until this very day. **11:8** But they did not listen to me or pay any attention to me! Each one of them followed the stubborn inclinations of his own wicked heart. So I brought on them all the punishments threatened in the covenant because they did not carry out its terms as I commanded them to do."⁶

11:9 The LORD said to me, "The people of Judah and the citizens of Jerusalem have plotted rebellion against me!⁷ **11:10** They have gone back to the evil ways⁸ of their ancestors of old who refused to obey what I told them. They, too, have paid allegiance to⁹ other gods and worshiped them. Both the nation of Israel and the nation of Judah¹⁰ have violated the covenant I made with their ancestors. **11:11** So I, the LORD,

say this:¹¹ 'I will soon bring disaster on them which they will not be able to escape! When they cry out to me for help, I will not listen to them. **11:12** Then those living in the towns of Judah and in Jerusalem will¹² go and cry out for help to the gods to whom they have been sacrificing. However, those gods will by no means¹³ be able to save them when disaster strikes them. **11:13** This is in spite of the fact that¹⁴ the people of Judah have as many gods as they have towns¹⁵ and the citizens of Jerusalem have set up as many altars to sacrifice to that disgusting god, Baal, as they have streets in the city!¹⁶ **11:14** So, Jeremiah,¹⁷ do not pray for these people. Do not cry out to me or petition me on their behalf. Do not plead with me to save them.¹⁸ For I will not listen to them when they call out to me for help when disaster strikes them."¹⁹

¹¹ **tn** *Heb* "Therefore, thus, says the LORD." The person has been shifted in the translation in accordance with the difference between Hebrew and English style.

¹² **tn** *Heb* "Then the towns of Judah and those living in Jerusalem will..."

¹³ **tn** The Hebrew construction is emphatic involving the use of an infinitive of the verb before the verb itself (*Heb* "saving they will not save"). For this construction to give emphasis to an antithesis, cf. GKC 343 §113.p.

¹⁴ **tn** This is again an attempt to render the Hebrew particle כִּי (*ki*) contextually. The nuance is a little hard to establish due to the nature of the rhetoric of the passage which utilizes the figure of apostrophe where the LORD turns from talking about Judah to addressing her directly, probably in condemnatory tones. Something like "the very idea that you should..." might best represent the mood. The כִּי is probably asseverative or intensive (cf. BDB 472 s.v. כִּי 1.e).

¹⁵ **sn** Cf. Jer 2:28.

¹⁶ **tn** *Heb* "For [or Indeed] the number of your [sing.] cities are your [sing.] gods, Judah, and the number of the streets of Jerusalem [or perhaps (your) streets, Jerusalem] you [plur.] have set up altars to the shameful thing, altars to sacrifice to Baal." This passage involves a figure of speech where the speaker turns from describing something about someone to addressing him/her directly (a figure called apostrophe). This figure is not common in contemporary English literature or conversation and translating literally would lead to confusion on the part of some readers. Hence, the translation retains the third person in keeping with the rest of the context. The shift from singular "your cities" to plural "you have set up" is interpreted contextually to refer to a shift in addressing Judah to addressing the citizens of Jerusalem whose streets are being talked about. The appositional clause, "altars to sacrifice to Baal" has been collapsed with the preceding clause to better identify what the shameful thing is and to eliminate a complex construction. The length of this sentence runs contrary to the usual practice of breaking up long complex sentences in Hebrew into shorter equivalent ones in English. However, breaking up this sentence and possibly losing the connecting link with the preceding used to introduce it might lead to misunderstanding.

¹⁷ **tn** *Heb* "you."

¹⁸ **tn** The words "to save them" are not in the text but are implicit from the context. They are supplied in the translation for clarity.

sn Cf. Jer 7:16 where this same command is addressed to Jeremiah.

¹⁹ **tc** The rendering "when disaster strikes them" is based on reading "at the time of" (בְּעֵת, *b'eit*) with a number of Hebrew MSS and the versions instead of "on account of" (בְּעֵד, *b'e'ad*). W. L. Holladay (*Jeremiah* [Hermeneia], 1:347) is probably right in assuming that the MT has been influenced by "for them" (בְּיָדָם, *va'adam*) earlier in the verse.

is put for the genus, "a region...abounding with pasture and fruits of all kinds."

¹ **tn** *Heb* "'a land flowing with milk and honey,' as at this day." However, the literal reading is too elliptical and would lead to confusion.

² **tn** The words "Let it be so" are not in the text; they are an explanation of the significance of the term "Amen" for those who may not be part of the Christian or Jewish tradition.

sn The word *amen* is found at the end of each of the curses in Deut 27 where the people express their agreement with the appropriateness of the curse for the offense mentioned.

³ **tn** *Heb* "the terms of this covenant." However, this was a separate message and the ambiguity of "this" could still cause some confusion.

⁴ **tn** *Heb* "warned them...saying, 'Obey me.'" However, it allows the long sentence to be broken up easier if the indirect quote is used.

⁵ **tn** For the explanation for this rendering see the note on 7:13.

⁶ **tn** *Heb* "So I brought on them all the terms of this covenant which I commanded to do and they did not do." There is an interesting polarity that is being exploited by two different nuances implicit in the use of the word "terms" (דְּבָרִים [*divre*], literally "words"), i.e., what the LORD "brings on" them, namely, the curses that are the penalty for disobedience and the stipulations that they are "to do," that is, to carry out. The sentence is broken up this way in keeping with contemporary English style to avoid the long and complicated style of the original.

⁷ **tn** *Heb* "Conspiracy [a plot to rebel] is found [or exists] among the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem."

⁸ **tn** Or "They have repeated the evil actions of..."

⁹ **tn** *Heb* "have walked/followed after." See the translator's note at 2:5 for the idiom.

¹⁰ **tn** *Heb* "house of Israel and house of Judah."

11:15 The LORD says to the people of Judah,¹
 “What right do you have to be in my
 temple, my beloved people?²
 Many of you have done wicked things.³
 Can your acts of treachery be so easily
 canceled by sacred offerings⁴

¹ **tn** The words “The LORD says to the people of Judah” are not in the text. It is, however, clear from the words that follow that he is the speaker and Judah the addressee. The words are supplied in the translation for the sake of clarity.

² **tn** *Heb* “What to my beloved [being] in my house?” The text has been restructured to avoid possible confusion by the shift from third person in the first two lines to second person in the last two lines and the lines of the following verse. The reference to Judah as his “beloved” is certainly ironic and perhaps even sarcastic.

³ **tc** The meaning of this line is uncertain. The text reads somewhat literally either “her doing the wicked thing the many” or “doing it, the wicked thing, the many.” The text, relationship between words, and meaning of this whole verse have been greatly debated. Wholesale emendation based on the ancient versions is common in both the commentaries and the modern English versions. Many follow the lead of the Greek version which in many cases offers a smoother reading but for that very reason may not be original. The notes that follow will explain some of these emendations but will also attempt to explain the most likely meaning of the MT which is the more difficult and probably the more original text. Since it is presumed to be the original the text will be dealt with in the notes line for line in the MT even though the emendations often relate to more than one line. For example the Greek of the first two lines reads: “Why has the beloved done abomination in my house?” This ignores the preposition before “my beloved” (לִידִידִי, *lididi*) and treats the form “her doing” (עֲשׂוּתָהּ [asotah], Qal infinitive plus suffix) as a finite verb (עֲשׂוּתָהּ [asotah], Qal perfect third feminine). The forms are similar but the Greek is smoother. Moreover, it is difficult to explain the presence of “to” in the MT if the Greek is the original. The Greek text likewise does not have the difficulty that is exhibited in the MT by the word “the many” (הַרְבִּיּוֹם, *harabbim*). It reads a word for “vows/votive offerings” (עֲשׂוּתָהּ [euchai] regularly = עֲשׂוּתָהּ [darim]) in place of the word “many” (הַרְבִּיּוֹם, *harabbim*) and takes it as part of a compound subject of the verb in the following line meaning “take away.” However, this word is far removed graphically from that in the MT and it would be difficult to explain how the MT arose from it. The Old Latin apparently reads a word for “fat” (*adipes* = חֲלָאִיִּם, *khalavim*) which is closer in script to the MT and would be more likely original than the Greek. However, both of these resolutions look like attempts to smooth out a difficult text. Because there is no solid support for any single reading, it is probably best to retain the MT’s “the many.” Many do retain it and take it as a second accusative of “doing it” and read “she does the wicked thing with many [i.e., many false gods],” a use of the accusative which is hard to justify. Another alternative, taking the adjective “the many” to modify the noun “the wicked thing” is sometimes suggested but is not possible because the adjective is masculine plural and the noun is feminine singular which is contrary to Hebrew style. Hence one cannot read “she has done many wicked things.” The present translation follows the suggestion in D. Barthélemy, ed., *Preliminary and Interim Report on the Hebrew Old Testament Text Project*, 4:209, that it is the subject of the infinitive construct with an object suffix which is anticipatory of the noun “wickedness” that follows (cf. GKC 425 §131.1), i.e., “the many do it, namely the wickedness” (for the meaning of the noun see BDB 273 s.v. כִּזְבוֹן 3.b).

⁴ **tn** The meaning of this line is also uncertain. The Hebrew text reads somewhat literally, “holy meat they pass over from upon you.” The question of the subject of the verb is the main problem here. The verb is masculine plural and the only subject available is “holy meat” which is singular, a “they” which goes back to “the many,” or a noun from the end of the preceding line which is combined with “holy meat.” The latter is the solution of the Greek version which reads “Will votive offer-

ings that you take joy in doing evil even while you make them?”⁵

11:16 I, the LORD, once called⁶ you a thriving olive tree,

ings [or pieces of fat (following the Old Latin)] and holy meats take away from you your wickedness?” However, that resolution has been rejected in the preceding note as smoothing out the difficulties of the first two lines. It also leaves out the כִּי (*ki*) at the beginning of the following line and takes the noun “your wickedness” as the object of the verb. That certainly would make for an easier reading of both this line and the next and the assumption that כִּי may not be in the text is possible because it could be explained as a double writing of the pronoun on the end of the preceding phrase “from upon you” (בְּעֵלְיֶיךָ, *me’alayikh*). However, besides being the smoother reading it leaves the last line too short poetically. The solution of the UBS, *Preliminary Report*, 4:209 is that “they” (referring back to “the many?”) is the subject. They read: “so that they carry away from you even sacrificial flesh.” But who are “they” and “you?” Is the “they” the priests and the “you” the people? (See 1 Sam 2:10-17 for a possible parallel.) This, however, introduces too many unknowns into the text. The translation adopted is based on a revocalization of the form “from upon you” (בְּעֵלְיֶיךָ, *me’alayikh*) to “your treacherous acts” (בְּעֵלְיֶיךָ, *me’alayikh*; for this noun cf. BDB 591 s.v. בָּעַל 2), a solution which is also proposed in the margin of the NJPS which reads: “Can your treacheries be canceled by sacrificial flesh?” For the nuance of the verb presupposed here (= be removed, cease to exist) see BDB 718 s.v. נָבַח Qal.6.c and compare usage in Job 30:15. While this solution does preserve the consonantal text and is accepted here, it should be acknowledged that there is no ancient support for it and the reading of the noun “treacheries” in place of the compound preposition “from upon” is purely speculative.

⁵ **tn** *Heb* “for [or when] your wickedness then you rejoice.” The meaning of this line is uncertain. The Greek version, which reads “or will you escape by these things” (presupposing a Hebrew text עָלַי יִצֵּא אֲנִי, *im ‘al zot ta’uzi*) is far removed from the reading in the MT (אֲנִי תִעֲלֶזֶי [‘az ta’aloz]; the rest of the Hebrew line has been left out because the Greek reads it with the preceding line) and again appears to be an attempt to smooth out a difficult text. The translation retains the MT but rewords it so it makes better sense in English. The translation presupposes that the phrase “your wickedness” is the object of the verb “take joy” and the adverb “then” refers back to the offering of sacred flesh, i.e., “even then [or at that time]” as a *constructio ad sensum*. For a similar use of the adverb (אֲזַי, *‘az*) compare Gen 13:7. For the use of כִּי (*ki*) meaning “that” after a question see BDB 472 s.v. כִּי 1.f. A possible alternative would be to read as UBS, *Preliminary Report*, 4:209 do: “When trouble reaches you, then will you exult?” If the text of the whole verse followed here, the more difficult text, is not the original one, the most likely alternative would be: “What right does my beloved have to be in my house? She has done wicked things [reading עֲשׂוּתָהּ מִזִּמּוֹת, *ostah me’zimot*]. Can fat pieces [reading חֲלָאִיִּם, *hakhalavim*] and sacred meat take away your wickedness from you [reading יַעֲבִירוּ עֲבֵרֶיךָ יְהִי, *ya’aviru me’alayikh ra’atekhi*]?” [If it could] then you could rejoice.” It should be emphasized that the text of the verse is uncertain in a number of places and open to more than one interpretation. However, regardless of which text or interpretation of it is followed, the Masoretic as interpreted here, the Greek as given in the notes, or an emended text based on both, the overall meaning is much the same. Judah has done evil and the LORD rejects their superficial attempts to placate him through ritual without change of behavior. The particulars are different; the point is the same.

⁶ **tn** For the argument of this verse compare the condemnatory questions in Jer 7:9-11.

⁷ **tn** *Heb* “The LORD once called you....” This is another example of the rapid shift in person that is common to Hebrew style which is not common in English and could lead to confusion for some readers. Here and in the verses that follow the person has been shifted to first person for consistency in English.

one that produced beautiful fruit.
But I will set you⁴ on fire,
fire that will blaze with a mighty roar.²
Then all your branches will be good for
nothing.³

11:17 For though I, the LORD who rules
over all,⁴ planted you in the land,⁵
I now decree that disaster will come on
you⁶
because the nations of Israel and Judah
have done evil
and have made me angry by offering sac-
rifices to the god Baal.⁷

*A Plot Against Jeremiah is Revealed and He
Complains of Injustice*

11:18 The LORD gave me knowledge, that I
might have understanding.⁸
Then he showed me what the people were
doing.⁹

11:19 Before this I had been like a docile
lamb ready to be led to the slaughter.
I did not know they were making plans to
kill me.¹⁰

I did not know they were saying.¹¹
“Let’s destroy the tree along with its
fruit!”¹²

Let’s remove Jeremiah¹³ from the world
of the living
so people will not even be reminded of
him any more.¹⁴

11:20 So I said to the LORD,¹⁵
“O LORD who rules over all,¹⁶ you are a
just judge!

You examine people’s hearts and minds.¹⁷
I want to see you pay them back for what
they have done
because I trust you to vindicate my
cause.”¹⁸

1 tn The verb form used here is another example of a verb expressing that the action is as good as done (the Hebrew prophetic perfect).

2 tn *Heb* “At the sound of a mighty roar he will set fire to it.” For the shift from third person “he” to the first person “I” see the preceding note. The Hebrew use of the pronouns in vv. 16-17 for the olive tree and the people that it represents is likely to cause confusion if retained. In v. 16 the people are “you” and the olive tree is “it.” The people are again “you” in v. 17 but part of the metaphor is carried over, i.e., “he ‘planted’ you.” It creates less confusion in the flow of the passage if the metaphorical identification is carried out throughout by addressing the people/plant as “you.”

3 tn The verb here has most commonly been derived from a root meaning “to be broken” (cf. BDB 949 s.v. II רָעַע) which fits poorly with the metaphor of setting the plant on fire. Another common option is to emend it to a verb meaning “to be burned up” (בָּעַר, *ba’ar*). However, it is better to follow the lead of the Greek version which translates “be good for nothing” (ἄχρηστος, *achreiothēsan*) and derive the verb from רָעַע (*ra’ā’*) meaning “be bad/evil” (cf. BDB 949 and compare the nuance of the adjective from this verb in BDB 948 s.v. רָעַע 5).

4 tn *Heb* “Yahweh of armies.”

sn For the significance of the term see the notes at 2:19 and 7:3.

5 tn The words “in the land” are not in the text but are supplied in the translation to clarify the meaning of the metaphor.

6 tn *Heb* “For Yahweh of armies who planted you speaks disaster upon you.” Because of the way the term LORD of armies has been rendered this sentence has been restructured to avoid confusion in English style.

7 tn *Heb* “pronounced disaster...on account of the evil of the house of Israel and the house of Judah which they have done to make me angry [or thus making me angry] by sacrificing to Baal.” The lines have been broken up in conformity with contemporary English style.

8 tn *Heb* “caused me to know that I might know.” Many English versions supply an unstated object “their plots” which is referred to later in the context (cf. v. 19). The presupposition of this kind of absolute ellipsis is difficult to justify and would create the need for understanding an ellipsis of “it” also after “I knew.” It is better to see a bipolar use of the verb “know” here. For the second use of the verb “know” meaning “have understanding” see BDB 394 s.v. יָדַע, Qal.5.

9 tn *Heb* “Then you showed me their deeds.” This is another example of the rapid shift in person which is common in Jeremiah. As elsewhere, it has been resolved for the sake of avoiding confusion for the English reader by leveling the referent to the same person throughout. The text again involves an apostrophe, talking about the LORD to addressing him.

10 tn *Heb* “against me.” The words “to kill me” are implicit from the context and are supplied in the translation for clarity.

11 tn The words “I did not know that they were saying” are not in the text. The quote is without formal introduction in the original. These words are supplied in the translation for clarity.

12 tn This word and its pronoun (לֶחֶמוֹ, *lakhmo*, “its bread”) is often emended to read “in/with its sap” = “in its prime” (either לָחֵי [lekhō] or לֶחֶמוֹ [lekh^omo]); the latter would be more likely and the נֹי (no) could be explained as a rare use of the old poetic third plural suffix for the third singular; cf. GKC 258 §91.1 for general use and Ps 11:7 and Job 27:23 for third singular use. Though this fits the context nicely the emendation is probably unnecessary since the word “bread” is sometimes used of other foodstuff than grain or its products (cf. BDB 537 s.v. לֶחֶם 2.a).

sn The word *fruit* refers contextually here to the prophecies that Jeremiah was giving, not (as some suppose) his progeny. Jeremiah was not married and had no children.

13 tn *Heb* “cut it [or him] off.” The metaphor of the tree may be continued, though the verb “cut off” is used also of killing people. The rendering clarifies the meaning of the metaphor.

14 tn *Heb* “so that his name will not be remembered any more.”

15 tn The words “So I said to the LORD” are not in the text but are implicit from the context. They are supplied in the translation for clarity to show the shift in address.

16 tn *Heb* “Yahweh of armies.”

sn For the significance of the term see the notes at 2:19 and 7:3.

17 tn *Heb* “LORD of armies, just judge, tester of kidneys and heart.” The sentence has been broken up to avoid a long and complex English sentence. The translation is more in keeping with contemporary English style. In Hebrew thought the “kidneys” were thought of as the seat of the emotions and passions and the “heart” was viewed as the seat of intellect, conscience, and will. The “heart” and the “kidneys” are often used figuratively for the thoughts, emotions, motives, and drives that are thought to be seated in them.

18 tn *Heb* “Let me see your retribution [i.e., see you exact retribution] from them because I reveal my cause [i.e., plea for justice] to you.”

11:21 Then the LORD told me about¹ some men from Anathoth² who were threatening to kill me.³ They had threatened,⁴ “Stop prophesying in the name of the LORD or we will kill you!”⁵ **11:22** So the LORD who rules over all⁶ said, “I will surely⁷ punish them! Their young men will be killed in battle.⁸ Their sons and daughters will die of starvation. **11:23** Not one of them will survive.⁹ I will bring disaster on those men from Anathoth who threatened you.¹⁰ A day of reckoning is coming for them.”¹¹

12:1 LORD, you have always been fair whenever I have complained to you.¹² However, I would like to speak with you about the disposition of justice.¹³ Why are wicked people successful?¹⁴ Why do all dishonest people have such easy lives?
12:2 You plant them like trees and they put down their roots.¹⁵ They grow prosperous and are very fruitful.¹⁶ They always talk about you, but they really care nothing about you.¹⁷

12:3 But you, LORD, know all about me. You watch me and test my devotion to you.¹⁸ Drag those wicked men away like sheep to be slaughtered! Appoint a time when they will be killed!¹⁹ **12:4** How long must the land be parched²⁰ and the grass in every field be withered? How long²¹ must the animals and the birds die because of the wickedness of the people who live in this land?²² For these people boast, “God²³ will not see what happens to us.”²⁴ **12:5** The LORD answered,²⁵ “If you have raced on foot against men and they have worn you out, how will you be able to compete with horses? And if you feel secure only²⁶ in safe and open country,²⁷

¹ **tn** *Heb* “Therefore thus says the LORD.” This phrase is anticipatory of the same phrase at the beginning of v. 22 and is introductory to what the LORD says about them. The translation seeks to show the connection of the “therefore” which is sometimes rather loose (cf. BDB 487 s.v. כִּן 3.d[b]) with the actual response which is not given until v. 22.

² **tn** *Heb* “the men of Anathoth.” However, this does not involve all of the people, only the conspirators. The literal might lead to confusion later since v. 21 mentions that there will not be any of them left alive. However, it is known from Ezra 2:23 that there were survivors.

³ **tc** The MT reads the 2nd person masculine singular suffix “your life,” but LXX reflects an alternative reading of the 1st person common singular suffix “my life.”

⁴ **tn** *Heb* “who were seeking my life, saying...” The sentence is broken up in conformity with contemporary English style.

⁵ **tn** *Heb* “or you will die by our hand.”

⁶ **tn** *Heb* “Yahweh of armies.”

sn For the significance of the term see the notes at 2:19 and 7:3.

⁷ **tn** *Heb* “Behold I will.” For the function of this particle see the translator’s note on 1:6.

⁸ **tn** *Heb* “will die by the sword.” Here “sword” stands contextually for “battle” while “starvation” stands for death by starvation during siege.

⁹ **tn** *Heb* “There will be no survivors for/among them.”

¹⁰ **tn** *Heb* “the men of Anathoth.” For the rationale for adding the qualification see the notes on v. 21.

¹¹ **tn** *Heb* “I will bring disaster on.... the year of their punishment.”

¹² **tn** Or “LORD, you are fair when I present my case before you.”

¹³ **tn** *Heb* “judgments” or “matters of justice.” For the nuance of “complain to,” “fair,” “disposition of justice” assumed here, see BDB 936 s.v. רָיַב Qal.4 (cf. Judg 21:22); BDB 843 s.v. מַדְרִיךְ 1.d (cf. Ps 7:12; 11:7); BDB 1049 s.v. מִבְּעַט 1.f (cf. Isa 26:8; Ps 10:5; Ezek 7:27).

¹⁴ **tn** *Heb* “Why does the way [= course of life] of the wicked prosper?”

¹⁵ **tn** *Heb* “You planted them and they took root.”

¹⁶ **tn** *Heb* “they grow and produce fruit.” For the nuance “grow” for the verb which normally means “go, walk,” see BDB 232 s.v. הָלַךְ Qal.1.3 and compare Hos 14:7.

¹⁷ **tn** *Heb* “You are near in their mouths, but far from their kid-

neys.” The figure of substitution is being used here, “mouth” for “words” and “kidneys” for passions and affections. A contemporary equivalent might be, “your name is always on their lips, but their hearts are far from you.”

¹⁸ **tn** *Heb* “You, LORD, know me. You watch me and you test my heart toward you.”

sn Jeremiah appears to be complaining like Job that God cares nothing about the prosperity of the wicked, but watches his every move. The reverse ought to be true. Jeremiah shouldn’t be suffering the onslaughts of his fellow countrymen as he is. The wicked who are prospering should be experiencing punishment.

¹⁹ **tn** *Heb* “set aside for them a day of killing.”

²⁰ **tn** The verb here is often translated “mourn.” However, this verb is from a homonymic root meaning “to be dry” (cf. HALOT 7 s.v. מָצַח and compare Hos 4:3 for usage).

²¹ **tn** The words “How long” are not in the text. They are carried over from the first line.

²² **tn** *Heb* “because of the wickedness of those who live in it.”

²³ **tn** *Heb* “he.” The referent is usually identified as God and is supplied here for clarity. Some identify the referent with Jeremiah. If that is the case, then he returns to his complaint about the conspirators. It is more likely, however, that it refers to God and Jeremiah’s complaint that the people live their lives apart from concern about God.

²⁴ **tc** Or reading with the Greek version, “God does not see what we are doing.” In place of “what will happen to us (אֲנִי וְיִרְתֶּנּוּ, *’akharitenu*, “our end”) the Greek version understands a Hebrew text which reads “our ways” (אֲרִיכוֹתֵינוּ, *’orkhotenu*), which is graphically very close to the MT. The Masoretic is supported by the Latin and is retained here on the basis of external evidence. Either text makes good sense in the context. Some identify the “he” with Jeremiah and understand the text to be saying that the conspirators are certain that they will succeed and he will not live to see his prophecies fulfilled.

sn The words here may be an outright rejection of the LORD’s words in Deut 32:20, which is part of a song that was to be taught to Israel in the light of their predicted rejection of the LORD.

²⁵ **tn** The words “The LORD answered” are not in the text but are implicit from the context. They are supplied in the translation for clarity.

²⁶ **tn** Some commentaries and English versions follow the suggestion given in HALOT 116 s.v. מָצַח that a homonym meaning “to stumble, fall down” is involved here and in Prov 14:16. The evidence for this homonym is questionable because both passages can be explained on other grounds with the usual root.

²⁷ **tn** *Heb* “a land of tranquility.” The expression involves a

how will you manage in the thick undergrowth along the Jordan River?¹

12:6 As a matter of fact,² even your own brothers and the members of your own family have betrayed you too.

Even they have plotted to do away with you.³

So do not trust them even when they say kind things⁴ to you.

12:7 “I will abandon my nation.⁵
I will forsake the people I call my own.⁶
I will turn my beloved people⁷
over to the power⁸ of their enemies.

figure of substitution where the feeling engendered is substituted for the conditions that engender it. For the idea see Isa 32:18. The translation both here and in the following line is intended to bring out the contrast implicit in the emotive connotations connected with “peaceful country” and “thicket along the Jordan.”

¹ **tn** Heb “the thicket along the Jordan.” The word “River” is not in the Hebrew text, but has been supplied in the translation for clarity.

sn The *thick undergrowth along the Jordan River* refers to the thick woods and underbrush alongside the Jordan where lions were known to have lived, and hence the area was considered dangerous. See Jer 49:19; 50:44. The **Lord** here seems to be telling Jeremiah that the situation will only get worse. If he has trouble contending with the plot from his fellow townsmen, what will he do when the whole country sets up a cry against him?

² **tn** This is an attempt to give some contextual sense to the particle “for, indeed” (כִּי, *ki*).

sn If the truth be known, Jeremiah wasn’t safe even in the context of his own family. They were apparently part of the plot by the people of Anathoth to kill him.

³ **tn** Heb “they have called after you fully”; or “have lifted up loud voices against you.” The word “against” does not seem quite adequate for the preposition “after.” The preposition “against” would be Hebrew לַעֲדָה (*al*). The idea appears to be that they are chasing after him, raising their voices along with those of the conspirators to have him killed.

⁴ **tn** Heb “good things.” See BDB 373 s.v. אוֹתֵי כֶּסֶף 2 for this nuance and compare Prov 12:25 for usage.

⁵ **tn** Heb “my house.” Or “I have abandoned my nation.” The word “house” has been used throughout Jeremiah for both the temple (e.g., 7:2, 10), the nation or people of Israel or of Judah (e.g. 3:18, 20), or the descendants of Jacob (i.e., the Israelites, e.g., 2:4). Here the parallelism argues that it refers to the nation of Judah. The translation throughout vv. 5-17 assumes that the verb forms are prophetic perfects, the form that conceives of the action as being as good as done. It is possible that the forms are true perfects and refer to a past destruction of Judah. If so, it may have been connected with the assaults against Judah in 598/7 a.c. by the Babylonians and the nations surrounding Judah recorded in 2 Kgs 24:14. No other major recent English version reflects these as prophetic perfects besides NIV and NCV, which does not use the future until v. 10. Hence the translation is somewhat tentative. C. Feinberg, “Jeremiah,” *EBC* 6:459 takes them as prophetic perfects and H. Freedman (*Jeremiah* [SoBB], 88) mentions that as a possibility for explaining the presence of this passage here. For another example of an extended use of the prophetic perfect without imperfections interspersed see Isa 8:23-9:6 HT (9:1-7 ET). The translation assumes they are prophetic and are part of the **Lord**’s answer to the complaint about the prosperity of the wicked; both the wicked Judeans and the wicked nations God will use to punish them will be punished.

⁶ **tn** Heb “my inheritance.”

⁷ **tn** Heb “the beloved of my soul.” Here “soul” stands for the person and is equivalent to “my.”

⁸ **tn** Heb “will give...into the hands of.”

12:8 The people I call my own⁹ have turned on me like a lion¹⁰ in the forest.

They have roared defiantly¹¹ at me. So I will treat them as though I hate them.¹²

12:9 The people I call my own attack me like birds of prey or like hyenas.¹³

But other birds of prey are all around them.¹⁴

Let all the nations gather together like wild beasts.

Let them come and destroy these people I call my own.¹⁵

12:10 Many foreign rulers¹⁶ will ruin the land where I planted my people.¹⁷

⁹ **tn** See the note on the previous verse.

¹⁰ **tn** Heb “have become to me like a lion.”

¹¹ **tn** Heb “have given against me with her voice.”

¹² **tn** Or “so I will reject her.” The word “hate” is sometimes used in a figurative way to refer to being neglected, i.e., treated as though unloved. In these contexts it does not have the same emotive connotations that a typical modern reader would associate with hate. See Gen 29:31, 33 and E. W. Bullinger, *Figures of Speech*, 556.

¹³ **tn** Or “like speckled birds of prey.” The meanings of these words are uncertain. In the Hebrew text sentence is a question: “Is not my inheritance to me a bird of prey [or] a hyena/a speckled bird of prey?” The question expects a positive answer and so is rendered here as an affirmative statement. The meaning of the word “speckled” is debated. It occurs only here. BDB 840 s.v. צִבְרִי relates it to another word that occurs only once in Judg 5:30 which is translated “dyed stuff.” HALOT 936 s.v. צִבְרִי relates a word found in the cognates meaning “hyena.” This is more likely and is the interpretation followed by the Greek which reads the first two words as “cave of hyena.” This translation has led some scholars to posit a homonym for the word “bird of prey” meaning “cave” which is based on Arabic parallels. The metaphor would then be of Israel carried off by hyenas and surrounded by birds of prey. The evidence for the meaning “cave” is weak and would involve a wordplay of a rare homonym with another word that is better known. For a discussion of the issues see J. Barr, *Comparative Philology and the Text of the Old Testament*, 128-29, 153.

¹⁴ **tn** Heb “Are birds of prey around her?” The question is again rhetorical and expects a positive answer. The birds of prey are of course the hostile nations surrounding her. The metaphor involved in these two lines may be interpreted differently. I.e., God considers Israel a proud bird of prey (hence the word for speckled) but one who is surrounded and under attack by other birds of prey. The fact that the sentences are divided into two rhetorical questions speaks somewhat against this.

¹⁵ **tn** Heb “Go, gather all the beasts of the field [= wild beasts]. Bring them to devour.” The verbs are masculine plural imperatives addressed rhetorically to some unidentified group (the heavenly counsel?) Cf. the notes on 5:1 for further discussion. Since translating literally would raise question about who the commands are addressed to, they have been turned into passive third person commands to avoid confusion. The metaphor has likewise been turned into a simile to help the modern reader. By the way, the imperatives here implying future action argue that the passage is future and that it is correct to take the verb forms as prophetic perfects.

¹⁶ **tn** Heb “Many shepherds.” For the use of the term “shepherd” as a figure for rulers see the notes on 10:21.

¹⁷ **tn** Heb “my vineyard.” To translate literally would presuppose an unlikely familiarity of this figure on the part of some readers. To translate as “vineyards” as some do would be misleading because that would miss the figurative nuance altogether.

sn The figure of Israel as God’s vine and the land as God’s

They will trample all over my chosen land.⁴

They will turn my beautiful land into a desolate wasteland.

12:11 They will lay it waste.

It will lie parched² and empty before me.

The whole land will be laid waste.

But no one living in it will pay any heed.³

12:12 A destructive army⁴ will come marching

over the hilltops in the desert.

For the LORD will use them as his destructive weapon⁵

against⁶ everyone from one end of the land to the other.

No one will be safe.⁷

12:13 My people will sow wheat, but will harvest weeds.⁸

They will work until they are exhausted, but will get nothing from it.

They will be disappointed in their harvests⁹

because the LORD will take them away in his fierce anger.¹⁰

12:14 “I, the LORD, also have something to say concerning¹¹ the wicked nations who surround my land¹² and have attacked and plundered¹³ the land that I gave to my people as a permanent possession.¹⁴ I say: ‘I will uproot the people of those nations from their lands and I will free the people of Judah who have been taken there.’¹⁵ **12:15** But after I have uprooted the people of those nations, I will relent¹⁶ and have pity on them. I will restore the people of each of those nations to their own lands¹⁷ and to their own country. **12:16** But they must make sure you learn to follow the religious practices of my people.¹⁸ Once they taught my people to swear their oaths using the name of the god Baal.¹⁹ But then, they must swear oaths using my name, saying, ‘As surely as the LORD lives, I swear.’²⁰ If they do these things,²¹ then they will be in-

vineyard is found several times in the Bible. The best known of these is the extended metaphor in Isa 5:1-7. This figure also appears in Jer 2:20.

¹ **tn** Heb “my portion.”

² **tn** For the use of this verb see the notes on 12:4. Some understand the homonym here meaning “it [the desolated land] will mourn to me.” However, the only other use of the preposition לָ (‘al) with this root means “to mourn over” not “to” (cf. Hos 10:5). For the use of the preposition here see BDB 753 s.v. לָ ll.1.b and compare the use in Gen 48:7.

³ **tn** Heb “But there is no man laying it to heart.” For the idiom here see BDB 525 s.v. לָב ll.3.d and compare the usage in Isa 42:25; 47:7.

sn There is a very interesting play on words and sounds in this verse that paints a picture of desolation and the pathos it evokes. Part of this is reflected in the translation. The same Hebrew word referring to a desolation or a waste (שָׁמָה, *sh’mamah*) is repeated three times at the end of three successive lines and the related verb is found at the beginning of the fourth (שָׁמָה, *nashammah*). A similar sounding word is found in the second of the three successive lines (שָׁמָה, *shamah* = “he [they] will make it”). This latter word is part of a further play because it is repeated in a different form in the last line (שָׁמָה, *sham* = “laying”); they lay it waste but no one lays it to heart. There is also an interesting contrast between the sorrow the LORD feels and the inattention of the people.

⁴ **tn** Heb “destroyers.”

⁵ **tn** Heb “It is the LORD’s consuming sword.”

⁶ **tn** Heb “For a sword of the LORD will devour.” The sword is often symbolic for destructive forces of all kinds. Here and in Isa 34:6; Jer 47:6 it is symbolic of the enemy armies that the LORD uses to carry out destructive punishment against his enemies, hence the translation “his destructive weapon.” A similar figure is use in Isa 10:5 where the figure is more clearly identified; Assyria is the rod/club that the LORD will use to discipline unfaithful Israel.

⁷ **tn** Heb “There is no peace to all flesh.”

⁸ **sn** Invading armies lived off the land, using up all the produce and destroying everything they could not consume.

⁹ **tn** The pronouns here are actually second plural; Heb “Be ashamed/disconcerted because of your harvests.” Because the verb form (וַיִּשְׁחָטוּ, *woshlu*) can either be Qal perfect third plural or Qal imperative masculine plural many emend the pronoun on the noun to third plural (see, e.g., BHS). However, this is the easier reading and is not supported by either the Latin or the Greek which have second plural. This is probably another case of the shift from description to direct address that has been met with several times already in Jeremiah (the figure of speech called apostrophe; for other examples see, e.g., 9:4; 11:13). As in other cases the translation has been

leveled to third plural to avoid confusion for the contemporary English reader. For the meaning of the verb here see BDB 101 s.v. בָּרַח Qal.2 and compare the usage in Jer 48:13.

¹⁰ **tn** Heb “be disappointed in their harvests from the fierce anger of the LORD.” The translation makes explicit what is implicit in the elliptical poetry of the Hebrew original.

¹¹ **tn** Heb “Thus says the LORD concerning....” This structure has been adopted to prevent a long dangling introduction to what the LORD has to say that does not begin until the middle of the verse in Hebrew. The first person address was adopted because the speaker is still the LORD as in vv. 7-13.

¹² **tn** Heb “my wicked neighbors.”

¹³ **tn** Heb “touched.” For the nuance of this verb here see BDB 619 s.v. נָגַע Qal.3 and compare the usage in 1 Chr 16:22 where it is parallel to “do harm to” and Zech 2:8 where it is parallel to “plundered.”

¹⁴ **tn** Heb “the inheritance which I caused my people Israel to inherit.” Compare 3:18.

¹⁵ **tn** Heb “I will uproot the house of Judah from their midst.”

sn There appears to be an interesting play on the Hebrew word translated “uproot” in this verse. In the first instance it refers to “uprooting the nations from upon their lands,” i.e., to exiling them. In the second instance it refers to “uprooting the Judeans from the midst of them,” i.e., to rescue them.

¹⁶ **tn** For the use of the verb “turn” (שׁוּב, *shuv*) in this sense, see BDB s.v. שׁוּב Qal.6.g and compare the usage in Pss 90:13; 6:4; Joel 2:14. It does not simply mean “again” as several of the English versions render it.

¹⁷ **sn** The LORD is sovereign over the nations and has allotted each of them their lands. See Deut 2:5 (Edom), Deut 2:9 (Moab), Deut 2:19 (Ammon). He promised to restore not only his own people Israel to their land (Jer 32:37) but also Moab (Jer 48:47) and Ammon (Jer 49:6).

¹⁸ **tn** Heb “the ways of my people.” For this nuance of the word “ways” compare 10:2 and the notes there.

¹⁹ **tn** Heb “taught my people to swear by Baal.”

²⁰ **tn** The words “I swear” are not in the text but are implicit to the oath formula. They are supplied in the translation for clarity.

²¹ **tn** The words “if they do this” are not in the text. They are part of an attempt to break up a Hebrew sentence which is long and complex into equivalent shorter sentences consistent with contemporary English style. Verse 16 in Hebrew is all one sentence with a long complex conditional clause followed by a short consequence: “If they carefully learn the ways of my people to swear by name, ‘By the life of the LORD,’ as they taught my people to swear by Baal, then they will be built up in the midst of my people.” The translation strives to create the same contingencies and modifications by breaking up the sentence into shorter sentences in accord with con-

cluded among the people I call my own.¹ 12:17 But I will completely uproot and destroy any of those nations that will not pay heed,”² says the LORD.

An Object Lesson from Ruined Linen Shorts

13:1 The LORD said to me, “Go and buy some linen shorts³ and put them on.⁴ Do not put them in water.”⁵ 13:2 So I bought the shorts as

the LORD had told me to do⁶ and put them on.⁷ 13:3 Then the LORD spoke to me again and said,⁸ 13:4 “Take the shorts that you bought and are wearing⁹ and go at once¹⁰ to Perath.¹¹ Bury the shorts there¹² in a crack in the rocks.” 13:5 So I went and buried them at Perath¹³ as the LORD had ordered me to do. 13:6 Many days later the LORD said to me, “Go at once to Perath and get¹⁴ the shorts I ordered you to bury there.” 13:7 So I went to Perath and dug up¹⁵ the shorts from the place where I had buried them. I found¹⁶ that they were ruined; they were good for nothing.

temporary English style.

¹ **tn** Heb “they will be built up among my people.” The expression “be built up among” is without parallel. However, what is involved here is conceptually parallel to the ideas expressed in Isa 19:23-25 and Zech 14:16-19. That is, these people will be allowed to live on their own land, to worship the LORD there, and to come to Jerusalem to celebrate the feasts. To translate literally would be meaningless or misleading for many readers.

² **tn** Heb “But if they will not listen, I will uproot that nation, uprooting and destroying.” *IBHS* 590-91 §35.3.2d is likely right in seeing the double infinitive construction here as an intensifying infinitive followed by an adverbial infinitive qualifying the goal of the main verb, “uproot it in such a way as to destroy it.” However, to translate that way “literally” would not be very idiomatic in contemporary English. The translation strives for the equivalent. Likewise, to translate using the conditional structure of the original seems to put the emphasis of the passage in its context on the wrong point.

³ **tn** The term here (עִזוֹר, *ezor*) has been rendered in various ways: “girdle” (KJV, ASV), “waistband” (NASB), “waistcloth” (RSV), “sash” (NKJV), “belt” (NIV, NCV, NLT), and “loincloth” (NAB, NRSV, NJPS, REB). The latter is more accurate according to J. M. Myers, “Dress and Ornaments,” *IDB* 1:870, and W. L. Holladay, *Jeremiah* (Hermeneia), 1:399. It was a short, skirt-like garment reaching from the waist to the knees and worn next to the body (cf. v. 9). The modern equivalent is “shorts” as in TEV/GNB, CEV.

sn The *linen shorts* (Heb “loincloth”) were representative of Israel and the wearing of them was to illustrate the LORD’s close relation to his people (v. 11). Since the priests’ garments were to be made wholly of linen (cf. Exod 28; Ezek 44:17-18), the fact that the shorts were to be made of linen probably was to symbolize the nature of Israel’s calling; they were to be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation (Exod 19:5-6). Just as the linen garments of the priest were to give him special honor and glory (Exod 28:40), so the linen garment was to be a source of praise and glory to the LORD (v. 11).

⁴ **tn** Heb “upon your loins.” The “loins” were the midriff of the body from the waist to the knees. For a further discussion including the figurative uses see, *IDB*, “Loins,” 3:149.

⁵ **tn** Or “Do not ever put them in water,” i.e., “Do not even wash them.”

sn The fact that the garment was not to be put in water is not explained. A possible explanation within the context is that it was to be worn continuously, not even taken off to wash it. That would illustrate that the close relationship that the LORD had with his people was continuous and indissoluble. Other explanations are that it was not to be gotten wet because (1) that would have begun the process of rotting (This assumes that the rotting was done by the water of the Euphrates. But it was buried in a crack in the rocks, not in the river itself); (2) that would have made it softer and easier to wear; or (3) that showed that the garment was new, clean, and fresh from the merchant. For this latter interpretation see J. A. Thompson, *Jeremiah* (NICOT), 64. For a fuller discussion of most of the issues connected with this acted out parable see W. McKane, *Jeremiah* (ICC), 1:285-92. However, the reason is not explained in the text and there is not enough evidence in the text to come to a firm conclusion, though the most likely possibility is that it was not to be taken off and washed but worn continuously.

⁶ **tn** Heb “according to the word of the LORD.”

⁷ **tn** Heb “upon your loins.” The “loins” were the midriff of the body from the waist to the knees. For a further discussion including the figurative uses see R. C. Dentan, “Loins,” *IDB* 3:149-50.

⁸ **tn** Heb “The word of the LORD came to me a second time, saying.”

⁹ **tn** Heb “which are upon your loins.” See further the notes on v. 1.

¹⁰ **tn** Heb “Get up and go.” The first verb is not literal but is idiomatic for the initiation of an action.

¹¹ **tn** There has been a great deal of debate about whether the place referred to here is a place (Parah [= Perath] mentioned in Josh 18:23, modern Khirbet Farah, near a spring ‘ain Farah) about three and a half miles from Anathoth which was Jeremiah’s home town or the Euphrates River. Elsewhere the word “Perath” always refers to the Euphrates but it is either preceded by the word “river of” or there is contextual indication that the Euphrates is being referred to. Because a journey to the Euphrates and back would involve a journey of more than 700 miles (1,100 km) and take some months, scholars both ancient and modern have questioned whether “Perath” refers to the Euphrates here and if it does whether a real journey was involved. Most of the attempts to identify the place with the Euphrates involve misguided assumptions that this action was a symbolic message to Israel about exile or the corrupting influence of Assyria and Babylon. However, unlike the other symbolic acts in Jeremiah (and in Isaiah and Ezekiel) the symbolism is not part of a message to the people but to Jeremiah; the message is explained to him (vv. 9-11) not the people. In keeping with some of the wordplays that are somewhat common in Jeremiah it is likely that the reference here is to a place, Parah, which was near Jeremiah’s hometown, but whose name would naturally suggest to Jeremiah later in the LORD’s explanation in vv. 9-11 Assyria-Babylon as a place connected with Judah’s corruption (see the notes on vv. 9-10). For further discussion the reader should consult the commentaries, especially W. Holladay, *Jeremiah* (Hermeneia), 1:396 and W. McKane, *Jeremiah* (ICC), 1:285-92 who take opposite positions on this issue.

¹² **sn** The significance of this act is explained in vv. 9-10. See the notes there for explanation.

¹³ **tc** The translation reads בַּפְּרָתָה (*bifratāh*) with 4QJer^a as noted in W. L. Holladay, *Jeremiah* (Hermeneia), 1:393 instead of בִּפְרָתָה (*bifrat*) in the MT.

¹⁴ **tn** Heb “Get from there.” The words “from there” are not necessary to the English sentence. They would lead to a redundancy later in the verse, i.e., “from there...bury there.”

¹⁵ **tn** Heb “dug and took.”

¹⁶ **tn** Heb “And behold.”

13:8 Then the LORD said to me,¹ 13:9 “I, the LORD, say;² ‘This shows how³ I will ruin the highly exalted position⁴ in which Judah and Jerusalem⁵ take pride. 13:10 These wicked people refuse to obey what I have said.⁶ They follow the stubborn inclinations of their own hearts and pay allegiance⁷ to other gods by worshiping and serving them. So⁸ they will become just like these linen shorts which are good for nothing. 13:11 For,’ I say,⁹ ‘just as shorts cling tightly to a person’s body, so I bound the whole nation of Israel and the whole nation of

Judah¹⁰ tightly¹¹ to me.’ I intended for them to be my special people and to bring me fame, honor, and praise.¹² But they would not obey me.

13:12 “So tell them,¹³ ‘The LORD, the God of Israel, says, “Every wine jar is made to be filled with wine.”¹⁴ And they will probably say to you, ‘Do you not think we know¹⁵ that every wine jar is supposed to be filled with wine?’ 13:13 Then¹⁶ tell them, ‘The LORD says, “I will soon fill all the people who live in this land with stupor.¹⁷ I will also fill the kings from David’s dynasty,¹⁸ the priests, the prophets, and the citizens of Jerusalem with stupor.¹⁹ 13:14 And I will smash them like wine bottles against one another, children and parents

¹ tn Heb “Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying.”

² tn Heb “Thus says the LORD.”

³ tn In a sense this phrase which is literally “according to thus” or simply “thus” points both backward and forward: backward to the acted out parable and forward to the explanation which follows.

⁴ tn Many of the English versions have erred in rendering this word “pride” or “arrogance” with the resultant implication that the LORD is going to destroy Israel’s pride, i.e., humble them through the punishment of exile. However, BDB 144-45 s.v. זָחַן; 1 is more probably correct when they classify this passage among those that deal with the “majesty, excellence” of nations, their wealth, power, magnificence of buildings.... The closest parallels to the usage here are in Zech 10:11 (parallel to scepter of Egypt); Ps 47:4 (47:5 HT; parallel to “our heritage” = “our land”); Isa 14:11; and Amos 8:7. The term is further defined in v. 11 where it refers to their special relationship and calling. To translate it “pride” or “arrogance” also ruins the wordplay on “ruin” (נִשְׁחַת) [nishkhat] in v. 7 and אֲשַׁחֵת [ashkhit] in v. 9).

sn Scholars ancient and modern are divided over the significance of the statement *I will ruin the highly exalted position in which Judah and Jerusalem take pride* (Heb “I will ruin the pride of Judah and Jerusalem”). Some feel that it refers to the corrupting influence of Assyria and Babylon and others feel that it refers to the threat of Babylonian exile. However, F. B. Huey (*Jeremiah, Lamentations* [NAC], 144) is correct in observing that the Babylonian exile did not lead to the rottenness of Judah, the corrupting influence of the foreign nations did. In Jeremiah’s day these came through the age-old influences of the Canaanite worship of Baal but also the astral worship introduced by Ahaz and Manasseh. For an example of the corrupting influence of Assyria on Judah through Ahaz’s political alliances see 2 Kgs 16 and also compare the allegory in Ezek 23:14-21. It was while the “linen shorts” were off Jeremiah’s body and buried in the rocks that the linen shorts were ruined. So the LORD “ruined” the privileged status that resulted from Israel’s close relationship to him (cf. v. 11). For the “problem” created by the LORD ruining Israel through corrupting influence compare the notes on Jer 4:10 and compare also passages like Isa 63:17 and Isa 6:10.

⁵ map For location see Map5-B1; Map6-F3; Map7-E2; Map8-F2; Map10-B3; JP1-F4; JP2-F4; JP3-F4; JP4-F4.

⁶ tn Heb “to listen to my words.”

⁷ tn Heb “and [they follow] after.” See the translator’s note at 2:5 for the idiom.

⁸ tn The structure of this verse is a little unusual. It consists of a subject, “this wicked people” qualified by several “which” clauses preceding a conjunction and a form which would normally be taken as a third person imperative (a Hebrew jussive; וְיָחִי, *viihi*). This construction, called *casus pendens* by Hebrew grammarians, lays focus on the subject, here calling attention to the nature of Israel’s corruption which makes it rotten and useless to God. See GKC 458 §143.d for other examples of this construction.

⁹ tn The words “I say” are “Oracle of the LORD” in Hebrew, and are located at the end of this statement in the Hebrew text rather than the beginning. However, they are rendered in the first person and placed at the beginning for smoother English style.

¹⁰ tn Heb “all the house of Israel and all the house of Judah.”

¹¹ tn It would be somewhat unnatural in English to render the play on the word translated here “cling tightly” and “bound tightly” in a literal way. They are from the same root word in Hebrew (דָּבַק, *davaq*), a word that emphasizes the closest of personal relationships and the loyalty connected with them. It is used, for example, of the relationship of a husband and a wife and the loyalty expected of them (cf. Gen 2:24; for other similar uses see Ruth 1:14; 2 Sam 20:2; Deut 11:22).

¹² tn Heb “I bound them...in order that they might be to me for a people and for a name and for praise and for honor.” The sentence has been separated from the preceding and an equivalent idea expressed which is more in keeping with contemporary English style.

¹³ tn Heb “So you shall say this word [or message] to them.”

¹⁴ tn Heb “Every wine jar is supposed to be filled with wine.”

sn Some scholars understand this as a popular proverb like that in Jer 31:29 and Ezek 18:2. Instead this is probably a truism; the function of wine jars is to be filled with wine. This may relate to the preceding where the LORD has set forth his intention for Israel. It forms the basis for an ironic threat of judgment because they have failed to fulfill his purpose.

¹⁵ tn This is an attempt to render a construction which involves an infinitive of a verb being added before the same verb in a question which expects a positive answer. There may, by the way, be a pun being passed back and forth here involving the sound play been “fool” (נָבֵל, *naval*) and “wine bottle” (נֵבֶל, *nebel*).

¹⁶ tn The Greek version is likely right in interpreting the construction of two perfects preceded by the conjunction as contingent or consequential here, i.e., “and when they say...then say.” See GKC 494 §159.g. However, to render literally would create a long sentence. Hence, the words “will probably” have been supplied in v. 12 in the translation to set up the contingency/consequential sequence in the English sentences.

¹⁷ sn It is probably impossible to convey in a simple translation all the subtle nuances that are wrapped up in the words of this judgment speech. The word translated “stupor” here is literally “drunkenness” but the word has in the context an undoubted intended double reference. It refers first to the drunken like stupor of confusion on the part of leaders and citizens of the land which will cause them to clash with one another. But it also probably refers to the reeling under God’s wrath that results from this (cf. Jer 25:15-29, especially vv. 15-16). Moreover there is still the subtle little play on wine jars. The people are like the wine jars which were supposed to be filled with wine. They were to be a special people to bring glory to God but they had become corrupt. Hence, like wine jars they would be smashed against one another and broken to pieces (v. 14). All of this, both “fill them with the stupor of confusion” and “make them reel under God’s wrath,” cannot be conveyed in one translation.

¹⁸ tn Heb “who sit on David’s throne.”

¹⁹ tn In Hebrew this is all one long sentence with one verb governing compound objects. It is broken up here in conformity with English style.

alike.¹ I will not show any pity, mercy, or compassion. Nothing will keep me from destroying them,² says the LORD.”

13:15 Then I said to the people of Judah,³

“Listen and pay attention! Do not be arrogant!

For the LORD has spoken.

13:16 Show the LORD your God the respect that is due him.⁴

Do it before he brings the darkness of disaster.⁵

Do it before you stumble⁶ into distress like a traveler on the mountains at twilight.⁷

Do it before he turns the light of deliverance you hope for into the darkness and gloom of exile.⁸

13:17 But if you will not pay attention to this warning,⁹

I will weep alone because of your arrogant pride.

I will weep bitterly and my eyes will overflow with tears¹⁰

because you, the LORD’s flock,¹¹ will be

carried¹² into exile.”¹³

13:18 The LORD told me,¹⁴

“Tell the king and the queen mother,

‘Surrender your thrones,¹⁴

for your glorious crowns will be removed¹⁵ from your heads.¹⁶

13:19 The gates of the towns in southern Judah will be shut tight.¹⁷

No one will be able to go in or out of them.¹⁸

All Judah will be carried off into exile.

They will be completely carried off into exile.”¹⁹

13:20 Then I said,²⁰

“Look up, Jerusalem,²¹ and see

is supplied in the translation to avoid the shift in English from the second person address at the beginning to the third person affirmation at the end. It also helps explain the metaphor of the people of Israel as God’s flock for some readers who may be unfamiliar with that metaphor.

12 tn The verb is once again in the form of “as good as done” (the Hebrew prophetic perfect).

13 tn The words “The LORD told me” are not in the text but are implicit in the shift from second plural pronouns in vv. 15-17 to second singular in the Hebrew text of this verse. These words are supplied in the translation for clarity.

14 tn Or “You will come down from your thrones”; Heb “Make low! Sit!” This is a case of a construction where two forms in the same case, mood, or tense are joined in such a way that one (usually the first) is intended as an adverbial or adjectival modifier of the other (a figure called hendiads). This is also probably a case where the imperative is used to express a distinct assurance or promise. See GKC 3:24 §110. b and compare the usage in Isa 37:30 and Ps 110:2.

sn The king and queen mother are generally identified as Jehoiachin and his mother who were taken into captivity with many of the leading people of Jerusalem in 597 B.C. See Jer 22:26; 29:2; 2 Kgs 24:14-16.

15 tn Heb “have come down.” The verb here and those in the following verses are further examples of the “as good as done” form of the Hebrew verb (the prophetic perfect).

16 tc The translation follows the common emendation of a word normally meaning “place at the head” [מִרְאֲשֵׁיתָ] [mar’ashot] plus pronoun = מִרְאֲשֵׁיתֶיכֶם [mar’aoshtekhem]) to “from your heads” (מִרְאֲשֵׁיתֶיכֶם, mera’shekhem) following the ancient versions. The meaning “tiara” is nowhere else attested for this word.

17 tn Heb “The towns of the Negev will be shut.”

18 tn Heb “There is no one to open them.” The translation is based on the parallel in Josh 6:1 where the very expression in the translation is used. Opening the city would have permitted entrance (of relief forces) as well as exit (of fugitives).

19 sn The statements are poetic exaggerations (hyperbole), as most commentaries note. Even in the exile of 587 B.C. not “all” of the people of Jerusalem or of Judah were exiled. Cf. the context of 2 Kgs 24:14-16 again.

20 tn The words “Then I said” are not in the text. They are supplied in the translation to show the shift in speaker from vv. 18-19 where the LORD is speaking to Jeremiah.

21 tn The word “Jerusalem” is not in the Hebrew text. It is added in the Greek text and is generally considered to be the object of address because of the second feminine singular verbs here and throughout the following verses. The translation follows the consonantal text (*Kethib*) and the Greek text in reading the second feminine singular here. The verbs and pronouns in vv. 20-22 are all second feminine singular with the exception of the suffix on the word “eyes” which is not reflected in the translation here (“Look up” = “Lift up your eyes”) and the verb and pronoun in v. 23. The text may reflect the same kind of alternation between singular and plural that

1 tn Or “children along with their parents”; Heb “fathers and children together.”

2 tn Heb “I will not show...so as not to destroy them.”

3 tn The words “Then I said to the people of Judah” are not in the text but are implicit from the address in v. 15 and the content of v. 17. They are supplied in the translation for clarity to show the shift from the LORD speaking to Jeremiah.

4 tn Heb “Give glory/respect to the LORD your God.” For this nuance of the word “glory” (כְבוֹד, *kavod*), see BDB 459 s.v. כְבוֹד 6.b and compare the usage in Mal 1:6 and Josh 7:19.

5 tn The words “of disaster” are not in the text. They are supplied in the translation to explain the significance of the metaphor to readers who may not be acquainted with the metaphorical use of light and darkness for salvation and joy and distress and sorrow respectively.

sn For the metaphorical use of these terms the reader should consult O. A. Piper, “Light, Light and Darkness,” *IDB* 3:130-32. For the association of darkness with the Day of the LORD, the time when he will bring judgment, see, e.g., Amos 5:18-20. For the association of darkness with exile see Isa 9:1-2 (8:23-9:1 HT).

6 tn Heb “your feet stumble.”

7 tn Heb “you stumble on the mountains at twilight.” The added words are again supplied in the translation to help explain the metaphor to the uninitiated reader.

8 tn Heb “and while you hope for light he will turn it into deep darkness and make [it] into gloom.” The meaning of the metaphor is again explained through the addition of the “of” phrases for readers who are unacquainted with the metaphorical use of these terms.

sn For the meaning and usage of the term “deep darkness” (צִלְמַוֶּטֶת, *tsalmavet*), see the notes on Jer 2:6. For the association of the term with exile see Isa 9:2 (9:1 HT). For the association of the word gloom with the Day of the LORD see Isa 60:2; Joel 2:2; Zeph 1:15.

9 tn Heb “If you will not listen to it.” For the use of the feminine singular pronoun to refer to the idea(s) expressed in the preceding verse(s), see GKC 440-41 §135.p.

10 tn Heb “Tearing [my eye] will tear and my eye will run down [= flow] with tears.”

sn The depth of Jeremiah’s sorrow for the sad plight of his people, if they refuse to repent, is emphasized by the triple repetition of the word “tears” twice in an emphatic verbal expression (Hebrew infinitive before finite verb) and once in the noun.

11 tn Heb “because the LORD’s flock will...” The pronoun “you”

the enemy¹ that is coming from the north.
Where now is the flock of people that
were entrusted to your care?²
Where now are the ‘sheep’ that you take
such pride in?³

13:21 What will you say⁴ when the LORD⁵
appoints as rulers over you those allies
that you, yourself, had actually prepared
as such?⁶

Then anguish and agony will grip you
like that of a woman giving birth to a
baby.⁷

13:22 You will probably ask yourself,⁸
‘Why have these things happened to me?’
Why have I been treated like a disgraced
adulteress
whose skirt has been torn off and her
limbs exposed?⁹
It is because you have sinned so much.¹⁰
13:23 But there is little hope for you ever
doing good,
you who are so accustomed to doing
evil.
Can an Ethiopian¹¹ change the color of
his skin?
Can a leopard remove its spots?¹²

13:24 “The LORD says,¹³

‘That is why I will scatter your people¹⁴
like chaff
that is blown away by a desert wind.¹⁵
13:25 This is your fate,

takes place in Isa 7 where the pronouns refer to Ahaz as an individual and his entourage, the contemporary ruling class (cf., e.g., Isa 7:4-5 [singular], 9 [plural], 11 [singular], 13-14 [plural]). Here the connection with the preceding may suggest that it is initially the ruling house (the king and the queen mother), then Jerusalem personified as a woman in her role as a shepherdess (i.e., leader). However, from elsewhere in the book the leadership has included the kings, the priests, the prophets, and the citizens as well (cf., e.g., 13:13). In v. 27 Jerusalem is explicitly addressed. It may be asking too much of some readers who are not familiar with biblical metaphors to understand an extended metaphor like this. If it is helpful to them, they may substitute plural referents for “I” and “me.”

¹ **tn** The word “enemy” is not in the text but is implicit. It supplied in the translation for clarity.

² **sn** On the phrase *the enemy that is coming from the north* see Jer 1:14-15; 4:6; 6:1, 22; 10:22.

³ **tn** Heb “the flock that was given to you.”

⁴ **tn** Heb “the sheep of your pride.” The words “of people” and the quotes around “sheep” are intended to carry over the metaphor in such a way that readers unfamiliar with the metaphor will understand it.

⁵ **tn** Or perhaps more rhetorically equivalent, “Will you not be surprised?”

⁶ **tn** The words “The LORD” are not in the text. Some commentators make the enemy the subject, but they are spoken of as “them.”

⁷ **tn** Or “to be rulers.” The translation of these two lines is somewhat uncertain. The sentence structure of these two lines raises problems in translation. The Hebrew text reads: “What will you do when he appoints over you [or punishes you (see BDB 823 s.v. פָּקַד Qal.B.2 for the former, Qal.A.3 for the latter)] and you, yourself, taught them over you friends [or chiefs (see BDB 48 s.v. לְאֹרֶיךָ 2 and Ps 55:13 for the former and BDB 49 s.v. לְאֹרֶיךָ and Exod 15:15 for the latter)] for a head.” The translation assumes that the clause “and you, yourself, taught them [= made them accustomed, i.e., “prepared”] [to be] over you” is parenthetical coming between the verb “appoint” and its object and object modifier (i.e., “appointed over you allies for rulers”). A quick check of other English versions will show how varied the translation of these lines has been. Most English versions seem to ignore the second “over you” after “you taught them.” Some rearrange the text to get what they think is a sensible meaning. For a fairly thorough treatment see W. McKane, *Jeremiah* (ICC), 1:308-10.

⁸ **sn** What is being alluded to here is the political policy of vacillating alliances through which Judah brought about her own downfall, allying herself first with Assyria, then Egypt, then Babylon, and then Egypt again. See 2 Kgs 23:29-24:7 for an example of this policy and the disastrous consequences.

⁹ **tn** Heb “Will not pain [here = mental anguish] take hold of you like a woman giving birth.” The question is rhetorical expecting a positive answer.

⁸ **tn** Heb “say in your heart.”

⁹ **tn** Heb “Your skirt has been uncovered and your heels have been treated with violence.” This is the generally accepted interpretation of these phrases. See, e.g., BDB 784 s.v. פָּקַד a and HALOT 329 s.v. הִטְטוּ. Nif. The significance of the actions here are part of the metaphor (i.e., personification) of Jerusalem as an adulteress having left her husband and have been explained in the translation for the sake of readers unfamiliar with the metaphor.

¹⁰ **sn** The actions here were part of the treatment of an adulteress by her husband, intended to shame her. See Hos 2:3, 10 (2:5, 12 HT); Isa 47:4.

¹¹ **tn** The translation has been restructured to break up a long sentence involving a conditional clause and an elliptical consequential clause. It has also been restructured to define more clearly what “these things” are. The Hebrew text reads: “And if you say, ‘Why have these things happened to me?’ Because of the greatness of your iniquity your skirts [= what your skirt covers] have been uncovered and your heels have been treated with violence.”

¹² **tn** This is a common proverb in English coming from this biblical passage. For cultures where it is not proverbial perhaps it would be better to translate “Can black people change the color of their skin?” Strictly speaking these are “Cushites” inhabitants of a region along the upper Nile south of Egypt. The Greek text is responsible for the identification with Ethiopia. The term in Greek is actually an epithet = “burnt face.”

¹³ **tn** Heb “Can the Cushite change his skin or the leopard his spots? [Then] you also will be able to do good who are accustomed to do evil.” The English sentence has been restructured and rephrased in an attempt to produce some of the same rhetorical force the Hebrew original has in this context.

¹⁴ **tn** The words, “The LORD says” are not in the text at this point. The words “an oracle of the LORD” does, however, occur in the middle of the next verse and it is obvious the LORD is the speaker. The words have been moved up from the next verse to enhance clarity.

¹⁵ **tn** Heb “them.” This is another example of the rapid shift in pronouns seen several times in the book of Jeremiah. The pronouns in the preceding and the following are second feminine singular. It might be argued that “them” goes back to the “flock”/“sheep” in v. 20, but the next verse refers the fate described here to “you” (feminine singular). This may be another example of the kind of metaphorical shifts in referents discussed in the notes on 13:20 above. Besides, it would sound a little odd in the translation to speak of scattering one person like chaff.

¹⁶ **sn** Compare the threat using the same metaphor in Jer 4:11-12.

the destiny to which I have appointed you,
 because you have forgotten me
 and have trusted in false gods.
13:26 So I will pull your skirt up over
 your face
 and expose you to shame like a disgraced
 adulteress!¹⁴
13:27 People of Jerusalem,² I have seen
 your adulterous worship,
 your shameless prostitution to, and your
 lustful pursuit of, other gods.³
 I have seen your disgusting acts of wor-
 ship⁴
 on the hills throughout the countryside.
 You are doomed to destruction!⁵
 How long will you continue to be un-
 clean?⁶

*A Lament over the Ravages of Drought*⁶

14:1 The LORD spoke to Jeremiah⁷ about the drought.⁸

14:2 “The people of Judah are in mourn-
 ing.
 The people in her cities are pining away.
 They lie on the ground expressing their
 sorrow.⁹
 Cries of distress come up to me¹⁰ from
 Jerusalem.¹¹
14:3 The leading men of the cities send
 their servants for water.
 They go to the cisterns,¹² but they do not
 find any water there.
 They return with their containers¹³ empty.
 Disappointed and dismayed, they bury
 their faces in their hands.¹⁴
14:4 They are dismayed because the
 ground is cracked¹⁵
 because there has been no rain in the
 land.
 The farmers, too, are dismayed
 and bury their faces in their hands.
14:5 Even the doe abandons her newborn
 fawn¹⁶ in the field

¹ **tn** Heb “over your face and your shame will be seen.” The words “like a disgraced adulteress” are not in the text but are supplied in the translation to explain the metaphor. See the notes on 13:22.

² **tn** Heb “Jerusalem.” This word has been pulled up from the end of the verse to help make the transition. The words “people of” have been supplied in the translation here to ease the difficulty mentioned earlier of sustaining the personification throughout.

³ **tn** Heb “[I have seen] your adulteries, your neighings, and your shameless prostitution.” The meanings of the metaphorical references have been incorporated in the translation for the sake of clarity for readers of all backgrounds.

sn The sentence is rhetorically loaded. It begins with three dangling objects of the verb all describing their adulterous relationship with the false gods under different figures and which are resumed later under the words “your disgusting acts.” The Hebrew sentence reads: “Your adulteries, your neighings, your shameful prostitution, upon the hills in the fields I have seen your disgusting acts.” This sentence drips with explosive disgust at their adulterous betrayal.

⁴ **tn** Heb “your disgusting acts.” This word is almost always used of idolatry or of the idols themselves. See BDB 1055 s.v. שִׁקְרָא and Deut 29:17 and Jer 4:1; 7:30.

⁵ **tn** Heb “Woe to you!”

sn See Jer 4:13, 31; 6:4; 10:19 for usage, and the notes on 4:13 and 10:19.

⁶ **sn** The form of Jer 14:1–15:9 is very striking rhetorically. It consists essentially of laments and responses to them. However, what makes it so striking is its deviation from normal form (cf. 2 Chr 20:5–17 for what would normally be expected). The descriptions of the lamentable situation come from the mouth of God *not* the people (cf. 14:1–6, 17–18). The prophet utters the petitions with statements of trust (14:7–9, 19–22) and the LORD answers *not* with oracles promising deliverance but promising doom (14:10; 15:1–9). In the course of giving the first oracle of doom, the Lord commands Jeremiah not to pray for the people (14:11–12) and Jeremiah tries to provide an excuse for their actions (14:13). The LORD responds to that with an oracle of doom on the false prophets (14:14–16).

⁷ **tn** Heb “That which came [as] the word of the LORD to Jeremiah.” The introductory formula here is a variation of that found in 7:1; 10:1; 11:1, i.e., “The word of the LORD which came to Jeremiah.” The relative pronoun “which” (אֲשֶׁר, *asher*) actually precedes the noun it modifies. See BDB 82 s.v. אֲשֶׁר 6.a for discussion and further examples.

⁸ **sn** *Drought* was one of the punishments for failure to adhere to the terms of their covenant with God. See Deut 28:22–24; Lev 26:18–20.

⁹ **tn** Heb “Judah mourns, its gates pine away, they are in mourning on the ground.” There are several figures of speech involved here. The basic figure is that of personification where Judah and its cities are said to be in mourning. However, in the third line the figure is a little hard to sustain because “they” are in mourning on the ground. That presses the imagination of most moderns a little too far. Hence the personification has been interpreted “people of” throughout. The term “gates” here is used as part for whole for the “cities” themselves as in several other passages in the OT (cf. BDB 1045 s.v. שַׁעַר 2.b, c and see, e.g., Isa 14:31).

¹⁰ **tn** The words “to me” are not in the text. They are implicit from the fact that the LORD is speaking. They are supplied in the translation for clarity.

¹¹ **map** For location see Map5-B1; Map6-F3; Map7-E2; Map8-F2; Map10-B3; JP1-F4; JP2-F4; JP3-F4; JP4-F4.

¹² **tn** Though the concept of “cisterns” is probably not familiar to some readers, it would be a mistake to translate this word as “well.” Wells have continual sources of water. Cisterns were pits dug in the ground and lined with plaster to hold rainwater. The drought had exhausted all the water in the cisterns.

¹³ **tn** The word “containers” is a generic word in Hebrew = “vessels.” It would probably in this case involve water “jars” or “jugs.” But since in contemporary English one would normally associate those terms with smaller vessels, “containers” may be safer.

¹⁴ **tn** Heb “they cover their heads.” Some of the English versions have gone wrong here because of the “normal” use of the words translated here “disappointed” and “dismayed.” They are regularly translated “ashamed” and “disgraced, humiliated, dismayed” elsewhere (see e.g., Jer 22:22); they are somewhat synonymous terms which are often parallel or combined. The key here, however, is the expression “they cover their heads” which is used in 2 Sam 15:30 for the expression of grief. Moreover, the word translated here “disappointed” (בוּשָׁה, *bosh*) is used that way several times. See for example Jer 12:13 and consult examples in BDB 101 s.v. בוּשָׁה Qal.2. A very similar context with the same figure is found in Jer 2:36–37.

¹⁵ **tn** For the use of the verb “is cracked” here see BDB 369 s.v. חִתְּתָהּ Qal.1 and compare the usage in Jer 51:56 where it refers to broken bows. The form is a relative clause without relative pronoun (cf., GKC 486–87 §155.f). The sentence as a whole is related to the preceding through a particle meaning “because of” or “on account of.” Hence the subject and verb have been repeated to make the connection.

¹⁶ **tn** Heb “she gives birth and abandons.”

because there is no grass.
14:6 Wild donkeys stand on the hilltops
 and pant for breath like jackals.
 Their eyes are strained looking for food,
 because there is none to be found.”¹

14:7 Then I said,²

“O LORD, intervene for the honor of your
 name³
 even though our sins speak out against
 us.”⁴

Indeed,⁵ we have turned away from you
 many times.

We have sinned against you.

14:8 You have been the object of Israel’s
 hopes.

You have saved them when they were in
 trouble.

Why have you become like a resident
 foreigner⁶ in the land?

Why have you become like a traveler
 who only stops in to spend the night?

14:9 Why should you be like someone
 who is helpless,⁷

like a champion⁸ who cannot save anyone?

¹ **tn** *Heb* “their eyes are strained because there is no verdure.”

² **tn** The words “Then I said” are not in the text. However, it cannot be a continuation of the LORD’s speech and the people have consistently refused to acknowledge their sin. The fact that the prayer here and in vv. 19-22 are followed by an address from God to Jeremiah regarding prayer (cf. 4:11 and the interchanges there between God and Jeremiah and 15:1) also argues that the speaker is Jeremiah. He is again identifying with his people (cf. 8:18-9:2). Here he takes up the petition part of the lament which often contains elements of confession of sin and statements of trust. In 14:1-6 God portrays to Jeremiah the people’s lamentable plight instead of their describing it to him. Here Jeremiah prays what they should pray. The people are strangely silent throughout.

³ **tn** *Heb* “Act for the sake of your name.” The usage of “act” in this absolute, unqualified sense cf. BDB 794 s.v. עָשָׂה Qal. l.r and compare the usage, e.g., in 1 Kgs 8:32 and 39. For the nuance of “for the sake of your name” compare the usage in Isa 48:9 and Ezek 20:9, 14.

⁴ **tn** Or “bear witness against us,” or “can be used as evidence against us,” to keep the legal metaphor. *Heb* “testify against.”

⁵ **tn** The Hebrew particle כִּי (*ki*) can scarcely be causal here; it is either intensive (BDB 472 s.v. כִּי 1.e) or concessive (BDB 473 s.v. כִּי 2.c). The parallel usage in Gen 18:20 argues for the intensive force as does the fact that the concessive has already been expressed by אִם (*im*).

⁶ **tn** It would be a mistake to translate this word as “stranger.” This word (גֵּר, *ger*) refers to a resident alien or resident foreigner who stays in a country not his own. He is accorded the privilege of protection through the common rights of hospitality but he does not have the rights of the native born or citizen. The simile here is particularly effective. The land was the LORD’s land; they were but resident foreigners and tenants on it (Lev 25:23). Jeremiah’s complaint here is particularly bold. For further information on the status of “resident foreigners” see *IDB* 4:397-99 s.v. “Sojourner.”

⁷ **tn** This is the only time this word occurs in the Hebrew Bible. The lexicons generally take it to mean “confused” or “surprised” (cf., e.g., BDB 187 s.v. הָרַם). However, the word has been found in a letter from the seventh century in a passage where it must mean something like “be helpless”; see W. L. Holladay, *Jeremiah* (Hermeneia), 1:433, for discussion and bibliography of an article where this letter is dealt with.

⁸ **tn** *Heb* “mighty man, warrior.” For this nuance see 1 Sam 17:51 where it parallels a technical term used of Goliath used

You are indeed with us,⁹
 and we belong to you.¹⁰
 Do not abandon us!”

14:10 Then the LORD spoke about these people.¹¹

“They truly¹² love to go astray.
 They cannot keep from running away
 from me.¹³

So I am not pleased with them.
 I will now call to mind¹⁴ the wrongs they
 have done¹⁵
 and punish them for their sins.”

Judgment for Believing the Misleading Lies of the False Prophets

14:11 Then the LORD said to me, “Do not pray for good to come to these people!¹⁶ **14:12** Even if they fast, I will not hear their cries for help. Even if they offer burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them.¹⁷ Instead, I will kill them through wars, famines, and plagues.”¹⁸

14:13 Then I said, “Oh, Lord GOD,¹⁹ look!²⁰ The prophets are telling them that you said,²¹ ‘You will not experience war or suffer famine.’²²

earlier in 17:4, 23.

⁹ **tn** *Heb* “in our midst.”

¹⁰ **tn** *Heb* “Your name is called upon us.” See Jer 7:10, 11, 14, 30 for this idiom with respect to the temple and see the notes on Jer 7:10.

¹¹ **tn** *Heb* “Thus said the LORD concerning this people.”

sn The LORD answers indirectly, speaking neither to Jeremiah directly nor to the people. Instead of an oracle of deliverance which was hoped for (cf. 2 Chr 20:14-17; Pss 12:5 [12:6 HT]; 60:6-8 [60:8-10 HT]) there is an oracle of doom.

¹² **tn** It is difficult to be certain how the particle כִּן (*ken*, usually used for “thus, so”) is to be rendered here. BDB 485 s.v. כִּן 1.b says that the force sometimes has to be elicited from the general context and points back to the line of v. 9. *IHBS* 666 §39.3.4e states that when there is no specific comparative clause preceding a general comparison is intended. They point to Judg 5:31 as a parallel. Ps 127:2 may also be an example if כִּי (*ki*) is not to be read (cf. *BHS* fn). “Truly” seemed the best way to render this idea in contemporary English.

¹³ **tn** *Heb* “They do not restrain their feet.” The idea of “away from me” is implicit in the context and is supplied in the translation for clarity.

¹⁴ **tn** *Heb* “remember.”

¹⁵ **tn** *Heb* “their iniquities.”

¹⁶ **tn** *Heb* “on behalf of these people for benefit.”

¹⁷ **sn** See 6:16-20 for parallels.

¹⁸ **tn** *Heb* “through sword, starvation, and plague.”

sn These were penalties (curses) that were to be imposed on Israel for failure to keep her covenant with God (cf. Lev 26:23-26). These three occur together fourteen other times in the book of Jeremiah.

¹⁹ **tn** *Heb* “Lord Yahweh.” The translation follows the ancient Jewish tradition of substituting the Hebrew word for God for the proper name Yahweh.

²⁰ **tn** *Heb* “Behold.” See the translator’s note on usage of this particle in 1:6.

²¹ **tn** The words “that you said” are not in the text but are implicit from the first person in the affirmation that follows. They are supplied in the translation for clarity.

²² **tn** *Heb* “You will not see sword and you will not have starvation [or hunger].”

I will give you lasting peace and prosperity in this land.”¹

14:14 Then the LORD said to me, “Those prophets are prophesying lies while claiming my authority!² I did not send them. I did not commission them.³ I did not speak to them. They are prophesying to these people false visions, worthless predictions,⁴ and the delusions of their own mind. **14:15** I did not send those prophets, though they claim to be prophesying in my name. They may be saying, ‘No war or famine will happen in this land.’ But I, the LORD, say this about⁵ them: ‘War and starvation will kill those prophets.’⁶ **14:16** The people to whom they are prophesying will die through war and famine. Their bodies will be thrown out into the streets of Jerusalem⁷ and there will be no one to bury them. This will happen to the men and their

wives, their sons, and their daughters.⁸ For I will pour out on them the destruction they deserve.”⁹

Lament over Present Destruction and Threat of More to Come

14:17 “Tell these people this, Jeremiah:¹⁰ ‘My eyes overflow with tears day and night without ceasing.¹¹

For my people, my dear children,¹² have suffered a crushing blow.

They have suffered a serious wound.¹³

14:18 If I go out into the countryside, I see those who have been killed in battle. If I go into the city,

I see those who are sick because of starvation.¹⁴

For both prophet and priest go about their own business

¹ **tn** *Heb* “I will give you unfailing peace in this place.” The translation opts for “peace and prosperity” here for the word שָׁלוֹם (*shalom*) because in the context it refers both to peace from war and security from famine and plague. The word translated “lasting” (אֱמֶת, *’emet*) is a difficult to render here because it has broad uses: “truth, reliability, stability, steadfastness,” etc. “Guaranteed” or “lasting” seem to fit the context the best.

² **tn** *Heb* “Falsehood those prophets are prophesying in my name.” In the OT, the “name” reflected the person’s character (cf. Gen 27:36; 1 Sam 25:25) or his reputation (Gen 11:4; 2 Sam 8:13). To speak in someone’s name was to act as his representative or carry his authority (1 Sam 25:9; 1 Kgs 21:8).

³ **tn** *Heb* “I did not command them.” Compare 1 Chr 22:12 for usage.

⁴ **tn** *Heb* “divination and worthlessness.” The noun “worthlessness” stands as a qualifying “of” phrase (= to an adjective; an attributive genitive in Hebrew) after a noun in Zech 11:17; Job 13:4. This is an example of hendiadys where two nouns are joined by “and” with one serving as the qualifier of the other.

sn The word translated “predictions” here is really the word “divination.” Divination was prohibited in Israel (cf. Deut 18:10, 14). The practice of divination involved various mechanical means to try to predict the future. The word was used here for its negative connotations in a statement that is rhetorically structured to emphasize the falseness of the promises of the false prophets. It would be unnatural to contemporary English style to try to capture this emphasis in English. In the Hebrew text the last sentence reads: “False vision, divination, and worthlessness and the deceitfulness of their heart they are prophesying to them.” For the emphasis in the preceding sentence see the note there.

⁵ **tn** *Heb* “Thus says the LORD about.” The first person construction has been used in the translation for better English style.

⁶ **tn** *Heb* “Thus says the LORD concerning the prophets who are prophesying in my name and I did not send them [= whom I did not send] and they are saying [= who are saying], ‘Sword and famine...’, by sword and famine those prophets will be killed.” This sentence has been restructured to conform to contemporary English style.

sn The rhetoric of the passage is again sustained by an emphatic word order which contrasts what they say will not happen to the land, “war and famine,” with the punishment that the LORD will inflict on them, i.e., “war and starvation [or famine].”

⁷ **map** For location see Map5-B1; Map6-F3; Map7-E2; Map8-F2; Map10-B3; JP1-F4; JP2-F4; JP3-F4; JP4-F4.

⁸ **tn** *Heb* “And the people to whom they are prophesying will be thrown out into the streets of Jerusalem and there will not be anyone to bury them, they, their wives, and their sons and their daughters.” This sentence has been restructured to break up a long Hebrew sentence and to avoid some awkwardness due to differences in the ancient Hebrew and contemporary English styles.

⁹ **tn** *Heb* “their evil.” Hebrew words often include within them a polarity of cause and effect. Thus the word for “evil” includes both the concept of wickedness and the punishment for it. Other words that function this way are “iniquity” = “guilt [of iniquity]” = “punishment [for iniquity].” Context determines which nuance is proper.

¹⁰ **tn** The word “Jeremiah” is not in the text but the address is to a second person singular and is a continuation of 14:14 where the quote starts. The word is supplied in the translation for clarity.

¹¹ **tn** Many of the English versions and commentaries render this an indirect or third person imperative, “Let my eyes overflow...” because of the particle אֵל (*’al*) which introduces the phrase translated “without ceasing” (אֵל-תִּדְמֶנָּה, *’al-tid-menah*). However, this is undoubtedly an example where the particle introduces an affirmation that something cannot be done (cf. GKC 322 §109.e). Clear examples of this are found in Pss 41:2 (41:3 HT); 50:3; Job 40:32 HT (41:8 ET). God here is describing again a lamentable situation and giving his response to it. See 14:1-6 above.

sn Once again it is the LORD lamenting the plight of the people, now directed to them, not the people lamenting their plight to him. See 14:1-6 and the study notes on the introduction to this section and on 14:7.

¹² **tn** *Heb* “virgin daughter, my people.” The last noun here is appositional to the first two (genitive of apposition). Hence it is not “literally” “virgin daughter of my people.”

sn This is a metaphor which occurs several times with regard to Israel, Judah, Zion, and even Sidon and Babylon. It is the poetic personification of the people, the city, or the land. Like other metaphors the quality of the comparison being alluded to must be elicited from the context. This is easy in Isa 23:12 (oppressed) and Isa 47:1 (soft and delicate) but not so easy in other places. From the nature of the context the suspicion here is that the protection the virgin was normally privileged to is being referred to and there is a reminder that the people are forfeiting it by their actions. Hence God laments for them.

¹³ **tn** This is a poetic personification. To translate with the plural “serious wounds” might mislead some into thinking of literal wounds.

sn Compare Jer 10:19 for a similar use of this metaphor.

¹⁴ **tn** The word “starvation” has been translated “famine” elsewhere in this passage. It is the word which refers to hunger. The “starvation” here may be war induced and not simply that which comes from famine per se. “Starvation” will cover both.

in the land without having any real understanding.”¹

14:19 Then I said,

“LORD,² have you completely rejected the nation of Judah?

Do you despise³ the city of Zion?

Why have you struck us with such force that we are beyond recovery?⁴

We hope for peace, but nothing good has come of it.

We hope for a time of relief from our troubles, but experience terror.⁵

14:20 LORD, we confess that we have been wicked.

We confess that our ancestors have done wrong.⁶

We have indeed⁷ sinned against you.

14:21 For the honor of your name,⁸ do not treat Jerusalem⁹ with contempt.

Do not treat with disdain the place where your glorious throne sits.¹⁰

Be mindful of your covenant with us. Do not break it!¹¹

14:22 Do any of the worthless idols¹² of the nations cause rain to fall?

Do the skies themselves send showers? Is it not you, O Lord our God, who does this?¹³

So we put our hopes in you¹⁴ because you alone do all this.”

15:1 Then the LORD said to me, “Even if Moses and Samuel stood before me pleading for¹⁵ these people, I would not feel pity for them!¹⁶ Get them away from me! Tell them to

¹ **tn** The meaning of these last two lines is somewhat uncertain. The meaning of these two lines is debated because of the uncertainty of the meaning of the verb rendered “go about their business” (סָחַר, *sakhar*) and the last phrase translated here “without any real understanding.” The verb in question most commonly occurs as a participle meaning “trader” or “merchant” (cf., e.g., Ezek 27:21, 36; Prov 31:14). It occurs as a finite verb elsewhere only in Gen 34:10, 21; 42:34 and there in a literal sense of “trading,” “doing business.” While the nuance is metaphorical here it need not extend to “journeying into” (cf., e.g., BDB 695 s.v. סָחַר Qal.1) and be seen as a reference to exile as is sometimes assumed. That seems at variance with the causal particle which introduces this clause, the tense of the verb, and the surrounding context. People are dying in the land (vv. 17-18a) not because prophet and priest have gone (the verb is the Hebrew perfect or past) into exile but because prophet and priest have no true knowledge of God or the situation. The clause translated here “without having any real understanding” (*Heb* “and they do not know”) is using the verb in the absolute sense indicated in BDB 394 s.v. יָדַע; Qal.5 and illustrated in Isa 1:3; 56:10. For a more thorough discussion of the issues one may consult W. McKane, *Jeremiah* (ICC), 1:330-31.

sn For the “business” of the prophets and priest see 2:8; 5:13; 6:13; 8:10. In the context it refers to the prophets prophesying lies (see vv. 13-15).

² **tn** The words, “Then I said, ‘LORD’ are not in the Hebrew text. It is obvious from the context that the LORD is addressee. The question of the identity of the speaker is the same as that raised in vv. 7-9 and the arguments set forth there are applicable here as well. Jeremiah is here identifying with the people and doing what they refuse to do, i.e., confess their sins and express their trust in him.

³ **tn** *Heb* “does your soul despise.” Here as in many places the word “soul” stands as part for whole for the person himself emphasizing emotional and volitional aspects of the person. However, in contemporary English one does not regularly speak of the “soul” in contexts such as this but of the person.

sn There is probably a subtle allusion to the curses called down on the nation for failure to keep their covenant with God. The word used here is somewhat rare (גָּאָל, *ga'al*). It is used of Israel’s rejection of God’s stipulations and of God’s response to their rejection of him and his stipulations in Lev 26:11, 15, 30, 43-44. That the allusion is intended is probable when account is taken of the last line of v. 21.

⁴ **tn** *Heb* “Why have you struck us and there is no healing for us.” The statement involves poetic exaggeration (hyperbole) for rhetorical effect.

⁵ **tn** *Heb* “[We hope] for a time of healing but behold terror.”

sn The last two lines of this verse are repeated word for word from 8:15. There they are spoken by the people.

⁶ **tn** *Heb* “We acknowledge our wickedness [and] the iniquity of our [fore]fathers.” For the use of the word “know” to mean “confess,” “acknowledge” cf. BDB 394 s.v. יָדַע, Qal.1.f and compare the usage in Jer 3:13.

sn For a longer example of an individual identifying with the

nation and confessing their sins and the sins of their forefathers see Ps 106.

⁷ **tn** This is another example of the intensive use of כִּי (*ki*). See BDB 472 s.v. כִּי 1.e.

⁸ **tn** *Heb* “For the sake of your name.”

⁹ **map** For location see Map5-B1; Map6-F3; Map7-E2; Map8-F2; Map10-B3; JP1-F4; JP2-F4; JP3-F4; JP4-F4.

¹⁰ **tn** English versions quite commonly supply “us” as an object for the verb in the first line. This is probably wrong. The Hebrew text reads: “Do not treat with contempt for the sake of your name; do not treat with disdain your glorious throne.” This is case of poetic parallelism where the object is left hanging until the second line. For an example of this see Prov 13:1 in the original and consult E. W. Bullinger, *Figures of Speech*, 103-4. There has also been some disagreement whether “your glorious throne” refers to the temple (as in 17:12) or Jerusalem (as in 3:17). From the beginning of the prayer in v. 19 where a similar kind of verb has been used with respect to Zion/Jerusalem it would appear that the contextual referent is Jerusalem. The absence of an object from the first line makes it possible to retain part of the metaphor in the translation and still convey some meaning.

sn The place of God’s *glorious throne* was first of all the ark of the covenant where God was said to be enthroned between the cherubim, then the temple that housed it, then the city itself. See 2 Kgs 19:14-15 in the context of Sennacherib’s attack on Jerusalem.

¹¹ **tn** *Heb* “Remember, do not break your covenant with us.”

¹² **tn** The word הֶבֶל (*hevel*), often translated “vanities”, is a common pejorative epithet for idols or false gods. See already in 8:19 and 10:8.

¹³ **tn** *Heb* “Is it not you, O LORD our God?” The words “who does” are supplied in the translation for English style.

¹⁴ **tn** The rhetorical negatives are balanced by a rhetorical positive.

¹⁵ **tn** The words “pleading for” have been supplied in the translation to explain the idiom (a metonymy). For parallel usage see BDB 763 s.v. נִבְדָּה Qal.1.a and compare usage in Gen 19:27, Deut 4:10.

sn Moses and Samuel were well-known for their successful intercession on behalf of Israel. See Ps 99:6-8 and see, e.g., Exod 32:11-14, 30-34; 1 Sam 7:5-9. The LORD is here rejecting Jeremiah’s intercession on behalf of the people (14:19-22).

¹⁶ **tn** *Heb* “my soul would not be toward them.” For the usage of “soul” presupposed here see BDB 660 s.v. נַפְשׁ 6 in the light of the complaints and petitions in Jeremiah’s prayer in 14:19, 21.

go away!⁴ 15:2 If they ask you, ‘Where should we go?’ tell them the LORD says this:

“Those who are destined to die of disease will go to death by disease.
Those who are destined to die in war will go to death in war.
Those who are destined to die of starvation will go to death by starvation.
Those who are destined to go into exile will go into exile.”²

15:3 “I will punish them in four different ways: I will have war kill them. I will have dogs drag off their dead bodies. I will have birds and wild beasts devour and destroy their corpses.³ 15:4 I will make all the people in all the kingdoms of the world horrified at what has happened to them because of what Hezekiah’s son Manasseh, king of Judah, did in Jerusalem.”⁴

15:5 The LORD cried out,⁵

“Who in the world⁶ will have pity on you, Jerusalem?”

1 tn Heb “Send them away from my presence and let them go away.”

2 tn It is difficult to render the rhetorical force of this passage in meaningful English. The text answers the question “Where should we go?” with four brief staccato-like expressions with a play on the preposition “to”: Heb “Who to the death, to the death and who to the sword, to the sword and who to the starvation, to the starvation and who to the captivity, to the captivity.” The word “death” here is commonly understood to be a poetic substitute for “plague” because of the standard trio of sword, famine, and plague (see, e.g., 14:12 and the notes there). This is likely here and in 18:21. For further support see W. L. Holladay, *Jeremiah* (Hermeneia), 1:440. The nuance “starvation” rather than “famine” has been chosen in the translation because the referents here are all things that accompany war.

3 tn The translation attempts to render in understandable English some rather unusual uses of terms here. The verb translated “punish” is often used that way (cf. BDB 823 s.v. פָּקַד Qal.A.3 and compare usage in Jer 11:22, 13:21). However, here it is accompanied by a direct object and a preposition meaning “over” which is usually used in the sense of appointing someone over someone (cf. BDB 823 s.v. פָּקַד Qal.B.1 and compare usage in Jer 51:27). Moreover the word translated “different ways” normally refers to “families,” “clans,” or “guilds” (cf. BDB 1046-47 s.v. מִשְׁפָּחָה for usage). Hence the four things mentioned are referred to figuratively as officers or agents into whose power the LORD consigns them. The Hebrew text reads: “I will appoint over them four guilds, the sword to kill, the dogs to drag away, the birds of the skies and the beasts of the earth to devour and to destroy.”

4 tn The length of this sentence runs contrary to the normal policy followed in the translation of breaking up long sentences. However, there does not seem any way to break it up here without losing the connections.

sn For similar statements see 2 Kgs 23:26; 24:3-4 and for a description of what Manasseh did see 2 Kgs 21:1-16. Manasseh was the leader, but they willingly followed (cf. 2 Kgs 21:9).

5 tn The words “The LORD cried out” are not in the text. However, they are necessary to show the shift in address between speaking to Jeremiah in vv. 1-4 about the people and addressing Jerusalem in vv. 5-6 and the shift back to the address to Jeremiah in vv. 7-9. The words “oracle of the LORD” are, moreover, found at the beginning of v. 6.

6 tn The words, “in the world” are not in the text but are the translator’s way of trying to indicate that this rhetorical question expects a negative answer.

Who will grieve over you?
Who will stop long enough
to inquire about how you are doing?⁸
15:6 I, the LORD, say:⁹ ‘You people have deserted me!
You keep turning your back on me.’¹⁰
So I have unleashed my power against you¹¹ and have begun to destroy you.¹²
I have grown tired of feeling sorry for you!¹³

15:7 The LORD continued,¹⁴

“In every town in the land I will purge them
like straw blown away by the wind.¹⁵

7 tn Heb “turn aside.”

8 tn Or “about your well-being”; Heb “about your welfare” (שָׁלוֹם, *shalom*).

9 tn Heb “oracle of the LORD.” In the original text this phrase is found between “you have deserted me” and “you keep turning your back on me.” It is put at the beginning and converted to first person for sake of English style and clarity.

10 tn Heb “you are going backward.” This is the only occurrence of this adverb with this verb. It is often used with another verb meaning “turn backward” (= abandon; Heb בָּטָח [אַחַד] in the Niphal). For examples see Jer 38:22; 46:5. The only other occurrence in Jeremiah has been in the unusual idiom in 7:24 where it was translated “they got worse and worse instead of better.” That is how J. Bright (*Jeremiah* [AB], 109) translates it here. However it is translated, it has connotations of apostasy.

11 tn Heb “stretched out my hand against you.” For this idiom see notes on 6:12.

12 tn There is a difference of opinion on how the verbs here and in the following verses are to be rendered, whether past or future. KJV, NASB, NIV for example render them as future. ASV, RSV, TEV render them as past. NJPS has past here and future in vv. 7-9. This is perhaps the best solution. The imperfect + *vav* consecutive here responds to the perfect in the first line. The imperfects + *vav* consecutives followed by perfects in vv. 7-9 and concluded by an imperfect in v. 9 pick up the perfects + *vav* (י) consecutives in vv. 3-4. Verses 7-9 are further development of the theme in vv. 1-4. Verses 5-6 have been an apostrophe or a turning aside to address Jerusalem directly. For a somewhat similar alternation of the tenses see Isa 5:14-17 and consult GKC 329-30 §111.w. One could of course argue that the imperfects + *vav* consecutive in vv. 7-9 continue the imperfect + *vav* consecutive here. In this case, vv. 7-9 are not a continuation of the oracle of doom but another lament by God (cf. 14:1-6, 17-18).

13 sn It is difficult to be sure what intertextual connections are intended by the author in his use of vocabulary. The Hebrew word translated “grown tired” is not very common. It has been used twice before. In 9:5-6b where it refers to the people being unable to repent and in 6:11 where it refers to Jeremiah being tired or unable to hold back his anger because of that inability. Now God too has worn out his patience with them (cf. Isa 7:13).

14 tn The words “The LORD continued” are not in the text. They have been supplied in the translation to show the shift back to talking about the people instead of addressing them. The obvious speaker is the LORD; the likely listener is Jeremiah as in vv. 1-4.

15 tn Heb “I have winnowed them with a winnowing fork in the gates of the land.” The word “gates” is here being used figuratively for the cities, the part for the whole. See 14:2 and the notes there.

sn Like straw blown away by the wind. A figurative use of the process of winnowing is referred to here. Winnowing was the process whereby a mixture of grain and straw was thrown up into the wind to separate the grain from the straw and the husks. The best description of the major steps in threshing and winnowing grain in the Bible is seen in another figurative passage in Isa 41:15-16.

I will destroy my people.
I will kill off their children.
I will do so because they did not change
their behavior.¹

15:8 Their widows will become in my
sight more numerous²
than the grains of sand on the seashores.
At noontime I will bring a destroyer
against the mothers of their young men.³
I will cause anguish⁴ and terror
to fall suddenly upon them.⁵

15:9 The mother who had seven children⁶
will grow faint.
All the breath will go out of her.⁷
Her pride and joy will be taken from her
in the prime of their life.
It will seem as if the sun had set while it
was still day.⁸

She will suffer shame and humiliation.⁹
I will cause any of them who are still left
alive
to be killed in war by the onslaughts of
their enemies.”¹⁰
says the LORD.

Jeremiah Complains about His Lot and The Lord Responds

15:10 I said,¹¹

“Oh, mother, how I regret¹² that you ever
gave birth to me!

I am always starting arguments and quar-
rels with the people of this land.¹³

I have not lent money to anyone and I
have not borrowed from anyone.
Yet all of these people are treating me
with contempt.”¹⁴

15:11 The LORD said,

“Jerusalem,¹⁵ I will surely send you away

¹ **tn** Or “did not repent of their wicked ways”; *Heb* “They did not turn back from their ways.” There is no casual particle here (either כִּי [ki], which is more formally casual, or וְ [v], which sometimes introduces casual circumstantial clauses). The causal idea is furnished by the connection of ideas. If the verbs throughout this section are treated as pasts and this section seen as a lament, then the clause could be sequential: “but they still did not turn...”

² **tn** *Heb* “to me.” BDB 513 s.v. הַ 5.a(d) compares the usage of the preposition “to” here to that in Jonah 3:3, “Nineveh was a very great city to God [in God’s estimation].” The NEB/REB interpret as though it were the agent after a passive verb, “I have made widows more numerous.” Most English versions ignore it. The present translation follows BDB though the emphasis on God’s agency has been strong in the passage.

³ **tn** The translation of this line is a little uncertain because of the double prepositional phrase which is not represented in this translation or most of the others. The Hebrew text reads: “I will bring in to them, against mother of young men, a destroyer at noon time.” Many commentaries delete the phrase with the Greek text. If the preposition read “against” like the following one this would be a case of apposition of nearer definition. There is some evidence of that in the Targum and the Syriac according to *BHS*. Both nouns “mothers” and “young men” are translated as plural here though they are singular; they are treated by most as collectives. It would be tempting to translate these two lines “In broad daylight I have brought destroyers against the mothers of her fallen young men.” But this may be too interpretive. In the light of 6:4, noontime was a good time to attack. NJPS has “I will bring against them – young men and mothers together –” In this case “mother” and “young men” would be a case ofasyndetic coordination.

⁴ **tn** This word is used only here and in Hos 11:9. It is related to the root meaning “to rouse” (so BDB 735 s.v. וָעִיר). Here it refers to the excitement or agitation caused by terror. In Hos 11:9 it refers to the excitement or arousal of anger.

⁵ **tn** The “them” in the Hebrew text is feminine referring to the mothers.

⁶ **tn** *Heb* “who gave birth to seven.”

⁷ **tn** To have seven children was considered a blessing and a source of pride and honor (Ruth 4:15; 1 Sam 2:5).

⁸ **tn** The meaning of this line is debated. Some understand this line to mean “she has breathed out her life” (cf., e.g., BDB 656 s.v. נָפַח and 656 s.v. נָפַח 1.c). However, as several commentaries have noted (e.g., W. McKane, *Jeremiah* [ICC], 1:341; J. Bright, *Jeremiah* [AB], 109) it makes little sense to talk about her suffering shame and embarrassment if she has breathed her last. Both the Greek and Latin versions understand “soul” not as the object but as the subject and the idea being one of fainting under despair. This idea seems likely in light of the parallelism. Bright suggests the phrase means either “she gasped out her breath” or “her throat gasped.” The former is more likely. One might also render “she fainted dead away,” but that idiom might not be familiar to all readers.

⁹ **tn** *Heb* “Her sun went down while it was still day.”

sn The sun was the source of light and hence has associations with life, prosperity, health, and blessing. The premature setting of the sun which brought these seems apropos as metaphor for the loss of her children which were not only a source of joy, help, and honor. Two references where “sun” is used figuratively, Ps 84:11 (84:12 HT) and Mal 4:2, may be helpful here.

⁹ **sn** She has lost her position of honor and the source of her pride. For the concepts here see 1 Sam 2:5.

¹⁰ **tn** *Heb* “I will deliver those of them that survive to the sword before their enemies.” The referent of “them” is ambiguous. Does it refer to the children of the widow (nearer context) or the people themselves (more remote context, v. 7)? Perhaps it was meant to include both. Verse seven spoke of the destruction of the people and the killing off of the children.

¹¹ **tn** The words “I said” are not in the text. They are supplied in the translation for clarity to mark a shift in the speaker.

¹² **tn** *Heb* “Woe to me, my mother.” See the comments on 4:13 and 10:19.

¹³ **tn** *Heb* “A man of strife and a man of contention with all the land.” The “of” relationship (Hebrew and Greek genitive) can convey either subjective or objective relationships, i.e., he instigates strife and contention or he is the object of it. A study of usage elsewhere, e.g., Isa 41:11; Job 31:35; Prov 12:19; 25:24; 26:21; 27:15, is convincing that it is subjective. In his role as God’s covenant messenger charging people with wrong doing he has instigated counterarguments and stirred about strife and contention against him.

¹⁴ **tc** The translation follows the almost universally agreed upon correction of the MT. Instead of reading בְּלֹהּ בְּקִלְלוֹנִי (kulloh m^eqallavni, “all of him is cursing me”) as the Masoretes proposed (Qere) one should read קִלְלוֹנִי (qilluni) with the written text (Kethib) and redive and repeat with the suggestion in *BHS* בְּקִלְלוֹנִי (qull^ehem, “all of them are cursing me”).

¹⁵ **tn** The word “Jerusalem” is not in the text. It is supplied in the translation for clarity to identify the referent of “you.” A comparison of three or four English versions will show how difficult this verse is to interpret. The primary difficulty is with the meaning of the verb rendered here as “I will surely send you out [שְׁרִיתְךָ, *shervitkha*].” The text and the meaning of the word are debated (for a rather full discussion see W. L. Holladay, *Jeremiah* [Hermeneia], 1:446-47, n. b-b). Tied up with that is the meaning of the verb in the second line and the identification of who the speaker and addressee are. One of two approaches are usually followed. Some follow the Greek version which has Jeremiah speaking and supporting his complaint that he has been faithful. In this case the word “said” is left out, the difficult verb is taken to mean “I have served you” [שְׁרַתְךָ [sherat^akha] from שָׂרַת [sharat; BDB 1058 s.v. שָׂרַת] and the parallel verb means “I have made intercession for my enemies.” The second tack is to suppose that

for your own good.
I will surely¹ bring the enemy upon you
in a time of trouble and distress.
15:12 Can you people who are like iron
and bronze
break that iron fist from the north?²

God is speaking and is promising Jeremiah deliverance from his detractors. In this case the troublesome word is taken to mean “deliver” (cf. BDB 1056 s.v. *שָׁרַף*), “strengthen” (see BDB’s discussion) or read as a noun “remnant” (*שְׁרִיתָךְ* = *שריתך* [shertekha = sh^e’ritekha]); again see BDB’s discussion). In this case the parallel verb is taken to mean “I will cause your enemies to entreat you,” a meaning it has nowhere else. Both of these approaches are probably wrong. The Greek text is the only evidence for leaving out “said.” The problem with making Jeremiah the addressee is twofold. First, the word “enemy” is never used in the book of Jeremiah’s foes, always of political enemies. Second, and more troublesome, one must assume a shift in the addressee between v. 11 and vv.13-14 or assume that the whole is addressed. The latter would be odd if he is promised deliverance from his detractors only to be delivered to captivity. If, however, one assumes that the whole is addressed to Jerusalem, there is no such problem. A check of earlier chapters will show that the second masculine pronoun is used for Judah/Jerusalem in 2:28-29; 4:1-2; 5:17-18; 11:13. In 2:28-28 and 4:1-2 the same shift from second singular to second plural takes place as does here in vv. 13-14. Moreover, vv. 13-14 continue much of the same vocabulary and is addressed to Jerusalem. The approach followed here is similar to that taken in REB except “for good” is taken in the way it is always used rather to mean “utterly.” The nuance suggested by BDB 1056 s.v. *שָׁרַף* is assumed and the meaning of the parallel verb is assumed to be similar to that in Isa 53:6 (see BDB 803 s.v. *בָּנֵי* Hiph.1). The MT is retained with demonstrable meanings. For the concept of “for good” see Jer 24:5-6. This assumes that the ultimate goal of God’s discipline is here announced.

sn The LORD interrupts Jeremiah’s complaint with a word for Jerusalem. Compare a similar interruption in discussion with Jeremiah in vv. 5-6.

1 t n “Surely” represents a construct in Hebrew that indicates a strong oath of affirmation. Cf. BDB 50 s.v. *כִּי* 1.b(2) and compare usage in 2 Kgs 9:26.

2 t n Or “Can iron and bronze break iron from the north?” The question is rhetorical and expects a negative answer. The translation and meaning of this verse are debated. See note for further details. The two main difficulties here involve the relation of words to one another and the obscure allusion to iron from the north. To translate “literally” is difficult since one does not know whether “iron” is subject of “break” or object of an impersonal verb. Likewise, the dangling “and bronze” fits poorly with either understanding. Options: “Can iron break iron from the north and bronze?” Or “Can one break iron, even iron from the north and bronze.” This last is commonly opted for by translators and interpreters, but why add “and bronze” at the end? And what does “iron from the north” refer to? A long history of interpretation relates it to the foe from the north (see already 1:14; 4:6; 6:1; 13:20). The translation follows the lead of NRSV and takes “and bronze” as a compound subject. There are no ready parallels for this syntax but the reference to “from the north” and the comparison to the stubbornness of the unrepentant people to bronze and iron in 6:28 suggests a possible figurative allusion. There is no evidence in the Bible that Israel knew about a special kind of steel like iron from the Black Sea mentioned in later Greek sources. The word “fist” is supplied in the translation to try to give some hint that it refers to a hostile force.

sn Compare Isa 10:5-6 for the idea here.

15:13 I will give away your wealth and
your treasures as plunder.
I will give it away free of charge for the
sins you have committed throughout
your land.

15:14 I will make you serve your enemies³
in a land that you know nothing about.
For my anger is like a fire that will burn
against you.”

15:15 I said,⁴

“LORD, you know how I suffer.⁵
Take thought of me and care for me.

Pay back for me those who have been
persecuting me.

Do not be so patient with them that you
allow them to kill me.

Be mindful of how I have put up with
their insults for your sake.

15:16 As your words came to me I drank
them in,⁶

and they filled my heart with joy and hap-
piness

because I belong to you,⁷ O LORD, the
God who rules over all.⁸

15:17 I did not spend my time in the com-
pany of other people,
laughing and having a good time.

I stayed to myself because I felt obligated
to you⁹

and because I was filled with anger at
what they had done.

15:18 Why must I continually suffer such
painful anguish?

Why must I endure the sting of their in-
sults like an incurable wound?

Will you let me down when I need you
like a brook one goes to for water, but
that cannot be relied on?¹⁰

3 t c This reading follows the Greek and Syriac versions and several Hebrew mss. Other Hebrew mss read “I will cause the enemy to pass through a land.” The difference in the reading is between one Hebrew letter, a *dalet* (ד) and a *resh* (ר).

4 t n The words “I said” are not in the text. They are supplied in the translation for clarity to mark the shift from the LORD speaking to Jerusalem, to Jeremiah speaking to God.

5 t n The words “how I suffer” are not in the text but are implicit from the continuation. They are supplied in the translation for clarity. Jeremiah is not saying “you are all knowing.”

6 s n Heb “Your words were found and I ate them.” This along with Ezek 2:8-3:3 is a poetic picture of inspiration. The prophet accepted them, assimilated them, and made them such a part of himself that he spoke with complete assurance what he knew were God’s words.

7 t n Heb “Your name is called upon me.”

8 s n See Jer 14:9 where this idiom is applied to Israel as a whole and Jer 7:10 where it is applied to the temple. For discussion cf. notes on 7:10.

9 t n Heb “LORD God of armies.” See the translator’s note at 2:19.

10 t n Heb “because of your hand.”

10 t n Heb “Will you be to me like a deceptive (brook), like waters which do not last [or are not reliable].”

sn Jeremiah is speaking of the stream beds or wadis which fill with water after the spring rains but often dry up in the summer time. A fuller picture is painted in Job 6:14-21. This contrasts with the earlier metaphor that God had used of himself in Jer 2:13.

15:19 Because of this, the LORD said,¹

“You must repent of such words and thoughts!

If you do, I will restore you to the privilege of serving me.²

If you say what is worthwhile instead of what is worthless,

I will again allow you to be my spokesman.³

They must become as you have been.

You must not become like them.⁴

15:20 I will make you as strong as a wall to these people,
a fortified wall of bronze.

They will attack you,
but they will not be able to overcome you.

For I will be with you to rescue you and deliver you,”⁵

says the LORD.

15:21 “I will deliver you from the power of the wicked.

I will free you from the clutches of violent people.”

Jeremiah Forbidden to Marry, to Mourn, or to Feast

16:1 The LORD said to me, 16:2 “Do not get married and do not have children here in this land. 16:3 For I, the LORD, tell you what will happen to⁶ the children who are born here in this land and to the men and women who are their mothers and fathers.⁷ 16:4 They will die of deadly diseases. No one will mourn for them. They will not be buried. Their dead bodies will lie like manure spread on the ground. They will be killed in war or die of starvation. Their corpses will be food for the birds and wild animals.

16:5 “Moreover I, the LORD, tell you:⁸ ‘Do not go into a house where they are having a funeral meal. Do not go there to mourn and express your sorrow for them. For I have stopped showing them my good favor,⁹ my love, and my compassion. I, the LORD, so affirm it!¹⁰ 16:6 Rich and poor alike will die in this land. They will not be buried or mourned. People will not cut their bodies or shave off their hair to show their grief for them.¹¹ 16:7 No one will take any food to those who mourn for the dead to comfort them. No one will give them any wine to drink to console them for the loss of their father or mother.

16:8 ““Do not go to a house where people are feasting and sit down to eat and drink with them either. 16:9 For I, the LORD God of Israel who rules over all, tell you what will happen.¹² I will put an end to the sounds of joy and gladness, to the glad celebration of brides and grooms in this land. You and the rest of the people will live to see this happen.”¹³

The Lord Promises Exile (But Also Restoration)

16:10 “When you tell these people about all this,¹⁴ they will undoubtedly ask you, ‘Why has the LORD threatened us with such great disaster? What wrong have we done? What sin have we done to offend the LORD our God?’ 16:11 Then tell them that the LORD says,¹⁵ ‘It is because your ancestors¹⁶ rejected me and paid allegiance to¹⁷ other gods. They have served them and worshiped them. But they have rejected me and not obeyed my law.¹⁸ 16:12 And you have acted

¹ tn Heb “So the LORD said thus.”

² tn Heb “If you return [= repent], I will restore [more literally, ‘cause you to return’] that you may stand before me.” For the idiom of “standing before” in the sense of serving see BDB 764 s.v. עָבַד Qal.1.e and compare the usage in 1 Kgs 10:8; 12:8; 17:1; Deut 10:8.

³ tn Heb “you shall be as my mouth.”

sn For the classic statement of the prophet as God’s “mouth/mouthpiece,” = “spokesman,” see Exod 4:15-16; 7:1-2.

⁴ tn Heb “They must turn/return to you and you must not turn/return to them.”

sn Once again the root “return” (שׁוּב, *shuv*) is being played on as in 3:1-4. See the threefold call to repentance in 3:12, 14, 22. The verb is used here four times “repent,” “restore,” and “become” twice. He is to serve as a model of repentance, not an imitator of their apostasy. In accusing God of being unreliable he was coming dangerously close to their kind of behavior.

⁵ sn See 1:18. The LORD renews his promise of protection and reiterates his call to Jeremiah.

⁶ tn Heb “For thus says the LORD concerning...”

⁷ tn Heb “Thus says the LORD concerning the sons and daughters who are born in the place and concerning their mothers who give them birth and their fathers who fathered them in this land.”

⁸ tn Heb “For thus says the LORD...”

⁹ tn Heb “my peace.” The Hebrew word שְׁלוֹמִי (*sh’lomi*) can be translated “peace, prosperity” or “well-being” (referring to wholeness or health of body and soul).

¹⁰ tn Heb “Oracle of the LORD.”

¹¹ sn These were apparently pagan customs associated with mourning (Isa 15:2; Jer 47:5) which were forbidden in Israel (Lev 19:8; 21:5) but apparently practiced anyway (Jer 41:5).

¹² tn Heb “For thus says Yahweh of armies the God of Israel.” The introductory formula which appears three times in vv. 1-9 (vv. 1, 3, 5) has been recast for smoother English style.

sn For the title “the LORD God of Israel who rules over all” see 7:3 and the study note on 2:19.

¹³ tn Heb “before your eyes and in your days.” The pronouns are plural including others than Jeremiah.

¹⁴ tn Heb “all these words/things.”

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

¹⁵ tn These two sentences have been recast in English to break up a long Hebrew sentence and incorporate the oracular formula “says the LORD (Heb ‘oracle of the LORD’)” which occurs after “Your fathers abandoned me.” In Hebrew the two sentences read: “When you tell them these things and they say, ‘...’, then tell them, ‘Because your ancestors abandoned me,’ oracle of the LORD.”

¹⁶ tn Heb “fathers” (also in vv. 12, 13, 15, 19).

¹⁷ tn Heb “followed after.” See the translator’s note at 2:5 for the explanation of the idiom.

¹⁸ tn Heb “But me they have abandoned and my law they have not kept.” The objects are thrown forward to bring out the contrast which has rhetorical force. However, such a sentence in English would be highly unnatural.

even more wickedly than your ancestors! Each one of you has followed the stubborn inclinations of your own wicked heart and not obeyed me.⁴ **16:13** So I will throw you out of this land into a land that neither you nor your ancestors have ever known. There you must worship other gods day and night, for I will show you no mercy.”

16:14 Yet² I, the LORD, say:³ “A new time will certainly come.⁴ People now affirm their oaths with ‘I swear as surely as the LORD lives who delivered the people of Israel out of Egypt.’ **16:15** But in that time they will affirm them with ‘I swear as surely as the LORD lives who delivered the people of Israel from the land of the north and from all the other lands where he had banished them.’ At that time I will bring them back to the land I gave their ancestors.”⁵

16:16 But for now I, the LORD, say:⁶ “I will send many enemies who will catch these people like fishermen. After that I will send others who will hunt them out like hunters from all the mountains, all the hills, and the crevices in the rocks.⁷ **16:17** For I see everything they do. Their wicked ways are not hidden from me. Their sin is not hidden away where I cannot see it.⁸ **16:18** Before I restore them⁹ I will punish them in

full¹⁰ for their sins and the wrongs they have done. For they have polluted my land with the lifeless statues of their disgusting idols. They have filled the land I have claimed as my own¹¹ with their detestable idols.”¹²

16:19 Then I said,¹³

“LORD, you give me strength and protect me.

You are the one I can run to for safety when I am in trouble.¹⁴

Nations from all over the earth will come to you and say,

‘Our ancestors had nothing but false gods –

worthless idols that could not help them at all.¹⁵

16:20 Can people make their own gods? No, what they make are not gods at all.”¹⁶

16:21 The LORD said,¹⁷

“So I will now let this wicked people know –

I will let them know my mighty power in judgment.

Then they will know that my name is the LORD.”¹⁸

¹⁰ **tn** *Heb* “double.” However, usage in Deut 15:18 and probably Isa 40:2 argues for “full compensation.” This is supported also by usage in a tablet from Alalakh in Syria. See P. C. Craigie, P. H. Kelley, J. F. Drinkard, *Jeremiah 1-25* (WBC), 218, for bibliography.

¹¹ **tn** *Heb* “my inheritance.”

¹² **sn** For earlier references to the term used here see Jer 2:7 where it applies as here to the land, Jer 10:16; 12:8-9 where it applies to the people, and Jer 12:7 where it applies to the temple.

¹³ **tn** Many of the English versions take “lifeless statues of their detestable idols” with “filled” as a compound object. This follows the Masoretic punctuation but violates usage. The verb “fill” never takes an object preceded by the preposition *ב* (*bet*).

¹⁴ **tn** The words “Then I said” are not in the text. They are supplied in the translation to show the shift from God, who has been speaking to Jeremiah, to Jeremiah, who here addresses God.

¹⁵ **sn** The shift here is consistent with the interruptions that have taken place in chapters 14 and 15 and in Jeremiah’s response to God’s condemnation of the people of Judah’s idolatry in chapter 10 (note especially vv. 6-16).

¹⁶ **tn** *Heb* “O LORD, my strength and my fortress, my refuge in the day of trouble. The literal which piles up attributes is of course more forceful than the predications. However, piling up poetic metaphors like this adds to the length of the English sentence and risks lack of understanding on the part of some readers. Some rhetorical force has been sacrificed for the sake of clarity.

¹⁷ **tn** Once again the translation has sacrificed some of the rhetorical force for the sake of clarity and English style: *Heb* “Only falsehood did our ancestors possess, vanity and [things in which?] there was no one profiting in them.”

¹⁸ **sn** This passage offers some rather forceful contrasts. The LORD is Jeremiah’s source of strength, security, and protection. The idols are false gods, worthless idols, that can offer no help at all.

¹⁹ **tn** *Heb* “and they are ‘no gods.’” For the construction here compare 2:11 and a similar construction in 2 Kgs 19:18 and see BDB 519 s.v. *אֱלֹהִים* 1.b(b).

²⁰ **tn** The words “The LORD said” are not in the text. However, it is obvious that he is the speaker. These words are supplied in the translation for clarity.

²¹ **tn** Or “So I will make known to those nations, I will make

¹ **sn** For the argumentation here compare Jer 7:23-26.

² **tn** The particle translated here “Yet” (*אָךְ*, *lakhen*) is regularly translated “So” or “Therefore” and introduces a consequence. However, in a few cases it introduces a contrasting set of conditions. Compare its use in Judg 11:8; Jer 48:12; 49:2; 51:52; and Hos 2:14 (2:16 HT).

³ **tn** *Heb* “Oracle of the LORD.” The LORD has been speaking; the first person has been utilized in translation to avoid a shift which might create confusion.

⁴ **tn** *Heb* “Behold the days are coming.”

⁵ **tn** These two verses which constitute one long sentence with compound, complex subordinations has been broken up for sake of English style. It reads, “Therefore, behold the days are coming, says the LORD [*Heb* ‘oracle of the LORD’] and it will not be said any longer, ‘By the life of the LORD who...Egypt’ but ‘by the life of the LORD who...’ and I will bring them back...”

⁶ **tn** *Heb* “Oracle of the LORD.” The LORD has been speaking; the first person has been utilized in translation to avoid a shift which might create confusion.

⁷ **tn** *Heb* “Behold I am about to send for many fishermen and they will catch them. And after that I will send for many hunters and they will hunt them from every mountain and from every hill and from the cracks in the rocks.”

⁸ **sn** The picture of rounding up the population for destruction and exile is also seen in Amos 4:2 and Hab 1:14-17.

⁹ **tn** *Heb* “For my eyes are upon all their ways. They are not hidden from before me. And their sin is not hidden away from before my eyes.”

¹⁰ **tn** *Heb* “First.” Many English versions and commentaries delete this word because it is missing from the Greek version and is considered a gloss added by a postexilic editor who is said to be responsible also for vv. 14-16. However, the reading of the MT is well attested, being supported by the other ancient versions. The word here refers to order in rank or order of events. Compare Gen 38:28; 1 Kgs 18:25. Here allusion is made to the restoration previously mentioned. First in order of events is the punishment of destruction and exile, then restoration.

17:1¹ The sin of Judah is engraved with an iron chisel on their stone-hard² hearts. It is inscribed with a diamond³ point on the horns of their altars.⁴
17:2 Their children are always thinking about⁵ their⁶ altars

known to them at this time my power and my might. Then they will know that my name is the LORD." There is a decided ambiguity in this text about the identity of the pronoun "them." Is it his wicked people he has been predicting judgment upon or the nations that have come to recognize the folly of idolatry? The nearer antecedent would argue for that. However, usage of "hand" (translated here "power") in 6:12; 15:6 and later 21:5 and especially the threatening motif of "at this time" (or "now") in 10:18 suggest that the "So" goes back logically to vv. 16-18, following a grounds of judgment with the threatened consequence as it has in at least 16 out of 18 occurrences thus far. Moreover it makes decidedly more sense that the Jews will know that his name is the LORD as the result of the present ("at this time") display of his power in judgment than that the idolaters will at some later (cf. Isa 2:2-4 for possible parallel) time. There has been a decided emphasis that the people of Israel do not "know" him (cf. 2:8; 4:22; 9:3, 6). Now they will, but in a way they did not wish to. There is probably an allusion (and an ironic reversal) here to Exod 3:13-15; 34:5-7. They have presumed upon his graciousness and forgotten that his name not only involves being with them to help but being against them to punish sin. Even if the alternate translation is followed the reference is still to God's mighty power made known in judging the wicked Judeans. The words "power" and "might" are an example of hendiadys in which two nouns joined by "and" in which one modifies the other.

1 tn The chapter division which was not a part of the original text but was added in the middle ages obscures the fact that there is no new speech here. The division may have resulted from the faulty identification of the "them" in the preceding verse. See the translator's note on that verse.

2 tn The adjective "stone-hard" is not in the Hebrew text. It is implicit in the metaphor and is supplied in the translation for clarity. Cf. Ezek 11:19; 36:26; and Job 19:24 for the figure.

3 tn Heb "adamant." The word "diamond" is an accommodation to modern times. There is no evidence that diamond was known in ancient times. This hard stone (perhaps emery) became metaphorical for hardness; see Ezek 3:9 and Zech 7:12. For discussion see W. E. Staples, "Adamant," *IDB* 1:45.

4 tn This verse has been restructured for the sake of the English poetry: Heb "The sin of Judah is engraved [or written] with an iron pen, inscribed with a point of a diamond [or adamant] upon the tablet of their hearts and on the horns of their altars."

sn There is biting sarcasm involved in the use of the figures here. The law was inscribed on the tablets of stone by the "finger" of God (Exod 31:18; 32:16). Later under the new covenant it would be written on their hearts (Jer 31:33). Blood was to be applied to the horns of the altar in offering the sin offering (cf., e.g., Lev 4:7, 18, 25, 20) and on the bronze altar to cleanse it from sin on the Day of Atonement (Lev 16:18). Here their sins are engraved (permanently written, cf. Job 19:24) on their hearts (i.e., control their thoughts and actions) and on their altars (permanently polluting them).

5 tn It is difficult to convey in good English style the connection between this verse and the preceding. The text does not have a finite verb but a temporal preposition with an infinitive: Heb "while their children remember their altars..." It is also difficult to translate the verb "literally." (i.e., what does "remember" their altars mean?). Hence it has been rendered "always think about." Another possibility would be "have their altars...on their minds."

sn There is possibly a sarcastic irony involved here as well. The Israelites were to remember the LORD and what he had done and were to commemorate certain days, e.g., the Passover and the Sabbath which recalled their deliverance. Instead they resorted to the pagan altars and kept them in mind.

6 tc This reading follows many Hebrew mss and ancient ver-

and their sacred poles dedicated to the goddess Asherah,⁷ set up beside the green trees on the high hills

17:3 and on the mountains and in the fields.⁸

I will give your wealth and all your treasures away as plunder.

I will give it away as the price⁹ for the sins you have committed throughout your land.

17:4 You will lose your hold on the land¹⁰ which I gave to you as a permanent possession.

I will make you serve your enemies in a land that you know nothing about.

For you have made my anger burn like a fire that will never be put out."¹¹

sions. Many other Hebrew mss read "your" [masc. pl.].

7 sn Sacred poles dedicated to...Asherah. A leading deity of the Canaanite pantheon was Asherah, wife/sister of El and goddess of fertility. She was commonly worshiped at shrines in or near groves of evergreen trees, or, failing that, at places marked by wooden poles (Hebrew אֲשֵׁרִים [*asherim*], plural). They were to be burned or cut down (Deut 7:5; 12:3; 16:21; Judg 6:25, 28, 30; 2 Kgs 18:4).

8 tc This reading follows some of the ancient versions. The MT reads, "hills. My mountain in the open field [alluding to Jerusalem] and your wealth...I will give." The vocalization of the noun plus pronoun and the unusual form of the expression to allude to Jerusalem calls into question the originality of the MT. The MT reads הָרָרִי (*harari*) which combines the suffix for a singular noun with a pointing of the noun in the plural, a form which would be without parallel (compare the forms in Ps 30:8 for the singular noun with suffix and Deut 8:9 for the plural noun with suffix). Likewise, Jerusalem was not "in the open field." For a similar expression compare Jer 13:27.

9 tc Or "I will give away your wealth, all your treasures, and your places of worship..." The translation follows the emendation suggested in the footnote in *BHS*, reading בִּמְכִירִי (*bimkhir*) in place of בְּמִתְּכָה (*bamotekha*). The forms are graphically very close and one could explain the origin of either from the other. The parallel in 15:13-14 reads לֹא בִמְכִירִי (lo' *bimkhir*). The text here may be a deliberate play on that one. The emended text makes decidedly better sense contextually than the MT unless some sardonic reference to their idolatry is intended.

10 tc Or "Through your own fault you will lose the land..." As W. McKane (*Jeremiah* [ICC], 1:386) notes the ancient versions do not appear to be reading יָדְךָ (*yad'kha*) as in the MT but possibly לְיָדְךָ (*l'yad'kha*; see *BHS* fn). The translation follows the suggestion in *BHS* fn that יָדְךָ (*yad'kha*, literally "your hand") be read for MT יָדְךָ. This has the advantage of fitting the idiom of this verb with "hand" in Deut 15:2 (see also v. 3 there). The Hebrew text thus reads "You will release your hand from your heritage."

11 tc A few Hebrew mss and two Greek mss read "a fire is kindled in my anger" (reading קִדְדָהּ, *qodkha*) as in 15:14 in place of "you have kindled a fire in my anger" (reading קִדְדִתֶּם, *qadaktetem*) in the majority of Hebrew mss and versions. The variant may be explained on the basis of harmonization with the parallel passage.

tn Heb "you have started a fire in my anger which will burn forever."

*Individuals Are Challenged to Put Their Trust in the Lord*¹

17:5 The LORD says,

“I will put a curse on people
who trust in mere human beings,
who depend on mere flesh and blood for
their strength,²
and whose hearts³ have turned away from
the LORD.

17:6 They will be like a shrub⁴ in the
desert.

They will not experience good things
even when they happen.

It will be as though they were growing in
the desert,
in a salt land where no one can live.

17:7 My blessing is on those people who
trust in me,

who put their confidence in me.⁵

17:8 They will be like a tree planted near
a stream
whose roots spread out toward the water.
It has nothing to fear when the heat
comes.

Its leaves are always green.

It has no need to be concerned in a year
of drought.

It does not stop bearing fruit.

17:9 The human mind is more deceitful
than anything else.

It is incurably bad.⁶ Who can understand
it?

17:10 I, the LORD, probe into people’s
minds.

I examine people’s hearts.⁷

I deal with each person according to how
he has behaved.

I give them what they deserve based on
what they have done.

17:11 The person who gathers wealth by
unjust means
is like the partridge that broods over eggs
but does not hatch them.⁸

Before his life is half over he will lose his
ill-gotten gains.⁹

At the end of his life it will be clear he
was a fool.¹⁰

Jeremiah Appeals to the Lord for Vindication

17:12 Then I said,¹¹

“LORD, from the very beginning
you have been seated on your glorious
throne on high.

You are the place where we can find re-
fuge.

17:13 You are the one in whom Israel may
find hope.¹²

⁷ **tn** The term rendered “mind” here and in the previous verse is actually the Hebrew word for “heart.” However, in combination with the word rendered “heart” in the next line, which is the Hebrew for “kidneys,” it is best rendered “mind” because the “heart” was considered the center of intellect, conscience, and will and the “kidneys” the center of emotions.

⁸ **tn** For an earlier reference to this motif see Jer 11:20. For a later reference see Jer 20:12. See also Ps 17:2-3.

⁹ **tn** The meaning of this line is somewhat uncertain. The word translated “broods over” occurs only here and Isa 34:15. It is often defined on the basis of an Aramaic cognate which means “to gather” with an extended meaning of “to gather together under her to hatch.” Many commentators go back to a Rabbinic explanation that the partridge steals the eggs of other birds and hatches them out only to see the birds depart when they recognize that she is not the mother. Modern studies question the validity of this zoologically. Moreover, W. L. Holladay contests the validity on the basis of the wording “and she does hatch them” (*Heb* “bring them to birth”). See W. L. Holladay, *Jeremiah* (Hermeneia), 1:498, and see also P. C. Craigie, P. H. Kelley, J. F. Drinkard, *Jeremiah 1-25* (WBC), 229. The point of the comparison is that the rich gather their wealth but they do not get to see the fruits of it.

¹⁰ **tn** The Hebrew text merely says “it.” But the antecedent might be ambiguous in English so the reference to wealth gained by unjust means is here reiterated for clarity.

¹¹ **tn** *Heb* “he will be [= prove to be] a fool.”

¹² **tn** The words, “Then I said” are not in the text. They are supplied in the translation for clarity to show the shift in speaker.

¹³ **tn** The LORD is no longer threatening judgment but is being addressed. For a similar doxological interruption compare Jer 16:19-20.

¹⁴ **tn** *Heb* “O glorious throne, O high place from the beginning, O hope of Israel, O LORD.” Commentators and translators generally understand these four lines (which are three in the Hebrew original) as two predications, one eulogizing the temple and the other eulogizing God. However, that does not fit the context very well and does not take into account the nature of Jeremiah’s doxology in Jeremiah 16:19-20 (and compare also 10:6-7). There the doxology is context motivated, focused on God, and calls on relevant attributes in the form of metaphorical epithets. That fits nicely here as well. For the relevant parallel passages see the study note.

¹⁵ **tn** As King and Judge seated on his heavenly throne on high the LORD metes out justice. For examples of this motif see Jer 25:30; Ps 11:4; 9:4, 7 (9:5, 8 HT). As the place of sanctuary

¹ **sn** Verses 5-11 are a collection of wisdom-like sayings (cf. Ps 1) which set forth the theme of the two ways and their consequences. It has as its background the blessings and the curses of Deut 28 and the challenge to faith in Deut 29-30 which climaxes in Deut 30:15-20. The nation is sinful and God is weary of showing them patience. However, there is hope for individuals within the nation if they will trust in him.

² **tn** *Heb* “who make flesh their arm.” The “arm” is the symbol of strength and the flesh is the symbol of mortal man in relation to the omnipotent God. The translation “mere flesh and blood” reflects this.

³ **sn** In the psychology of ancient Hebrew thought the *heart* was the center not only of the emotions but of the thoughts and motivations. It was also the seat of moral conduct (cf. its placement in the middle of the discussion of moral conduct in Prov 4:20-27, i.e., in v. 23).

⁴ **tn** This word occurs only here and in Jer 48:6. It has been identified as a kind of juniper, which is a short shrub with minute leaves that look like scales. For a picture and more discussion see *Fauna and Flora of the Bible*, 131.

⁵ **tn** *Heb* “Blessed is the person who trusts in the LORD, and whose confidence is in the LORD.” However, because this is a statement of the LORD and the translation chooses to show that the blessing comes from him, the first person is substituted for the divine name.

⁶ **tn** Or “incurably deceitful”; *Heb* “it is incurable.” For the word “deceitful” compare the usage of the verb in Gen 27:36 and a related noun in 2 Kgs 10:19. For the adjective “incurable” compare the usage in Jer 15:18. It is most commonly used with reference to wounds or of pain. In Jer 17:16 it is used metaphorically for a “woeful day” (i.e., day of irreparable devastation).

⁷ **sn** The background for this verse is Deut 29:18-19 (29:17-18 HT) and Deut 30:17.

All who leave you will suffer shame.
 Those who turn away from you¹ will be
 consigned to the netherworld.²
 For they have rejected you, the LORD, the
 fountain of life.³
17:14 LORD, grant me relief from my suf-
 fering
 so that I may have some relief.
 Rescue me from those who persecute me
 so that I may be rescued.⁴
17:15 Listen to what they are saying to
 me.⁵
 They are saying, “Where are the things
 the LORD threatens us with?
 Come on! Let’s see them happen!”⁶
17:16 But I have not pestered you to bring
 disaster.⁷

I have not desired the time of irreparable
 devastation.⁸
 You know that.
 You are fully aware of every word that I
 have spoken.⁹
17:17 Do not cause me dismay!¹⁰
 You are my source of safety in times of
 trouble.
17:18 May those who persecute me be
 disgraced.
 Do not let me be disgraced.
 May they be dismayed.
 Do not let me be dismayed.
 Bring days of disaster on them.
 Bring on them the destruction they de-
 serve.”¹¹

he offers refuge for those who are fleeing for safety. Ezek 11:16 and Isa 18:1-4 are examples of passages using that motif. Finally, the LORD has been referred to earlier as the object of Israel’s hope (Jer 14:8). All of these are relevant to the choices that the LORD has placed before them, trust or turn away, and the threat that as all-knowing Judge he will reward people according to their behavior.

1 tc The translation is based on an emendation suggested in W. L. Holladay, *Jeremiah* (Hermeneia), 1:500, n. b-b. The emendation involves following the reading preferred by the Masoretes (the *Qere*) and understanding the preposition with the following word as a corruption of the suffix on it. Thus the present translation reads וְסוּרֵי אֶרֶץ (*usurekha ’erets*) instead of וְסוּרֵי בְּאֶרֶץ (*usuray ba’erets*, “and those who leave me will be written in the earth”), a reading which is highly improbable since all the other pronouns are second singular.

2 tn Or “to the world of the dead.” An alternative interpretation is: “will be as though their names were written in the dust”; Heb “will be written in the dust.” The translation follows the nuance of “earth” listed in HALOT 88 s.v. אֶרֶץ 4 and found in Jonah 2:6 (2:7 HT); Job 10:21-22. For the nuance of “enrolling, registering among the number” for the verb translated here “consign” see BDB 507 s.v. בָּתַב Qal.3 and 508 s.v. Niph.2 and compare usage in Ezek 13:9 and Ps 69:28 (69:29 HT).

3 tn Heb “The fountain of living water.” For an earlier use of this metaphor and the explanation of it see Jer 2:13 and the notes there. There does not appear to be any way to retain this metaphor in the text without explaining it. In the earlier text the context would show that literal water was not involved. Here it might still be assumed that the LORD merely gives life-giving water.

4 tn The translation fills in the details of the metaphor from a preceding context (15:18) and from the following context (17:18). The literal translation “Heal me and I will be healed. Rescue me and I will be rescued.” does not make much sense if these details are not filled in. The metaphor is filled in for clarity for the average reader.

5 tn Heb “Behold, they are saying to me.”

6 tn Heb “Where is the word of the LORD. Let it come [or come to pass] please.”

7 tc Heb “I have not run after you for the sake of disaster.” The translation follows the suggestion of some ancient versions. The Hebrew text reads “I have not run from being a shepherd after you.” The translation follows two Greek versions (Aquila and Symmachus) and the Syriac in reading the word “evil” or “disaster” here in place of the word “shepherd” in the Hebrew text. The issue is mainly one of vocalization. The versions mentioned are reading a form מֵרָעָה (*mera’ah*) instead of מֵרֵעָה (*mero’eh*). There does not appear to be any clear case of a prophet being called a shepherd, especially in Jeremiah where it is invariably used of the wicked leaders/rulers of Judah, the leaders/rulers of the enemy that he brings to punish them, or the righteous ruler that he will bring in the future. Moreover, there are no cases where the preposition “after” is used with the verb “shepherd.” Parallelism also ar-

*Observance of the Sabbath Day Is a Key to the Future*¹²

17:19 The LORD told me, “Go and stand in the People’s Gate¹³ through which the kings of Judah enter and leave the city. Then go and stand in all the other gates of the city of

gues for the appropriateness of this reading; “disaster” parallels the “incurable day.” The thought also parallels the argument thus far. Other than 11:20; 12:3; 15:15 where he has prayed for vindication by the LORD punishing his persecutors as they deserve, he has invariably responded to the LORD’s word of disaster with laments and prayers for his people (see 4:19-21; 6:24; 8:18; 10:19-25; 14:7-9, 19-22).

8 tn Heb “the incurable day.” For the use of this word see the note on 17:9.

9 tn Heb “that which goes out of my lip is right in front of your face.”

10 tn Heb “do not be a source of dismay for me.” For this nuance of בְּהִתָּה (*m^hkhittah*) rather than “terror” as many of the English versions have it see BDB 370 s.v. בְּהִתָּה 1.b and the usage in Prov 21:15. Compare also the usage of the related verb which occurs in the next verse (see also BDB 369 s.v. הִתָּה Qal.2).

11 tn Or “complete destruction.” See the translator’s note on 16:18.

sn Jeremiah now does what he says he has not wanted to do or been hasty to do. He is, however, seeking his own vindication and that of God whose threats they have belittled.

12 sn Observance of the Sabbath day (and the Sabbatical year) appears to have been a litmus test of the nation’s spirituality since it is mentioned in a number of passages besides this one (cf., e.g., Isa 56:2, 6; 58:13; Neh 13:15-18). Perhaps this is because the Sabbath day was the sign of the Mosaic covenant (Exod 31:13-17) just as the rainbow was the sign of the Noahic covenant (Gen 9:12, 13, 17) and circumcision was the sign of the Abrahamic covenant (Gen 17:11). This was not the only command they failed to obey, nor was their failure to obey this one the sole determining factor in the LORD’s decision to destroy Judah (cf. 7:23-24; 11:7-8 in their contexts).

13 sn The identity and location of the People’s Gate is uncertain since it is mentioned nowhere else in the Hebrew Bible. Some identify it with the Benjamin Gate mentioned in Jer 37:13; 38:7 (cf. NAB), but there is no textual support for this in the Hebrew Bible or in any of the ancient versions.

Jerusalem.¹ 17:20 As you stand in those places² announce, ‘Listen, all you people who pass through these gates. Listen, all you kings of Judah, all you people of Judah and all you citizens of Jerusalem. Listen to what the LORD says.’³ 17:21 The LORD says, ‘Be very careful if you value your lives!’⁴ Do not carry any loads⁵ in through⁶ the gates of Jerusalem on the Sabbath day. 17:22 Do not carry any loads out of your houses or do any work on the Sabbath day.⁷ But observe the Sabbath day as a day set apart to the LORD,⁸ as I commanded your ancestors.⁹ 17:23 Your ancestors,¹⁰ however, did not listen to me or pay any attention to me. They stubbornly refused¹¹ to pay attention or to respond to any discipline.’ 17:24 The LORD says,¹² ‘You must make sure to obey me. You must not bring any loads through the gates of this city on the Sabbath day. You must set the Sabbath day apart to me. You must not do any work on that day.

17:25 If you do this,¹³ then the kings and princes who follow in David’s succession¹⁴ and ride in chariots or on horses will continue to enter through these gates, as well as their officials and the people of Judah and the citizens of Jerusalem.¹⁵ This city will always be filled with people.¹⁶ 17:26 Then people will come here from the towns in Judah, from the villages surrounding Jerusalem, from the territory of Benjamin, from the western foothills, from the southern hill country, and from the southern part of Judah. They will come bringing offerings to the temple of the LORD: burnt offerings, sacrifices, grain offerings, and incense along with their thank offerings.¹⁷ 17:27 But you must obey me and set the Sabbath day apart to me. You must not carry any loads in through¹⁸ the gates of Jerusalem on the Sabbath day. If you disobey, I will set the gates of Jerusalem on fire. It will burn down all the fortified dwellings in Jerusalem and no one will be able to put it out.”

An Object Lesson from the Making of Pottery

18:1 The LORD said to Jeremiah:¹⁹ 18:2 “Go down at once²⁰ to the potter’s house. I will speak to you further there.”²¹ 18:3 So I went down to the potter’s house and found him working²² at

¹ map For location see Map5-B1; Map6-F3; Map7-E2; Map8-F2; Map10-B3; JP1-F4; JP2-F4; JP3-F4; JP4-F4.

² tn The words “As you stand there” are not in the text but are implicit in the connection. They are supplied in the translation for clarity.

³ tn Heb “Listen to the word of the LORD, kings of Judah...Jerusalem who enter through these gates.” This sentence has been restructured to avoid a long complex English sentence and to put “Listen to what the LORD says” closer to the content of what he says.

⁴ tn Heb “Be careful at the risk of your lives.” The expression with the preposition ב (bet) is unique. Elsewhere the verb “be careful” is used with the preposition ל (lamed) in the sense of the reflexive. Hence the word “soul” cannot be simply reflexive here. BDB 1037 s.v. שָׁמַר Niph.1 understands this as a case where the preposition ל introduces the cost or price (cf. BDB 90 s.v. ב III.3.a).

⁵ sn Comparison with Neh 13:15-18 suggests that these loads were merchandise or agricultural produce which were being brought in for sale. The loads that were carried out of the houses in the next verse were probably goods for barter.

⁶ tn Heb “carry loads on the Sabbath and bring [them] in through.” The two verbs “carry” and “bring in” are an example of hendiadys (see the note on “Be careful...by carrying”). This is supported by the next line where only “carry out” of the houses is mentioned.

⁷ tn Heb “Do not carry any loads out of your houses on the Sabbath day and do not do any work.” Translating literally might give the wrong impression that they were not to work at all. The phrase “on the Sabbath day” is, of course, intended to qualify both prohibitions.

⁸ tn Heb “But sanctify [or set apart as sacred] the Sabbath day.” The idea of setting it apart as something sacred to the LORD is implicit in the command. See the explicit statements of this in Exod 20:10; 31:5; 35:2; Lev 24:8. For some readers the idea of treating the Sabbath day as something sacred won’t mean much without spelling the qualification out specifically. Sabbath observance was not just a matter of not working.

⁹ tn Heb “fathers.”

¹⁰ tn Heb “They.” The antecedent is spelled out to avoid any possible confusion.

¹¹ tn Heb “They hardened [or made stiff] their neck so as not to.”

¹² tn Heb “Oracle of the LORD.”

¹³ tn Heb “If you will carefully obey me by not bringing...and by sanctifying...by not doing..., then kings will...” The structure of prohibitions and commands followed by a brief “if” clause has been used to break up a long condition and consequence relationship which is contrary to contemporary English style.

¹⁴ tn Heb “who sit [or are to sit] on David’s throne.”

¹⁵ tn Heb “There will come through the gates of this city the kings and princes...riding in chariots and on horses, they and their officials...” The structure of the original text is broken up here because of the long compound subject which would make the English sentence too long. The term “princes” is often omitted as a supposed double writing of the word that follows it and looks somewhat like it (the Hebrew reads here וְיָשִׁיבוּ וְיָשִׁיבוּ, *u-yashivu u-yashivu*) or the same word which occurs later in the verse and is translated “officials” (the word can refer to either). It is argued that “princes” are never said to sit on the throne of David (translated here “follow in the succession of David”). However, the word is in all texts and versions and the concept of sitting on the throne of someone is descriptive of both past, present, and future and is even used with the participle in a proleptic sense of “the one who is to sit on the throne” (cf. Exod 11:5; 12:29).

¹⁶ tn Heb “will be inhabited forever.”

¹⁷ tn Heb “There will come from the cities of Judah and from the environs of Jerusalem and from...those bringing...incense and those bringing thank offerings.” This sentence has been restructured from a long complex original to conform to contemporary English style.

¹⁸ tn Heb “carry loads on the Sabbath and bring [them] in through.” The translation treats the two verbs “carry” and “bring in” are an example of hendiadys (see the note on “through” in 17:21).

¹⁹ tn Heb “The word which came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying.” This same formula occurs ten other times in Jeremiah. It has already occurred at 7:1 and 11:1.

²⁰ tn Heb “Get up and go down.” The first verb is not literal but is idiomatic for the initiation of an action. See 13:4, 6 for other occurrences of this idiom.

²¹ tn Heb “And I will cause you to hear my word there.”

²² tn Heb “And behold he was working.”

his wheel.¹ **18:4** Now and then² there would be something wrong³ with the pot he was molding from the clay⁴ with his hands. So he would re-work⁵ the clay into another kind of pot as he saw fit.⁶

18:5 Then the LORD said to me,⁷ **18:6** “I, the LORD, say.⁸ ‘O nation of Israel, can I not deal with you as this potter deals with the clay?’⁹ In my hands, you, O nation of Israel, are just like the clay in this potter’s hand.” **18:7** There are times, Jeremiah,¹⁰ when I threaten to uproot, tear

¹ **sn** At his wheel (Heb “at the two stones”). The Hebrew expression is very descriptive of the construction of a potter’s wheel which consisted of two stones joined by a horizontal shaft. The potter rotated the wheel with his feet on the lower wheel and worked the clay with his hands on the upper. For a picture of a potter working at his wheel see I. Ben-Dor, “Potter’s Wheel,” *IDB* 3:846. See also the discussion regarding the making of pottery in J. L. Kelso, “Pottery,” *IDB* 3:846-53.

² **tn** The verbs here denote repeated action. They are the Hebrew perfect with the vav (h) consecutive. The text then reads somewhat literally, “Whenever the vessel he was molding...was ruined, he would remold...” For this construction see *Joûn* 2:393-94 §118.n and 2:628-29 §167.b, and compare the usage in *Amos* 4:7-8.

³ **sn** Something was wrong with the clay – either there was a lump in it, or it was too moist or not moist enough, or it had some other imperfection. In any case the vessel was “ruined” or “spoiled” or defective in the eyes of the potter. This same verb has been used of the linen shorts that were “ruined” and hence were “good for nothing” in *Jer* 13:7. The nature of the clay and how it responded to the potter’s hand determined the kind of vessel that he made of it. He did not throw the clay away. This is the basis for the application in vv. 7-10 to any nation and to the nation of Israel in particular (vv. 10-17).

⁴ **tn** The usage of the preposition ב (bet) to introduce the material from which something is made in *Exod* 38:8 and 1 *Kgs* 15:22 should lay to rest the rather forced construction that some (like J. Bright, *Jeremiah* [AB], 121) put on the variant בְּחֹמֶר (*kakhomer*) found in a few Hebrew mss. Bright renders that phrase as an elliptical “as clay sometimes will.” The phrase is missing from the Greek version.

⁵ **tn** Heb “he would turn and work.” This is an example of hendiadys where one of the two verbs joined by “and” becomes the adverbial modifier of the other. The verb “turn” is very common in this construction (see *BDB* 998 s.v. שׁוּב *Qal*.8 for references).

⁶ **tn** Heb “as it was right in his eyes to do [or work it].” For this idiom see *Judg* 14:3, 7; 1 *Sam* 18:20, 26; 2 *Sam* 17:4.

⁷ **tn** Heb “Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying.”

⁸ **tn** This phrase (literally “Oracle of the LORD”) has been handled this way on several occasions when it occurs within first person addresses where the LORD is the speaker. See, e.g., 16:16; 17:24.

⁹ **tn** The words “deals with the clay” are not in the text. They are part of an elliptical comparison and are supplied in the translation here for clarity.

¹⁰ **tn** The word “Jeremiah” is not in the text but it is implicit from the introduction in v. 5 that he is being addressed. It is important to see how the rhetoric of this passage is structured. The words of vv. 7-10 lead up to the conclusion “So now” in v. 11 which in turns leads to the conclusion “Therefore” in v. 13. The tense of the verb in v. 12 is very important. It is a vav consecutive perfect indicating the future (cf. *GKC* 333 §112.p, r); their response is predictable. The words of vv. 7-10 are addressed to Jeremiah (v. 5) in fulfillment of the LORD’s promise to speak to him (v. 2) and furnish the basis for the LORD’s words of conditional threat to a people who show no promise of responding positively (vv. 11-12). Verse six then must be seen as another example of the figure of apostrophe (the turning aside from description about someone to addressing them directly; cf., e.g., *Ps* 6:8-9 (6:9-10 HT). Earlier examples of this figure have been seen in 6:20; 9:4; 11:13;

down, and destroy a nation or kingdom.¹¹ **18:8** But if that nation I threatened stops doing wrong,¹² I will cancel the destruction¹³ I intended to do to it. **18:9** And there are times when I promise to build up and establish¹⁴ a nation or kingdom. **18:10** But if that nation does what displeases me and does not obey me, then I will cancel the good I promised to do to it. **18:11** So now, tell the people of Judah and the citizens of Jerusalem¹⁵ this: The LORD says, ‘I am preparing to bring disaster on you! I am making plans to punish you.¹⁶ So, every one of you, stop the evil things you have been doing.¹⁷ Correct the way you have been living and do what is right.’¹⁸ **18:12** But they just keep saying, ‘We do not care what you say!¹⁹ We will do whatever we want to do! We will continue to behave wickedly and stubbornly!’²⁰

12:13; 15:6.

¹¹ **tn** Heb “One moment I may speak about a nation or kingdom to...” So also in v. 9. The translation is structured this way to avoid an awkward English construction and to reflect the difference in disposition. The constructions are, however, the same.

¹² **tn** Heb “turns from its wickedness.”

¹³ **tn** There is a good deal of debate about how the word translated here “revoke” should be translated. There is a good deal of reluctance to translate it “change my mind” because some see that as contradicting *Num* 23:19 and thus prefer “relent.” However, the English word “relent” suggests the softening of an attitude but not necessarily the change of course. It is clear that in many cases (including here) an actual change of course is in view (see, e.g., *Amos* 7:3, 6; *Jonah* 3:9; *Jer* 26:19; *Exod* 13:17; 32:14). Several of these passages deal with “conditional” prophecies where a change in behavior of the people or the mediation of a prophet involves the change in course of the threatened punishment (or the promised benefit). “Revoke” or “forgo” may be the best way to render this in contemporary English idiom.

sn There is a wordplay here involving the word “evil” (רָעָה, *ra’ah*) which refers to both the crime and the punishment. This same play is carried further in *Jonah* 3:10-4:1 where *Jonah* becomes very displeased (Heb “it was very evil to *Jonah* with great evil”) when God forgoes bringing disaster (evil) on Nineveh because they have repented of their wickedness (evil).

¹⁴ **sn** Heb “plant.” The terms “uproot,” “tear down,” “destroy,” “build,” and “plant” are the two sides of the ministry *Jeremiah* was called to (cf. *Jer* 1:10).

¹⁵ **map** For location see Map5-B1; Map6-F3; Map7-E2; Map8-F2; Map10-B3; JP1-F4; JP2-F4; JP3-F4; JP4-F4.

¹⁶ **sn** Heb “I am forming disaster and making plans against you.” The word translated “forming” is the same as that for “potter,” so there is a wordplay taking the reader back to v. 5. They are in his hands like the clay in the hands of the potter. Since they have not been pliable he forms new plans. He still offers them opportunity to repent, but their response is predictable.

¹⁷ **tn** Heb “Turn, each one from his wicked way.” See v. 8.

¹⁸ **tn** Or “Make good your ways and your actions.” See the same expression in 7:3, 5.

¹⁹ **tn** Heb “It is useless!” See the same expression in a similar context in *Jer* 2:25.

²⁰ **tn** Heb “We will follow our own plans and do each one according to the stubbornness of his own wicked heart.”

sn This has been the consistent pattern of their behavior. See 7:24; 9:13; 13:10; 16:12.

18:13 Therefore, the LORD says,

“Ask the people of other nations
whether they have heard of anything like
this.

Israel should have been like a virgin.
But she has done something utterly re-
volting!

18:14 Does the snow ever completely van-
ish from the rocky slopes of Lebanon?
Do the cool waters from those distant
mountains ever cease to flow?¹

18:15 Yet my people have forgotten me
and offered sacrifices to worthless idols!
This makes them stumble along in the
way they live

and leave the old reliable path of their
fathers.²

They have left them to walk in bypaths,
in roads that are not smooth and level.³

18:16 So their land will become an object
of horror.⁴

People will forever hiss out their scorn
over it.

All who pass that way will be filled with
horror

and will shake their heads in derision.⁵

18:17 I will scatter them before their en-
emies

like dust blowing in front of a burning
east wind.

I will turn my back on them and not look
favorably on them⁶
when disaster strikes them.”

*Jeremiah Petitions the Lord to Punish Those Who
Attack Him*

18:18 Then some people⁷ said, “Come on! Let
us consider how to deal with Jeremiah!⁸ There
will still be priests to instruct us, wise men to give
us advice, and prophets to declare God’s word.⁹
Come on! Let’s bring charges against him and get
rid of him!¹⁰ Then we will not need to pay atten-
tion to anything he says.”

18:19 Then I said,¹¹

“LORD, pay attention to me.

Listen to what my enemies are saying.¹²

18:20 Should good be paid back with evil?
Yet they are virtually digging a pit to kill
me.¹³

Just remember how I stood before you
pleading on their behalf¹⁴
to keep you from venting your anger on
them.¹⁵

¹ **tn** The precise translation of this verse is somewhat uncertain. Two phrases in this verse are the primary cause of discussion and the source of numerous emendations, none of which has gained consensus. The phrase which is rendered here “rocky slopes” is in Hebrew צִבְרֵי שָׂדֵי (*tsur saday*), which would normally mean something like “rocky crag of the field” (see BDB 961 s.v. שָׂדֵי 1.g). Numerous emendations have been proposed, most of which are listed in the footnotes of J. A. Thompson, *Jeremiah* (NICOT), 436. The present translation has chosen to follow the proposal of several scholars that the word here is related to the Akkadian word *shadu* meaning mountain. The other difficulty is the word translated “cease” which in the MT is literally “be uprooted” (יִנְתָּשׁוּ, *yinnatshu*). The word is usually emended to read יִנְתָּשׁוּ (yinnashu, “are dried up”) as a case of transposed letters (cf., e.g., BDB 684 s.v. נִתַּשׁ Niph). This is probably a case of an error in hearing and the word נָתַשׁ (*natash*) which is often parallel to נָבַח (*azav*), translated here “vanish,” should be read in the sense that it has in 1 Sam 10:2. Whether one reads “are plucked up” and understands it figuratively of ceasing (“are dried” or “cease”), the sense is the same. For the sense of “distant” for the word זָרִים (*zarim*) see 2 Kgs 19:24.

sn Israel’s actions are contrary to nature. See the same kind of argumentation in Jer 2:11; 8:7.

² **sn** *Heb* “the ancient path.” This has already been referred to in Jer 6:16. There is another “old way” but it is the path trod by the wicked (cf. Job 22:15).

³ **sn** *Heb* “ways that are not built up.” This refers to the built-up highways. See Isa 40:4 for the figure. The terms “way,” “by-paths,” “roads” are, of course, being used here in the sense of moral behavior or action.

⁴ **tn** There may be a deliberate double meaning involved here. The word translated here “an object of horror” refers both to destruction (cf. 2:15; 4:17) and the horror or dismay that accompanies it (cf. 5:30; 8:21). The fact that there is no conjunction or preposition in front of the noun “hissing” that follows this suggests that the reaction is in view here, not the cause.

⁵ **sn** *Heb* “an object of lasting hissing. All who pass that way will be appalled and shake their head.”

sn The actions of “shaking of the head” and “hissing” were obviously gestures of scorn and derision. See Lam 2:15-16.

⁶ **tc** *Heb* “I will show them [my] back and not [my] face.” This reading follows the suggestion of some of the versions and some of the Masoretes. The MT reads “I will look on their back and not on their faces.”

sn To “turn the back” is universally recognized as a symbol of rejection. The turning of the face toward one is the subject of the beautiful Aaronic blessing in Num 6:24-26.

⁷ **tn** *Heb* “They.” The referent is unidentified; “some people” has been used in the translation.

⁸ **tn** *Heb* “Let us make plans against Jeremiah.” See 18:18 where this has sinister overtones as it does here.

⁹ **tn** *Heb* “Instruction will not perish from priest, counsel from the wise, word from the prophet.”

sn These are the three channels through whom God spoke to his people in the OT. See Jer 8:8-10 and Ezek 7:26.

¹⁰ **tn** *Heb* “Let us smite him with our tongues.” It is clear from the context that this involved plots to kill him.

¹¹ **tn** The words “Then I said” are not in the text. They are supplied in the translation for clarity to show that Jeremiah turns from description of the peoples’ plots to his address to God to deal with the plotters.

¹² **tn** *Heb* “the voice of my adversaries.”

sn Jeremiah’s prayers against the unjust treatment of his enemies here and elsewhere (see 11:18-20; 12:1-4; 15:15-18; 17:14-18) have many of the elements of the prayers of the innocent in the book of Psalms: an invocation of the LORD as just judge, a lament about unjust attacks, an appeal to innocence, and a cry for vindication which often calls for the LORD to pay back in kind those who unjustly attack the petitioner. See for examples Pss 5, 7, 17, 54 among many others.

¹³ **tn** Or “They are plotting to kill me”; *Heb* “They have dug a pit for my soul.” This is a common metaphor for plotting against someone. See BDB 500 s.v. בָּרַךְ Qal and for an example see Pss 7:16 (7:15 HT) in its context.

¹⁴ **tn** *Heb* “to speak good concerning them” going back to the concept of “good” being paid back with evil.

¹⁵ **tn** *Heb* “to turn back your anger from them.”

sn See Jer 14:7-9, 19-21 and 15:1-4 for the idea.

18:21 So let their children die of starvation.
 Let them be cut down by the sword.¹
 Let their wives lose their husbands and children.
 Let the older men die of disease²
 and the younger men die by the sword in battle.
 18:22 Let cries of terror be heard in their houses
 when you send bands of raiders unexpectedly to plunder them.³
 For they have virtually dug a pit to capture me
 and have hidden traps for me to step into.
 18:23 But you, LORD, know
 all their plots to kill me.
 Do not pardon their crimes!
 Do not ignore their sins as though you
 had erased them!⁴
 Let them be brought down in defeat before you!
 Deal with them while you are still angry!⁵

An Object Lesson from a Broken Clay Jar

19:1 The LORD told Jeremiah,⁶ “Go and buy a clay jar from a potter.⁷ Take with you⁸ some of the leaders of the people and some of the lead-

ers⁹ of the priests. 19:2 Go out to the part of the Hinnom Valley which is near the entrance of the Potsherd Gate.¹⁰ Announce there what I tell you.¹¹ 19:3 Say, ‘Listen to what the LORD says, you kings of Judah and citizens of Jerusalem!’¹² The LORD God of Israel who rules over all¹³ says, “I will bring a disaster on this place¹⁴ that will make the ears of everyone who hears about it ring!¹⁵ 19:4 I will do so because these people¹⁶ have rejected me and have defiled¹⁷ this place. They have offered sacrifices in it to other gods which neither they nor their ancestors¹⁸ nor the kings of Judah knew anything about. They have filled it with the blood of innocent children.¹⁹ 19:5 They have built places here²⁰ for worship of the god Baal so that they could sacrifice their children as burnt offerings to him in the fire.

¹ **tn** *Heb* “be poured out to the hand [= power] of the sword.” For this same expression see Ezek 35:5; Ps 63:10 (63:11 HT). Comparison with those two passages show that it involved death by violent means, perhaps death in battle.

² **tn** *Heb* “be slain by death.” The commentaries are generally agreed that this refers to death by disease or plague as in 15:2. Hence, the reference is to the deadly trio of sword, starvation, and disease which were often connected with war. See the notes on 15:2.

³ **tn** *Heb* “when you bring marauders in against them.” For the use of the noun translated here “bands of raiders to plunder them” see 1 Sam 30:3, 15, 23 and BDB 151 s.v. גִּידוֹר 1.

⁴ **sn** *Heb* “Do not blot out their sins from before you.” For this anthropomorphic figure which looks at God’s actions as though connected with record books, i.e., a book of wrongdoings to be punished, and a book of life for those who are to live, see e.g., Exod 32:32, 33, Ps 51:1 (51:3 HT); 69:28 (69:29 HT).

⁵ **tn** *Heb* “in the time of your anger.”

⁶ **tn** The word “Jeremiah” is not in the text. Some Hebrew MSS and some of the versions have “to me.” This section, 19:1–20:6 appears to be one of the biographical sections of the book of Jeremiah where incidents in his life are reported in third person. See clearly 9:14 and 20:1–3. The MSS and versions do not represent a more original text but are translational or interpretive attempts to fill in a text which had no referent. They are like the translational addition that has been supplied on the basis of contextual indicators.

⁷ **tn** *Heb* “an earthenware jar of the potter.”

sn The word translated “clay” here refers to a clay which has been baked or fired in a kiln. In Jer 18 the clay was still soft and pliable, capable of being formed into different kinds of vessels. Here the clay is set, just as Israel is set in its ways. The word for jar refers probably to a water jug or decanter and is onomatopoeic, *baqbuq*, referring to the gurgling sound made by pouring out the water.

⁸ **tc** The words “Take with you” follow the reading of the Syriac version and to a certain extent the reading of the Greek version (the latter does not have “with you”). The Hebrew text does not have these words but they are undoubtedly implicit.

⁹ **tn** *Heb* “elders” both here and before “of the people.”

sn The civil and religious leaders are referred to here. They were to be witnesses of the symbolic act and of the message that Jeremiah proclaimed to the leaders of Jerusalem and its citizens (see v. 3).

¹⁰ **sn** The exact location of the *Potsherd Gate* is unknown since it is nowhere else mentioned in the Hebrew Bible. It is sometimes identified with the Dung Gate mentioned in Neh 2:13; 3:13–14; 12:31 on the basis of the Jerusalem Targum. It is probably called “Potsherd Gate” because that is where the potter threw out the broken pieces of pottery which were no longer of use to him. The Valley of Ben Hinnom has already been mentioned in 7:31–32 in connection with the illicit religious practices, including child sacrifice, which took place there. The Valley of Ben Hinnom (or sometimes Valley of Hinnom) runs along the west and south sides of Jerusalem.

¹¹ **tn** *Heb* “the words that I will speak to you.”

¹² **map** For location see Map5-B1; Map6-F3; Map7-E2; Map8-F2; Map10-B3; JP1-F4; JP2-F4; JP3-F4; JP4-F4.

¹³ **tn** *Heb* “Yahweh of armies, the God of Israel.”

sn See the study notes on 2:19 and 7:3 for explanation of this title.

¹⁴ **sn** Careful comparison of the use of this term throughout this passage and comparison with 7:31–33 which is parallel to several verses in this passage will show that the reference is to the Valley of Ben Hinnom which will become a Valley of Slaughter (see v. 6 and 7:32).

¹⁵ **tn** *Heb* “which everyone who hears it [or about it] his ears will ring.” This is proverbial for a tremendous disaster. See 1 Sam 3:11; 2 Kgs 21:12 for similar prophecies.

¹⁶ **tn** The text merely has “they.” But since a reference is made later to “they” and “their ancestors,” the referent must be to the people that the leaders of the people and leaders of the priests represent.

¹⁷ **sn** *Heb* “have made this city foreign.” The verb here is one that is built off of the noun and adjective which relate to foreign nations. Comparison may be made to Jer 2:21 where the adjective refers to the strange, wild vine as opposed to the choice vine the LORD planted and to 5:19 and 8:19 where the noun is used of worshipping foreign gods. Israel through its false worship has “denationalized” itself in its relation to God.

¹⁸ **tn** *Heb* “fathers.”

¹⁹ **tn** *Heb* “the blood of innocent ones.” This must be a reference to child sacrifice as explained in the next verse. Some have seen a reference to the sins of social injustice alluded to in 2 Kgs 21:16 and 24:4 but those are connected with the city itself. Hence the word children is supplied in the translation to make the referent explicit.

²⁰ **tn** The word “here” is not in the text. However, it is implicit from the rest of the context. It is supplied in the translation for clarity.

Such sacrifices¹ are something I never commanded them to make! They are something I never told them to do! Indeed, such a thing never even entered my mind! **19:6** So I, the LORD, say:² “The time will soon come that people will no longer call this place Topheth or the Hinnom Valley. But they will call this valley³ the Valley of Slaughter! **19:7** In this place I will thwart⁴ the plans of the people of Judah and Jerusalem. I will deliver them over to the power of their enemies who are seeking to kill them. They will die by the sword⁵ at the hands of their enemies.⁶ I will make their dead bodies food for the birds and wild beasts to eat. **19:8** I will make this city an object of horror, a thing to be hissed at. All who pass by it will be filled with horror and will hiss out their scorn⁷ because of all the disasters that have happened to it.⁸ **19:9** I will reduce the people of this city to desperate straits during the siege imposed on it by their enemies who are seeking to kill them. I will make them so desper-

ate that they will eat the flesh of their own sons and daughters and the flesh of one another.”⁹

19:10 The LORD continued,¹⁰ “Now break the jar in front of those who have come here with you. **19:11** Tell them the LORD who rules over all says,¹¹ ‘I will do just as Jeremiah has done.¹² I will smash this nation and this city as though it were a potter’s vessel which is broken beyond repair.¹³ The dead will be buried here in Topheth until there is no more room to bury them.’¹⁴ **19:12** I, the LORD, say:¹⁵ ‘That is how I will deal with this city and its citizens. I will make it like Topheth. **19:13** The houses in Jerusalem and the houses of the kings of Judah will be defiled by dead bodies¹⁶ just like this place, Topheth. For they offered sacrifice to the stars¹⁷ and poured out drink offerings to other gods on the roofs of those houses.’”

19:14 Then Jeremiah left Topheth where the LORD had sent him to give that prophecy. He went to the LORD’s temple and stood¹⁸ in its courtyard and called out to all the people. **19:15** “The LORD God of Israel who rules over all¹⁹ says, ‘I will soon bring on this city and all the towns surrounding it²⁰ all the disaster I threatened to do to it. I will do so because they have

1 tn The words “such sacrifices” are not in the text. The text merely says “to burn their children in the fire as burnt offerings to Baal which I did not command.” The command obviously refers not to the qualification “to Baal” but to burning the children in the fire as burnt offerings. The words are supplied in the translation to avoid a possible confusion that the reference is to sacrifices to Baal. Likewise the words should not be translated so literally that they leave the impression that God never said anything about sacrificing their children to other gods. The fact is he did. See Lev 18:21; Deut 12:30; 18:10.

2 tn This phrase (*Heb* “Oracle of the LORD”) has been handled this way on several occasions when it occurs within first person addresses where the LORD is the speaker. See, e.g., 16:16; 17:24; 18:6.

3 tn *Heb* “it will no longer be called to this place Topheth or the Valley of Ben Hinnom but the Valley of Slaughter.”

sn See Jer 7:31-32 for an almost word for word repetition of vv. 5-6.

4 sn There is perhaps a two-fold wordplay in the use of this word. One involves the sound play with the word for “jar,” which has been explained as a water decanter. The word here is *בַּקָּבֵי* (*vaqqoi*). The word for jar in v. 1 is *בַּקָּבֵק* (*vaqbuq*). There may also be a play on the literal use of this word to refer to the laying waste or destruction of a land (see Isa 24:3; Nah 2:3). Many modern commentaries think that at this point Jeremiah emptied out the contents of the jar, symbolizing the “emptying” out of their plans.

5 sn This refers to the fact that they will die in battle. The sword would be only one of the weapons that strikes them down. It is one of the trio of “sword,” “starvation,” and “disease” which were the concomitants of war referred to so often in the book of Jeremiah. Starvation is referred to in v. 9.

6 tn *Heb* “I will cause them to fall by the sword before their enemies and in the hand of those who seek their soul [= life].” In this context the two are meant as obvious qualifications of one entity, not two. Some rearrangement of the qualifiers had to be made in the English translation to convey this.

7 sn See 18:16 and the study note there.

8 tn *Heb* “all its smittings.” This word has been used several times for the metaphorical “wounds” that Israel has suffered as a result of the blows from its enemies. See, e.g., 14:17. It is used in the Hebrew Bible of scourging, both literally and metaphorically (cf. Deut 25:3; Isa 10:26), and of slaughter and defeat (1 Sam 4:10; Josh 10:20). Here it refers to the results of the crushing blows at the hands of her enemies which has made her the object of scorn.

9 tn This verse has been restructured to try to bring out the proper thought and subordinations reflected in the verse without making the sentence too long and complex in English: *Heb* “I will make them eat the flesh of their sons and daughters. And they will eat one another’s flesh in the siege and in the straits which their enemies who are seeking their lives reduce them to.” This also shows the agency through which God’s causation was effected, i.e., the siege.

sn Cannibalism is one of the penalties for disobedience to their covenant with the LORD effected through the Mosaic covenant. See Deut 28:53, 55, 57. For examples of this being carried out see 2 Kgs 6:28-29; Lam 4:10.

10 tn The words “And the LORD continued” are not in the text. However, they are necessary to take us clearly back to the flow of the narrative begun in vv. 1-2 and interrupted by the long speech in vv. 3-9.

11 tn *Heb* “Thus says Yahweh of armies.” For this title see the study note on 2:19. The translation attempts to avoid the confusion of embedding quotes within quotes by reducing this one to an indirect quote.

12 tn The adverb “Thus” or “Like this” normally points back to something previously mentioned. See, e.g., Exod 29:35; Num 11:15; 15:11; Deut 25:9.

13 tn *Heb* “Like this I will break this people and this city, just as one breaks the vessel of a potter which is not able to be repaired.”

14 sn See Jer 7:22-23 for parallels.

15 tn This phrase (*Heb* “Oracle of the LORD”) has been handled this way on several occasions when it occurs within first person addresses where the LORD is the speaker. See, e.g., 16:16; 17:24; 18:6.

16 tn The words “by dead bodies” is not in the text but is implicit from the context. They are supplied in the translation for clarity.

17 tn *Heb* “the host of heaven.”

18 tn *Heb* “And Jeremiah entered from Topheth where the LORD had sent him to prophesy and he stood in the courtyard of the LORD’s temple.”

19 tn *Heb* “Yahweh of armies, the God of Israel.”

sn See the study notes on 2:19 and 7:3 for explanation of this title.

20 tn *Heb* “all its towns.”

stubbornly refused¹ to pay any attention to what I have said!”

Jeremiah is Flogged and Put in A Cell

20:1 Now Pashhur son of Immer heard Jeremiah prophesy these things. He was the priest who was chief of security² in the LORD's temple. **20:2** When he heard Jeremiah's prophecy, he had the prophet flogged.³ Then he put him in the stocks⁴ which were at the Upper Gate of Benjamin in the LORD's temple.⁵ **20:3** But the next day Pashhur released Jeremiah from the stocks. When he did, Jeremiah said to him, "The LORD's name for you is not 'Pashhur' but 'Terror is Everywhere.'⁶ **20:4** For the LORD says, 'I will make both you and your friends terrified of what will happen to you.'⁷ You will see all of

them die by the swords of their enemies.⁸ I will hand all the people of Judah over to the king of Babylon. He will carry some of them away into exile in Babylon and he will kill others of them with the sword. **20:5** I will hand over all the wealth of this city to their enemies. I will hand over to them all the fruits of the labor of the people of this city and all their prized possessions, as well as all the treasures of the kings of Judah. Their enemies will seize it all as plunder⁹ and carry it off to Babylon. **20:6** You, Pashhur, and all your household¹⁰ will go into exile in Babylon. You will die there and you will be buried there. The same thing will happen to all your friends to whom you have prophesied lies."¹¹

Jeremiah Complains about the Reaction to His Ministry

20:7 LORD, you coerced me into being a prophet, and I allowed you to do it. You overcame my resistance and prevailed over me.¹²

¹ **tn** Heb "They hardened [or made stiff] their neck so as not to."

² **tn** Heb "chief overseer/officer." The translation follows the suggestion of P. C. Craigie, P. H. Kelley, J. F. Drinkard, *Jeremiah 1-25* (WBC), 267, based on the parallel passage in 29:26-27 where this official appears to have been in charge of maintaining order in the temple.

sn Judging from a comparison of this passage with Jer 29:26-27 and that passage in turn with 2 Kgs 25:18, Pashhur held an office second in rank only to the high priest. He was in charge of keeping order in the temple and took offense at what he heard Jeremiah saying.

³ **tn** Heb "And Pashhur son of Immer, the priest and he [= who] was chief overseer [or officer] in the house of the LORD heard Jeremiah prophesying these words/things **20:2** and Pashhur had the prophet Jeremiah flogged." This verse and the previous one has been restructured in the translation to better conform with contemporary English style.

⁴ **tn** The meaning of this word is uncertain. It occurs only here, in 29:26 where it is followed by a parallel word that occurs only there and is generally translated "collar," and in 2 Chr 16:10 where it is preceded by the word "house of." It is most often translated "stocks" and explained as an instrument of confinement for keeping prisoners in a crooked position (from its relation to a root meaning "to turn." See BDB 246 s.v. מַרְבֵּבָה and KBL 500 s.v. מַרְבֵּבָה for definition and discussion.) For a full discussion including the interpretation of the ancient versions see W. L. Holladay, *Jeremiah* (Hermeneia), 1:542-43.

⁵ **sn** A comparison of Ezek 8:3 and 9:2 in their contexts will show that this probably refers to the northern gate to the inner court of the temple. It is called Upper because it was on higher ground above the gate in the outer court. It is qualified by "in the LORD's temple" to distinguish it from the Benjamin Gate in the city wall (cf. 37:13; 38:7). Like the Benjamin Gate in the city wall it faced north toward the territory of the tribe of Benjamin.

⁶ **tn** This name is translated rather than transliterated to aid the reader in understanding this name and connect it clearly with the explanation that follows in the next verse. For a rather complete discussion on the significance of this name and an attempt to explain it as a pun on the name "Pashhur" see J. A. Thompson, *Jeremiah* (NICOT), 455, n. 35.

sn The name *Pashhur* is essentially a curse pronounced by Jeremiah invoking the LORD's authority. The same phrase occurs in Jer 6:25; 46:5; 49:29 which are all in the context of war. In ancient Israelite culture the change in name denoted a change in status or destiny. See, for example, the shift from Jacob ("He grabs the heel" and "Cheater" or "Deceiver," Gen 25:26; 27:36) to Israel ("He perseveres with God," Gen 32:28).

⁷ **tn** Heb "I will make you an object of terror to both you and your friends."

⁸ **tn** Heb "And they will fall by the sword of their enemies and [with] your eyes seeing [it]."

⁹ **tn** Heb "Take them [the goods, etc.] as plunder and seize them."

¹⁰ **tn** Heb "all who live in your house." This included his family and his servants.

¹¹ **sn** As a member of the priesthood and the protector of order in the temple, Pashhur was undoubtedly one of those who promulgated the deceptive belief that the LORD's presence in the temple was a guarantee of Judah's safety (cf. 7:4, 8). Judging from the fact that two other men held the same office after the leading men in the city were carried into exile in 597 B.C. (see Jer 29:25-26 and compare 29:1-2 for the date and 2 Kgs 24:12-16 for the facts), this prophecy was probably fulfilled in 597. For a similar kind of oracle of judgment see Amos 7:10-17.

¹² **tn** The translation is admittedly interpretive but so is every other translation that tries to capture the nuance of the verb rendered here "coerced." Here the Hebrew text reads: "You [-] led me and I let myself be [-] led. You overpowered me and prevailed." The value one assigns to [-] is in every case interpretive based on what one thinks the context is referring to. The word is rendered "deceived" or "tricked" by several English versions (see, e.g., KJV, NASB, TEV, ICV) as though God had misled him. It is rendered "enticed" by some (see, e.g., NRSV, NJPS) as though God had tempted him with false hopes. Some go so far as to accuse Jeremiah of accusing God of metaphorically "raping" him. It is true that the word is used of "seducing" a virgin in Exod 22:15 and that it is used in several places to refer to "deceiving" someone with false words (Prov 24:28; Ps 78:36). It is also true that it is used of "coaxing" someone to reveal something he does not want to (Judg 14:15; 16:5) and of "enticing" someone to do something on the basis of false hopes (1 Kgs 22:20-22; Prov 1:10). However, it does not always have negative connotations or associations. In Hos 2:14 (2:16 HT) God "charms" or "woos" Israel, his estranged "wife," into the wilderness where he hopes to win her back to himself. What Jeremiah is alluding to here is crucial for translating and interpreting the word. There is no indication in this passage that Jeremiah is accusing God of misleading him or raising false hopes; God informed him at the outset that he would encounter opposition (1:17-19). Rather, he is alluding to his call to be a prophet, a call which he initially resisted but was persuaded to undertake because of God's persistence (Jer 1:7-10). The best single word to translate "..." with is thus "persuaded" or "coerced." The translation spells out the allusion explicitly so the reader is not left wondering about what is being alluded to when Jer-

Now I have become a constant laughing-stock.

Everyone ridicules me.

20:8 For whenever I prophesy,¹ I must cry out.²

“Violence and destruction are coming!”³

This message from the LORD⁴ has made me an object of continual insults and derision.

20:9 Sometimes I think, “I will make no mention of his message.

I will not speak as his messenger⁵ any more.”

But then⁶ his message becomes like a fire locked up inside of me, burning in my heart and soul.⁷

I grow weary of trying to hold it in; I cannot contain it.

20:10 I⁸ hear many whispering words of intrigue against me.

Those who would cause me terror are everywhere!⁹

They are saying, “Come on, let’s publicly denounce him!”¹⁰

All my so-called friends¹¹ are just watching for something that would lead to my downfall.¹²

They say, “Perhaps he can be enticed into slipping up, so we can prevail over¹³ him and get our revenge on him.

20:11 But the LORD is with me to help me like an awe-inspiring warrior.¹⁴

emiah speaks of being “coerced.” The translation “I let you do it” is a way of rendering the Niphal of the same verb which must be tolerative rather than passive since the normal passive for the Piel would be the Pual (See *IBHS* 389-90 §23.4g for discussion and examples.). The translation “you overcame my resistance” is based on allusion to the same context (1:7-10) and the parallel use of *khazaq*) as a transitive verb with a direct object in 1 Kgs 16:22.

¹ **tn** Heb “speak,” but the speaking is in the context of speaking as a prophet.

² **tn** Heb “I cry out, I proclaim.”

³ **tn** Heb “Violence and destruction.”

sn The words “Violence and destruction...” are a synopsis of his messages of judgment. Jeremiah is lamenting that his ministry up to this point has been one of judgment and has brought him nothing but ridicule because the LORD has not carried out his threats. He appears in the eyes of the people to be a false prophet.

⁴ **tn** Heb “the word of the LORD.” For the use of *ki...ki* (the sense of “for...and” see KBL 432 s.v. *ki*) here in the sense of “for...and” see KBL 432 s.v. *ki*.

⁵ **tn** Heb “speak in his name.” This idiom occurs in passages where someone functions as the messenger under the authority of another. See Exod 5:23; Deut 18:19, 29:20; Jer 14:14. The antecedent in the first line is quite commonly misidentified as being “him,” i.e., the LORD. Comparison, however, with the rest of the context, especially the consequential clause “then it becomes” (וַיִּהְיֶה, *vayyayah*), and Jer 23:36 shows that it is “the word of the LORD.”

⁶ **tn** The English sentence has again been restructured for the sake of English style. The Hebrew construction involves two *vav* consecutive perfects in a condition and consequence relation, “If I say to myself...then it [his word] becomes.” See GKC 337 §112. *kk* for the construction.

⁷ **tn** Heb “It is in my heart like a burning fire, shut up in my bones.” In addition to standing as part for the whole, the “bones” for the person (e.g., Ps 35:10), the bones were associated with fear (e.g., Job 4:14) and with pain (e.g., Job 33:19, Ps 102:3 [102:4 HT]) and joy or sorrow (e.g., Ps 51:8 [51:10 HT]). As has been mentioned several times, the heart was connected with intellectual and volitional concerns.

⁸ **tn** It would be difficult to render accurately the Hebrew particle *ki* that introduces this verse without lengthening the English line unduly. It probably means something like “This is true even though I...,” i.e., the particle is concessive (cf. BDB s.v. *ki* 2.c). No other nuance seems appropriate. The particle is left out of the translation, but its presence is acknowledged here.

⁹ **tn** The phrase translated “Those who would cause me terror are everywhere” has already occurred in 6:25 in the context of the terror caused by the enemy from the north and in 20:3 in reference to the curse pronounced on Pashhur who would experience it first hand. Some have seen the phrase here not as Jeremiah’s ejaculation of terror but of his assailant’s taunts of his message or even their taunting nickname for him. But comparison of this passage with the first two lines of Ps 31:13 (31:14 HT) which are word for word the same as these two will show that it refers to the terror inspired by the plots of his enemies to do away with him. It is also clear from the context of that passage and the following context here that the “whispering of many” (the literal translation of “many whispering words of intrigue against me”) refers to intrigues to take vengeance on him and do away with him.

¹⁰ **tn** Heb “Denounce and let us denounce him.” The verb which is translated “denounce” (נָגַד, *nagad*) does not take an accusative object of person as it does here very often. When it does it usually means to inform someone. The only relevant passage appears to be Job 17:5 where it means something like “denounce.” What is probably involved here are the attempts to portray Jeremiah as a traitor (Jer 26:10) and a false prophet (see his conflict with Hananiah in Jer 28).

¹¹ **tn** Heb “the men of my peace [who are concerned about my welfare].” For this phrase compare Ps 41:9 (41:10 HT); Jer 38:22. It is generally agreed that irony is being invoked here, hence “so-called” is supplied in the translation to bring out the irony.

¹² **tn** Heb “watching my stumbling [for me to stumble].” Metaphorically they were watching for some slip-up that would lead to his downfall. Compare the use in Pss 35:15 and 38:17 (38:18 HT).

¹³ **tn** All the text says literally is “Perhaps he can be enticed so that we can prevail over him.” However the word “enticed” needs some qualification. As W. McKane (*Jeremiah* [ICC], 1:479) notes it should probably be read in the context of the “stumbling” (= “something that would lead to my downfall”). Hence “slipping up” has been supplied as an object. It is vague enough to avoid specifics as the original text does but suggests some reference to “something that would lead to my downfall.”

sn There is an interesting ironical play on words here with the earlier use of these same Hebrew words in v. 7 to refer to the LORD coercing him into being his spokesman and overcoming his resistance. Jeremiah is lamenting that it was God’s call to speak his word which he could not (and still cannot) resist that has led ironically to his predicament, which is a source of terror to him.

¹⁴ **sn** This line has some interesting ties with Jer 15:20-21 where Jeremiah is assured by God that he is indeed with him as he promised him when he called him (1:8, 19) and will deliver him from the clutches of wicked and violent people. The word translated here “awe-inspiring” is the same as the word “violent people” there. Jeremiah is confident that his “awe-inspiring” warrior will overcome “violent people.” The statement of confidence here is, by the way, a common element in the psalms of petition in the Psalter. The common elements of that type of psalm are all here: invocation (v. 7), lament (vv. 7-10), confession of trust/confidence in being heard (v. 11), petition (v. 12), thanksgiving or praise (v. 13). For some ex-

Therefore those who persecute me will fail and will not prevail over me. They will be thoroughly disgraced because they did not succeed. Their disgrace will never be forgotten.

20:12 O LORD who rules over all,¹ you test and prove the righteous. You see into people's hearts and minds.² Pay them back for what they have done because I trust you to vindicate my cause.

20:13 Sing to the LORD! Praise the LORD! For he rescues the oppressed from the clutches of evildoers.³

20:14 Cursed be the day I was born! May that day not be blessed when my mother gave birth to me.⁴

20:15 Cursed be the man who made my father very glad when he brought him the news that a baby boy had been born to him!⁵

20:16 May that man be like the cities⁶ that the LORD destroyed without showing any mercy. May he hear a cry of distress in the morning and a battle cry at noon.

20:17 For he did not kill me before I came from the womb,

making my pregnant mother's womb my grave forever.⁷

20:18 Why did I ever come forth from my mother's womb? All I experience is trouble and grief, and I spend my days in shame.⁸

The Lord Will Hand Jerusalem over to Enemies

21:1 The LORD spoke to Jeremiah⁹ when King Zedekiah¹⁰ sent to him Pashhur son of Malkijah and the priest Zephaniah son of Maaseiah.¹¹ Zedekiah sent them to Jeremiah to ask,¹² **21:2** "Please ask the LORD to come and help us,¹³ because King Nebuchadnezzar¹⁴ of Babylon is attacking us. Maybe the LORD will perform one of his miracles as in times past and make him stop attacking us and leave."¹⁵ **21:3** Jeremiah answered them, "Tell Zedekiah

⁷ *tn Heb* "because he did not kill me from the womb so my mother might be to me for my grave and her womb eternally pregnant." The sentence structure has been modified and the word "womb" moved from the last line to the next to the last line for English stylistic purposes and greater clarity.

⁸ *tn Heb* "Why did I come forth from the womb to see [= so that I might see] trouble and grief and that my days might be consumed in shame."

⁹ *tn Heb* "The word which came to Jeremiah from the LORD."

¹⁰ *sn Zedekiah* was the last king of Judah. He ruled from 597 b.c. when he was placed on the throne by Nebuchadnezzar (2 Kgs 24:17) until the fall of Jerusalem in 587/6 b.c. He acquiesced to some of his anti-Babylonian counselors, rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar, and sought help from the Egyptians (Ezek 17:12-15). This brought Nebuchadnezzar against the city in 588 b.c. This is the first of two delegations to Jeremiah. The later one was sent after Nebuchadnezzar withdrew to take care of the Egyptian threat (cf. Jer 37:1-9).

¹¹ *sn* The Pashhur son of Malkijah referred to here is not the same as the Pashhur referred to in 20:1-6 who was the son of Immer. This Pashhur is referred to later in 38:1. The Zephaniah referred to here was the chief of security referred to later in Jer 29:25-26. He appears to have been favorably disposed toward Jeremiah.

¹² *tn Heb* "sent to him...Maaseiah, saying,...."

¹³ *tn* The verb used here is often used of seeking information through a prophet (e.g., 2 Kgs 1:16; 8:8) and hence many translate "inquire of the LORD for us." However, it is obvious from the following that they were not seeking information but help. The word is also used for that in Pss 34:4 (34:5 HT); 77:2 (77:3 HT).

¹⁴ *tn* The dominant spelling of this name is actually Nebuchadrezzar which is closer to his Babylonian name *Nebu kudduri uzzur*. An alternate spelling which is found 6 times in the book of Jeremiah and 17 times elsewhere is Nebuchadnezzar which is the form of the name that is usually used in English versions.

sn Nebuchadnezzar was the second and greatest king of Babylon. He is known in the Bible both for his two conquests of Jerusalem in 597 b.c. (2 Kgs 24:10-17) and 587 b.c. (2 Kgs 25:1-7) and for his having built Babylon the Great (Dan 4:28-30).

¹⁵ *tn Heb* "Perhaps the LORD will do according to his miracles that he may go up from against us."

sn The miracles that they may have had in mind would have included the Exodus, the conquest of Jericho, the deliverance of Jehoshaphat (2 Chr 20:1-30), etc., but predominant in their minds was probably the deliverance of Jerusalem from Sennacherib in the times of Hezekiah (Isa 37:33-38).

amples of this type of psalm see Pss 3, 7, 26.

¹ *tn Heb* "Yahweh of armies."

sn See the study note on 2:19 for explanation of this title for God.

² *tn Heb* "LORD of armies, the one who tests the righteous, who sees kidneys and heart." The sentence has been broken up to avoid a long and complex English sentence. The translation is more in keeping with contemporary English style.

sn This verse is almost an exact duplication of the petition in one of Jeremiah's earlier prayers and complaints. See Jer 11:20 and notes there for explanation of the Hebrew psychology underlying the use of "kidneys and heart" here. For the thoughts expressed here see Pss 17.

³ *sn* While it may be a little confusing to modern readers to see the fluctuation in moods and the shifts in addressee in a prayer and complaint like this, it was not at all unusual for Israel where these were often offered in the temple in the conscious presence of God before fellow worshipers. For another example of these same shifts see Ps 22 which is a prayer of David in a time of deep distress.

⁴ *sn* From the heights of exaltation, Jeremiah returns to the depths of despair. For similar mood swings in the psalms of lament compare Ps 102. Verses 14-18 are similar in tone and mood to Job 3:1-10. They are very forceful rhetorical ways of Job and Jeremiah expressing the wish that they had never been born.

⁵ *tn Heb* "Cursed be the man who brought my father the news saying, 'A son, a male, has been born to you,' making glad his joy." This verse has been restructured for English stylistic purposes.

sn The birth of a child was an occasion of great joy. This was especially true if the child was a boy because it meant the continuance of the family line and the right of retention of the family property. See Ruth 4:10, 13-17.

⁶ *sn* The cities alluded to are Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities of the Jordan plain which had become proverbial for their wickedness and for the destruction that the LORD brought on them because of it. See Isa 1:9-10; 13:19; Jer 23:14; 49:18.

21:4 that the LORD, the God of Israel, says,¹ ‘The forces at your disposal² are now outside the walls fighting against King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon and the Babylonians³ who have you under siege. I will gather those forces back inside the city.⁴ 21:5 In anger, in fury, and in wrath I myself will fight against you with my mighty power and great strength!⁵ 21:6 I will kill everything living in Jerusalem,⁶ people and animals alike! They will die from terrible diseases. 21:7 Then⁷ I, the LORD, promise that⁸ I will hand over King Zedekiah of Judah, his officials, and any of the people who survive the war, starvation, and disease. I will hand them over to King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon and to their enemies who want to kill them. He will slaughter them with the sword. He will not show them any mercy, compassion, or pity.’

21:8 “But⁹ tell the people of Jerusalem¹⁰ that the LORD says, ‘I will give you a choice between two courses of action. One will result in life; the other will result in death.’¹¹ 21:9 Those who stay in this city will die in battle or of starvation or disease. Those who leave the city and surrender to the Babylonians who are besieging it will live. They will escape with their lives.¹² 21:10 For I, the LORD, say that¹³ I am determined not to deliver this city but to bring disaster on it.¹⁴ It will be handed over to the king of Babylon and he will destroy it with fire.”¹⁵

Warnings to the Royal Court

21:11 The LORD told me to say¹⁶ to the royal court¹⁷ of Judah,

“Listen to what the LORD says,
21:12 O royal family descended from David.¹⁸

¹ tn Heb “Tell Zedekiah, ‘Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel.’” Using the indirect quote eliminates one level of embedded quotation and makes it easier for the reader to follow.

² tn Heb “the weapons which are in your hand.” Weapons stands here by substitution for the soldiers who wield them.

³ sn The Babylonians (Heb “the Chaldeans”). The Chaldeans were a group of people in the country south of Babylon from which Nebuchadnezzar came. The Chaldean dynasty his father established became the name by which the Babylonians are regularly referred to in the book of Jeremiah. Jeremiah’s contemporary Ezekiel uses both terms.

⁴ tn The structure of the Hebrew sentence of this verse is long and complex and has led to a great deal of confusion and misunderstanding. There are two primary points of confusion: 1) the relation of the phrase “outside the walls,” and 2) the antecedent of “them” in the last clause of the verse that reads in Hebrew: “I will gather them back into the midst of the city.” Most take the phrase “outside the walls” with “the Babylonians....” Some take it with “turn back/bring back” to mean “from outside....” However, the preposition “from” is part of the idiom for “outside....” The phrase goes with “fighting” as J. Bright (*Jeremiah* [AB], 215) notes and as NJPS suggests. The antecedent of “them” has sometimes been taken mistakenly to refer to the Babylonians. It refers rather to “the forces at your disposal” which is literally “the weapons which are in your hands.” This latter phrase is a figure involving substitution (called metonymy) as Bright also correctly notes. The whole sentence reads in Hebrew: “I will bring back the weapons of war which are in your hand with which you are fighting Nebuchadnezzar the King of Babylon and the Chaldeans who are besieging you outside your wall and I will gather them into the midst of the city.” The sentence has been restructured to better reflect the proper relationships and to make the sentence conform more to contemporary English style.

⁵ tn Heb “with outstretched hand and with strong arm.” These are, of course, figurative of God’s power and might. He does not literally have hands and arms.

⁶ sn The phrases in this order are unique but a very similar phrase “by strong hand and outstretched arm” are found several times with reference to God’s mighty power unleashed against Egypt at the exodus (cf., Deut 4:34; 5:15; 26:8; Jer 32:21; Ps 136:12). Instead of being directed at Israel’s enemies it will now be directed against her.

⁶ map For location see Map5-B1; Map6-F3; Map7-E2; Map8-F2; Map10-B3; JP1-F4; JP2-F4; JP3-F4; JP4-F4.

⁷ tn Heb “And afterward.”

⁸ tn Heb “oracle of the LORD.”

⁹ tn Heb “And/But unto this people you shall say...” “But” is suggested here by the unusual word order which offsets what they are to say to Zedekiah (v. 3).

¹⁰ tn Heb “these people.”

¹¹ tn Heb “Behold I am setting before you the way of life and the way of death.”

¹² tn Heb “his life will be to him for spoil.”

¹³ sn Spoil was what was carried off by the victor (see, e.g., Judg 5:30). Those who surrendered to the Babylonians would lose their property, their freedom, and their citizenship but would at least escape with their lives. Jeremiah was branded a traitor for this counsel (cf. 38:4) but it was the way of wisdom since the LORD was firmly determined to destroy the city (cf. v. 10).

¹⁴ tn Heb “oracle of the LORD.”

¹⁴ tn Heb “I have set my face against this city for evil [i.e., disaster] and not for good [i.e., well-being].” For the use of the idiom “set one’s face against/toward” see, e.g., usage in 1 Kgs 2:15; 2 Kgs 2:17; Jer 42:15, 17 and note the interesting interplay of usage in Jer 44:11-12.

¹⁵ tn Heb “he will burn it with fire.”

¹⁶ tn The words “The LORD told me to say” are not in the text. They have been supplied in the translation for clarity. This text has been treated in two very different ways depending upon how one views the connection of the words “and to/concerning the household of the King of Judah, ‘Hear the word of the LORD....’” with the preceding and following. Some treat the words that follow as a continuation of Jeremiah’s response to the delegation sent by Zedekiah (cf. vv. 3, 8). Others treat this as introducing a new set of oracles parallel to those in 23:9-40 which are introduced by the heading “to/concerning the prophets.” There are three reasons why this is the more probable connection: (1) the parallelism in expression with 23:9; (2) the other introductions in vv. 3, 8 use the preposition לְ (‘el) instead of בְּ (‘b) used here, and they have the formal introduction “you shall say...”; (3) the warning or challenge here would mitigate the judgment pronounced on the king and the city in vv. 4-7. Verses 8-9 are different. They are not a mitigation but an offer of escape for those who surrender. Hence, these words are a title “Now concerning the royal court.” (The vav [v] that introduces this is disjunctive = “Now.”) However, since the imperative that follows is masculine plural and addressed to the royal house, something needs to be added to introduce it. Hence the translation supplies “The LORD told me to say” to avoid confusion or mistakenly connecting it with the preceding.

¹⁷ tn Heb “house” or “household.” It is clear from 22:1-6 that this involved the King, the royal family, and the court officials.

¹⁸ tn Heb “house of David.” This is essentially equivalent to the royal court in v. 11.

The LORD says:
 ‘See to it that people each day¹ are
 judged fairly.²
 Deliver those who have been robbed
 from those³ who oppress them.
 Otherwise, my wrath will blaze out
 against you.
 It will burn like a fire that cannot be put
 out
 because of the evil that you have done.⁴
21:13 Listen, you⁵ who sit enthroned
 above the valley on a rocky plateau.
 I am opposed to you,⁶ says the LORD.⁷

¹ **tn** Heb “to the morning” = “morning by morning” or “each morning.” See Isa 33:2 and Amos 4:4 for parallel usage.

² **sn** The kings of Israel and Judah were responsible for justice. See Pss 122:5. The king himself was the final court of appeals judging from the incident of David with the wise woman of Tekoa (2 Sam 14), Solomon and the two prostitutes (1 Kgs 3:16-28), and Absalom’s attempts to win the hearts of the people of Israel by interfering with due process (2 Sam 15:2-4). How the system was designed to operate may be seen from 2 Chr 19:4-11.

³ **tn** Heb “from the hand [or power] of.”

⁴ **tn** Heb “Lest my wrath go out like fire and burn with no one to put it out because of the evil of your deeds.”

⁵ **tn** Or “Listen, Jerusalem, you...”; Heb text of v. 21a-b reads, “Behold I am against you [fem. sg.], O inhabitant [fem. sg.] of the valley [and of] the rock of the plain, oracle of the LORD, who are saying [masc. pl.].” Verses 13-14 are generally treated as a separate oracle addressed to Jerusalem. The basis for this is (1) the appropriateness of the description here to the city of Jerusalem; (2) the rather similar reference to Jerusalem smugly living in her buildings made from cedars of Lebanon in 22:23; (3) the use of the second feminine singular pronoun “you” in other places in reference to Jerusalem (cf. clearly in 4:14; 6:8; 13:20; 15:5-6); (4) the use of the feminine singular participle to refer to personified Jerusalem in 10:17 as well as 20:23. However, the description in 21:13 is equally appropriate to the royal household that the LORD has been addressing; the palace stood on the Ophel or fill between the northern and southern hill just south of the temple and overlooked the Kidron valley. Moreover, the word “enthroned” is even more fitting to the royal household than to Jerusalem. The phrase “enthroned above the valley” is literally “inhabitant of the valley.” But since the literal is inappropriate for either Jerusalem or the royal palace, the phrase is regularly interpreted after the parallel phrase referring to the LORD “enthroned above the cherubim.” The royal house was “enthroned” more literally than Jerusalem was. Taking this to refer to the royal court rather than Jerusalem also introduces one less unintroduced entity by the shift in pronoun in vv. 11-14 as well as eliminating the introduction of an otherwise unintroduced oracle. The “you” of “you boast” is actually the masculine plural participle (Heb “who say”) that modifies the feminine singular participle “you who sit enthroned” and goes back to the masculine plural imperatives in v. 12 rather than introducing a new entity, the people of the city. The participle “you who sit enthroned” is to be interpreted as a collective referring to the royal court not a personification of the city of Jerusalem (cf. GKC 394 §122.s and see, e.g., Isa 12:6; Mic 1:11). Moreover, taking the referent to be the royal court makes the reference to the word translated “palace” much more natural. The word is literally “forest” and is often seen to be an allusion to the armory which was called the “Forest of Lebanon” (1 Kgs 7:2; 10:17; 10:21; Isa 22:8 and see also Ezek 17:3 in an allegory (17:2-18) which may have been contemporary with this oracle). Taking the oracle to refer to the royal court also makes this oracle more parallel with the one that follows where destruction of the palace leads also to the destruction of the city.

⁶ **tn** Heb “I am against you.”

⁷ **tn** Heb “oracle of the LORD.”

‘You boast, “No one can swoop down on
 us.
 No one can penetrate into our places of
 refuge.”⁸
21:14 But I will punish you as your deeds
 deserve,⁹
 says the LORD.⁹
 ‘I will set fire to your palace;
 it will burn up everything around it.’¹⁰

22:1 The LORD told me,¹¹ “Go down¹² to the palace of the king of Judah. Give him a message from me there.¹³ **22:2** Say: ‘Listen, O king of Judah who follows in David’s succession.¹⁴ You, your officials, and your subjects who pass through the gates of this palace must listen to what the LORD says.¹⁵ **22:3** The LORD says, “Do what is just and right. Deliver those who have been robbed from those¹⁶ who oppress them. Do not exploit or mistreat foreigners who live in your land, children who have no fathers, or widows.¹⁷ Do not kill innocent people¹⁸ in this land.

⁸ **tn** Heb “Who can swoop...Who can penetrate...?” The questions are rhetorical and expect a negative answer. They are rendered as negative affirmations for clarity.

sn What is being expressed here is the belief in the inviolability of Zion/Jerusalem carried to its extreme. Signal deliverances of Jerusalem such as those experienced under Jehoshaphat (2 Chr 20) and Hezekiah (Isa 37:36-37) in the context of promises to protect it (Isa 31:4-5; 37:33-35; 38:6) led to a belief that Zion was unconquerable. This belief found expression in several of Israel’s psalms (Pss 46, 48, 76) and led to the mistaken assumption that God would protect it regardless of how the people treated God or one another. Micah and Jeremiah both deny that (cf. Mic 3:8-12; Jer 21:13-14).

⁹ **tn** Heb “oracle of the LORD.”

¹⁰ **tn** Heb “I will set fire in its forest and it will devour its surroundings.” The pronouns are actually third feminine singular going back to the participle “you who sit enthroned above the valley.” However, this is another example of those rapid shifts in pronouns typical of the biblical Hebrew style which are uncommon in English. They have regularly been leveled to the same person throughout in the translation to avoid possible confusion for the English reader.

¹¹ **tn** The word “me” is not in the text. It is, however, implicit and is supplied in the translation for clarity.

¹² **sn** The allusion here is to going down from the temple to the palace which was on a lower eminence. See 36:12 in its context.

¹³ **tn** Heb “And speak there this word:” The translation is intended to eliminate an awkward and lengthy sentence.

¹⁴ **tn** Heb “who sits on David’s throne.”

¹⁵ **tn** Heb “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 pass through these gates.”

¹⁶ **tn** Heb “from the hand [or power] of.”

¹⁷ **tn** Heb “aliens, orphans, or widows” treating the terms as generic or collective. However, the term “alien” carries faulty connotations and the term “orphan” is not totally appropriate because the Hebrew term does not necessarily mean that both parents have died.

sn These were classes of people who had no one to look out for their rights. The laws of Israel, however, were careful to see that their rights were guarded (cf. Deut 10:18) and that provision was made for meeting their needs (cf. Deut 24:19-21). The LORD promised to protect them (cf. Ps 146:9) and a curse was called down on any who deprived them of justice (cf. Deut 27:19).

¹⁸ **tn** Heb “Do not shed innocent blood.”

sn Do not kill innocent people. For an example of one of the last kings who did this see Jer 36:20-23. Manasseh was no-

22:4 If you are careful to¹ obey these commands, then the kings who follow in David's succession and ride in chariots or on horses will continue to come through the gates of this palace, as will their officials and their subjects.² 22:5 But, if you do not obey these commands, I solemnly swear³ that this palace will become a pile of rubble. I, the LORD, affirm it!"⁴

22:6 "For the LORD says concerning the palace of the king of Judah, "This place looks like a veritable forest of Gilead to me.

It is like the wooded heights of Lebanon in my eyes.

But I swear that I will make it like a wilderness

whose towns have all been deserted.⁵

22:7 I will send men against it to destroy it⁶

with their axes and hatchets.

They will hack up its fine cedar panels and columns

and throw them into the fire.

22:8 "People from other nations will pass by this city. They will ask one another, "Why has the LORD done such a thing to this great city?"

torious for having done this and the book of 2 Kgs attributes the ultimate destruction of Judah to this crime and his sin of worshipping false gods (2 Kgs 21:16; 24:4).

¹ **tn** The translation here reflects the emphasizing infinitive absolute before the verb.

² **tn** *Heb* "There will come through the gates of this city the kings...riding in chariots and on horses, they and their officials..." The structure of the original text is broken up here because of the long compound subject which would make the English sentence too long. Compare 17:25 for the structure and wording of this sentence.

³ **tn** *Heb* "I swear by myself." Oaths were guaranteed by invoking the name of a god or swearing by "his life." See Jer 12:16; 44:26. Since the LORD is incomparably great, he could swear by no higher (see Heb 6:13-16) than to swear by himself or his own great name.

⁴ **tn** *Heb* "Oracle of the LORD."

⁵ **tn** *Heb* "Gilead you are to me, the height of Lebanon, but I will surely make you a wilderness [with] cities uninhabited." The points of comparison are made explicit in the translation for the sake of clarity. See the study note for further explanation. For the use of the preposition בְּ (*lamed*) = "in my eyes/in my opinion" see BDB 513 s.v. בְּ 5.a(d) and compare Jonah 3:3; Esth 10:3. For the use of the particles לֹא וְ (*'im lo'*) to introduce an emphatic oath see BDB 50 s.v. לֹא 1.b(2).

sn *Lebanon* was well known for its cedars and the palace (and the temple) had used a good deal of such timber in its construction (see 1 Kgs 5:6, 8-10; 7:2-3). In this section several references are made to cedar (see vv. 7, 14, 15, 23) and allusion has also been made to the paneled and colonnade armory of the Forest of Lebanon (2:14). It appears to have been a source of pride and luxury, perhaps at the expense of justice. Gilead was also noted in antiquity for its forests as well as for its fertile pastures.

⁶ **tn** *Heb* "I will sanctify destroyers against it." If this is not an attenuated use of the term "sanctify" the traditions of Israel's holy wars are being turned against her. See also 6:4. In Israel's early wars in the wilderness and in the conquest, the LORD fought for her against the enemies (cf., e.g., Josh 10:11, 14, 42; 24:7; Judg 5:20; 1 Sam 7:10). Now he is going to fight against them (21:5, 13) and use the enemy as his instruments of destruction. For a similar picture of destruction in the temple see the lament in Ps 74:3-7.

22:9 The answer will come back, "It is because they broke their covenant with the LORD their God and worshiped and served other gods."

Judgment on Jehoahaz

22:10 "Do not weep for the king who was killed.

Do not grieve for him.

But weep mournfully for the king who has gone into exile.

For he will never return to see his native land again.⁷

22:11 "For the LORD has spoken about Shallum son of Josiah, who succeeded his father as king of Judah but was carried off into exile. He has said, "He will never return to this land."⁸ 22:12 For he will die in the country where they took him as a captive. He will never see this land again."⁹

Judgment on Jehoiakim

22:13 "Sure to be judged¹⁰ is the king who builds his palace using injustice and treats people unfairly while adding its upper rooms.¹¹

He makes his countrymen work for him for nothing.

⁷ **tn** The word "king" is not in the original text of either the first or the third line. It is implicit in the connection and is supplied in the translation for clarity.

sn As the next verse makes clear, the king who will never return to see his native land is Shallum, also known as Jehoahaz (cf. 1 Chr 3:15; 2 Kgs 23:30, 33-34). He was made king by popular acclaim after the death of his father, Josiah, who was killed at Megiddo trying to stop Pharaoh Necho from going to the aid of the Assyrians. According to 2 Kgs 23:32 he was a wicked king. He was deposed by Necho and carried into exile where he died. The dead king alluded to is his father, Josiah, who was a godly king and was accordingly spared from seeing the destruction of his land (2 Kgs 22:20).

⁸ **tn** *Heb* "For thus said the LORD concerning Shallum son of Josiah, king of Judah, who reigned instead of his father who went away from this place: He will not return there again."

⁹ **tn** This prophecy was fulfilled according to 2 Kgs 23:34.

¹⁰ **sn** *Heb* "Woe." This particle is used in laments for the dead (cf., e.g., 1 Kgs 13:30; Jer 34:5) and as an introductory particle in indictments against a person on whom judgment is pronounced (cf., e.g., Isa 5:8, 11; Jer 23:1). The indictment is found here in vv. 13-17 and the announcement of judgment in vv. 18-19.

¹¹ **tn** *Heb* "Woe to the one who builds his house by unrighteousness and its upper rooms with injustice using his neighbor [= countryman] as a slave for nothing and not giving to him his wages."

sn This was a clear violation of covenant law (cf. Deut 24:14-15) and a violation of the requirements set forth in Jer 22:3. The allusion is to Jehoiakim who is not mentioned until v. 18. He was placed on the throne by Pharaoh Necho and ruled from 609-598 B.C. He became a vassal of Nebuchadnezzar but rebelled against him, bringing about the siege of 597 B.C. in which his son and many of the Judean leaders were carried off to Babylon (2 Kgs 23:34-24:16). He was a wicked king according to the author of the book of Kings (2 Kgs 23:37). He had Uriah the prophet killed (Jer 26:23) and showed no regard for Jeremiah's prophecies, destroying the scroll containing them (Jer 36:23) and ordering Jeremiah's arrest (Jer 36:23).

He does not pay them for their labor.
22:14 He says, "I will build myself a large palace with spacious upper rooms." He cuts windows in its walls, panels it⁴ with cedar, and paints its rooms red.²
22:15 Does it make you any more of a king that you outstrip everyone else in³ building with cedar?
 Just think about your father. He was content that he had food and drink.⁴
 He did what was just and right.⁵ So things went well with him.
22:16 He upheld the cause of the poor and needy. So things went well for Judah.⁶
 The LORD says, "That is a good example of what it means to know me."⁷
22:17 But you are always thinking and looking

for ways to increase your wealth by dishonest means.
 Your eyes and your heart are set on killing some innocent person and committing fraud and oppression.⁸
22:18 So⁹ the LORD has this to say about Josiah's son, King Jehoiakim of Judah: People will not mourn for him, saying, "This makes me sad, my brother! This makes me sad, my sister!" They will not mourn for him, saying, "Poor, poor lord! Poor, poor majesty!"¹⁰
22:19 He will be left unburied just like a dead donkey. His body will be dragged off and thrown outside the gates of Jerusalem."¹¹

Warning to Jerusalem

22:20 People of Jerusalem,¹² go up to Lebanon and cry out in mourning. Go to the land of Bashan and cry out loudly. Cry out in mourning from the mountains of Moab.¹³ For your allies¹⁴ have all been defeated.

¹ **tc** The MT should be emended to read הָלִינוּ וְסָפֹן (*khal-lonayv v^esafon*) instead of הָלִינוּ וְסָפֹן (*khal-lonay v^esafon*), i.e., the plural noun with third singular suffix rather than the first singular suffix and the infinitive absolute rather than the passive participle. The latter form then parallels the form for "paints" and functions in the same way (cf. GKC 345 §113.z for the infinitive with *vav* [י] continuing a perfect). The errors in the MT involve reading the ו (u) instead of twice (haplography) and reading the ו (u) for the ו (o).

² **tn** The word translated "red" only occurs here and in Ezek 23:14 where it refers to the pictures of the Babylonians on the wall of the temple. Evidently this was a favorite color for decoration. It is usually identified as vermilion, a mineral product from red ochre (cf. C. L. Wickwire, "Vermilion," *IDB* 4:748).

³ **tn** For the use of this verb see Jer 12:5 where it is used of Jeremiah "competing" with horses. The form is a rare Tiphel (see GKC 153 §55.h).

⁴ **tn** *Heb* "Your father, did he not eat and drink and do justice and right." The copulative *vav* in front of the verbs here (all Hebrew perfects) shows that these actions are all coordinate not sequential. The contrast drawn here between the actions of Jehoiakim and Josiah show that the phrase eating and drinking should be read in the light of the same contrasts in Eccl 2 which ends with the note of contentment in Eccl 2:24 (see also Eccl 3:13; 5:18 [5:17 HT]; 8:15). The question is, of course, rhetorical setting forth the positive role model against which Jehoiakim's actions are to be condemned. The key terms here are "then things went well with him" which is repeated in the next verse after the reiteration of Josiah's practice of justice.

⁵ **sn** The *father* referred to here is the godly king Josiah. He fulfilled the requirements for kings set forth in 22:3 in contrast to his son who did not (22:13).

⁶ **tn** The words "for Judah" are not in the text, but the absence of the preposition plus object as in the preceding verse suggests that this is a more general statement, i.e., "things went well for everyone."

⁷ **tn** *Heb* "Is that not what it means to know me." The question is rhetorical and expects a positive answer. It is translated in the light of the context.

sn Comparison of the usage of the words "know me" in their context in Jer 2:8; 9:3, 6, 24 and here will show that more than mere intellectual knowledge is involved. It involves also personal commitment to God and obedience to the demands of the agreements with him. The word "know" is used in ancient Near Eastern treaty contexts of submission to the will of the overlord. See further the notes on 9:3.

⁸ **tn** *Heb* "Your eyes and your heart do not exist except for dishonest gain and for innocent blood to shed [it] and for fraud and for oppression to do [them]." The sentence has been broken up to conform more to English style and the significance of "eyes" and "heart" explained before they are introduced into the translation.

⁹ **sn** This is the regular way of introducing the announcement of judgment after an indictment of crimes. See, e.g., Isa 5:13, 14; Jer 23:2.

¹⁰ **tn** The translation follows the majority of scholars who think that the address of brother and sister are the address of the mourners to one another, lamenting their loss. Some scholars feel that all four terms are parallel and represent the relation that the king had metaphorically to his subjects; i.e., he was not only Lord and Majesty to them but like a sister or a brother. In that case something like: "How sad it is for the one who was like a brother to us! How sad it is for the one who was like a sister to us." This makes for poor poetry and is not very likely. The lover can call his bride sister in Song of Solomon (Song 4:9, 10) but there are no documented examples of a subject ever speaking of a king in this way in Israel or the ancient Near East.

¹¹ **sn** A similar judgment against this ungodly king is pronounced by Jeremiah in 36:30. According to 2 Chr 36:6 he was bound over to be taken captive to Babylon but apparently died before he got there. According to the Jewish historian Josephus, Nebuchadnezzar ordered his body thrown outside the wall in fulfillment of this judgment. The Bible itself, however, does not tell us that.

map For location see Map5-B1; Map6-F3; Map7-E2; Map8-F2; Map10-B3; JP1-F4; JP2-F4; JP3-F4; JP4-F4.

¹² **tn** The words "people of Jerusalem" are not in the text. They are supplied in the translation to clarify the referent of the imperative. The imperative is feminine singular and it is generally agreed that personified Zion/Jerusalem is in view. The second feminine singular has commonly been applied to Jerusalem or the people of Judah throughout the book. The reference to allies (v. 20, 22) and to leaders (v. 22) make it very probable that this is the case here too.

map For location see Map5-B1; Map6-F3; Map7-E2; Map8-F2; Map10-B3; JP1-F4; JP2-F4; JP3-F4; JP4-F4.

¹³ **tn** *Heb* "from Abarim." This was the mountain range in Moab from which Moses viewed the promised land (cf. Deut 32:49).

¹⁴ **tn** *Heb* "your lovers." For the usage of this term to refer to allies see 30:14 and a semantically similar term in 4:30.

22:21 While you were feeling secure I gave you warning.¹ But you said, “I refuse to listen to you.” That is the way you have acted from your earliest history onward.² Indeed, you have never paid attention to me.
22:22 My judgment will carry off all your leaders like a storm wind!³ Your allies will go into captivity. Then you will certainly⁴ be disgraced and put to shame because of all the wickedness you have done.
22:23 You may feel as secure as a bird nesting in the cedars of Lebanon. But oh how you⁵ will groan⁶ when the pains of judgment come on you.

They will be like those of a woman giving birth to a baby.⁷

Jeconiah Will Be Permanently Exiled

22:24 The LORD says,⁸

“As surely as I am the living God, you, Jeconiah,⁹ king of Judah, son of Jehoiakim, will not be the earthly representative of my authority. Indeed, I will take that right away from you.¹⁰
22:25 I will hand you over to those who want to take your life and of whom you are afraid. I will hand you over to King Nebuchadnezzar of

sn If the passages in this section are chronologically ordered, this refers to the help that Jehoiakim relied on when he rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar.

1 tn *Heb* “I spoke to you in your security.” The reference is to the sending of the prophets. Compare this context with the context of 7:25. For the nuance “security” for this noun (שְׁלוּחָה, *shalvah*) rather than “prosperity” as many translate see Pss 122:7; 30:6 and the related adjective (שָׁלוֹחַ, *shalev*) in Jer 49:31; Job 16:2; 21:23.

2 tn *Heb* “from your youth.” Compare the usage in 2:2; 3:24 and compare a similar idea in 7:25.

3 tn *Heb* “A wind will shepherd away all your shepherds.” The figures have all been interpreted in the translation for the sake of clarity. For the use of the word “wind” as a metaphor or simile for God’s judgment (using the enemy forces) see 4:11-12; 13:24; 18:17. For the use of the word “shepherd” to refer to rulers/leaders 2:8; 10:21; and 23:1-4. For the use of the word “shepherd away” in the sense of carry off/drive away see BDB 945 s.v. שָׁדַד 2.d and compare Job 20:26. There is an obvious wordplay involved in two different senses of the word “shepherd,” one referring to their leaders and one referring to the loss of those leaders by the wind driving them off. There may even be a further play involving the word “wickedness” which comes from a word having the same consonants. If the oracles in this section are chronologically ordered this threat was fulfilled in 597 b.c. when many of the royal officials and nobles were carried away captive with Jehoiachin (see 2 Kgs 24:15) who is the subject of the next oracle.

4 tn The use of the Hebrew particle כִּי (*ki*) is intensive here and probably also at the beginning of the last line of v. 21. (See BDB 472 s.v. כִּי 1.e.)

5 tn *Heb* “You who dwell in Lebanon, you who are nested in its cedars, how you....” The metaphor has been interpreted for the sake of clarity. The figure here has often been interpreted of the people of Jerusalem living in paneled houses or living in a city dominated by the temple and palace which were built from the cedars of Lebanon. Some even interpret this as a reference to the king who has been characterized as living in a cedar palace, in a veritable Lebanon (cf. vv. 6-7, 14 and see also the alternate interpretation of 21:13-14). However, the reference to “nesting in the cedars” and the earlier reference to “feeling secure” suggests that the figure is rather like that of Ezek 31:6 and Dan 4:12. See also Hab 2:9 where a related figure is used. The forms for “you who dwell” and “you who are nested” in the literal translation are feminine singular participles referring again to personified Jerusalem. (The written forms of these participles are to be explained as participles with a *hireq campaginis* according to GKC 253 §90.m. The use of the participle before the preposition is to be explained according to GKC 421 §130.a.)

6 tn The verb here should be identified as a Niphal perfect of the verb אָנַח (*anakh*) with the *n* (*aleph*) left out (so BDB 336 s.v. אָנַח Niph and GKC 80 §23.f, n. 1). The form is already translated that way by the Greek, Latin, and Syriac versions.

7 sn This simile has already been used in Jer 4:31; 6:24 in conjunction with Zion/Jerusalem’s judgment.

8 tn *Heb* “Oracle of the Lord.”

9 tn *Heb* “Coniah.” This is the spelling of this king’s name here and in v. 28 and 37:1. Elsewhere in Jeremiah he is called Jeconiah (24:1; 27:20; 28:4; 29:2 [see also 1 Chr 3:16, 17; Esth 2:6]) and Jehoiachin (52:31, 33 [see also 2 Kgs 24:6, 8, 12, 15; 25:27, 29; 2 Chr 36:8, 9; Ezek 1:2]). For the sake of consistency the present translation uses the name Jeconiah throughout.

sn According to 2 Kgs 24:8-9 Jeconiah (= Jehoiachin) succeeded his father Jehoiakim and evidently followed in his anti-Babylon, anti-God stance. He surrendered to Nebuchadnezzar shortly after he became king and along with his mother, his family, his officials, and some of the leading men of Jerusalem and Judah was carried into exile in 597 b.c. According to Jer 28:4, 10, there were popular hopes that he would be restored from exile and returned to the throne. This oracle flatly denies that hope. Allusion has already been made to the loss of regal authority by this king and his mother in 13:18-19.

10 tn *Heb* “As surely as I live, Jeconiah, King of Judah, son of Jehoiakim will not be a signet ring on my right hand. Indeed I will tear you off from it [i.e., pull you off of my finger as a signet ring].” The signet ring was the king’s seal by which he verified all his legal and political transactions. To have the signet ring was to exercise authority in the king’s name. For examples of this see Gen 41:42, 43; 1 Kgs 21:8; Esth 3:10; 8:2. The figure has been interpreted in the translation for the sake of clarity. The particles אֲנִי חַי (*ki ‘im*) that stand after the oath formula “As I live” introduce a negative statement according to the usage of Hebrew grammar (cf. BDB 474 s.v. אֲנִי חַי 1.a and BDB 50 s.v. אֲנִי 1.b[2] and compare 2 Sam 3:35). The particle כִּי that stands in front of “I will tear you off” introduces a positive affirmation according to the same rules of Hebrew grammar (cf. BDB 472 s.v. כִּי 1.c and compare 1 Sam 14:39, 44). The LORD is swearing emphatically that Jeconiah will not be the earthly representative of his rule; i.e., not carry the authority of the signet ring bearer. As in several other places in Jeremiah there is a sudden shift from the third person to the second person which runs throughout vv. 24-27. The pronouns are leveled in the translation to the second person to avoid confusion. The figures are interpreted in the translation to convey the proper significance. See the study note for explanation.

sn According to the Davidic covenant the Davidic king sat on God’s throne over God’s kingdom, Israel (cf. 2 Chr 29:30; 28:5). As God’s representative he ruled in God’s stead and could even be addressed figuratively as God (cf. Ps 45:6 [45:7 HT] and compare the same phenomenon for the earthly judges, Exod 22:7-8; Ps 82:1, 6). Jeconiah is being denied the right to function any longer as the Davidic king and any hopes of ever regaining that right in his lifetime or through the succession of his sons is also denied. This oracle is reversed by the later oracle of the prophet Haggai to his grandson Zerubbabel in Hag 2:20-23 and both Jeconiah and Zerubbabel are found in the genealogy of Christ in Matt 1:12-13.

Babylon and his Babylonian¹ soldiers. **22:26** I will force you and your mother who gave you birth into exile. You will be exiled to² a country where neither of you were born, and you will both die there. **22:27** You will never come back to this land to which you will long to return!³

22:28 This man, Jeconiah, will be like a broken pot someone threw away. He will be like a clay vessel⁴ that no one wants.⁵

Why will he and his children be forced into exile?

Why will they be thrown out into a country they know nothing about?⁶

22:29 O land of Judah, land of Judah, land of Judah!⁷

Listen to what the LORD has to say!

22:30 The LORD says,

“Enroll this man in the register as though he were childless.⁸

¹ **tn** *Heb* “the Chaldeans.” See the study note on 21:4.

² **tn** *Heb* “I will hurl you and your mother...into another land where...” The verb used here is very forceful. It is the verb used for Saul throwing a spear at David (1 Sam 18:11) and for the LORD unleashing a violent storm on the sea (Jonah 1:4). It is used both here and in v. 28 for the forceful exile of Jeconiah and his mother.

³ **tn** *Heb* “And unto the land to which they lift up their souls to return there, there they will not return.” Once again there is a sudden shift in person from the second plural to the third plural. As before the translation levels the pronouns to avoid confusion. For the idiom “to lift up the soul to” = “to long/yearn to/for” see BDB 670 s.v. *נָפַח*; 1.b(9).

⁴ **tn** The word translated “clay vessel” occurs only here. Its meaning, however, is assured on the basis of the parallelism and on the basis of the verb root which is used for shaping or fashioning in Job 10:8. The KJV renders it as “idol,” but that word, while having the same consonants, never appears in the singular. The word is missing in the Greek version but is translated “vessel” in the Latin version. The word “clay” is supplied in the translation to clarify what sort of vessel is meant; its inclusion is justified based on the context and the use of the same verb root in Job 10:8 to refer to shaping or fashioning, which would imply clay pots or vessels.

⁵ **tn** *Heb* “Is this man, Coniah, a despised, broken vessel or a vessel that no one wants?” The question is rhetorical expecting a positive answer in agreement with the preceding oracle.

sn For the image of the rejected, broken vessel see Jer 19:1-13 (where, however, the vessel is rejected first and then broken) and compare also the image of the linen shorts which are good for nothing in Jer 13 (see especially vv. 10-11).

⁶ **sn** The question “Why?” is a common rhetorical feature in the book of Jeremiah. See Jer 2:14, 31; 8:5, 19, 22; 12:1; 13:22; 14:19. In several cases like this one no answer is given, leaving a sense of exasperation and hopelessness with the sinfulness of the nation that calls forth such punishment from God.

⁷ **tn** There is no certain explanation for the triple repetition of the word “land” here. F. B. Huey (*Jeremiah, Lamentations* [NAC], 209) suggests the idea of exasperation, but exasperation at what? Their continued apostasy which made these exiles necessary? Or exasperation at their pitiful hopes of seeing Jeconiah restored? Perhaps “pitiful, pitiful, pitiful land of Judah” would convey some of the force of the repetition without being any more suggestive of why the land is so addressed.

⁸ **tn** *Heb* “Write this man childless.” For the explanation see the study note. The word translated “childless” has spawned some debate because Jeconiah was in fact not childless. There is record from both the Bible and ancient Near Eastern

Enroll him as a man who will not enjoy success during his lifetime.

For none of his sons will succeed in occupying the throne of David or ever succeed in ruling over Judah.”

New Leaders over a Regathered Remnant

23:1 The LORD says,⁹ “The leaders of my people are sure to be judged.¹⁰ They were supposed to watch over my people like shepherds watch over their sheep. But they are causing my people to be destroyed and scattered.¹¹ **23:2** So the LORD God of Israel has this to say about the leaders who are ruling over his people: “You have caused my people¹² to be dispersed and driven into exile. You have not taken care of them. So I will pun-

texts that he had children (see, e.g., 1 Chr 3:17). G. R. Driver, “Linguistic and Textual Problems: Jeremiah,” *JQR* 28 (1937-38): 115, has suggested that the word both here and in Lev 20:20-21 should be translated “stripped of honor.” While that would relieve some of the difficulties here, the word definitely means “childless” in Gen 15:2 and also in Sir 16:3 where it is contrasted with having godless children. The issue is not one of childlessness but of having “one of his sons” succeed to the Davidic throne. The term for “one of his sons” is literally “from his seed a man” and the word “seed” is the same one that is used to refer to his “children” who were forced into exile with him (v. 28).

sn The figure here is of registering a person on an official roll of citizens, etc. (cf. Num 11:26; 1 Chr 4:41; Ps 87:6). Here it probably refers to the “king list” of dynastic succession. While Jeconiah did have children (2 Chr 3:17) none of them ever returned to Judah or ruled over it. What is being denied here is his own succession and that of his immediate sons contrary to the popular hopes expressed in Jer 28:4. His grandson Zerubbabel did return to Judah, became governor (Hag 1:1; 2:2), and along with the high priest Joshua was responsible for rebuilding the second temple (e.g., Ezra 5:2).

⁹ **tn** *Heb* “Oracle of the LORD.”

¹⁰ **sn** *Heb* This particle once again introduces a judgment speech. The indictment is found in v. 1 and the announcement of judgment in v. 2. This leads into an oracle of deliverance in vv. 3-4. See also the note on the word “judged” in 22:13.

¹¹ **tn** *Heb* “Woe to the shepherds who are killing and scattering the sheep of my pasture.” See the study note on 22:13 for the significance of “Sure to be judged” (*Heb* “Woe”) See the study note for the significance of the metaphor introduced here.

sn Verses 1-4 of ch. 23 are an extended metaphor in which the rulers are compared to shepherds and the people are compared to sheep. This metaphor has already been met with in 10:21 and is found elsewhere in the context of the LORD’s covenant with David (cf. 2 Sam 7:7-8; Ps 78:70-72). The sheep are God’s people and he is the ultimate shepherd who is personally concerned about their care (cf. Pss 23:1; 80:2). He has set rulers over them as his under-shepherds and they are responsible to him for the care of his sheep (see 22:3-4). They have been lax shepherds, allowing the sheep to be scattered and destroyed. So he will punish them. As the true shepherd of Israel he will regather his scattered flock and place new shepherds (rulers) over them. These verses lead to a promise of an ideal ruler set over an Israel which has experienced a new and better Exodus (vv. 6-8). For a more complete development of this metaphor with similar messianic and eschatological implications see Ezek 34. The metaphor has been interpreted in the translation but some of the flavor left in the simile.

¹² **tn** *Heb* “about the shepherds who are shepherding my people. ‘You have caused my sheep...’” For the metaphor see the study note on the previous verse.

ish you for the evil that you have done.¹ I, the LORD, affirm it!² **23:3** Then I myself will regather those of my people³ who are still alive from all the countries where I have driven them. I will bring them back to their homeland.⁴ They will greatly increase in number. **23:4** I will install rulers⁵ over them who will care for them. Then they will no longer need to fear or be terrified. None of them will turn up missing.⁶ I, the LORD, promise it!⁷

23:5 “I, the LORD, promise⁸ that a new time will certainly come⁹ when I will raise up for them a righteous branch,¹⁰ a descendant of David. He will rule over them with wisdom and understanding¹¹ and will do what is just and right in the land.¹²”

1 *tn* Heb “Therefore, thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, concerning the shepherds who should be shepherding my people: You have scattered my sheep and driven them away and you have not taken care of them. Behold I will visit upon you the evil of your deeds.” “Therefore” announces the judgment which does not come until “Behold.” It is interrupted by the messenger formula and a further indictment. The original has been broken up to conform more to contemporary English style, the metaphors have been interpreted for clarity and the connections between the indictments and the judgments have been carried by “So.”

2 *tn* Heb “Oracle of the LORD.”

3 *tn* Heb “my sheep.”

4 *tn* Heb “their fold.”

5 *tn* Heb “shepherds.”

6 *tn* There are various nuances of the word פָּקַד (*paqad*) represented in vv. 2, 4. See Ps 8:4 (8:5 HT) and Zech 10:3 for “care for/take care of” (cf. BDB 823 s.v. פָּקַד Qal.A.1.a). See Exod 20:5; Amos 3:2; Jer 9:24; 11:22 for “punish” (cf. BDB 823 s.v. פָּקַד Qal.A.3). See 1 Kgs 20:39 and 2 Kgs 10:19 for “be missing” (cf. BDB 823 s.v. פָּקַד Niph.1.).

sn There is an extended play on the Hebrew word פָּקַד which is a word with rather broad English equivalents. Here the word refers to the fault of the shepherds/rulers who have not “taken care” of the sheep/people (v. 2), the “punishment” for the evil they have done in not taking care of them (v. 2), and the fact that after the LORD assigns new shepherds/rulers over them they will be cared for in such a way that none of them “will turn up missing” (v. 4).

7 *tn* Heb “Oracle of the LORD.”

8 *tn* Heb “Oracle of the LORD.”

9 *tn* Heb “Behold the days are coming.”

10 *tn* Heb “a righteous sprig to David” or “a righteous shoot” (NAB).

sn This passage and the parallel in Jer 33:15 are part of a growing number of prayers and prophecies regarding an ideal ruler to come forth from the Davidic line who will bring the justice, security, and well-being that the continuing line of Davidic rulers did not. Though there were periodic kings like Josiah who did fulfill the ideals set forth in Jer 22:3 (see Jer 22:15), by and large they were more like Jehoiakim who did not (see Jer 22:13). Hence the LORD brought to an end the Davidic rule. The potential for the ideal, however, remained because of God’s promise to David (2 Sam 7:16). The Davidic line became like a tree which was cut down, leaving only a stump. But from that stump God would bring forth a “shoot,” a “sprig” which would fulfill the ideals of kingship. See Isa 11:1-6 and Zech 3:8, 6:12 for this metaphor and compare Dan 4:14-15, 23, 26 for a different but related use of the metaphor.

11 *tn* Heb “he will reign as king and act wisely.” This is another example of the use of two verbs joined by “and” where one becomes the adverbial modifier of the other (hendiadys). For the nuance of the verb “act wisely” rather than “prosper” see Amos 5:13; Ps 2:10 (cf. BDB 968 s.v. נָבִיא Hiph.5).

12 *sn* This has been the constant emphasis in this section.

23:6 Under his rule¹³ Judah will enjoy safety¹⁴

and Israel will live in security.¹⁵

This is the name he will go by:

‘The LORD has provided us with justice.’¹⁶

23:7 “So I, the LORD, say:¹⁷ ‘A new time will certainly come.¹⁸ People now affirm their oaths with “I swear as surely as the LORD lives who delivered the people of Israel out of Egypt.” **23:8** But at that time they will affirm them with “I swear as surely as the LORD lives who delivered the descendants of the former nation of Israel¹⁹ from the land of the north and from all the other lands where he had banished²⁰ them.”²¹ At that time they will live in their own land.””

See 22:3 for the demand, 22:15 for its fulfillment, and 22:13 for its abuse. The ideal king would follow in the footsteps of his illustrious ancestor David (2 Sam 8:15) who set this forth as an ideal for his dynasty (2 Sam 23:3) and prayed for it to be true of his son Solomon (Ps 72:1-2).

13 *tn* Heb “In his days [= during the time he rules].”

14 *tn* Parallelism and context (cf. v. 4) suggest this nuance for the word often translated “be saved.” For this nuance elsewhere see Ps 119:117; Prov 28:18 for the verb (יָשַׁע [yasha] in the Niphal); and Ps 12:6; Job 5:4, 11 for the related noun (יָשַׁע, yasha).

15 *sn* It should be noted that this brief oracle of deliverance implies the reunification of Israel and Judah under the future Davidic ruler. Jeremiah has already spoken about this reunification earlier in 3:18 and will have more to say about it in 30:3; 31:27, 31. This same ideal was espoused in the prophecies of Hosea (1:10-11 [2:1-2 HT]), Isaiah (11:1-4, 10-12), and Ezekiel (37:15-28) all of which have messianic and eschatological significance.

16 *tn* Heb “his name will be called ‘The LORD our righteousness.’”

sn The Hebrew word translated “justice” here is very broad in its usage, and it is hard to catch all the relevant nuances for this word in this context. It is used for “vindication” in legal contexts (see, e.g., Job 6:29), for “deliverance” or “salvation” in exilic contexts (see, e.g., Isa 58:8), and in the sense of ruling, judging with “justice” (see, e.g., Lev 19:15; Isa 32:1). Here it probably sums up the justice that the LORD provides through raising up this ruler as well as the safety, security, and well-being that result (see vv. 5-6a). In the NT this takes on soteriological connotations (see 1 Cor 1:31 in its context).

17 *tn* Heb “Oracle of the LORD.”

18 *tn* Heb “Behold the days are coming.”

19 *tn* Heb “descendants of the house of Israel.”

20 *tc* It is probably preferable to read the third masculine singular plus suffix (הִדְדִּיקְהֶם, *hiddikham*) here with the Greek version and the parallel passage in 16:15 rather than the first singular plus suffix in the MT (הִדְדִּיקְתִּים, *hiddakhtim*). If this is not a case of mere graphic confusion, the MT could have arisen under the influence of the first person in v. 3. Though sudden shifts in person have been common in the book of Jeremiah, that is unlikely in a context reporting an oath.

21 *tn* This passage is the same as 16:14-15 with a few minor variations in Hebrew wording. The notes on that passage should be consulted for the rendering here. This passage has the Niphal of the verb “to say” rather than the impersonal use of the Qal. It adds the idea of “bringing out” to the idea of “bringing up out” and (Heb “who brought up and who brought out,” probably a case of hendiadys) before “the people [here “seed” rather than “children”] of Israel [here “house of Israel”] from the land of the north.” These are minor variations and do not affect the sense in any way. So the passage is rendered in much the same way.

sn This passage looks forward to a new and greater Exodus, one that so outstrips the earlier one that the earlier will not serve as the model of deliverance any longer. This same ideal was the subject of Isaiah’s earlier prophecies in Isa 11:11-12, 15-16; 43:16-21; 49:8-13; 51: 1-11.

*Oracles Against the False Prophets*¹

23:9 Here is what the LORD says concerning the false prophets:²
My heart and my mind are deeply disturbed.

I tremble all over.³
I am like a drunk person,
like a person who has had too much wine,⁴

because of the way the LORD
and his holy word are being mistreated.⁵

23:10 For the land is full of people unfaithful to him.⁶

They live wicked lives and they misuse their power.⁷

So the land is dried up⁸ because it is under his curse.⁹

The pastures in the wilderness are withered.

23:11 Moreover,¹⁰ the LORD says,¹¹
“Both the prophets and priests are godless.

I have even found them doing evil in my temple!

23:12 So the paths they follow will be dark and slippery.

They will stumble and fall headlong.
For I will bring disaster on them.

A day of reckoning is coming for them.”¹²
The LORD affirms it!¹³

23:13 The LORD says,¹⁴ “I saw the prophets of Samaria¹⁵

doing something that was disgusting.¹⁶
They prophesied in the name of the god Baal

and led my people Israel astray.¹⁷

23:14 But I see the prophets of Jerusalem¹⁸
doing something just as shocking.

They are unfaithful to me
and continually prophesy lies.¹⁹

So they give encouragement to people
who are doing evil,

with the result that they do not stop their evildoing.²⁰

¹ **sn** Jeremiah has already had a good deal to say about the false prophets and their fate. See 2:8, 26; 5:13, 31; 14:13-15. Here he parallels the condemnation of the wicked prophets and their fate (23:9-40) with that of the wicked kings (21:11-22:30).

² **tn** The word “false” is not in the text, but it is clear from the context that these are whom the sayings are directed against. The words “Here is what the LORD says” are also not in the text. But comparison with 46:2; 48:1; 49:1, 7, 23, 28; and 21:11 will show that this is a heading. The words are supplied in the translation for clarity.

³ **tn** *Heb* “My heart is crushed within me. My bones tremble.” It has already been noted several times that the “heart” in ancient Hebrew psychology was the intellectual and volitional center of the person, the kidneys were the emotional center, and the bones the locus of strength and also the subject of joy, distress, and sorrow. Here Jeremiah is speaking of his distress of heart and mind in modern psychology, a distress that leads him to trembling of body which he compares to that of a drunken person staggering around under the influence of wine.

⁴ **tn** *Heb* “wine has passed over him.”

⁵ **tn** *Heb* “wine because of the LORD and because of his holy word.” The words that are supplied in the translation are implicit from the context and are added for clarity.

sn The way the LORD and his word are being treated is clarified in the verses that follow.

⁶ **tn** *Heb* “adulterers.” But spiritual adultery is clearly meant as also in 3:8-9; 9:2, and probably also 5:7.

⁷ **tn** For the word translated “They live...lives” see usage in Jer 8:6. For the idea of “misusing” their power (*Heb* “their power is not right” i.e., used in the wrong way) see 2 Kgs 7:9; 17:9. In the original text this line (really two lines in the Hebrew poetry) are at the end of the verse. However, this places the antecedent too far away and could lead to confusion. The lines have been rearranged to avoid such confusion.

⁸ **tn** For the use of this verb see 12:4 and the note there.

⁹ **tc** The translation follows the majority of Hebrew MSS (*me'alah*) rather than the Greek and Syriac version and a few Hebrew MSS which read “because of these” (*me'alleh*), referring to the people unfaithful to him).

sn The curse is, of course, the covenant curse. See Deut 29:20-21 (29:19-20 HT) and for the specific curse see Deut 28:23-24. The curse is appropriate since their “adultery” lay in attributing their fertility to the god Baal (see Hos 2:9-13 (2:11-15 HT) and violating the covenant (see Hos 4:1-3).

¹⁰ **tn** The particle *ki* (*כִּי*) which begins this verse is parallel to the one at the beginning of the preceding verse. However, the connection is too distant to render it “for.” “Moreover” is intended to draw the parallel. The words “the LORD says” (*Heb* “Oracle of the LORD”) have been drawn up to the front to introduce the shift in speaker from Jeremiah, who describes his agitated state, to God, who describes the sins of the prophets and priests and his consequent judgment on them.

¹¹ **tn** *Heb* “Oracle of the LORD.”

¹² **tn** For the last two lines see 11:23 and the notes there.

¹³ **tn** *Heb* “Oracle of the LORD.”

¹⁴ **tn** The words “The LORD says” are not in the text, but it is clear from the content that he is the speaker. These words are supplied in the translation for clarity.

¹⁵ **map** For location see Map2-B1; Map4-D3; Map5-E2; Map6-A4; Map7-C1.

¹⁶ **tn** According to BDB 1074 s.v. *הַבְּרִיָּה* this word means “unseemly, unsavory.” The related adjective is used in Job 6:6 of the tastelessness of something that is unseasoned.

¹⁷ **tn** *Heb* “by Baal.”

sn Prophesying in the name of the god Baal was a clear violation of Mosaic law and punishable by death (see Deut 13:1-5). For an example of the apostasy encouraged by prophets of Baal in the northern kingdom of Israel see 1 Kgs 18:16-40.

¹⁸ **map** For location see Map5-B1; Map6-F3; Map7-E2; Map8-F2; Map10-B3; JP1-F4; JP2-F4; JP3-F4; JP4-F4.

¹⁹ **tn** Or “they commit adultery and deal falsely.” The word “shocking” only occurs here and in 5:30 where it is found in the context of prophesying lies. This almost assures that the reference to “walking in lies” (*Heb* “in the lie”) is referring to false prophesy. Moreover the references to the prophets in 5:13 and in 14:13-15 are all in the context of false prophesy as are the following references in this chapter in 23:24, 26, 32 and in 28:15. This appears to be the theme of this section. This also makes it likely that the reference to adultery is not literal adultery, though two of the false prophets in Babylon were guilty of this (29:23). The reference to “encouraging those who do evil” that follows also makes more sense if they were preaching messages of comfort rather than messages of doom. The verbs here are infinitive absolutes in place of the finite verb, probably used to place greater emphasis on the action (cf. Hos 4:2 in a comparable judgment speech.)

²⁰ **tn** *Heb* “So they strengthen the hands of those doing evil so that they do not turn back from their evil.” For the use of the figure “strengthen the hands” meaning “encourage” see

I consider all of them as bad as the people of Sodom, and the citizens of Jerusalem as bad as the people of Gomorrah.¹

23:15 So then I, the LORD who rules over all,²

have something to say concerning the prophets of Jerusalem.³

‘I will make these prophets eat the bitter food of suffering

and drink the poison water of judgment.⁴

For the prophets of Jerusalem are the reason⁵

that ungodliness⁶ has spread throughout the land.’”

23:16 The LORD who rules over all⁷ says to the people of Jerusalem:⁸

“Do not listen to what those prophets are saying to you. They are filling you with false hopes.

They are reporting visions of their own imaginations,

not something the LORD has given them to say.⁹

23:17 They continually say¹⁰ to those who reject what the LORD has said,¹¹

‘Things will go well for you!’¹²

They say to all those who follow the stubborn inclinations of their own hearts,

‘Nothing bad will happen to you!’

23:18 Yet which of them has ever stood in the LORD’s inner circle¹³

so they¹⁴ could see and hear what he has to say?¹⁵

Which of them have ever paid attention or listened to what he has said?

23:19 But just watch!¹⁶ The wrath of the LORD

will come like a storm!¹⁷

Like a raging storm it will rage down!¹⁸

Judg 9:24; Ezek 13:22 (and cf. BDB 304 s.v. חָזַק Piel.2). The vav consecutive on the front of the form gives the logical consequence equivalent to “so” in the translation.

¹ **tn** Heb “All of them are to me like Sodom and its [Jerusalem’s] inhabitants like Gomorrah.”

sn The rhetoric of this passage is very forceful. Like Amos who focuses attention on the sins of the surrounding nations to bring out more forcefully the heinousness of Israel’s sin, God focuses attention on the sins of the prophets of Samaria to bring out the even worse sin of the prophets of Jerusalem. (The oracle is directed at them, not at the prophets of Samaria. See the announcement of judgment that follows.) The LORD has already followed that tack with Judah in Jeremiah 2 (cf. 2:11). Moreover, he here compares the prophets and the evil-doing citizens of Jerusalem, whom they were encouraging through their false prophesy, to the people of Sodom and Gomorrah who were proverbial for their wickedness (Deut 32:32; Isa 1:10).

² **tn** Heb “Yahweh of armies.”

sn See the study note on 2:19 for explanation of this title.

³ **tn** Heb “Therefore, thus says the LORD...concerning the prophets.” The person is shifted to better conform with English style and the word “of Jerusalem” is supplied in the translation to avoid the possible misunderstanding that the judgment applies to the prophets of Samaria who had already been judged long before.

⁴ **tn** Heb “I will feed this people wormwood and make them drink poison water.” For these same words of judgment on another group see 9:15 (9:14 HT). “Wormwood” and “poison water” are not to be understood literally here but are symbolic of judgment and suffering. See, e.g., BDB 542 s.v. מַרְרֵהָ.

⁵ **tn** The compound preposition מֵעַתָּה (*me’et*) expresses source or origin (see BDB 86 s.v. מֵ 4.c). Context shows that the origin is in their false prophesying which encourages people in their evil behavior.

⁶ **sn** A word that derives from this same Hebrew word is used in v. 11 at the beginning of the LORD’s criticism of the prophet and priest. This is a common rhetorical device for bracketing material that belongs together. The criticism has, however, focused on the false prophets and the judgment due them.

⁷ **tn** Heb “Yahweh of armies.”

sn See the study note on 2:19 for explanation of this title.

⁸ **tn** The words “to the people of Jerusalem” are not in the Hebrew text but are supplied in the translation to reflect the masculine plural form of the imperative and the second masculine plural form of the pronoun. These words have been supplied in the translation for clarity.

⁹ **tn** Heb “They tell of a vision of their own heart [= mind] not from the mouth of the LORD.”

¹⁰ **tn** The translation reflects an emphatic construction where the infinitive absolute follows a participle (cf. GKC 343 §113.r).

¹¹ **tc** The translation follows the Greek version. The Hebrew text reads, “who reject me, ‘The LORD has spoken, “Things...”” The Greek version is to be preferred here because of (1) the parallelism of the lines “reject what the LORD has said” // “follow the stubborn inclinations of their own hearts;” (2) the preceding context which speaks of “visions of their own imaginations not of what the LORD has given them;” (3) the following context which denies that they have ever had access to the LORD’s secrets; (4) the general contexts earlier regarding false prophecy where rejection of the LORD’s word is in view (6:14 [see there v. 10]; 8:11 [see there v. 9]); (5) the meter of the poetic lines (the Hebrew meter is 3/5/4/3; the meter presupposed by the translation is 5/3/4/3 with the 3’s being their words). The difference is one of vocalization of the same consonants. The vocalization of the MT is מִנְחָצִי דָבַר יְהוָה [m^hna’atsay dibber y^hvhah]; the Hebrew Vorlage behind the Greek would be vocalized as מִנְחָצִי דָבַר יְהוָה (m^hna’atsey d^hvar y^hvhah).

¹² **tn** Heb “You will have peace.” But see the note on 14:13. See also 6:14 and 8:11.

¹³ **tn** Or “has been the LORD’s confidant.”

sn The LORD’s inner circle refers to the council of angels (Ps 89:7 [89:8 HT]; 1 Kgs 22:19-22; Job 1-2; Job 15:8) where God made known his counsel/plans (Amos 3:7). They and those they prophesied to will find out soon enough what the purposes of his heart are, and they are not “peace” (see v. 20). By their failure to announce the impending doom they were not turning the people away from their wicked course (v. 21-22).

¹⁴ **tn** The form here is a jussive with a vav of subordination introducing a purpose after a question (cf. GKC 322 §109.f).

¹⁵ **tc** Heb “his word.” In the second instance (“what he has said” at the end of the verse) the translation follows the suggestion of the Masoretes (*Qere*) and many Hebrew MSS rather than the consonantal text (*Kethib*) of the Leningrad Codex.

¹⁶ **tn** Heb “Behold!”

¹⁷ **tn** The syntax of this line has generally been misunderstood, sometimes to the point that some want to delete the word wrath. Both here and in 30:23 where these same words occur the word “anger” stands not as an accusative of attendant circumstance but an apposition, giving the intended referent to the figure. Comparison should be made with Jer 25:15 where “this wrath” is appositional to “the cup of wine” (cf. GKC 425 §131.k).

¹⁸ **tn** The translation is deliberate, intending to reflect the repetition of the Hebrew root which is “swirl/swirling.”

on the heads of those who are wicked.

23:20 The anger of the LORD will not turn back until he has fully carried out his intended purposes.¹

In days to come²

you people will come to understand this clearly.³

23:21 I did not send those prophets.

Yet they were in a hurry to give their message.⁴

I did not tell them anything.

Yet they prophesied anyway.

23:22 But if they had stood in my inner circle,⁵

they would have proclaimed my message to my people.

They would have caused my people to turn from their wicked ways and stop doing the evil things they are doing.

23:23 Do you people think⁶ that I am some local deity

and not the transcendent God?⁷ the LORD

¹ **tn** Heb “until he has done and until he has carried out the purposes of his heart.”

² **tn** Heb “in the latter days.” However, as BDB 31 s.v. אַחֲרַיִת b suggests, the meaning of this idiom must be determined from the context. Sometimes it has remote, even eschatological, reference and other times it has more immediate reference as it does here and in Jer 30:23 where it refers to the coming days of Babylonian conquest and exile.

³ **tn** The translation is intended to reflect a Hebrew construction where a noun functions as the object of a verb from the same root word (the Hebrew cognate accusative).

⁴ **tn** Heb “Yet they ran.”

sn The image is that of a messenger bearing news from the king. See 2 Sam 18:19-24; Jer 51:31; Isa 40:9; 52:7; Hab 2:2 (the tablet/scroll bore the message the runner was to read to the intended recipients of his message). Their message has been given in v. 17 (see notes there for cross references).

⁵ **tn** Or “had been my confidant.” See the note on v. 18.

⁶ **tn** The words “Do you people think” at the beginning of this verse and “Do you really think” at the beginning of the next verse are not in the text but are a way of trying to convey the nature of the rhetorical questions which expect a negative answer. They are also a way of trying to show that the verses are still connected with the preceding discussion addressed to the people (cf. 23:16, 20).

⁷ **tn** Heb “Am I a god nearby and not a god far off?” The question is sometimes translated as though there is an alternative being given in v. 23, one that covers both the ideas of immanence and transcendence (i.e., “Am I only a god nearby and not also a god far off?”). However, the *he* interrogative (הוּא) at the beginning of this verse and the particle (אם, *im*) at the beginning of the next show that the linkage is between the question in v. 23 and that in v. 24a. According to BDB 210 s.v. הוּא 1.d both questions in this case expect a negative answer.

sn The thought that is expressed here must be viewed against the background of ancient Near Eastern thought where gods were connected with different realms, e.g., Baal, the god of wind, rain, and fertility, Mot, the god of drought, infertility, and death, Yam, the god of the sea and of chaos. Moreover, Baal was worshiped in local manifestations as the Baal of Peor, Baal of Gad, etc. Hence, Baal is sometimes spoken of in the singular and sometimes in the plural. The LORD is the one true God (Deut 6:4). Moreover, he is the maker of heaven and earth (Gen 14:12; 2 Kgs 19:15; Ps 115:15), sees into the hearts of all men (Ps 33:13-15), and judges men according to what they do (Ezek 7:3, 7, 27). There is no hiding from him (Job 34:22; Ps 139:7-12) and no escape from his judgment (Amos 9:2-4). God has already spoken to the peo-

asks.⁸

23:24 “Do you really think anyone can hide himself

where I cannot see him?” the LORD asks.⁹

“Do you not know that I am every-

where?”¹⁰

the LORD asks.¹¹

23:25 The LORD says,¹² “I have heard what those prophets who are prophesying lies in my name are saying. They are saying, ‘I have had a dream! I have had a dream!’¹³ **23:26** Those prophets are just prophesying lies. They are prophesying the delusions of their own minds.¹⁴ **23:27** How long will they go on plotting¹⁵ to

ple and their leaders through Jeremiah along these lines (Jer 16:17; 21:14). Lurking behind the thoughts expressed here is probably Deut 29:19-21 where God warns that one “bad apple” who thinks he can get away with sinning against the covenant can lead to the destruction of all. The false prophets were the “bad apples” that were encouraging the corruption of the whole nation by their words promoting a false sense of security unconnected with loyalty to God and obedience to his covenant. The first question deals with the issue of God’s transcendence, the second with his omniscience, and the third with his omnipresence.

⁸ **tn** Heb “Oracle of the LORD.”

⁹ **tn** Heb “Oracle of the LORD.”

¹⁰ **tn** The words “Don’t you know” are not in the text. They are a way of conveying the idea that the question which reads literally “Do I not fill heaven and earth?” expects a positive answer. They follow the pattern used at the beginning of the previous two questions and continue that thought. The words are supplied in the translation for clarity.

¹¹ **tn** Heb “Oracle of the LORD.”

¹² **tn** The words, “The LORD says” are not in the text. They are supplied in the translation for clarity to show that the LORD continues speaking.

¹³ **sn** To have had a dream was not an illegitimate means of receiving divine revelation. God had revealed himself in the past to his servants through dreams (e.g., Jacob [Gen 31:10-11] and Joseph [Gen 37:6, 7, 9]) and God promised to reveal himself through dreams (Num 12:6; Joel 2:28 [3:1 HT]). What was illegitimate was to use the dream to lead people away from the LORD (Deut 13:1-5 [13:2-6 HT]). That was what the prophets were doing through their dreams which were “lies” and “the delusions of their own minds.” Through them they were making people forget who the LORD really was which was just like what their ancestors had done through worshiping Baal.

¹⁴ **sn** See the parallel passage in Jer 14:13-15.

¹⁵ **tn** The relation of the words to one another in v. 26 and the beginning of v. 27 has created difficulties for translators and commentators. The proper solution is reflected in the NJPS. Verses 26-27 read somewhat literally, “How long is there in the hearts of the prophets who are prophesying the lie and [in the hearts of] the prophets of the delusions of their [own] hear the plotting to cause my people to forget my name...” Most commentaries complain that the text is corrupt, that there is no subject for “is there.” However, the long construct qualification “in the hearts of” has led to the lack of observation that the proper subject is “the plotting to make my people forget.” There are no exact parallels but Jer 14:22; Neh 5:5 follow the same structure. The “How long” precedes the other means of asking a question for the purpose of emphasis (cf. BDB 210 s.v. הוּא 1.b and compare for example the usage in 2 Sam 7:7). There has also been a failure to see that “the prophets of the delusion of...” is a parallel construct noun after “heart of.” Stripping the syntax down to its barest minimum and translating literally, the sentence would read “How long will the plotting...continue in the hearts of the prophets who...and [in hearts of] the prophets of...” The sentence has been restructured in the translation to conform to contempo-

make my people forget who I am¹ through the dreams they tell one another? That is just as bad as what their ancestors² did when they forgot who I am by worshipping the god Baal.³ **23:28** Let the prophet who has had a dream go ahead and tell his dream. Let the person who has received my message report that message faithfully. What is like straw cannot compare to what is like grain!⁴ I, the LORD, affirm it!⁵ **23:29** My message is like a fire that purges dross!⁶ It is like a hammer that breaks a rock in pieces!⁷ I, the LORD, so affirm it!⁸ **23:30** So I, the LORD, affirm⁹ that I am opposed to those prophets who steal messages from one another that they claim are from me.¹⁰ **23:31** I, the LORD, affirm¹¹ that I am opposed to those prophets who are using their own tongues to declare, ‘The LORD declares....’¹²

rary English style but attempt has been made to maintain the same subordinations.

1 tn Heb “my name.”

sn In the OT, the “name” reflected the person’s character (cf. Gen 27:36; 1 Sam 25:25) or his reputation (Gen 11:4; 2 Sam 8:13). To speak in someone’s name was to act as his representative or carry his authority (1 Sam 25:9; 1 Kgs 21:8). To call someone’s name over something was to claim it for one’s own (2 Sam 12:28). Hence, here to forget the name is equivalent to forgetting who he was in his essential character (cf. Exod 3:13-15; 6:3; 34:5-7). By preaching lies they had obliterated part of his essential character and caused people to forget who he really was.

2 tn Heb “fathers” (also in v. 39).

3 tn Heb “through Baal.” This is an elliptical expression for the worship of Baal. See 1:1; 17; 12:16; 19:5 for other references to their relation to Baal. There is a deliberate paralleling in the syntax here between “through their dreams” and “through Baal.”

4 tn Heb “What to the straw with [in comparison with] the grain?” This idiom represents an emphatic repudiation or denial of relationship. See, for example, the usage in 2 Sam 16:10 and note BDB 553 s.v. חָיַב l.d(c).

5 tn Heb “Oracle of the LORD.”

6 tn Heb “Is not my message like a fire?” The rhetorical question expects a positive answer that is made explicit in the translation. The words “that purges dross” are not in the text but are implicit to the metaphor. They are supplied in the translation for clarity.

7 tn Heb “Is it not like a hammer that breaks a rock in pieces?” See preceding note.

8 tn Heb “Oracle of the LORD.”

9 tn Heb “Oracle of the LORD.”

10 tn Heb “who are stealing my words from one another.” However, context shows that it is their own word which they claim is from the LORD (cf. next verse).

11 tn Heb “Oracle of the LORD.”

12 tn The word “The LORD” is not actually in the text but is implicit in the idiom. It is generally supplied in all the English versions.

sn Jer 23:30-33 are filled with biting sarcasm. The verses all begin with “Behold I am against the prophets who...” and go on to describe their reprehensible behavior. They “steal” one another’s messages which the LORD sarcastically calls “my words” (The passage shows that they are not; compare Marc Anthony’s use of “noble” to describe the ignoble men who killed Caesar). Here the use of the idiom translated “to use their own tongue” is really the idiom that refers to taking something in preparation for action, i.e., “they take their tongue” and “declare.” The verb “declare” is only used here and is derived from the idiom “oracle of” which is almost universally used in the idiom “oracle of the LORD” which occurs 176 times in Jeremiah. I.e., it is their tongue that is “declaring not his mouth” (v. 16). Moreover in the report of what they “declare” the LORD has left out the qualifying “of the LORD” to suggest the delusive nature of their message, i.e. they mis-

23:32 I, the LORD, affirm¹³ that I am opposed to those prophets who dream up lies and report them. They are misleading my people with their reckless lies.¹⁴ I did not send them. I did not commission them. They are not helping these people at all.¹⁵ I, the LORD, affirm it!¹⁶

23:33 The LORD said to me, “Jeremiah,¹⁷ when one of these people, or a prophet, or a priest asks you, ‘What burdensome message¹⁸ do you have from the LORD?’ Tell them, ‘You are the

lead people into believing that their message is from the LORD. Elsewhere in the discussion of the issue of false prophecy the LORD will use the full formula (Ezek 13:6-7). How ironic that their “Oracle of...” is punctuated by the triple “Oracle of the LORD” (vv. 30, 31, 32; translated here “I, the LORD, affirm that...”).

13 tn Heb “Oracle of the LORD.”

14 tn Heb “with their lies and their recklessness.” This is an example of hendiadys where two nouns (in this case a concrete and an abstract one) are joined by “and” but one is intended to be the adjectival modifier of the other.

15 sn In the light of what has been said this is a rhetorical understatement; they are not only “not helping,” they are leading them to their doom (cf. vv. 19-22). This figure of speech is known as litotes.

16 tn Heb “Oracle of the LORD.”

17 tn The words “The LORD said to me, ‘Jeremiah’” are not in the text. They are supplied in the translation for clarity to show the shift between the LORD addressing the people (second masculine plural) and the LORD addressing Jeremiah (second masculine singular).

18 tn The meaning of vv. 33-40 is debated. The translation given here follows the general direction of NRSV and REB rather than that of NIV and the related direction taken by NCV and God’s Word. The meaning of vv. 33-40 are debated because of (1) the ambiguity involved in the word מַסָּא (masa’), which can mean either “burden” (as something carried or weighing heavily on a person; see, e.g., Exod 23:5; Num 4:27; 2 Sam 15:33; Ps 38:4) or “oracle” (of doom; see, e.g., Isa 13:1; Nah 1:1); (the translation is debated due to etymological concerns), (2) the ambiguity of the line in v. 36 which has been rendered “For what is ‘burdensome’ really pertains rather to what a person himself says” (Heb “the burden is to the man his word”), and (3) the text in v. 33 of “you are the burden.” Many commentaries see a wordplay on the two words “burden” and “oracle” which are homonyms. However, from the contrasts that are drawn in the passage, it is doubtful whether the nuance of “oracle” ever is in view. The word is always used in the prophets of an oracle of doom or judgment; it is not merely revelation of God which one of the common people would have been uttering (contra NIV). Jeremiah never uses the word in that sense nor does anyone else in the book of Jeremiah.

sn What is in view here is the idea that the people consider Jeremiah’s view of loyalty to God and obedience to the covenant “burdensome.” I.e., what burdensome demands is the LORD asking you to impose on us (See Jer 17:21, 22, 24, 27 where this same word is used regarding Sabbath observance which they chafed at). The LORD answers back that it is not he who is being burdensome to them; they are burdensome to him (See 15:6: “I am weary” and compare Isa 1:14 where the verb rather than the noun is used).

burden,⁴ and I will cast you away.² I, the LORD, affirm it!³ **23:34** I will punish any prophet, priest, or other person who says “The LORD’s message is burdensome.”⁴ I will punish both that person and his whole family.”⁵

23:35 So I, Jeremiah, tell you,⁶ “Each of you people should say to his friend or his relative, ‘How did the LORD answer? Or what did the LORD say?’”**23:36** You must no longer say that the LORD’s message is burdensome.⁸ For what is ‘burdensome’⁹ really pertains to what a person himself says.¹⁰

1 tc The translation follows the Latin and Greek versions. The Hebrew text reads “What burden [i.e., burdensome message]?” The syntax of “what message?” is not in itself objectionable; the interrogative can function as an adjective (cf. BDB 552 s.v. מָה 1.a[a]). What is objectionable to virtually all the commentaries and lexicons is the unparalleled use of the accusative particle in front of the interrogative and the noun (see, e.g., BDB 672 s.v. III מַשָּׂא and GKC 365-66 §117.m, n. 3). The emendation only involves the redivision and revocalization of the same consonants: אֲתָּהּ מַשָּׂא (‘et-mah-masa’) becomes אֲתָּהּ הַמַּשָּׂא (‘atem hammasa’). This also makes a much more natural connection for the vav consecutive perfect that follows (cf. GKC 334 §112.x and compare Isa 6:7; Judg 13:3).

2 tn The meaning “cast you away” is questioned by some because the word is regularly used of “forsaking” or “abandoning” (see, e.g., Jer 7:29; 12:7; 15:6). However, it is clearly used of “casting down” or “throwing away” in Ezek 29:5; 32:4 and that meaning is virtually assured in v. 39 where the verb is combined with the phrase “from my presence” which is elsewhere used in rejection contexts with verbs like “send away,” “throw out,” or “remove” (see BDB 819 s.v. נָתַח II.8.a). This is another example of the bracketing effect of a key word and should be rendered the same in the two passages. Moreover, it fits in nicely with the play on “burden” here.

3 tn Heb “Oracle of the LORD.”

4 tn Heb “burden of the LORD.”

5 tn Heb “And the prophet or the priest or the people [common person] who says, ‘The burden of the LORD,’ I will visit upon [= punish] that man and his house.” This is an example of the Hebrew construction called nominative absolute or *casus pendens* (cf. GKC 458 §143.d).

6 tn The words “So, I, Jeremiah tell you” are not in the text. They are supplied in the translation for clarity to show that it is he who is addressing the people, not the LORD. See “our God” in v. 38 and “Here is what the LORD says...” which indicate the speaker is other than he.

7 tn This line is sometimes rendered as a description of what the people are doing (cf. NIV). However, repetition with some slight modification referring to the prophet in v. 37 followed by the same kind of prohibition that follows here shows that what is being contrasted is two views toward the LORD’s message, i.e., one of openness to receive what the LORD says through the prophet and one that already characterizes the LORD’s message as a burden. Allusion to the question that started the discussion in v. 33 should not be missed. The prophet alluded to is Jeremiah. He is being indirect in his reference to himself.

8 tn Heb “burden of the LORD.”

9 tn Heb “the burden.”

10 tn Heb “The burden is [or will be] to a man his word.” There is a good deal of ambiguity regarding how this line is to be rendered. For the major options and the issues involved W. L. Holladay, *Jeremiah* (Hermeneia), 1:651-52 should be consulted. Most of them are excluded by the observation that מַשָּׂא probably does not mean “oracle” anywhere in this passage (see note on v. 33 regarding the use of this word). Hence it does not mean “every man’s word becomes his oracle” as in NIV or “for that ‘burden’ [= oracle] is what he entrusts to the man of his word” (W. McKane, *Jeremiah* [ICC], 1:600-601). The latter is also ruled out by the fact that the antecedent of “his” on “his word” is clearly the word “man” in front of it. This

You are misrepresenting¹¹ the words of our God, the living God, the LORD who rules over all.¹² **23:37** Each of you should merely ask the prophet, “What answer did the LORD give you? Or what did the LORD say?”¹³ **23:38** But just suppose you continue to say, “The message of the LORD is burdensome.” Here is what the LORD says will happen: “I sent word to you that you must not say, “The LORD’s message is burdensome.” But you used the words “The LORD’s message is burdensome” anyway. **23:39** So¹⁴ I will carry you far off¹⁵ and throw you away. I will send both you and the city I gave to you and to your ancestors out of my sight.¹⁶ **23:40** I will bring on you lasting shame and lasting disgrace which will never be forgotten!”

would be the only case where the phrase “man of his word” occurs. There is also no textual reason for repeating the noun with the article as the noun with the interrogative to read “For how can his word become a burden to anyone?” There are, of course, other options but this is sufficient to show that the translation has been chosen after looking at other alternatives.

11 tn Heb “turning.” See BDB 245 s.v. הָפַךְ Qal.1.c and Lev 13:55; Jer 13:23 “changing, altering.”

12 tn Heb “Yahweh of armies.”

13 tn See the study note on 2:19 for the explanation of the significance of this title.

14 tn See the note on v. 35.

15 tn As noted in v. 35 the prophet is Jeremiah. The message is directed against the prophet, priest, or common people who have characterized his message as a “burden from the LORD.”

16 tn The translation of v. 38 and the first part of v. 39 represents the restructuring of a long and complex Hebrew sentence: Heb “But if you say, ‘The burden of the LORD,’ therefore this is what the LORD says, ‘Because you said this word, “The burden of the LORD,” even though I sent unto saying, “you shall not say, ‘The burden of the LORD,’ therefore...”’ The first “therefore” picks up the “if” (BDB 487 s.v. כִּן 3.d) and the second answer the “because” (BDB 774 s.v. עַי 1).

15 tc The translation follows a few Hebrew MSS and the major versions. The majority of Hebrew MSS read “I will totally forget [or certainly forget] you.” In place of נָשִׁיתִי (vⁿnashiti) a few Hebrew MSS, LXX, Aquila, Symmachus, Syriac, and Vulgate read נָשָׂאִי (vⁿnasa’i). Instead of the infinitive absolute נָשָׂא (nasha’) a number of Hebrew MSS, Aquila, Symmachus, Syriac, and Vulgate read נָשָׂא (naso’). For the confusion of III נ and III ה verbs presupposed by the miswriting of the Hebrew text see GKC 216 §75.gq and compare the forms of נָבָא (nava’) in Jer 26:9 and 1 Sam 10:6. While the verb “forget” would not be totally inappropriate here it does not fit the concept of “throwing away from my presence” as well as “pick up” does. For the verb נָשָׂא (nasa’) meaning “carry you off” compare the usage in 1 Kgs 15:22; 18:12 (and see BDB 671 s.v. נָשָׂא 3.b). Many see the nuance “pick you up” carrying through on the wordplay in v. 33. While that may be appropriate for the repetition of the verb “throw away” (נָתַח, natash) that follows, it does not seem as appropriate for the use of the infinitive absolute that follows the verb which expresses some kind of forcefulness (see GKC 343 §113.g).

16 tn Heb “throw you and the city that I gave you and your fathers out of my presence.” The English sentences have been broken down to conform to contemporary English style.

Good Figs and Bad Figs

24:1 The LORD showed me two baskets of figs sitting before his temple. This happened after King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon deported Jehoiakim's son, King Jeconiah of Judah. He deported him and the leaders of Judah, along with the craftsmen and metal workers, and took them to Babylon.¹ **24:2** One basket had very good-looking figs in it. They looked like those that had ripened early.² The other basket had very bad-looking figs in it, so bad they could not be eaten. **24:3** The LORD said to me, "What do you see, Jeremiah?" I answered, "I see figs. The good ones look very good. But the bad ones look very bad, so bad that they cannot be eaten."

24:4 The LORD said to me,³ **24:5** "I, the LORD, the God of Israel, say: 'The exiles whom I sent away from here to the land of Babylon⁴ are like those good figs. I consider them to be good. **24:6** I will look after their welfare⁵ and will restore them to this land. There I will build them up and will not tear them down. I will plant them firmly in the land⁶ and will not uproot them.'⁷ **24:7** I will give them the desire to acknowledge that I⁸ am the LORD. I will be their God and they will be my people. For they will wholeheartedly⁹ return to me.'

24:8 "I, the LORD, also solemnly assert: 'King Zedekiah of Judah, his officials, and the people who remain in Jerusalem¹⁰ or who have gone to live in Egypt are like those bad figs. I consider them to be just like those bad figs that are so bad they cannot be eaten.'¹¹ **24:9** I will

bring such disaster on them that all the kingdoms of the earth will be horrified. I will make them an object of reproach, a proverbial example of disaster. I will make them an object of ridicule, an example to be used in curses.¹² That is how they will be remembered wherever I banish them.¹³ **24:10** I will bring war, starvation, and disease¹⁴ on them until they are completely destroyed from the land I gave them and their ancestors."¹⁵

Seventy Years of Servitude for Failure to Give Heed

25:1 In the fourth year that Jehoiakim son of Josiah was king of Judah, the LORD spoke to Jeremiah¹⁶ concerning all the people of Judah. (That was the same as the first year that Nebuchadnezzar was king of Babylon.)¹⁷ **25:2** So the prophet Jeremiah spoke to all the people of Judah and to all the people who were living in Jerusalem.¹⁸ **25:3** "For the last twenty-three years, from the thirteenth year that Josiah son of Amon was ruling in Judah¹⁹ until now, the LORD has been speaking to me. I told you over and

28:6; Gen 42:30.

12 tn Or "an object of reproach in peoples' proverbs...an object of ridicule in people's curses." The alternate translation treats the two pairs which are introduced without vavs (ו) but are joined by vavs as examples of hendiadys. This is very possible here but the chain does not contain this pairing in 25:18; 29:18.

sn For an example of how the "example used in curses" worked, see Jer 29:22. Sodom and Gomorrah evidently function much that same way (see 23:14; 49:18; 50:40; Deut 29:23; Zeph 2:9).

13 tn Heb "I will make them for a terror for disaster to all the kingdoms of the earth, for a reproach and for a proverb, for a taunt and a curse in all the places which I banish them there." The complex Hebrew sentence has been broken down into equivalent shorter sentences to conform more with contemporary English style.

14 sn See Jer 14:12 and the study note there.

15 tn Heb "fathers."

16 tn Heb "The word was to Jeremiah." It is implicit from the context that it was the LORD's word. The verbal expression is more in keeping with contemporary English style.

17 sn The year referred to would be 605 b.c. Jehoiakim had been placed on the throne of Judah as a puppet king by Pharaoh Necho after the defeat of Josiah at Megiddo in 609 b.c. (2 Kgs 23:34-35). According to Jer 46:2 Nebuchadnezzar defeated Necho at Carchemish in that same year. After defeating Necho, Nebuchadnezzar had hurried back to Babylon where he was made king. After being made king he then returned to Judah and attacked Jerusalem (Dan 1:1. The date given there is the third year of Jehoiakim but scholars are generally agreed that the dating there is based on a different system than the one here. It did not count the part of the year before New Year's day as an official part of the king's official rule. Hence, the third year there is the fourth year here.) The identity of the foe from the north referred to in general terms (4:6; 6:1; 15:12) now becomes clear.

18 map For location see Map5-B1; Map6-F3; Map7-E2; Map8-F2; Map10-B3; JP1-F4; JP2-F4; JP3-F4; JP4-F4.

19 sn The year referred to would be 627 b.c. The same year is referred to in 1:2 in reference to his call to be a prophet.

1 sn See 2 Kgs 24:10-17 (especially vv. 14-16). Nebuchadnezzar left behind the poorest people of the land under the puppet king Zedekiah. Jeconiah has already been referred to earlier in 13:18; 22:25-26. The deportation referred to here occurred in 597 b.c. and included the priest Ezekiel.

2 sn See Isa 28:4; Hos 9:10.

3 tn Heb "The word of the LORD came to me."

4 tn Heb "the land of the Chaldeans." See the study note on 21:4.

5 tn Heb "I will set my eyes upon you for good." For the nuance of "good" see Jer 21:10; Amos 9:4 (in these cases the opposite of harm; see BDB 375 s.v. טובוּד 1).

6 tn The words "There" and "firmly in the land" are not in the text but are implicit from the connection and the metaphor. They are supplied in the translation for clarity.

7 sn For these terms see Jer 1:10.

8 tn Heb "I will give them a heart to know me that I am the LORD." For the use of "heart" here referring to "inclinations, resolutions, and determinations of the will" see BDB 525 s.v. לֵב 4 and compare the usage in 2 Chr 12:14. For the use of "know" to mean "acknowledge" see BDB 384 s.v. יָדַע Qal.1.f and compare the usage in Jer 39:4. For the construction "know 'someone' that he..." = "know that 'someone'..." see GKC 365 §117.h and compare the usage in 2 Sam 3:25.

9 tn Heb "with all their heart."

10 map For location see Map5-B1; Map6-F3; Map7-E2; Map8-F2; Map10-B3; JP1-F4; JP2-F4; JP3-F4; JP4-F4.

11 tn Heb "Like the bad figs which cannot be eaten from badness [= because they are so bad] surely [emphatic כִּי, *ki*] so I regard Zedekiah, king of Judah, and his officials and the remnant of Jerusalem which remains in this land and those who are living in Egypt." The sentence has been restructured in the translation to conform more to contemporary English style. For the use of נָתַן (*natan*) meaning "regard" or "treat like" see BDB 681 s.v. נָתַן 3.c and compare the usage in Ezek

over again⁴ what he said.² But you would not listen. 25:4 Over and over again³ the LORD has sent⁴ his servants the prophets to you. But you have not listened or paid attention.⁵ 25:5 He said through them,⁶ ‘Each of you must turn from your wicked ways and stop doing the evil things you are doing.⁷ If you do, I will allow you to continue to live here in the land that I gave to you and your ancestors as a lasting possession.⁸ 25:6 Do not pay allegiance to⁹ other gods and worship and serve them. Do not make me angry by the things that you do.¹⁰ Then I will not cause you any harm.’ 25:7 So, now the LORD says,¹¹ ‘You have not listened to me. But¹² you have made me angry by the things that you have done.¹³ Thus you have brought harm on yourselves.’

25:8 “Therefore, the LORD who rules over all¹⁴ says, ‘You have not listened to what I

said.¹⁵ 25:9 So I, the LORD, affirm that¹⁶ I will send for all the peoples of the north¹⁷ and my servant,¹⁸ King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. I will bring them against this land and its inhabitants and all the nations that surround it. I will utterly destroy¹⁹ this land, its inhabitants, and all the nations that surround it²⁰ and make them everlasting ruins.²¹ I will make them objects of horror and hissing scorn.²² 25:10 I will put an end to the sounds of joy and gladness, to the glad celebration of brides and grooms in these lands.²³ I will put an end to the sound of people grinding meal. I will put an end to lamps shining

¹ **tn** For the idiom involved here see the notes at 7:13 and 11:7.

² **tn** The words “what he said” are not in the text but are implicit. They are supplied in the translation for clarity.

³ **tn** For the idiom involved here see the notes at 7:13 and 11:7.

⁴ **tn** The *vav* consecutive with the perfect in a past narrative is a little unusual. Here it is probably indicating repeated action in past time in keeping with the idiom that precedes and follows it. See GKC 332 §112.f for other possible examples.

⁵ **tn** *Heb* “inclined your ear to hear.” This is idiomatic for “paying attention.” It is often parallel with “listen” as here or with “pay attention” (see, e.g., Prov 4:20; 5:1).

⁶ **tn** *Heb* “saying.” The infinitive goes back to “he sent”; i.e., “he sent, saying.”

⁷ **tn** *Heb* “Turn [masc. pl.] each person from his wicked way and from the evil of your [masc. pl.] doings.” See the same demand in 23:22.

⁸ **tn** *Heb* “gave to you and your fathers with reference to from ancient times even unto forever.” See the same idiom in 7:7.

⁹ **tn** *Heb* “follow after.” See the translator’s note on 2:5 for this idiom.

¹⁰ **tn** *Heb* “make me angry with the work of your hands.” The term “work of your own hands” is often interpreted as a reference to idolatry as is clearly the case in Isa 2:8; 37:19. However, the parallelism in 25:14 and the context in 32:30 show that it is more general and refers to what they have done. That is likely the meaning here as well.

¹¹ **tn** *Heb* “Oracle of the LORD.”

¹² **tn** This is a rather clear case where the Hebrew particle *לְ* (*l’ma’an*) introduces a consequence and not a purpose, contrary to the dictum of BDB 775 s.v. *לְ*; note 1. They have not listened to him *in order* to make him angry but *with the result* that they have made him angry by going their own way. Jeremiah appears to use this particle for result rather than purpose on several other occasions (see, e.g., 7:18, 19; 27:10, 15; 32:29).

¹³ **tn** *Heb* “make me angry with the work of your hands.” The term “work of your own hands” is often interpreted as a reference to idolatry as is clearly the case in Isa 2:8; 37:19. However, the parallelism in 25:14 and the context in 32:30 show that it is more general and refers to what they have done. That is likely the meaning here as well.

¹⁴ **tn** *Heb* “Yahweh of armies.”

¹⁵ **tn** See the study note on 2:19 for an explanation of this title.

¹⁵ **tn** *Heb* “You have not listened to my words.”

¹⁶ **tn** *Heb* “Oracle of the LORD.”

¹⁷ **sn** The many allusions to trouble coming from the north are now clarified: it is the armies of Babylon which included within it contingents from many nations. See 1:14, 15; 4:6; 6:1, 22; 10:22; 13:20 for earlier allusions.

¹⁸ **sn** Nebuchadnezzar is called the LORD’s *servant* also in Jer 27:6; 43:10. He was the LORD’s servant in that he was the agent used by the LORD to punish his disobedient people. Assyria was earlier referred to as the LORD’s “rod” (Isa 10:5-6) and Cyrus is called his “shepherd” and his “anointed” (Isa 44:28; 45:1). P. C. Craigie, P. H. Kelley, and J. F. Drinkard (*Jeremiah 1-25* [WBC], 364) make the interesting observation that the terms here are very similar to the terms in v. 4. The people of Judah ignored the servants, the prophets, he sent to turn them away from evil. So he will send other servants whom they cannot ignore.

¹⁹ **tn** The word used here was used in the early years of Israel’s conquest for the action of killing all the men, women, and children in the cities of Canaan, destroying all their livestock, and burning their cities down. This policy was intended to prevent Israel from being corrupted by paganism (Deut 7:2; 20:17-18; Josh 6:18, 21). It was to be extended to any city that led Israel away from worshiping God (Deut 13:15) and any Israelite who brought an idol into his house (Deut 7:26). Here the policy is being directed against Judah as well as against her neighbors because of her persistent failure to heed God’s warnings through the prophets. For further usage of this term in application to foreign nations in the book of Jeremiah see 50:21, 26; 51:3.

²⁰ **tn** *Heb* “will utterly destroy them.” The referent (this land, its inhabitants, and the nations surrounding it) has been specified in the translation for clarity, since the previous “them” referred to Nebuchadnezzar and his armies.

sn This is essentially the introduction to the “judgment on the nations” in vv. 15-29 which begins with Jerusalem and Judah (v. 18) and ultimately ends with Babylon itself (“Sheshach” in v. 26; see note there for explanation of the term).

²¹ **tn** The Hebrew word translated “everlasting” is the word often translated “eternal.” However, it sometimes has a more limited time reference. For example it refers to the lifetime of a person who became a “lasting slave” to another person (see Exod 21:6; Deut 15:17). It is also used to refer to the long life wished for a king (1 Kgs 1:31; Neh 2:3). The time frame here is to be qualified at least with reference to Judah and Jerusalem as seventy years (see 29:10-14 and compare v. 12).

²² **tn** *Heb* “I will make them an object of horror and a hissing and everlasting ruins.” The sentence has been broken up to separate the last object from the first two which are of slightly different connotation, i.e., they denote the reaction to the latter.

sn Compare Jer 18:16 and 19:8 and the study note at 18:16.

²³ **sn** Compare Jer 7:24 and 16:9 for this same dire prediction limited to Judah and Jerusalem.

in their houses.⁴ 25:11 This whole area² will become a desolate wasteland. These nations will be subject to the king of Babylon for seventy years.³

25:12 “But when the seventy years are over, I will punish the king of Babylon and his nation⁴ for their sins. I will make the land of Babylon⁵ an everlasting ruin.⁶ I, the LORD, affirm it!⁷ 25:13 I will bring on that land everything that I said I would. I will bring on it everything that is written in this book. I will bring on it everything that Jeremiah has prophesied against all the nations.⁸

¹ **sn** The sound of people grinding meal and the presence of lamps shining in their houses were signs of everyday life. The LORD is going to make these lands desolate (v. 11) destroying all signs of life. (The statement is, of course, hyperbolic or poetic exaggeration; even after the destruction of Jerusalem many people were left in the land.) For these same descriptions of everyday life applying to the end of life see the allegory in Eccl 12:3-6.

² **tn** Heb “All this land.”

³ **sn** It should be noted that the text says that the nations will be subject to the king of Babylon for seventy years, not that they will lie desolate for seventy years. Though several proposals have been made for dating this period, many ignore this fact. This most likely refers to the period beginning with Nebuchadnezzar’s defeat of Pharaoh Necho at Carchemish in 605 b.c. and the beginning of his rule over Babylon. At this time Babylon became the dominant force in the area and continued to be so until the fall of Babylon in 538 b.c. More particularly Judah became a vassal state (cf. Jer 46:2; 2 Kgs 24:1) in 605 b.c. and was allowed to return to her homeland in 538 when Cyrus issued his edict allowing all the nations except by Babylon to return to their homelands. (See 2 Chr 36:21 and Ezra 1:2-4; the application there is made to Judah but the decree of Cyrus was broader.)

⁴ **tn** Heb “that nation.”

⁵ **tn** Heb “the land of the Chaldeans.” See the study note on 21:4 for the use of the term “Chaldeans.”

⁶ **tn** Heb “I will visit upon the king of Babylon and upon that nation, oracle of the LORD, their iniquity even upon the land of the Chaldeans and I will make it everlasting ruins.” The sentence has been restructured to avoid ambiguity and to conform the style more to contemporary English.

sn Compare Isa 13:19-22 and Jer 50:39-40.

⁷ **tn** Heb “Oracle of the LORD.”

⁸ **tn** Or “I will bring upon it everything that is to be written in this book. I will bring upon it everything that Jeremiah is going to prophesy concerning all the nations.” The reference to “this book” and “what Jeremiah has prophesied against the nations” raises issues about the editorial process underlying the current form of the book of Jeremiah. As the book now stands there is no earlier reference to any judgments against Babylon or any book (really “scroll”; books were a development of the first or second century A.D.) containing them. A common assumption is that this “book” of judgment refers to the judgments against Babylon and the other nations contained at the end of the book of Jeremiah (46:1–51:58). The Greek version actually inserts the prophecies of 46:1–51:58 here (but in a different order) and interprets “Which (= What) Jeremiah prophesied concerning all the nations” as a title. It is possible that the Greek version may represent an earlier form of the book. At least two earlier forms of the book are known that date roughly to the period dealt with here (Compare 36:1 with 25:1 and see 36:2, 4 and 36:28, 32). Whether reference here is made to the first or second of these scrolls and whether the Greek version represents either is impossible to determine. It is not inconceivable that the referent here is the prophecies which Jeremiah has already uttered in vv. 8-12 and is about to utter in conjunction with the symbolical act that the LORD commands him to perform (vv. 15-26, 30-38) and that these are proleptic of the latter prophecies which will be given later and will be incorporated in a future book. That is the tenor of the alternate translation. The verb forms involved are capable of either a past/perfect translation or a

25:14 For many nations and great kings will make slaves of the king of Babylon and his nation⁹ too. I will repay them for all they have done!”¹⁰

Judah and the Nations Will Experience God’s Wrath

25:15 So¹¹ the LORD, the God of Israel, spoke to me in a vision.¹² “Take this cup from my hand. It is filled with the wine of my wrath.¹³ Take it and make the nations to whom I send you drink it. 25:16 When they have drunk it, they

proleptic/future translation. For the use of the participle (in the alternate translation = Heb “that is to be written”; הַכְּתוּב, *hakkatuv*) to refer to what is proleptic see GKC 356-57 §116. *d, e,* and compare usage in Jonah 1:3; 2 Kgs 11:2. For the use of the perfect to refer to a future act (in the alternate translation “is going to prophesy,” נִבְּאָה, *nibba*) see GKC 312 §106. *m* and compare usage in Judg 1:2. In support of this interpretation is the fact that the first verb in the next verse (Heb “they will be subjected,” נִבְּאָה, *nibba*) is undoubtedly prophetic [it is followed by a *vav* consecutive perfect; cf. Isa 5:14]. Reading the text this way has the advantage of situating it within the context of the passage itself which involves prophecies against the nations and against Babylon. Babylon is both the agent of wrath (the cup from which the nations drink, cf. 51:7) and the recipient of it (cf. v. 26). However, this interpretation admittedly does not explain the reference to “this book,” except as a proleptic reference to some future form of the book and there would be clearer ways of expressing this view if that were what was definitely intended.

⁹ **tn** Heb “make slaves of them.” The verb form here indicates that the action is as good as done (the Hebrew prophetic perfect). For the use of the verb rendered “makes slaves” see parallel usage in Lev 25:39, 46 (cf. BDB 713 s.v. נָבַר 3).

¹⁰ **tn** Heb “according to their deeds and according to the work of their hands.” The two phrases are synonymous; it would be hard to represent them both in translation without being redundant. The translation attempts to represent them by the qualifier “all” before the first phrase.

¹¹ **tn** This is an attempt to render the Hebrew particle כִּי (*ki*) which is probably being used in the sense that BDB 473-74 s.v. כִּי 3.c notes, i.e., the causal connection is somewhat loose, related here to the prophecies against the nations. “So” seems to be the most appropriate way to represent this.

¹² **tn** Heb “Thus said the LORD, the God of Israel, to me.” It is generally understood that the communication is visionary. God does not have a “hand” and the action of going to the nations and making them drink of the cup are scarcely literal. The words are supplied in the translation to show the figurative nature of this passage.

¹³ **sn** “Drinking from the cup of wrath” is a common figure to represent being punished by God. Isaiah had used it earlier to refer to the punishment which Judah was to suffer and from which God would deliver her (Isa 51:17, 22) and Jeremiah’s contemporary Habakkuk uses it of Babylon “pouring out its wrath” on the nations and in turn being forced to drink the bitter cup herself (Hab 2:15-16). In Jer 51:7 the LORD will identify Babylon as the cup which makes the nations stagger. In v. 16 drinking from the cup will be identified with the sword (i.e., wars) that the LORD will send against the nations. Babylon is also to be identified as the sword (cf. Jer 51:20-23). What is being alluded to here in highly figurative language is the judgment that the LORD will wreak on the nations listed here through the Babylonians. The prophecy given here in symbolical form is thus an expansion of the one in vv. 9-11.

will stagger to and fro¹ and act insane. For I will send war sweeping through them."²

25:17 So I took the cup from the LORD's hand. I made all the nations to whom he sent me drink the wine of his wrath.³ **25:18** I made Jerusalem⁴ and the cities of Judah, its kings and its officials drink it.⁵ I did it so Judah would become a ruin. I did it so Judah, its kings, and its officials would become an object⁶ of horror and of hissing scorn, an example used in curses.⁷ Such is already becoming the case!⁸ **25:19** I made all of these other people drink it: Pharaoh, king of Egypt,⁹ his attendants, his officials, his people, **25:20** the foreigners living in Egypt;¹⁰ all the kings of the land of Uz;¹¹ all the kings of the

land of the Philistines,¹² the people of Ashkelon, Gaza, Ekron, the people who had been left alive from Ashdod;¹³ **25:21** all the people of Edom,¹⁴ Moab,¹⁵ Ammon;¹⁶ **25:22** all the kings of Tyre,¹⁷ all the kings of Sidon;¹⁸ all the kings of the coastlands along the sea;¹⁹ **25:23** the people of Dedan, Tema, Buz,²⁰ all the desert people who cut their hair short at the temples;²¹ **25:24** all the kings of Arabia who²² live in the desert; **25:25** all the kings of Zimri;²³ all the kings of Elam,²⁴ all the kings of Media;²⁵ **25:26** all the kings of the north, whether near or far from one another; and all the other kingdoms which are on the face of the earth. After all of them have drunk the wine of the LORD's wrath,²⁶ the king of Babylon²⁷ must drink it.

1 tn There is some debate about the meaning of the verb here. Both BDB 172 s.v. שָׁנַן Hithpo and KBL 191 s.v. שָׁנַן; Hitpol interpret this of the back and forth movement of staggering. HALOT 192 s.v. שָׁנַן Hitpo interprets it as vomiting. The word is used elsewhere of the up and down movement of the mountains (2 Sam 22:8) and the up and down movement of the rolling waves of the Nile (Jer 46:7, 8). The fact that a different verb is used in v. 27 for vomiting would appear to argue against it referring to vomiting (contra W. L. Holladay, *Jeremiah* [Hermeneia], 1:674; it is "they" that do this not their stomachs).

2 tn Heb "because of the sword that I will send among them." Here, as often elsewhere in Jeremiah, the sword is figurative for warfare which brings death. See, e.g., 15:2. The causal particle here is found in verbal locutions where it is the cause of emotional states or action. Hence there are really two "agents" which produce the effects of "staggering" and "acting insane," the cup filled with God's wrath and the sword. The sword is the "more literal" and the actual agent by which the first agent's action is carried out.

3 tn The words "the wine of his wrath" are not in the text but are implicit in the metaphor (see vv. 15-16). They are supplied in the translation for clarity.

4 map For location see Map5-B1; Map6-F3; Map7-E2; Map8-F2; Map10-B3; JP1-F4; JP2-F4; JP3-F4; JP4-F4.

5 tn The words "I made" and "drink it" are not in the text. The text from v. 18 to v. 26 contains a list of the nations that Jeremiah "made drink it." The words are supplied in the translation here and at the beginning of v. 19 for the sake of clarity. See also the note on v. 26.

6 tn Heb "in order to make them a ruin, an object of..." The sentence is broken up and the antecedents are made specific for the sake of clarity and English style.

7 tn See the study note on 24:9 for explanation.

8 tn Heb "as it is today." This phrase would obviously be more appropriate after all these things had happened as is the case in 44:6, 23 where the verbs referring to these conditions are past. Some see this phrase as a marginal gloss added after the tragedies of 597 b.c. or 586 b.c. However, it may refer here to the beginning stages where Judah has already suffered the loss of Josiah, of its freedom, of some of its temple treasures, and of some of its leaders (Dan 1:1-3). The different date for Jehoiakim there is due to the different method of counting the king's first year; the third year there is the same as the fourth year in 25:1).

9 sn See further Jer 46:2-28 for the judgment against Egypt.

10 tn The meaning of this term and its connection with the preceding is somewhat uncertain. This word is used of the mixture of foreign people who accompanied Israel out of Egypt (Exod 12:38) and of the foreigners that the Israelites were to separate out of their midst in the time of Nehemiah (Neh 13:3). Most commentators interpret it here of the foreign people who were living in Egypt. (See BDB 786 s.v. עֲרָבִים and KBL 733 s.v. אֲרָבִים.)

11 sn The land of Uz was Job's homeland (Job 1:1). The exact location is unknown but its position here between Egypt and the Philistine cities suggests it is south of Judah, probably in the Arabian peninsula. Lam 4:21 suggests that it was near Edom.

12 sn See further Jer 47:1-7 for the judgment against the Philistines. The Philistine cities were west of Judah.

13 sn The Greek historian Herodotus reports that Ashdod had been destroyed under the Pharaoh who preceded Necho, Psammetichus.

14 sn See further Jer 49:7-22 for the judgment against Edom. Edom, Moab, and Ammon were east of Judah.

15 sn See further Jer 48:1-47 for the judgment against Moab.

16 sn See further Jer 49:1-6 for the judgment against Ammon.

17 map For location see Map1-A2; Map2-G2; Map4-A1; JP3-F3; JP4-F3.

18 sn Tyre and Sidon are mentioned within the judgment on the Philistines in Jer 47:4. They were Phoenician cities to the north and west of Judah on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea in what is now Lebanon.

map For location see Map1-A1; JP3-F3; JP4-F3.

19 sn The connection with Tyre and Sidon suggests that these were Phoenician colonies. See also Isa 23:2.

20 sn Dedan and Tema are mentioned together in Isa 21:13-14 and located in the desert. They were located in the northern part of the Arabian peninsula south and east of Ezion Geber. Buz is not mentioned anywhere else and its location is unknown. Judgment against Dedan and Tema is mentioned in conjunction with the judgment on Edom in Jer 49:7-8.

21 tn For the discussion regarding the meaning of the terms here see the notes on 9:26.

sn See Jer 9:26 where these are mentioned in connection with Moab, Edom, and Ammon.

22 tc Or "and all the kings of people of mixed origin who." The Greek version gives evidence of having read the term only once; it refers to the "people of mixed origin" without reference to the kings of Arabia. While the term translated "people of mixed origin" seems appropriate in the context of a group of foreigners within a larger entity (e.g. Israel in Exod 12:38; Neh 13:3; Egypt in Jer 50:37), it seems odd to speak of them as a separate entity under their own kings. The presence of the phrase in the Hebrew text and the other versions dependent upon it can be explained as a case of dittography.

sn See further Jer 49:28-33 for judgment against some of these Arabian peoples.

23 sn The kingdom of Zimri is mentioned nowhere else, so its location is unknown.

24 sn See further Jer 49:34-39 for judgment against Elam.

25 sn Elam and Media were east of Babylon; Elam in the south and Media in the north. They were in what is now western Iran.

26 tn The words "have drunk the wine of the LORD's wrath" are not in the text. They are supplied in the translation for clarity at the end of the list to serve as a transition to the next sentence which does not directly mention the cup or the LORD's wrath.

27 tn Heb "the king of Sheshach." "Sheshach" is a code name for Babylon formed on the principle of substituting the last letter of the alphabet for the first, the next to the last for the second, and so on. On this principle Hebrew שׁ (shin) is

25:27 Then the LORD said to me,¹ “Tell them that the LORD God of Israel who rules over all² says,³ ‘Drink this cup⁴ until you get drunk and vomit. Drink until you fall down and can’t get up.’⁵ For I will send wars sweeping through you.’⁶ 25:28 If they refuse to take the cup from your hand and drink it, tell them that the LORD who rules over all says⁷ ‘You most certainly must drink it!’⁸ 25:29 For take note, I am already beginning to bring disaster on the city that I call my own.⁹ So how can you possibly avoid being punished?¹⁰ You will not go unpunished! For I am proclaiming war against all who live on the earth. I, the LORD who rules over all,¹¹ affirm it!’¹²

25:30 “Then, Jeremiah,¹³ make the following prophecy¹⁴ against them:

‘Like a lion about to attack,¹⁵ the LORD

will roar from the heights of heaven; from his holy dwelling on high he will roar loudly.

He will roar mightily against his land.¹⁶

He will shout in triumph like those stomping juice from the grapes¹⁷

against all those who live on the earth.

25:31 The sounds of battle¹⁸ will resound to the ends of the earth.

For the LORD will bring charges against the nations.¹⁹

He will pass judgment on all humankind and will hand the wicked over to be killed in war.’²⁰

The LORD so affirms it!²¹

25:32 The LORD who rules over all²² says, ‘Disaster will soon come on one nation after another.²³

A mighty storm of military destruction²⁴ is rising up

substituted for Hebrew \beth (*bet*) and Hebrew κ (*kaf*) is substituted for Hebrew λ (*lamed*). On the same principle “Leb Kamai” in Jer 51:1 is a code name for Chasdim or Chaldeans which is Jeremiah’s term for the Babylonians. No explanation is given for why the code names are used. The name “Sheshach” for Babylon also occurs in Jer 51:41 where the term Babylon is found in parallelism with it.

1 **tn** The words “Then the LORD said to me” are not in the text. They are supplied in the translation for clarity, to connect this part of the narrative with vv. 15, 17 after the long intervening list of nations who were to drink the cup of God’s wrath in judgment.

2 **tn** *Heb* “Yahweh of armies, the God of Israel.”

sn See the study notes on 2:19 and 7:3 for explanation of this extended title.

3 **tn** *Heb* “Tell them, ‘Thus says the LORD...’” The translation is intended to eliminate one level of imbedded quotation marks to help avoid confusion.

4 **tn** The words “this cup” are not in the text but are implicit to the metaphor and the context. They are supplied in the translation for clarity.

5 **tn** *Heb* “Drink, and get drunk, and vomit and fall down and don’t get up.” The imperatives following drink are not parallel actions but consequent actions. For the use of the imperative plus the conjunctive “and” to indicate consequent action, even intention see GKC 324-25 §110.f and compare usage in 1 Kgs 22:12; Prov 3:3b-4a.

6 **tn** *Heb* “because of the sword that I will send among you.” See the notes on 2:16 for explanation.

7 **tn** *Heb* “Tell them, ‘Thus says the LORD...’” The translation is intended to eliminate one level of imbedded quote marks to help avoid confusion.

8 **tn** The translation attempts to reflect the emphatic construction of the infinitive absolute preceding the finite verb which is here an obligatory imperfect. (See Joüon 2:371-72 §113.m and 2:423 §123.h, and compare usage in Gen 15:13.)

9 **tn** *Heb* “which is called by my name.” See translator’s note on 7:10 for support.

10 **tn** This is an example of a question without the formal introductory particle following a conjunctive *vav* introducing an opposition. (See Joüon 2:609 §161.a.) It is also an example of the use of the infinitive before the finite verb in a rhetorical question involving doubt or denial. (See Joüon 2:422-23 §123.f, and compare usage in Gen 37:8.)

11 **tn** *Heb* “Yahweh of armies.”

sn See the study notes on 2:19 and 7:3 for explanation of this extended title.

12 **tn** *Heb* “Oracle of Yahweh of armies.”

13 **tn** The word “Jeremiah” is not in the text. It is supplied in the translation to make clear who is being addressed.

14 **tn** *Heb* “Prophecy against them all these words.”

15 **tn** The words “like a lion about to attack” are not in the text but are implicit in the metaphor. The explicit comparison

of the LORD to a lion is made at the end of the passage in v. 38. The words are supplied in the translation here for clarity.

sn For the metaphor of the LORD going forth against his enemies like an attacking lion see Jer 49:19; 50:44; Isa 31:4 in all of which the LORD comes against the nations in defense of his people. In Hos 5:14 the metaphor is turned against his own people. The figure of a lion ravaging people has already been used in Jer 4:7 of the enemy from the north (Babylon).

16 **sn** The word used here (*Heb* “his habitation”) refers to the land of Canaan which the LORD chose to make his earthly dwelling (Exod 15:13) and which was the dwelling place of his chosen people (Jer 10:25; Isa 32:18). Judgment would begin at the “house of God” (v. 29; 1 Pet 4:17) but would extend to the rest of the earth (v. 29).

17 **sn** The metaphor shifts from God as a lion to God as a mighty warrior (Jer 20:11; Isa 42:13; Zeph 3:17) shouting in triumph over his foes. Within the metaphor is a simile where the warrior is compared to a person stomping on grapes to remove the juice from them in the making of wine. The figure will be invoked later in a battle scene where the sounds of joy in the grape harvest are replaced by the sounds of joy of the enemy soldiers (Jer 48:33). The picture is drawn in more gory detail in Isa 63:1-6.

18 **tn** For the use of this word see Amos 2:2; Hos 10:14; Ps 74:23. See also the usage in Isa 66:6 which is very similar to the metaphorical usage here.

19 **tn** *Heb* “the LORD has a lawsuit against the nations.” For usage of the term see Hos 4:1; Mic 6:2, and compare the usage of the related verb in Jer 2:9; 12:1.

20 **tn** *Heb* “give the wicked over to the sword.”

sn There is undoubtedly a deliberate allusion here to the reference to the “wars” (*Heb* “sword”) that the LORD had said he would send raging through the nations (vv. 16, 27) and the “war” (*Heb* “sword”) that he is proclaiming against them (v. 29).

21 **tn** *Heb* “Oracle of the LORD.”

22 **tn** *Heb* “Yahweh of armies.”

sn See the study notes on 2:19 and 7:3 for explanation of this extended title.

23 **tn** *Heb* “will go forth from nation to nation.”

24 **tn** The words “of military destruction” have been supplied in the translation to make the metaphor clear. The metaphor has shifted from that of God as a lion, to God as a warrior, to God as a judge, to God as the author of the storm winds of destruction.

sn For the use of this word in a literal sense see Jonah 1:4. For its use to refer to the wrath of the LORD which will rage over the wicked see Jer 23:19; 30:23. Here it refers to the mighty Babylonian army which will come bringing destruction over all the known world. The same prophecy has just been given under the figure of the nations drinking the wine of God’s wrath (vv. 15-29).

from the distant parts of the earth.’

25:33 Those who have been killed by the

LORD at that time will be scattered from one end of the earth to the other.

They will not be mourned over, gathered up, or buried.¹

Their dead bodies will lie scattered over the ground like manure.

25:34 Wail and cry out in anguish, you rulers!

Roll in the dust, you who shepherd flocks of people!²

The time for you to be slaughtered has come.

You will lie scattered and fallen like broken pieces of fine pottery.³

25:35 The leaders will not be able to run away and hide.⁴

The shepherds of the flocks will not be able to escape.

25:36 Listen to the cries of anguish of the leaders.

Listen to the wails of the shepherds of the flocks.

They are wailing because the LORD is about to destroy their lands.⁵

25:37 Their peaceful dwelling places will be laid waste⁶

by the fierce anger of the LORD.⁷

25:38 The LORD is like a lion who has left his lair.⁸

So their lands will certainly⁹ be laid waste

by the warfare of the oppressive nation¹⁰ and by the fierce anger of the LORD.”

¹ **sn** The intent here is to emphasize the large quantity of those who are killed – there will be too many to insure proper mourning rites and proper burial.

² **tn** *Heb* “Wail and cry out, you shepherds. Roll in the dust, you leaders of the flock.” The terms have been reversed to explain the figure.

sn The term “shepherd” has been used several times in the book of Jeremiah to refer to the leaders of the people who were responsible for taking care of their people who are compared to a flock. (See Jer 23:1-4 and the notes there.) Here the figure has some irony involved in it. It is the shepherds who are to be slaughtered like sheep. They may have considered themselves “choice vessels” (the literal translation of “fine pottery”), but they would be slaughtered and lie scattered on the ground (v. 33) like broken pottery.

³ **tn** The meaning of this line is debated. The Greek version does not have the words “lie scattered” and it reads the words “like broken pieces of fine pottery” (*Heb* “like choice vessels”; *בְּצֵלֵי הַמְּדָה*, *kikhli khemdah*) as “like choice rams” (*בְּצֵלֵי הַמְּדָה*, *k'ele khemdah*); i.e., “the days have been completed for you to be slaughtered and you will fall like choice rams.” The reading of the Greek version fits the context better, but is probably secondary for that very reason. The word translated “lie scattered” (*וַיִּפְּסוּ*, *ʿfotsah*) occurs nowhere else and the switch to the simile of “choice vessels” is rather abrupt. However, this section has been characterized by switching metaphors. The key to the interpretation and translation here is the consequential nature of the verbal actions involved. “Fall” does not merely refer to the action but the effect, i.e., “lie fallen” (cf. BDB 657 s.v. *נָפַל* 7 and compare Judg 3:25; 1 Sam 31:8). Though the noun translated “lie scattered” does not occur elsewhere, the verb does. It is quite commonly used of dispersing people and that has led many to see that as the reference here. The word, however, can be used of scattering other things like seed (Isa 28:25), arrows (2 Sam 22:15; metaphorical for lightning), etc. Here it follows “slaughtered” and refers to their dead bodies. The simile (*Heb* “fallen like choice vessels”) is elliptical, referring to “broken pieces” of choice vessels. In this sense the simile fits in perfectly with v. 33.

⁴ **tn** *Heb* “Flight [or “place of escape”] will perish from the shepherds.”

sn Judging from Gen 14:10 and Judg 8:12 (among many others), it was not uncommon for the leaders to try to save their own necks at the expense of their soldiers.

⁵ **tn** *Heb* “their pastures,” i.e., the place where they “shepherd” their “flocks.” The verb tenses in this section are not as clear as in the preceding. The participle in this verse is followed by a *vav* consecutive perfect like the imperatives in v. 34. The verbs in v. 38 are perfects but they can be and probably should be understood as prophetic like the perfect in v. 31 (*נִתְּנָם*, *nʿtanam*) which is surrounded by imperfects, participles, and *vav* consecutive perfects.

sn Jer 25:36-38 shifts to the future as though the action were already accomplished or going on. It is the sound that Jeremiah hears in his “prophetic ears” of something that has begun (v. 29) but will find its culmination in the future (vv. 13, 16, 27, 30-35).

⁶ **tn** For this meaning of the verb used here see HALOT 217 s.v. *הָמַם* Nif. Elsewhere it refers to people dying (see, e.g., Jer 49:26; 50:30) hence some see a reference to “lifeless.”

⁷ **tn** *Heb* “because of the burning anger of the LORD.”

⁸ **tn** *Heb* “Like a lion he has left his lair.”

sn The text returns to the metaphor alluded to in v. 30. The bracketing of speeches with repeated words or motifs is a common rhetorical device in ancient literature.

⁹ **tn** This is a way of rendering the Hebrew particle *כִּי* (*ki*) which is probably here for emphasis rather than indicating cause (see BDB 473 s.v. *כִּי* 1.e and compare usage in Jer 22:22).

¹⁰ **tc** *Heb* “by the sword of the oppressors.” The reading here follows a number of Hebrew *mss* and the Greek version. The majority of Hebrew *mss* read “the anger of the oppressor.” The reading “the sword of the oppressors” is supported also by the parallel use of this phrase in Jer 46:16; 50:16. The error in the MT may be explained by confusion with the following line which has the same beginning combination (*כַּפְּנֵי הַרְיֹן* [*mippʿne kharon*] confused for *כַּפְּנֵי הַרְיָב* [*mippʿne kharev*]). This reading is also supported by the Targum, the Aramaic paraphrase of the OT. According to BDB 413 s.v. *חַיָּה* Qal the feminine singular participle (*הַרְיָנָה*, *hayyonah*) is functioning as a collective in this idiom (see GKC 394 §122.s for this phenomenon).

sn The connection between “war” (*Heb* “the sword”) and the wrath or anger of the LORD has already been made in vv. 16, 27 and the sword has been referred to also in vv. 29, 31. The sword is of course a reference to the onslaughts of the Babylonian armies (see later Jer 51:20-23).

Jeremiah Is Put on Trial as a False Prophet¹

26:1 The LORD spoke to Jeremiah² at the beginning of the reign³ of Josiah's son, King Jehoiakim of Judah. **26:2** The LORD said, "Go stand in the courtyard of the LORD's temple.⁴ Speak out to all the people who are coming from the towns of Judah to worship in the LORD's temple. Tell them everything I command you to tell them. Do not leave out a single word! **26:3** Maybe they will pay attention and each of them will stop living the evil way they do.⁵ If they do that, then I will forgo destroying them⁶ as I had intended to do because of the wicked things they have been doing.⁷ **26:4** Tell them that the LORD says,⁸ 'You must obey me! You must live according to the way I have instructed you in my laws.⁹ **26:5** You must pay attention to the exhortations of my servants the prophets. I have sent them to you over and over again.¹⁰ But you have not paid any attention to them. **26:6** If you do not obey me,¹¹ then I will do to this temple what I did to Shiloh.¹² And I will make this city an example to be used in curses by people from all the nations on the earth."¹³

26:7 The priests, the prophets, and all the people heard Jeremiah say these things in the LORD's temple. **26:8** Jeremiah had just barely finished saying all the LORD had commanded him to say to all the people. All at once some¹⁴ of the priests, the prophets, and the people grabbed him and shouted, "You deserve to die!¹⁴ **26:9** How dare you claim the LORD's authority to prophesy such things! How dare you claim his authority to prophesy that this temple will become like Shiloh and that this city will become an uninhabited ruin!"¹⁵ Then all the people crowded around Jeremiah.

¹ **sn** Beginning with Jer 26 up to Jer 45 the book narrates in third person style incidents in the life of Jeremiah and prophecies (or sermons) he gave in obedience to the LORD's commands. Baruch is the probable narrator, passing on information gleaned from Jeremiah himself. (See Jer 36:4, 18, 32; 45:1 and also 32:13-14 where it is clear that Baruch is Jeremiah's scribe or secretary.) Chapters 26-29 contain narratives concerning reactions to Jeremiah's prophecies and his conflict with the prophets who were prophesying that things would be all right (see, e.g., 14:14-15; 23:21).

² **tn** The words "to Jeremiah" are not in the Hebrew text. They are added by the Old Latin (not the Vulgate) and the Syriac versions. They are implicit, however, to the narrative style which speaks of Jeremiah in the third person (cf. vv. 7, 12). They have been supplied in the translation for clarity.

³ **tn** It is often thought that the term here is equivalent to a technical term in Akkadian (*reshsharruti*) which refers to the part of the year remaining from the death or deposing of the previous king until the beginning of the calendar year when the new king officially ascended the throne. In this case it would refer to the part of the year between September, 609 B.C. when Jehoiakim was placed on the throne as a puppet king by Pharaoh Necho (2 Kgs 23:34-35) and April, 608 B.C. when he would have been officially celebrated as king. However, it will be suggested below in conjunction with the textual problems in 27:1 and 28:1 that the term does not necessarily refer to this period.

⁴ **sn** It is generally agreed that the incident recorded in this chapter relates to the temple message that Jeremiah gave in 7:1-15. The message there is summarized here in vv. 3-6. The primary interest here is in the response to that message.

⁵ **tn** *Heb* "will turn from his wicked way."

⁶ **tn** For the idiom and translation of terms involved here see 18:8 and the translator's note there.

sn The LORD is being consistent in the application of the principle laid down in Jer 18:7-8 that reformation of character will result in the withdrawal of the punishment of "uprooting, tearing down, destroying." His prophecies of doom are conditional threats, open to change with change in behavior.

⁷ **tn** *Heb* "because of the wickedness of their deeds."

⁸ **tn** *Heb* "thus says the LORD, '...'" The use of the indirect quotation in the translation eliminates one level of embedded quotation to avoid confusion.

⁹ **tn** *Heb* "by walking in my law which I set before you."

sn Examples of those laws are found in Jer 7:5-6, 9. The law was summarized or epitomized in the ten commandments which are called the "words of the covenant" in Exod 34:28, but it contained much more. However, when Israel is taken to task by God, it often relates to their failure to live up to the standards of the ten commandments (*Heb* "the ten words"; see Hos 4:1-3; Jer 7:9).

¹⁰ **tn** See the translator's note on 7:13 for the idiom here.

¹¹ **tn** 26:4-6 are all one long sentence containing a long condition with subordinate clauses (vv. 4-5) and a compound consequence in v. 6: *Heb* "If you will not obey me by walking in my law...by paying attention to the words of the prophets which...and you did not pay heed, then I will make...and I will make..." The sentence has been broken down in conformity to contemporary English style but an attempt has been made to reflect all the subordinations in the English translation.

¹² **sn** See the study note on Jer 7:13.

¹³ **tn** The translation again represents an attempt to break up a long complex Hebrew sentence into equivalent English ones that conform more to contemporary English style: *Heb* "And as soon as Jeremiah finished saying all that...the priests...grabbed him and said..." The word "some" has been supplied in the translation, because obviously it was not all the priests, the prophets, and all the people, but only some of them. There is, of course, rhetorical intent here to show that all were implicated, although all may not have actually participated. (This is a common figure called synecdoche where all is put for a part - all for all kinds or representatives of all kinds. See E. W. Bullinger, *Figures of Speech*, 614-19, and compare usage in Acts 10:12; Matt 3:5.)

¹⁴ **tn** Or "You must certainly die!" The construction here is again emphatic with the infinitive preceding the finite verb (cf. Joüon 2:423 §123.h, and compare usage in Exod 21:28).

¹⁵ **tn** *Heb* "Why have you prophesied in the LORD's name, saying, 'This house will become like Shiloh and this city will become a ruin without inhabitant?'" It is clear from the context here and in 7:1-15 that the emphasis is on "in the LORD's name" and that the question is rhetorical. The question is not a quest for information but an accusation, a remonstrance. (For this figure see E. W. Bullinger, *Figures of Speech*, 953-54, who calls a question like this a rhetorical question of remonstrance or expostulation. For good examples see Pss 11:1; 50:16.) For the significance of "prophesying in the LORD's name" see the study note on 14:14. The translation again utilizes the indirect quote to eliminate one level of embedded quotation.

sn They are questioning his right to claim the LORD's authority for what they see as a false prophecy. They believed that the presence of the LORD in the temple guaranteed their safety (7:4, 10, 14) and that the LORD could not possibly be threatening its destruction. Hence they were ready to put him to death as a false prophet according to the law of Moses (Deut 18:20).

26:10 However, some of the officials¹ of Judah heard about what was happening² and they rushed up to the LORD's temple from the royal palace. They set up court³ at the entrance of the New Gate of the LORD's temple.⁴ **26:11** Then the priests and the prophets made their charges before the officials and all the people. They said,⁵ "This man should be condemned to die⁶ because he prophesied against this city. You have heard him do so⁷ with your own ears."

26:12 Then Jeremiah made his defense before all the officials and all the people.⁸ "The LORD sent me to prophesy everything you have heard me say against this temple and against this city. **26:13** But correct the way you have been living and do what is right.⁹ Obey the LORD your God. If you do, the LORD will forgo destroying you as he threatened he would.¹⁰ **26:14** As to my case, I am in your power.¹¹ Do to me what you deem fair and proper. **26:15** But you should take careful note of this: If you put me to death, you will bring on yourselves and this city and those who live in it the guilt of murdering an innocent

man. For the LORD has sent me to speak all this where you can hear it. That is the truth!"¹²

26:16 Then the officials and all the people rendered their verdict to the priests and the prophets. They said,¹³ "This man should not be condemned to die.¹⁴ For he has spoken to us under the authority of the LORD our God."¹⁵ **26:17** Then some of the elders of Judah¹⁶ stepped forward and spoke to all the people gathered there. They said, **26:18** "Micah from Moresheth¹⁷ prophesied during the time Hezekiah was king of Judah.¹⁸ He told all the people of Judah,

"The LORD who rules over all¹⁹ says, "Zion²⁰ will become a plowed field. Jerusalem²¹ will become a pile of rubble. The temple mount will become a mere wooded ridge."²²

¹² tn Heb "For in truth the LORD has sent me to you to speak in your ears all these words/things."

¹³ tn Heb "Then the officials and all the people said to the priests and the prophets..."

¹⁴ sn Contrast v. 11.

¹⁵ tn Heb "For in the name of the LORD our God he has spoken to us." The emphasis is on "in the name of..."

sn The priests and false prophets claimed that they were speaking in the LORD's name (i.e., as his representatives and with his authority [see 1 Sam 25:9; 1 Kgs 21:8 and cf. the study note on Jer 23:27]) and felt that Jeremiah's claims to be doing so were false (see v. 9). Jeremiah (and the LORD) charged that the opposite was the case (cf. 14:14-15; 23:21). The officials and the people, at least at this time, accepted his claims that the LORD had sent him (vv. 12, 15).

¹⁶ tn Heb "elders of the land."

sn The elders were important land-owning citizens, separate from the "heads" or leaders of the tribes, the officers and the judges. They were very influential in both the judicial, political, and religious proceedings of the cities and the state. (See, e.g., Josh 24:1; 2 Sam 19:11; 2 Kgs 23:1 for elders of Israel/Judah, and Deut 21:1-9; Ruth 4:1-2 for elders of the cities.)

¹⁷ sn Micah from Moresheth was a contemporary of Isaiah (compare Mic 1:1 with Isa 1:1) from the country town of Moresheth in the hill country southwest of Jerusalem. The prophecy referred to is found in Mic 3:12. This is the only time in the OT where an OT prophet is quoted verbatim and identified.

¹⁸ sn Hezekiah was co-regent with his father Ahaz from 729-715 B.C. and sole ruler from 715-686 B.C. His father was a wicked king who was responsible for the incursions of the Assyrians (2 Kgs 16; 2 Chr 28). Hezekiah was a godly king, noted for his religious reforms and for his faith in the LORD in the face of the Assyrian threat (2 Kgs 18-19; 2 Chr 32:1-23). The deliverance of Jerusalem in response to his prayers of faith (2 Kgs 19:14-19, 29-36) was undoubtedly well-known to the people of Jerusalem and Judah and may have been one of the prime reasons for their misplaced trust in the inviolability of Zion/Jerusalem (see Ps 46, 76) though the people of Micah's day already believed it too (Mic 3:11).

¹⁹ tn Heb "Yahweh of armies."

sn For an explanation of this title for God see the study note on 2:19.

²⁰ sn Zion was first of all the citadel that David captured (2 Sam 5:6-10), then the City of David and the enclosed temple area, then the whole city of Jerusalem. It is often in poetic parallelism with Jerusalem as it is here (see, e.g., Ps 76:2; Amos 1:2).

²¹ map For location see Map5-B1; Map6-F3; Map7-E2; Map8-F2; Map10-B3; JP1-F4; JP2-F4; JP3-F4; JP4-F4.

²² sn There is irony involved in this statement. The text reads literally "high places of a forest/thicket." The "high places" were the illicit places of worship that Jerusalem was supposed to replace. Because of their sin, Jerusalem would be like one of the pagan places of worship with no place left sac-

¹ sn These officials of Judah were officials from the royal court. They may have included some of the officials mentioned in Jer 36:12-25. They would have been concerned about any possible "illegal" proceedings going on in the temple.

² tn Heb "these things."

³ tn Heb "they sat" or "they took their seats." However, the context is one of judicial trial.

sn The gateway or gate complex of an ancient Near Eastern city was often used for court assemblies (cf. Deut 21:19; 22:15; Ruth 4:1; Isa 29:21). Here the gate of the temple was used for the convening of a court to try Jeremiah for the charge of being a false prophet.

⁴ tn The translation follows many Hebrew MSS and ancient versions in reading the word "house" (= temple) here. The majority of Hebrew MSS do not have this word. It is, however, implicit in the construction "the New Gate of the LORD."

sn The location of the New Gate is uncertain. It is mentioned again in Jer 36:10 where it is connected with the upper (i.e., inner) court of the temple. Some equate it with the Upper Gate that Jotham rebuilt during his reign (2 Kgs 15:35; Jotham reigned from 750-735 B.C.). That gate, however, has already been referred to as the Upper Gate of Benjamin in Jer 20:2 (for more detail see the study note there) and would not likely have been called something different here.

⁵ tn Heb "the priests and prophets said to the leaders and the people..." The long sentence has been broken up to conform better with contemporary English style and the situational context is reflected in "laid their charges."

⁶ tn Heb "a sentence of death to this man."

⁷ tn Heb "it."

⁸ tn Heb "Jeremiah said to all the leaders and all the people..." See the note on the word "said" in the preceding verse.

⁹ tn Heb "Make good your ways and your actions." For the same expression see 7:3, 5; 18:11.

¹⁰ tn For the idiom and translation of terms involved here see 18:8 and the translator's note there.

sn The LORD is being consistent in the application of the principle laid down in Jer 18:7-8 that reformation of character will result in the withdrawal of the punishment of "uprooting, tearing down, destroying." His prophecies of doom are conditional threats, open to change with change in behavior.

¹¹ tn Heb "And I, behold I am in your hand." Hand is quite commonly used for "power" or "control" in biblical contexts.

26:19 King Hezekiah and all the people of Judah did not put him to death, did they? Did not Hezekiah show reverence for the LORD and seek the LORD's favor?¹ Did not² the LORD forgo destroying them³ as he threatened he would? But we are on the verge of bringing great disaster on ourselves.⁴

26:20 Now there was another man⁵ who prophesied as the LORD's representative⁶ against this city and this land just as Jeremiah did. His name was Uriah son of Shemaiah from Kiriath Jearim.⁷ 26:21 When the king and all his bodyguards⁸ and officials heard what he was prophesying,⁹ the king sought to have him executed. But Uriah found out about it and fled to Egypt out of fear.¹⁰ 26:22 However, King Jehoiakim sent some men to Egypt, including Elnathan son of Achbor,¹¹ 26:23 and they brought Uriah back

from there.¹² They took him to King Jehoiakim, who had him executed and had his body thrown into the burial place of the common people.¹³

26:24 However, Ahikam son of Shaphan¹⁴ used his influence to keep Jeremiah from being handed over and executed by the people.¹⁵

Jeremiah Counsels Submission to Babylon

27:1 The LORD spoke to Jeremiah¹⁶ early in the reign of Josiah's son, King Zedekiah of Judah.¹⁷ 27:2 The LORD told

¹² **tn** *Heb* "from Egypt."

sn A standard part of international treaties at this time was a stipulation of mutual extradition of political prisoners. Jehoiakim was a vassal of Pharaoh Necho (see 2 Kgs 23:34-35) and undoubtedly had such a treaty with him.

¹³ **sn** The *burial place of the common people* was the public burial grounds, distinct from the family tombs, where poor people without any distinction were buried. It was in the Kidron Valley east of Jerusalem (2 Kgs 23:6). The intent of reporting this is to show the ruthlessness of Jehoiakim.

¹⁴ **sn** *Ahikam son of Shaphan* was an official during the reign of Jehoiakim's father, Josiah (2 Kgs 22:12, 14). He was also the father of Gedaliah who became governor of Judah after the fall of Jerusalem (Jer 40:5). The participle at the beginning of the verse is meant to contrast the actions of this man with the actions of Jehoiakim. The impression created by this verse is that it took more than just the royal officials' opinion and the elders' warnings to keep the priests and prophets from swaying popular opinion to put Jeremiah to death.

¹⁵ **tn** *Heb* "Nevertheless, the hand of Ahikam son of Shaphan was with Jeremiah so that he would not be given (even more literally, 'so as not to give him') into the hand of the people to kill him." "Hand" is often used for "aid," "support," "influence," "power," "control."

¹⁶ **sn** The names of Jeremiah and of Nebuchadnezzar are spelled differently in the Hebrew of chapter 27-29. That and other literary features show that these three chapters are all closely related. The events of these three chapters all take place within the space of one year (cf. 28:1; 29:17).

¹⁷ **tc** The reading here is based on a few Hebrew mss and the Syriac and Arabic versions. The majority of Hebrew mss and most of the versions read "At the beginning of the reign of Josiah's son, Jehoiakim king of Judah" as in 26:1. The LXX does not have this whole verse. It has long been recognized that the text of 27:1 is textually corrupt. The date formula in the majority of Hebrew mss at 27:1 is contradictory both with the context of the passage which deals with an event in the reign of Zedekiah (see vv. 3, 13 and v. 20 which presupposes that Jeconiah, Jehoiakim's son, has been taken captive [i.e., after the death of Jehoiakim!]) and the date formula in 28:1 which refers to an event "in that same year" and then qualifies it with "Early in the reign of Zedekiah." Hence it is preferable to read "Zedekiah" here in place of "Jehoiakim" and explain the error in the Hebrew manuscripts as an erroneous copying of 26:1.

sn If the text of 28:1 is correct, the date here would be sometime in the fourth year of Zedekiah which would be 594/3 B.C. Zedekiah had been placed on the throne as a puppet king by Nebuchadnezzar after he deposed Zedekiah's nephew, Jeconiah (Jehoiachin) and sent him, his family, some of the temple treasures, and some of the Judean leaders away to Babylon (2 Kgs 23:8-17). The author does not state directly why the envoys from the nations mentioned in v. 3 were in Jerusalem, but the implication is that they were there trying to interest Zedekiah in rebelling. Modern scholars have used the data here and in 28:1 and in the Babylonian Chronicles (it contains a record of major events of Nebuchadnezzar's reign) to suggest a plausible background for such a meeting. Nebuchadnezzar had to put down an uprising in the east and quell a rebellion in Babylon itself in the two years prior to this meeting. Some "prophets" in the nation of Israel and in these other nations (see vv. 9-10) saw in these events hopes for not

rosanct. It would even be overgrown with trees and bushes. So much for its inviolability!

¹ **tn** This Hebrew idiom (קָלַח פָּנִים, *khalah panim*) is often explained in terms of "stroking" or "patting the face" of someone, seeking to gain his favor. It is never used in a literal sense and is found in contexts of prayer (Exod 32:11; Ps 119:158), worship (Zech 8:21-22), humble submission (2 Chr 3:12), or amendment of behavior (Dan 9:13). All were true to one extent or another of Hezekiah.

² **tn** The *he* interrogative (הֲ) with the negative governs all three of the verbs, the perfect and the two *vav* (ו) consecutive imperfections that follow it. The next clause has disjunctive word order and introduces a contrast. The question expects a positive answer.

³ **tn** For the translation of the terms involved here see the translator's note on 18:8.

⁴ **tn** Or "great harm to ourselves." The word "disaster" (or "harm") is the same one that has been translated "destroying" in the preceding line and in vv. 3 and 13.

⁵ **sn** This is a brief parenthetical narrative about an otherwise unknown prophet who was executed for saying the same things Jeremiah did. It is put here to show the real danger that Jeremiah faced for saying what he did. There is nothing in the narrative here to show any involvement by Jehoiakim. This was a "lynch mob" instigated by the priests and false prophets which was stymied by the royal officials supported by some of the elders of Judah. Since it is disjunctive or parenthetical it is unclear whether this incident happened before or after that in the main narrative being reported.

⁶ **tn** *Heb* "in the name of the LORD," i.e., as his representative and claiming his authority. See the study note on v. 16.

⁷ **tn** *Heb* "Now also a man was prophesying in the name of the LORD, Uriah son of..., and he prophesied against this city and against this land according to all the words of Jeremiah." The long Hebrew sentence has been broken up in conformity with contemporary English style and the major emphasis brought out by putting his prophesying first, then identifying him.

⁸ **tn** *Heb* "all his mighty men/soldiers." It is unlikely that this included all the army. It more likely was the palace guards or royal bodyguards (see 2 Sam 23 where the same word is used of David's elite corps).

⁹ **tn** *Heb* "his words."

¹⁰ **tn** *Heb* "But Uriah heard and feared and fled and entered Egypt."

¹¹ **sn** *Elnathan son of Achbor* was one of the officials who urged Jeremiah and Baruch to hide after they heard Jeremiah's prophecies read before them (Jer 36:11-19). He was also one of the officials who urged Jehoiakim not to burn the scroll containing Jeremiah's prophecies (Jer 36:25). He may have been Jehoiakim's father-in-law (2 Kgs 24:6, 8).

me,¹ “Make a yoke² out of leather straps and wooden crossbars and put it on your neck. 27:3 Use it to send messages to the kings of Edom, Moab, Ammon, Tyre,³ and Sidon.⁴ Send them through⁵ the envoys who have come to Jerusalem⁶ to King Zedekiah of Judah. 27:4 Charge them to give their masters a message from me. Tell them, ‘The LORD God of Israel who rules over all⁷ says to give your masters this message.’⁸ 27:5 “I made the earth and the people and animals on it by my mighty power and great

strength,⁹ and I give it to whomever I see fit.¹⁰ 27:6 I have at this time placed all these nations of yours under the power¹¹ of my servant,¹² King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. I have even made all the wild animals subject to him.¹³ 27:7 All nations must serve him and his son and grandson¹⁴ until the time comes for his own nation to fall.¹⁵ Then many nations and great kings will in turn subjugate Babylon.¹⁶ 27:8 But suppose a nation or a kingdom will not be subject to King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. Suppose it will not submit to the yoke of servitude to¹⁷ him. I, the LORD, affirm that¹⁸ I will punish that nation. I will use the king of Babylon to punish it¹⁹ with war,²⁰ starvation, and disease until I have destroyed it.²¹ 27:9 So do not listen to your proph-

having to pay tribute to (i.e., submit to the yoke of) Nebuchadnezzar and were counseling rebellion. Jeremiah saw this as foolhardy and counseled otherwise. Again, there is a conflict between “prophets” which is what this whole section (Jer 27–29) is all about.

1 tn There is some disjunction in the narrative of this chapter. The introduction in v. 1 presents this as a third person narrative. But the rest of the passage reports the narrative in first person. Thus the text reads here “Thus the LORD said to me...” In vv. 12, 16 the narrative picks up in first person report and never indicates that Jeremiah carried out the command in vv. 2–4 that introduces the message which he repeats in summary form himself to Zedekiah. The report is thus an “unedited” first person report. This may create some confusion for some readers, but it is best to leave it in first person here because of the continuation in vv. 12, 16.

2 sn The yoke is a common biblical symbol of political servitude (see, e.g., Deut 28:48; 1 Kgs 12:4, 9, 10). From the context of 1 Kgs 12 it is clear that it applied to taxation and the provision of conscript labor. In international political contexts it involved the payment of heavy tribute which was often conscripted from the citizens (see, e.g., 2 Kgs 15:19–20; 23:34–35) and the furnishing of military contingents for the sovereign’s armies (see, e.g., 2 Kgs 24:2). Jeremiah’s message here combines both a symbolic action (the wearing of a yoke) and words of explanation as in Jer 19:1–13. (See Isa 20:1–6 for an example outside of Jeremiah.) The casting off of the yoke has been used earlier in Jer 2:20, 5:5 to refer to Israel’s failure to remain spiritually “subject” or faithful to God.

3 map For location see Map1-A2; Map2-G2; Map4-A1; JP3-F3; JP4-F3.

4 sn The nations of *Edom, Moab, and Ammon* were east of Judah. They were sometimes allies and sometimes enemies. The nations of *Tyre and Sidon* were on the sea coast north and west of Judah. They are best known for their maritime trade during the reign of Solomon. They were more commonly allies of Israel and Judah than enemies.

map For the location of Sidon see Map1-A1; JP3-F3; JP4-F3.

5 tn Heb “send by means of them” [i.e., the straps and crossbars made into a yoke] to...through.” The text is broken up in conformity with contemporary English style. Many English versions ignore the suffix on the end of “send” and find some support for this on the basis of its absence in the Lucianic Greek text. However, it is probably functioning metonymically here for the message which they see symbolized before them and is now explained clearly to them.

6 map For location see Map5-B1; Map6-F3; Map7-E2; Map8-F2; Map10-B3; JP1-F4; JP2-F4; JP3-F4; JP4-F4.

7 tn Heb “Yahweh of armies, the God of Israel.”

sn See study notes on 2:19 and 7:3 for the significance of this title.

8 tn Heb “Give them a charge to their masters saying, ‘Thus says Yahweh of armies, the God of Israel, ‘Thus you shall say to your masters...’” The sentence is broken up in conformity with contemporary English style.

9 tn Heb “by my great power and my outstretched arm.” Again “arm” is symbolical for “strength.” Compare the similar expression in 21:5.

10 sn See Dan 4:17 for a similar statement.

11 tn Heb “have given...into the hand of.”

12 sn See the study note on 25:9 for the significance of the application of this term to Nebuchadnezzar.

13 tn Heb “I have given...to him to serve him.” The verb “give” in this syntactical situation is functioning like the Hiphil stem, i.e., as a causative. See Dan 1:9 for parallel usage. For the usage of “serve” meaning “be subject to” compare 2 Sam 22:44 and BDB 713 s.v. נָבַר 3.

sn This statement is rhetorical, emphasizing the totality of Nebuchadnezzar’s dominion. Neither here nor in Dan 2:38 is it to be understood literally.

14 sn This is a figure that emphasizes that they will serve for a long time but not for an unlimited duration. The kingdom of Babylon lasted a relatively short time by ancient standards. It lasted from 605 b.c. when Nebuchadnezzar defeated Necho at Carchemish until the fall of Babylon in 538 b.c. There were only four rulers. Nebuchadnezzar was succeeded by his son, Evil Merodach (cf. 52:31), and two other rulers who were not descended from him.

15 tn Heb “until the time of his land, even his, comes.” The independent pronoun is placed here for emphasis on the possessive pronoun. The word “time” is used by substitution for the things that are done in it (compare in the NT John 2:4; 7:30; 8:20 “his hour had not yet come”).

sn See Jer 25:12–14, 16.

16 tn Heb “him.” This is a good example of the figure of substitution where the person is put for his descendants or the nation or subject he rules. (See Gen 28:13–14 for another good example and Acts 22:7 in the NT.)

17 tn Heb “put their necks in the yoke of.” See the study note on v. 2 for the figure.

18 tn Heb “oracle of the LORD.”

19 tn Heb “The nation and/or the kingdom which will not serve him, Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, and which will not put its neck in the yoke of the king of Babylon, by sword, starvation, and disease I will punish [or more literally, “visit upon”] that nation, oracle of the LORD.” The long complex Hebrew sentence has been broken up in conformity with contemporary English style and the figures interpreted for the sake of clarity. The particle הַא, the sign of the accusative, before “which will not put...” is a little unusual here. For its use to introduce a new topic (here a second relative clause) see BDB 85 s.v. הַא 3.α.

20 tn Heb “with/by the sword.”

21 tc The verb translated “destroy” (הָבַט, *tamam*) is usually intransitive in the stem of the verb used here. It is found in a transitive sense elsewhere only in Ps 64:7. BDB 1070 s.v. הָבַט 7 emends both texts. In this case they recommend הָבַט (hbb): “until I give them into his hand.” That reading is suggested by the texts of the Syriac and Targumic translations (see BHS fn c). The Greek translation supports reading the verb “destroy” but treats it as though it were intransitive “until they are de-

ets or to those who claim to predict the future by divination,¹ by dreams, by consulting the dead,² or by practicing magic. They keep telling you, ‘You do not need to be³ subject to the king of Babylon.’ 27:10 Do not listen to them,⁴ because their prophecies are lies.⁵ Listening to them will only cause you⁶ to be taken far away from your native land. I will drive you out of your country and you will die in exile.⁷ 27:11 Things will go better for the nation that submits to the yoke of servitude⁸ the king of Babylon and is subject to him. I will leave that nation⁹ in its native land. Its people can continue to farm it and live in it. I, the LORD, affirm it!”¹⁰

27:12 I told King Zedekiah of Judah the same thing. I said,¹¹ “Submit¹² to the yoke of servitude to¹³ the king of Babylon. Be subject to him and his people. Then you will continue to live. 27:13 There is no reason why you and your

people should die in war¹⁴ or from starvation or disease!¹⁵ That’s what the LORD says will happen to any nation¹⁶ that will not be subject to the king of Babylon. 27:14 Do not listen to the prophets who are telling you that you do not need to serve¹⁷ the king of Babylon. For they are prophesying lies to you. 27:15 For I, the LORD, affirm¹⁸ that I did not send them. They are prophesying lies to you. If you¹⁹ listen to them, I will drive you and the prophets who are prophesying lies out of the land and you will all die in exile.”²⁰

27:16 I also told the priests and all the people, “The LORD says, ‘Do not listen to what your prophets are saying. They are prophesying to you that²¹ the valuable articles taken from the LORD’s temple will be brought back from Babylon very soon.²² But they are prophesying a lie to you. 27:17 Do not listen to them. Be subject to the king of Babylon. Then you²³ will continue to live. Why should this city be made a pile of rubble?’”²⁴ 27:18 I also told them,²⁵ “If they are really prophets and the LORD is speaking to them,²⁶ let them pray earnestly to the LORD who rules over all.²⁷ Let them plead with him not to

stroyed by his hand” (reading תַּמָּמִים [*tummam*]). The MT here is accepted as the more difficult reading and support is seen in the transitive use of the verb in Ps 64:7.

tn Heb “I will punish that nation until I have destroyed them [i.e., its people] by his hand.” “Hand” here refers to agency. Hence, “I will use him.”

1 sn Various means of *divination* are alluded to in the OT. For example, Ezek 21:26-27 alludes to throwing down arrows to see which way they fall and consulting the shape of the liver of slaughtered animals. Gen 44:5 alludes to reading the future through pouring liquid in a cup. The means alluded to in this verse were all classified as pagan and prohibited as illegitimate in Deut 18:10-14. The LORD had promised that he would speak to them through prophets like Moses (Deut 18:15, 18). But even prophets could lie. Hence, the LORD told them that the test of a true prophet was whether what he said came true or not (Deut 18:20-22). An example of false prophesying and the vindication of the true as opposed to the false will be given in the chapter that follows this.

2 sn An example of this is seen in 1 Sam 28.

3 tn The verb in this context is best taken as a negative obligatory imperfect. See *IBHS* 508-9 §31.4g for discussion and examples. See Exod 4:15 as an example of positive obligation.

4 tn The words “Don’t listen to them” have been repeated from v. 9a to pick up the causal connection between v. 9a and v. 10 that is formally introduced by a causal particle in v. 10 in the original text.

5 tn Heb “they are prophesying a lie.”

6 tn Heb “lies will result in your being taken far...” (לְיָמֵינוּ [*l’ma’an*] + infinitive). This is a rather clear case of the particle לְיָמֵינוּ introducing result (contra BDB 775 s.v. לָקַח note 1. There is no irony in this statement; it is a bold prediction).

7 tn The words “out of your country” are not in the text but are implicit in the meaning of the verb. The words “in exile” are also not in the text but are implicit in the context. These words have been supplied in the translation for clarity.

8 tn Heb “put their necks in the yoke of.” See the study note on v. 2 for the figure.

9 tn The words “Things will go better for” are not in the text. They are supplied contextually as a means of breaking up the awkward syntax of the original which reads “The nation which brings its neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon and subjects itself to him, I will leave it...”

10 tn Heb “oracle of the LORD.”

11 tn Heb “I spoke to Zedekiah...according to all these words, saying.”

12 sn The verbs in this verse are all plural. They are addressed to Zedekiah and his royal advisers (compare 22:2).

13 tn Heb “put their necks in the yoke of.” See the study note on v. 2 for the figure.

14 tn Heb “with/by the sword.”

15 tn Heb “Why should you and your people die...?” The rhetorical question expects the answer made explicit in the translation, “There is no reason!”

16 tn Heb “...disease according to what the LORD spoke concerning the nation that...”

17 tn The verb in this context is best taken as a negative obligatory imperfect. See *IBHS* 508 §31.4g for discussion and examples. See Exod 4:15 as an example of positive obligation.

18 tn Heb “oracle of the LORD.”

19 sn The verbs are again plural referring to the king and his royal advisers.

20 tn Heb “...drive you out and you will perish, you and the prophets who are prophesying lies.”

sn For the fulfillment of this prophecy see Jer 39:5-7; 52:7-11; 2 Kgs 25:4-7.

21 tn Heb “don’t listen to the words of the prophets who are prophesying to you....” The sentence has been broken up for the sake of English style and one level of embedded quotes has been eliminated to ease complexity.

22 sn This refers to the *valuable articles* of the temple treasury which were carried off by Nebuchadnezzar four years earlier when he carried off Jeconiah, his family, some of his nobles, and some of the cream of Judean society (2 Kgs 24:10-16, especially v. 13 and see also vv. 19-20 in the verses following).

23 tn The imperative with *vav* (ו) here and in v. 12 after another imperative are a good example of the use of the imperative to introduce a consequence. (See GKC 324-25 §110.f and see Gen 42:18. This is a common verb in this idiom.)

24 tn According to E. W. Bullinger (*Figures of Speech*, 954) both this question and the one in v. 13 are examples of rhetorical questions of prohibition / “don’t let this city be made a pile of rubble.”

25 tn The words “I also told them” are not in the text, but it is obvious from the fact that the LORD is spoken about in the third person in vv. 18, 19, 21 that he is not the speaker. This is part of Jeremiah’s own speech to the priests and the people (v. 16). These words are supplied in the translation for clarity.

26 tn Heb “the word of the LORD is with them.”

27 tn Heb “Yahweh of armies.”

sn For the significance of this title see the study note on 2:19.

let the valuable articles that are still left in the LORD's temple, in the royal palace, and in Jerusalem be taken away¹ to Babylon. 27:19 For the LORD who rules over all² has already spoken about the two bronze pillars,³ the large bronze basin called 'The Sea,'⁴ and the movable bronze stands.⁵ He has already spoken about the rest of the valuable articles that are left in this city. 27:20 He has already spoken about these things that King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon did not take away when he carried Jehoiakim's son King Jeconiah of Judah and the nobles of Judah and Jerusalem away as captives.⁶ 27:21 Indeed, the LORD God of Israel who rules over all⁷ has already spoken⁸ about the valuable articles that are

left in the LORD's temple, in the royal palace of Judah, and in Jerusalem. 27:22 He has said, 'They will be carried off to Babylon. They will remain there until it is time for me to show consideration for them again.⁹ Then I will bring them back and restore them to this place.' I, the LORD, affirm this!¹⁰

Jeremiah Confronted by a False Prophet

28:1 The following events occurred in that same year, early in the reign of King Zedekiah of Judah. To be more precise, it was the fifth month of the fourth year of his reign.¹¹ The

¹ **tn** *Heb* "...speaking to them, let them entreat the LORD... so that the valuable articles...will not go to Babylon." The long original sentence has been broken up for the sake of English style.

² **tn** *Heb* "Yahweh of armies." For the significance of this title see the note at 2:19.

³ **tn** The words "two bronze" are not in the text. They have been supplied in the translation to help identify the referent.

sn The two bronze pillars are the two free-standing pillars at the entrance of the temple (Jakin and Boaz) described in 1 Kgs 7:15-22.

⁴ **tn** The words "the large bronze basin called" are not in the text. They have been supplied in the translation to help identify the referent.

sn "The Sea" refers to the large basin that was mounted on twelve bronze bulls. It stood in front of the temple and contained water for the priests to bathe themselves (2 Chr 4:6; cf. Exod 30:17-21). It is described in 1 Kgs 7:23-26.

⁵ **tn** The words "movable bronze" are not in the text. They have been supplied in the translation to help identify the referent. See the study note for further reference.

sn The bronze stands are the movable bronze stands described in 1 Kgs 7:27-37. They were the stands for the bronze basins described in 1 Kgs 7:38-39. According to 2 Chr 4:6 the latter were used to wash the burnt offerings. The priests would have been very concerned especially about the big bronze basin and the movable stands and their basins because they involved their ritual purification apart from which they would have had no sanctity. These articles (or furnishings in this case) were broken up and the bronze carried away to Babylon along with all the other bronze, silver, and gold furnishings when the temple and the city were destroyed in 587 B.C. (see 2 Kgs 25:13-15; Jer 52:17-19).

⁶ **tn** 27:19-20 are all one long sentence in Hebrew. It has been broken up for the sake of English style. Some of the sentences still violate contemporary English style (e.g., v. 20) but breaking them down any further would lose the focus. For further discussion see the study note on v. 21.

⁷ **tn** *Heb* "Yahweh of armies, the God of Israel." For the significance of this title see the note at 2:19.

⁸ **sn** Some of the flavor of the repetitive nature of Hebrew narrative is apparent in vv. 19-21. In the Hebrew original vv. 19-20 are all one long sentence with complex coordination and subordinations. I.e., all the objects in v. 19 are all objects of the one verb "has spoken about" and the description in v. 20 is one long relative or descriptive clause. The introductory "For the LORD...has already spoken" is repeated in v. 21 from v. 19 and reference is made to the same articles once again, only in the terms that were used in v. 18b. By this means, attention is focused for these people (here the priests and the people) on articles which were of personal concern for them and the climax or the punch line is delayed to the end. The point being made is that the false prophets are mistaken; not only will the articles taken to Babylon not be returned "very soon" but the LORD had said that the ones that remained would be taken there as well. They ought rather pray that the LORD will change his mind and not carry them off as well.

⁹ **tn** This verb is a little difficult to render here. The word is used in the sense of taking note of something and acting according to what is noticed. It is the word that has been translated several times throughout Jeremiah as "punish [someone]." It is also used in the opposite sense of taking note and "show consideration for" (or "care for;" see, e.g., Ruth 1:6). Here the nuance is positive and is further clarified by the actions that follow, bringing them back and restoring them.

¹⁰ **tn** *Heb* "oracle of the LORD."

¹¹ **tc** The original text is unusually full here and deemed by many scholars to be corrupt: *Heb* "And it happened in that year in the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah king of Judah, in the fourth year, in the fifth month Hananiah...said to..." Many scholars see a contradiction between "in the fourth year" and "in the beginning of the reign." These scholars point to the fact that the Greek version does not have "in that year" and "in the beginning of the reign of"; it merely reads "in the fourth year of Zedekiah king of Judah, in the fifth month." These scholars generally also regard the heading at 27:1 to be unoriginal and interpret the heading in the MT here as a faulty harmonization of the original (that in the Greek version) with the erroneous one in the Hebrew of 27:1. However, it is just as possible that the Greek version in both places is an attempt to harmonize the data of 27:1 and 28:1. I.e., it left out both the heading at 27:1, and "in that year" and "at the beginning of the reign of" in the heading here because it thought the data was contradictory. However, it is just as likely that there is really no contradiction here. I.e., the term "beginning of the reign" can include the fourth year. E. H. Merrill has argued that the term here refers not to the accession year (see the translator's note on 26:1) but to the early years in general ("The 'Accession Year' and Davidic Chronology," *JANESCU* 19 [1989]: 105-6, and cf. note 18 for bibliography on Akkadian parallels). Hence the phrase has been translated both here and in 27:1 "early in the reign of..." and in other attempts at harmonization see the discussion in G. L. Keown, P. J. Scalise, T. G. Smothers, *Jeremiah* 26-52 (WBC), 41, n. 1a.

sn The dating here is very full and precise. "In that same year" ties the events here in with the messages that Jeremiah delivered to the envoys, the king and his court, and the priests and people while wearing the yoke symbolizing servitude to Nebuchadnezzar. The text wants to show that the events here transpired shortly after those in Jer 27 and that Jeremiah is still wearing the yoke. The supplying of the precise month is important because the end of the chapter will show that Jeremiah's prophecy regarding Hananiah was fulfilled two months later. Hence Jeremiah is the true prophet and Hananiah and the others (27:16) are false. The supplying of the year is perhaps significant because the author states in 51:59 that Zedekiah went to Babylon that same year, probably to pledge his loyalty. The suggestion lies ready to hand that the events of this chapter and the preceding one lead to his dismissal of the false prophet Hananiah's advice and the acceptance of Jeremiah's.

prophet Hananiah son of Azzur, who was from Gibeon, spoke to Jeremiah¹ in the LORD's temple in the presence of the priests and all the people.² **28:2** "The LORD God of Israel who rules over all³ says, 'I will break the yoke of servitude⁴ to the king of Babylon. **28:3** Before two years are over, I will bring back to this place everything that King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon took from it and carried away to Babylon. **28:4** I will also bring back to this place Jehoiakim's son King Jeconiah of Judah and all the exiles who were taken to Babylon.' Indeed, the LORD affirms,⁵ 'I will break the yoke of servitude to the king of Babylon.'"⁶

28:5 Then the prophet Jeremiah responded to the prophet Hananiah in the presence of the priests and all the people who were standing in the LORD's temple. **28:6** The prophet Jeremiah said, "Amen! May the LORD do all this! May the LORD make your prophecy come true! May he bring back to this place from Babylon all the valuable articles taken from the LORD's temple and the people who were carried into exile. **28:7** But listen to what I say to you and to all these people.⁶ **28:8** From earliest times, the prophets who preceded you and me invariably⁷ prophesied

war, disaster,⁸ and plagues against many countries and great kingdoms. **28:9** So if a prophet prophesied⁹ peace and prosperity, it was only known that the LORD truly sent him when what he prophesied came true."

28:10 The prophet Hananiah then took the yoke off the prophet Jeremiah's neck and broke it. **28:11** Then he spoke up in the presence of all the people. "The LORD says, 'In the same way I will break the yoke of servitude of all the nations to King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon¹⁰ before two years are over.'"¹¹ After he heard this, the prophet Jeremiah departed and went on his way.¹¹

28:12 But shortly after the prophet Hananiah had broken the yoke off the prophet Jeremiah's neck, the LORD spoke to Jeremiah. **28:13** "Go and tell Hananiah that the LORD says,¹² 'You have indeed broken the wooden yoke. But you have¹³ only succeeded in replacing it with an iron one!¹⁴ **28:14** For the LORD God of Israel who rules over all¹⁵ says, 'I have put an irresistible yoke of servitude on all these nations¹⁶ so they will serve King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. And they will indeed serve him. I have even given him control over the wild ani-

¹ **tn** Heb "to me." The rest of the chapter is all in third person narrative (see vv. 5, 6, 10, 11, 12, 15). Hence, many explain the first person here as a misunderstanding of the abbreviation "to Jeremiah" (אל ירמיהו [*el yirmiyah*] = אֵלַי, [*elay*]). It is just as likely that there is a similar kind of disjunction here that was found in 27:1-2 only in the opposite direction. There what started out as a third person report was really a first person report. Here what starts out as a first person report is really a third person report. The text betrays both the hands of the narrator, probably Baruch, and the reportee, Jeremiah, who dictated a synopsis of his messages and his stories to Baruch to write down (Jer 36:4, 32).

² **tn** Heb "And it happened in that year in the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah king of Judah, in the fourth year, in the fifth month, Hananiah son of Azzur the prophet who was from Gibeon said to me in..." The sentence has been broken up in conformity with contemporary English style and the flavor given in modern equivalent terms.

³ **tn** Heb "Yahweh of armies, the God of Israel." See the study notes on 2:19 and 7:3 for the explanation of this title.

⁴ **sn** See the study note on 27:2 for this figure. Hananiah is given the same title "the prophet" as Jeremiah throughout the chapter and claims to speak with the same authority (compare v. 2a with 27:21a). He even speaks like the true prophet; the verb form "I will break" is in the "prophetic perfect" emphasizing certitude. His message here is a contradiction of Jeremiah's message recorded in the preceding chapter (compare especially v. 3 with 27:16, 19-22 and v. 4 with 22:24-28). The people and the priests are thus confronted with a choice of whom to believe. Who is the "true" prophet and who is the "false" one? Only fulfillment of their prophecies will prove which is which (see Deut 18:21-22).

⁵ **tn** Heb "Oracle of the LORD."

sn Notice again that the "false" prophet uses the same formula and claims the same source for his message as the true prophet has (cf. 27:22).

⁶ **tn** Heb "Listen to this word/message which I am about to speak in your ears and the ears of all these people."

⁷ **tn** The word "invariably" is not in the text but is implicit in the context and in the tense of the Hebrew verb. It is supplied in the translation for clarity and to help bring out the contrast in the next verse.

⁸ **tc** Many Hebrew mss read "starvation/famine" which is the second member of a common triad "sword, famine, and plague" in Jeremiah. This triad occurs thirteen times in the book and undoubtedly influenced a later scribe to read "starvation [= famine]" here. For this triad see the note on 14:14. The words "disaster and plagues" are missing in the LXX.

⁹ **tn** The verbs in this verse are to be interpreted as iterative imperfects in past time rather than as futures because of the explicit contrast that is drawn in the two verses by the emphatic syntactical construction of the two verses. Both verses begin with a *casus pendens* construction to throw the two verses into contrast: Heb "The prophets who were before me and you from ancient times, they prophesied...The prophet who prophesied peace, when the word of that prophet came true, that prophet was known that the LORD truly sent him."

¹⁰ **tn** Heb "I will break the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon from upon the necks of all the nations."

¹¹ **tn** Heb "Then the prophet Jeremiah went his way."

¹² **tn** Heb "Hananiah, 'Thus says the LORD....' The translation uses an indirect quotation here used to eliminate one level of embedded quotation.

¹³ **tn** The Greek version reads "I have made/put" rather than "you have made/put." This is the easier reading and is therefore rejected.

¹⁴ **tn** Heb "the yoke bars of wood you have broken, but you have made in its stead yoke bars of iron."

sn This whole incident (and the preceding one in Jer 28) is symbolic. Jeremiah's wearing of the yoke was symbolic of the LORD's message to submit to Babylonian authority. Hananiah's breaking of the yoke was a prediction that that authority would not last beyond two years. By breaking the yoke he was encouraging rebellion against Nebuchadnezzar's (and hence the LORD's) authority (cf. 27:9, 14). However, rebelling would only result in further, harsher, more irresistible measures by Nebuchadnezzar to control such rebellion.

¹⁵ **tn** Heb "Yahweh of armies, the God of Israel." See the study notes on 2:19 and 7:3 for this title.

¹⁶ **tn** Heb "An iron yoke I have put on the necks of all these nations."

mals.”¹ **28:15** Then the prophet Jeremiah told the prophet Hananiah, “Listen, Hananiah! The LORD did not send you! You are making these people trust in a lie!² **28:16** So the LORD says, ‘I will most assuredly remove³ you from the face of the earth. You will die this very year because you have counseled rebellion against the LORD.’⁴

28:17 In the seventh month of that very same year⁵ the prophet Hananiah died.

Jeremiah's Letter to the Exiles

29:1 The prophet Jeremiah sent a letter to the exiles Nebuchadnezzar had carried off from Jerusalem⁶ to Babylon. It was addressed to the elders who were left among the exiles, to the priests, to the prophets, and to all the other people who were exiled in Babylon.⁷ **29:2** He sent it after King Jeconiah, the queen mother, the palace officials,⁸ the leaders of Judah and Jerusalem, the craftsmen, and the metal workers had been exiled from Jerusalem.⁹ **29:3** He sent it with Elash son of Shaphan¹⁰ and Gemariah son of

Hilkiah.¹¹ King Zedekiah of Judah had sent these men to Babylon to King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon.¹² The letter said:

29:4 “The LORD God of Israel who rules over all¹³ says to all those he sent¹⁴ into exile to Babylon from Jerusalem,¹⁵ **29:5** ‘Build houses and settle down. Plant gardens and eat what they produce. **29:6** Marry and have sons and daughters. Find wives for your sons and allow your daughters get married so that they too can have sons and daughters. Grow in number; do not dwindle away. **29:7** Work to see that the city where I sent you as exiles enjoys peace and prosperity. Pray to the LORD for it. For as it prospers you will prosper.’

29:8 “For the LORD God of Israel who rules over all¹⁶ says, ‘Do not let the prophets or those among you who claim to be able to predict the future by divination¹⁷ deceive you. And do not pay any attention to the dreams that you are encouraging them to dream. **29:9** They are prophesying lies to you and claiming my authority to do so.¹⁸ But I did not send them. I, the LORD, affirm it!’¹⁹

29:10 “For the LORD says, ‘Only when the seventy years of Babylonian rule²⁰ are over will I again take up consideration for you.²¹ Then I

¹ **sn** The emphasis is on the absoluteness of Nebuchadnezzar's control. The statement is once again rhetorical and not to be taken literally. See the study note on 27:6.

² **tn** Or “You are giving these people false assurances.”

³ **sn** There is a play on words here in Hebrew between “did not send you” and “will...remove you.” The two verbs are from the same root word in Hebrew. The first is the simple active and the second is the intensive.

⁴ **sn** In giving people false assurances of restoration when the LORD had already told them to submit to Babylon, Hananiah was really counseling rebellion against the LORD. What Hananiah had done was contrary to the law of Deut 13:5 and was punishable by death.

⁵ **sn** Comparison with Jer 28:1 shows that this whole incident took place in the space of two months. Hananiah had prophesied that the captivity would be over before two years had past. However, before two months were past, Hananiah himself died in fulfillment of Jeremiah's prophecy of his death. His death was a validation of Jeremiah as a true prophet. The subsequent events of 588 B.C. would validate Jeremiah's prophecies and invalidate those of Hananiah.

⁶ **map** For location see Map5-B1; Map6-F3; Map7-E2; Map8-F2; Map10-B3; JP1-F4; JP2-F4; JP3-F4; JP4-F4.

⁷ **tn** Jer 29:1-3 are all one long sentence in Hebrew containing a parenthetical insertion. The text reads “These are the words of the letter which the prophet Jeremiah sent to the elders...people whom Nebuchadnezzar had exiled from Jerusalem to Babylon after King Jeconiah...had gone from Jerusalem by the hand of Elash...whom Zedekiah sent...saying, ‘Thus says the LORD...’” The sentence has been broken up for the sake of contemporary English style and clarity.

⁸ **tn** This term is often mistakenly understood to refer to a “eunuch.” It is clear, however, in Gen 39:1 that “eunuchs” could be married. On the other hand it is clear from Isa 59:3-5 that some who bore this title could not have children. In this period, it is possible that the persons who bore this title were high officials like the *rab saris* who was a high official in the Babylonian court (cf. Jer 39:3, 13; 52:25). For further references see HALOT 727 s.v. סָרִיס 1.c.

⁹ **sn** See 2 Kgs 24:14-16 and compare the study note on Jer 24:1.

¹⁰ **sn** Elash son of Shaphan may have been the brother of Ahikam, who supported Jeremiah when the priests and the prophets in Jerusalem sought to kill Jeremiah for preaching that the temple and the city would be destroyed (cf. 26:24).

¹¹ **sn** This individual is not the same as the Gemariah mentioned in 36:10, 11, 12, 25 who was one of the officials who sought to have the first scroll of Jeremiah's prophecies preserved. He may, however, have been a son or grandson of the High Priest who discovered the book of the law during the reign of Josiah (cf., e.g., 2 Kgs 22:8, 10) which was so instrumental in Josiah's reforms.

¹² **sn** It is unclear whether this incident preceded or followed those in the preceding chapter. It is known from 52:59 that Zedekiah himself had made a trip to Babylon in the same year mentioned in 28:1 and that Jeremiah had used that occasion to address a prophecy of disaster to Babylon. It is not impossible that Jeremiah sent two such disparate messages at the same time (see Jer 25:8-11, 12-14, 17-18, 26).

¹³ **tn** *Heb* “Yahweh of armies, the God of Israel.”

sn See study notes on 2:19 and 7:3 for the explanation of this title.

¹⁴ **tn** *Heb* “I sent.” This sentence exhibits a rapid switch in person, here from the third person to the first. Such switches are common to Hebrew poetry and prophecy (cf. GKC 462 §144.p). Contemporary English, however, does not exhibit such rapid switches and it creates confusion for the careful reader. Such switches have regularly been avoided in the translation.

sn Elsewhere Nebuchadnezzar is seen as the one who carried them into exile (cf. 27:20; 29:1). Here and in v. 14 the LORD is seen as the one who sends them into exile. The LORD is the ultimate cause and Nebuchadnezzar is his agent or servant (cf. 25:9; 27:6 and notes).

¹⁵ **map** For location see Map5-B1; Map6-F3; Map7-E2; Map8-F2; Map10-B3; JP1-F4; JP2-F4; JP3-F4; JP4-F4.

¹⁶ **tn** *Heb* “Yahweh of armies, the God of Israel.”

sn See study notes on 2:19 and 7:3 for the explanation of this title.

¹⁷ **sn** See the study notes on 27:9 for this term.

¹⁸ **tn** *Heb* “prophesying lies to you in my name.”

sn For the significance of “in my name” see the study notes on 14:14 and 23:27.

¹⁹ **tn** *Heb* “Oracle of the LORD.”

²⁰ **sn** See the study note on Jer 25:11 for the reckoning of the seventy years.

²¹ **tn** See the translator's note on Jer 27:22 for this term.

will fulfill my gracious promise to you and restore¹ you to your homeland.² **29:11** For I know what I have planned for you,' says the LORD.³ 'I have plans to prosper you, not to harm you. I have plans to give you⁴ a future filled with hope.⁵ **29:12** When you call out to me and come to me in prayer,⁶ I will hear your prayers.⁷ **29:13** When you seek me in prayer and worship, you will find me available to you. If you seek me with all your heart and soul,⁸ **29:14** I will make myself available to you,⁹ says the LORD.¹⁰ 'Then I will reverse your plight¹¹ and will re-

1 **tn** Verse 10 is all one long sentence in the Hebrew original: "According to the fullness of Babylon seventy years I will take thought of you and I will establish my gracious word to you by bringing you back to this place." The sentence has been broken up to conform better to contemporary English style.

2 **tn** *Heb* "this place." The text has probably been influenced by the parallel passage in 27:22. The term appears fifteen times in Jeremiah and is invariably a reference to Jerusalem or Judah.

sn See Jer 27:22 for this promise.

3 **tn** *Heb* "Oracle of the LORD."

4 **tn** *Heb* "I know the plans that I am planning for you, oracle of the LORD, plans of well-being and not for harm to give to you...."

5 **tn** Or "the future you hope for"; *Heb* "a future and a hope." This is a good example of hendiadys where two formally coordinated nouns (adjectives, verbs) convey a single idea where one of the terms functions as a qualifier of the other. For this figure see E. W. Bullinger, *Figures of Speech*, 658-72. This example is discussed on p. 661.

6 **tn** *Heb* "come and pray to me." This is an example of verbal hendiadys where two verb formally joined by "and" convey a main concept with the second verb functioning as an adverbial qualifier.

7 **tn** Or "You will call out to me and come to me in prayer and I will hear your prayers." The verbs are *vav* consecutive perfects and can be taken either as unconditional futures or as contingent futures. See GK 337 §112. *kk* and 494 §159. *g* and compare the usage in Gen 44:22 for the use of the *vav* consecutive perfects in contingent futures. The conditional clause in the middle of 29:13 and the deuteronomical theology reflected in both Deut 30:1-5 and 1 Kgs 8:46-48 suggest that the verbs are contingent futures here. For the same demand for wholehearted seeking in these contexts which presuppose exile see especially Deut 30:2, 1 Kgs 8:48.

8 **tn** Or "If you wholeheartedly seek me"; *Heb* "You will seek me and find [me] because you will seek me with all your heart." The translation attempts to reflect the theological nuances of "seeking" and "finding" and the psychological significance of "heart" which refers more to intellectual and volitional concerns in the OT than to emotional ones.

9 **tn** *Heb* "I will let myself be found by you." For this nuance of the verb see BDB 594 s.v. נָצַח Niph.1.f and compare the usage in Isa 65:1; 2 Chr 15:2. The Greek version already noted that nuance when it translated the phrase "I will manifest myself to you."

10 **tn** *Heb* "Oracle of the LORD."

11 **tn** *Heb* "restore your fortune." Alternately, "I will bring you back from exile." This idiom occurs twenty-six times in the OT and in several cases it is clearly not referring to return from exile but restoration of fortunes (e.g., Job 42:10; Hos 6:11-7:1; Jer 33:11). It is often followed as here by "regather" or "bring back" (e.g., Jer 30:3; Ezek 29:14) so it is often misunderstood as "bringing back the exiles." The versions (LXX, Vulg., Tg., Pesh.) often translate the idiom as "to go away into captivity," deriving the noun from שָׁבִי (*sh'vi*, "captivity"). However, the use of this expression in Old Aramaic documents of Sefire parallels the biblical idiom: "the gods restored the fortunes of the house of my father again" (J. A. Fitzmyer, *The Aramaic Inscriptions of Sefire* [BibOr], 100-101, 119-20). The idiom means "to turn someone's fortune, bring about change"

gather you from all the nations and all the places where I have exiled you,' says the LORD.¹² 'I will bring you back to the place from which I exiled you.'

29:15 "You say, 'The LORD has raised up prophets of good news¹³ for us here in Babylon.' **29:16** But just listen to what the LORD has to say about¹⁴ the king who occupies David's throne and all your fellow countrymen who are still living in this city of Jerusalem¹⁵ and were not carried off into exile with you. **29:17** The LORD who rules over all¹⁶ says, 'I will bring war,¹⁷ starvation, and disease on them. I will treat them like figs that are so rotten¹⁸ they cannot be eaten. **29:18** I will chase after them with war,¹⁹ starvation, and disease. I will make all the kingdoms of the earth horrified at what happens to them. I will make them examples of those who are cursed, objects of horror, hissing scorn, and ridicule among all the nations where I exile them. **29:19** For they have not paid attention to what I said to them through my servants the prophets whom I sent to them over and over again,'²⁰ says the LORD.²¹ 'And you exiles²² have not paid any attention to them either,' says the LORD.²³ **29:20** 'So pay attention to what I, the LORD, have said,²⁴ all you exiles whom I have sent to Babylon from Jerusalem.'

or "to reestablish as it was" (*HALOT* 1386 s.v. 3.c). In Ezek 16:53 it is paralleled by the expression "to restore the situation which prevailed earlier." This amounts to *restitutio in integrum*, which is applicable to the circumstances surrounding the return of the exiles.

12 **tn** *Heb* "Oracle of the LORD."

13 **tn** The words "of good news" are not in the text but are implicit from the context. They are supplied in the translation for clarity.

14 **tn** *Heb* "But thus says the LORD about." The words "just listen to what" are supplied in the translation to help show the connection with the preceding.

sn Jeremiah answers their claims that the LORD has raised up prophets to encourage them that their stay will be short by referring to the LORD's promise that the LORD's plans are not for restoration but for further destruction.

15 **tn** The words "of Jerusalem" are not in the text but are supplied in the translation to identify the referent and avoid the possible confusion that "this city" refers to Babylon.

16 **tn** *Heb* "Yahweh of armies." See the study note on 2:19 for explanation of this title.

17 **tn** *Heb* "the sword."

18 **tn** The meaning of this word is somewhat uncertain. It occurs only here in the Hebrew Bible. BDB 1045 s.v. שָׁרֵר relates it to the noun "horrible thing" (translated "something shocking") in Jer 5:30; 23:14 and defines it as "horrid, disgusting." *HALOT* 1495 s.v. שָׁרֵר relates it to the same noun and define it as "rotten; corrupt." That nuance is accepted here.

sn Compare Jer 24:8-10 in its context for the figure here.

19 **tn** *Heb* "with the sword."

20 **tn** See the translator's note on 7:13 for an explanation of this idiom.

21 **tn** *Heb* "Oracle of the LORD."

22 **tn** The word "exiles" is not in the text. It is supplied in the translation to clarify the referent of "you."

23 **tn** *Heb* "Oracle of the LORD."

24 **tn** *Heb* "pay attention to the word of the LORD." However, the LORD is speaking in the words just previous to this and in the words which follow ("whom I have sent"). This is another example of the shift from third person referent to first person which is common in Hebrew poetry and prophecy but is not common in English style. The person has been adjusted in the translation to avoid confusion.

29:21 “The LORD God of Israel who rules over all¹ also has something to say about Ahab son of Kolaiah and Zedekiah son of Maaseiah, who are prophesying lies to you and claiming my authority to do so.² ‘I will hand them over to King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon and he will execute them before your very eyes. **29:22** And all the exiles of Judah who are in Babylon will use them as examples when they put a curse on anyone. They will say, “May the LORD treat you like Zedekiah and Ahab whom the king of Babylon roasted to death in the fire!”³ **29:23** This will happen to them because they have done what is shameful⁴ in Israel. They have committed adultery with their neighbors’ wives and have spoken lies while claiming my authority.⁵ They have spoken words that I did not command them to speak. I know what they have done. I have been a witness to it,” says the LORD.⁶”

A Response to the Letter and a Subsequent Letter

29:24 The LORD told Jeremiah, “Tell⁷ Shemaiah the Nehelamite⁸ **29:25** that the LORD God

of Israel who rules over all⁹ has a message for him.¹⁰ Tell him,¹¹ ‘On your own initiative¹² you sent a letter¹³ to the priest Zephaniah son of Maaseiah¹⁴ and to all the other priests and to all the people in Jerusalem.¹⁵ In your letter you said to Zephaniah,¹⁶ **29:26** “The LORD has made you priest in place of Jehoiada.¹⁷ He has put you in charge in the LORD’s temple of controlling¹⁸ any

⁹ **tn** Heb “Yahweh of armies, the God of Israel.”

sn See study notes on 2:19 and 7:3 for the explanation of this title.

¹⁰ **tn** Heb “Tell Shemaiah the Nehelamite, ‘Thus says Yahweh of armies the God of Israel....’” The indirect quotation is used in the translation to avoid the complexity of embedding a quotation within a quotation.

¹¹ **sn** Jer 29:24-32 are concerned with Jeremiah’s interaction with a false prophet named Shemaiah. The narrative in this section is not in strict chronological order and is somewhat elliptical. It begins with a report of a message that Jeremiah appears to have delivered directly to Shemaiah and refers to a letter that Shemaiah sent to the priest Zephaniah encouraging him to reprimand Jeremiah for what Shemaiah considered treasonous words in his letter to the exiles (vv. 24-28; compare v. 28 with v. 5). However, Jeremiah is in Jerusalem and Shemaiah is in Babylon. The address must then be part of a second letter Jeremiah sent to Babylon. Following this the narrative refers to Zephaniah reading Shemaiah’s letter to Jeremiah and Jeremiah sending a further letter to the captives in Babylon (vv. 29-32). This is probably not a third letter but part of the same letter in which Jeremiah reprimands Shemaiah for sending his letter to Zephaniah (vv. 25-28; the same letter referred to in v. 29). The order of events thus is: Jeremiah sent a letter to the captives counseling them to settle down in Babylon (vv. 1-23). Shemaiah sent a letter to Zephaniah asking him to reprimand Jeremiah (vv. 26-28). After Zephaniah read that letter to Jeremiah (v. 29), Jeremiah wrote a further letter to Babylon reprimanding him (vv. 25-28, 31) and pronouncing judgment on him (v. 32). The elliptical nature of the narrative is reflected in the fact that vv. 25-27 are part of a long causal sentence which sets forth an accusation but has no corresponding main clause or announcement of judgment. This kind of construction involves a rhetorical figure (called aposiopesis) where what is begun is not finished for various rhetorical reasons. Here the sentence that is broken off is part of an announcement of judgment which is not picked up until v. 32 after a further (though related) accusation (v. 31b).

¹² **tn** Heb “In your [own] name.” See the study note on 23:27 for the significance of this idiom.

¹³ **tn** Heb “letters.” Though GKC 397 §124.b, n. 1 denies it, this is probably a case of the plural of extension. For a similar usage see Isa 37:14 where the plural “letters” is referred to later as an “it.” Even if there were other “letters,” the focus is on the letter to Zephaniah.

¹⁴ **sn** According to Jer 52:24 and 2 Kgs 25:18 Zephaniah son of Maaseiah was second in command to the high priest. He was the high ranking priest who was sent along with a civic official to inquire of the LORD’s will from Jeremiah by Zedekiah on two separate occasions (Jer 21:1; 37:3).

¹⁵ **map** For location see Map5-B1; Map6-F3; Map7-E2; Map8-F2; Map10-B3; JP1-F4; JP2-F4; JP3-F4; JP4-F4.

¹⁶ **tn** The words “In your letter you said to Zephaniah” are not in the text: Heb “you sent a letter to.... saying.” The sentence has been broken up to conform better to contemporary English style and these words have been supplied in the translation to make the transition to the address to Zephaniah in v. 26-28.

¹⁷ **tn** Heb “in place of Jehoiada the priest.” The word “the priest” is unnecessary to the English sentence.

¹⁸ **tc** Heb “The LORD has appointed you priest in place of the priest Jehoiada to be overseer in the house of the LORD for/over.” The translation is based on a reading presupposed by several of the versions. The Hebrew text reads “The LORD has...to be overseers [in] the house of the LORD for/over.” The

¹ **tn** Heb “Yahweh of armies, the God of Israel.”

sn See study notes on 2:19 and 7:3 for the explanation of this title.

² **tn** Heb “prophesying lies in my name.” For an explanation of this idiom see the study notes on 14:14 and 23:27.

³ **sn** Being roasted to death in the fire appears to have been a common method of execution in Babylon. See Dan 3:6, 19-21. The famous law code of the Babylonian king Hammurabi also mandated this method of execution for various crimes a thousand years earlier. There is a satirical play on words involving their fate, “roasted them to death” (qalah, qalam), and the fact that that fate would become a common topic of curse (qalah) pronounced on others in Babylon.

⁴ **tn** It is commonly assumed that this word is explained by the two verbal actions that follow. The word (valah, valah) is rather commonly used of sins of unchastity (cf., e.g., Gen 34:7; Judg 19:23; 2 Sam 13:12) which would fit the reference to adultery. However, the word is singular and not likely to cover both actions that follow. The word is also used of the greedy act of Achan (Josh 7:15) which threatened Israel with destruction and the churlish behavior of Nabal (1 Sam 25:25) which threatened him and his household with destruction. The word is also used of foolish talk in Isa 9:17 (9:16 HT) and Isa 32:6. It is possible that this refers to a separate act, one that would have brought the death penalty from Nebuchadnezzar, i.e., the preaching of rebellion in conformity with the message of the false prophets in Jerusalem and other nations (cf. 27:9, 13). Hence it is possible that the translation should read: “This will happen because of their vile conduct. They have propagated rebellion. They have committed adultery with their neighbors’ wives. They have spoken words that I did not command them to speak. They have spoken lies while claiming my authority.”

⁵ **tn** Heb “prophesying lies in my name.” For an explanation of this idiom see the study notes on 14:14 and 23:27.

⁶ **tn** Heb “Oracle of the LORD.”

⁷ **tn** The words “The LORD told Jeremiah” are not in the text. They are supplied in the translation here to indicate the shift in topic and the shift in addressee (the imperative “tell” is second singular). The introduction supplied in the translation here matches that in v. 30 where the words are in the text.

⁸ **tn** It is unclear whether this is a family name or a place name. The word occurs nowhere else in the Hebrew Bible.

lunatic¹ who pretends to be a prophet.² And it is your duty to put any such person in the stocks³ with an iron collar around his neck.⁴ 29:27 You should have reprimanded Jeremiah from Anathoth who is pretending to be a prophet among you!⁵ 29:28 For he has even sent a message to us here in Babylon. He wrote and told us,⁶ “You will be there a long time. Build houses and settle down. Plant gardens and eat what they produce.”⁷

29:29 Zephaniah the priest read that letter to the prophet Jeremiah.⁸ 29:30 Then the LORD spoke to Jeremiah. 29:31 “Send a message to all the exiles in Babylon. Tell them, ‘The LORD has spoken about Shemaiah the Nehelamite. “Shemaiah has spoken to you as a prophet even though I did not send him. He is making you trust in a lie.’⁹ 29:32 Because he has done this,¹⁰ the LORD says, “I will punish Shemaiah the Nehelamite and his whole family. There will not be any of them left to experience the good things that I will do for my people. I, the LORD, affirm it! For he counseled rebellion against the LORD.”¹¹

reading here follows that of the Greek, Syriac, and Latin versions in reading פְּקִיד בְּבֵית (paqid b'bet) in place of פְּקִידִים בְּבֵית (p'qidim bet). There has been a confusion of the *mem* (mem) and *bet* (bet) and a transposition of the *vod* (vov) and *daleth* (daleth).

¹ *sn* The Hebrew term translated *lunatic* applies to anyone who exhibits irrational behavior. It was used for example of David who drooled and scratched on the city gate to convince Achish not to arrest him as a politically dangerous threat (1 Sam 21:14). It was often used contemptuously of the prophets by those who wanted to play down the significance of their words (2 Kgs 9:11; Hos 9:7 and here).

² *tn* The verb here is a good example of what *IBHS* 431 §26.2f calls the estimative-declarative reflexive where a person presents himself in a certain light. For examples of this usage see 2 Sam 13:5; Prov 13:7.

³ *tn* See the translator's note on 20:2 for this word which only occurs here and in 20:2-3.

⁴ *tn* This word only occurs here in the Hebrew Bible. All the lexicons are agreed as seeing it referring to a collar placed around the neck. The *is* for this definition are the cognate languages (see, e.g., *HALOT* 958-59 s.v. צִנִּיָּן for the most complete discussion).

⁵ *tn* *Heb* “So why have you not reprimanded Jeremiah...?” The rhetorical question functions as an emphatic assertion made explicit in the translation.

⁶ *tn* *Heb* “For he has sent to us in Babylon, saying....” The quote, however, is part of the earlier letter.

⁷ *tn* See v. 5.

⁸ *tn* *Heb* “in the ears of Jeremiah the prophet.”

⁹ *tn* Or “is giving you false assurances.”

¹⁰ *tn* *Heb* “Therefore.”

¹¹ *sn* Compare the same charge against Hananiah in Jer 28:16 and see the note there. In this case, the false prophesy of Shemaiah is not given but it likely had the same tenor since he wants Jeremiah reprimanded for saying that the exile will be long and the people are to settle down in Babylon.

Introduction to the Book of Consolation

30:1 The LORD spoke to Jeremiah.¹² 30:2 “The LORD God of Israel says,¹³ ‘Write everything that I am about to tell you in a scroll.’¹⁴ 30:3 For I, the LORD, affirm¹⁵ that the time will come when I will reverse the plight¹⁶ of my people, Israel and Judah,’ says the LORD. ‘I will bring them back to the land I gave their ancestors¹⁷ and they will take possession of it once again.’¹⁸

Israel and Judah Will Be Delivered after a Time of Deep Distress

30:4 So here is what the LORD has to say about Israel and Judah.¹⁹

30:5 Yes,²⁰ here is what he says:
“You hear cries of panic and of terror;
there is no peace in sight.”²¹

¹² *tn* Compare the headings at 7:1; 11:1; 18:1; 21:1 and the translator's note at those places.

¹³ *tn* *Heb* “Thus says Yahweh of armies, the God of Israel, saying....” For significance of the title “Yahweh of armies, the God of Israel” see the note at 2:19.

¹⁴ *tn* *Heb* “Write all the words which I speak to you in a scroll.” The verb “which I speak” is the instantaneous use of the perfect tense (cf. *GKC* 311-12 §106.i or *IBHS* 488-89 §30.5.1d). The words that the LORD is about to speak follow in chs. 30-31.

sn Reference is made here to the so-called “Book of Consolation” which is the most extended treatment of the theme of hope or deliverance in the book. Jeremiah was called to be a prophet both of judgment (of tearing down and destroying) and of deliverance (of replanting and rebuilding; see Jer 1:10). Jeremiah lamented that he had to predominantly pronounce judgment but he has periodically woven in prophecies of hope after judgment in 3:14-18; 16:14-15; 23:3-8; 24:4-7; 29:10-14, 32. The oracles of hope contained in these chapters are undated but reference is made in them to the restoration of both Israel which had gone into exile in Assyria in 722 b.c. and Judah which began to be exiled in 605 and 597 b.c. Jeremiah had already written as early as the reign of Zedekiah about the exiles who were the good figs who were to experience the “good” of restoration (24:4-7; 29:10-14) and had spoken of the further exile of those who remained in Judah. So it is possible that these oracles fit in roughly the same time frame as chapters 27-29.

¹⁵ *tn* *Heb* “Oracle of the LORD.”

¹⁶ *tn* *Heb* “restore the fortune.” For the translation and meaning of this idiom see the note at 29:14.

¹⁷ *tn* *Heb* “fathers.”

¹⁸ *sn* As the nations of *Israel and Judah* were united in their sin and suffered the same fate – that of exile and dispersion – (cf. Jer 3:8; 5:11; 11:10, 17) so they will ultimately be regathered from the nations and rejoined under one king, a descendant of David, and regain possession of their ancestral lands. The prophets of both the eighth and seventh century looked forward to this ideal (see, e.g., Hos 1:11 (2:2 HT); Isa 11:11-13; Jer 23:5-6; 30:3; 33:7; Ezek 37:15-22). This has already been anticipated in Jer 3:18.

¹⁹ *tn* *Heb* “And these are the words/things that the LORD speaks concerning Israel and Judah.”

²⁰ *tn* The particle כִּי (*ki*) is functioning here as loosely causal or epexegetical of the preceding introduction. For this usage cf. *BDB* 473-74 s.v. כִּי 3.c. This nuance borders on that of the intensive use of כִּי. See the discussion in *BDB* 472 s.v. כִּי note and *ib* 1.e.

²¹ *tn* *Heb* “We have heard the sound of panic and of fear, and there is no peace.” It is generally agreed that the person of the verb presupposes that this is an unintroduced quote of the people.

30:6 Ask yourselves this and consider it carefully:¹

Have you ever seen a man give birth to a baby?

Why then do I see all these strong men grabbing their stomachs in pain like² a woman giving birth?

And why do their faces turn so deathly pale?

30:7 Alas, what a terrible time of trouble it is!³

There has never been any like it.

It is a time of trouble for the descendants of Jacob, but some of them will be rescued out of it.⁴

30:8 When the time for them to be rescued comes,⁵

says the LORD who rules over all,⁶

"I will rescue you from foreign subjugation."⁷

¹ **tn** Heb "Ask and see/consider."

² **tn** Heb "with their hands on their loins." The word rendered "loins" refers to the area between the ribs and the thighs.

³ **tn** Heb "Alas [or Woe] for that day will be great." For the use of the participle "Alas" to signal a time of terrible trouble, even to sound the death knell for someone, see the translator's note on 22:13.

sn The reference to a *terrible time of trouble* (Heb "that day") is a common shorthand reference in the prophets to "the Day of the LORD." The "Day of the LORD" refers to a time when God intervenes in judgment against the wicked. The time referent can be either near or far, referring to something as near as the Assyrian threat in the time of Ahaz (Isa 7:18, 20, 21, 23) or as distant as the eschatological battle of God against Gog when he attacks Israel (Ezek 38:14, 18). The judgment can be against Israel's enemies and result in Israel's deliverance (Jer 50:30-34). At other times as here the Day of the LORD involves judgment on Israel itself. Here reference is to the judgment that the northern kingdom, Israel, has already experienced (cf., e.g., Jer 3:8) and which the southern kingdom, Judah, is in the process of experiencing and which Jeremiah has lamented over several times and even described in hyperbolic and apocalyptic terms in Jer 4:19-31.

⁴ **tn** Heb "It is a time of trouble for Jacob but he will be saved out of it."

sn *Jacob* here is figurative for the people descended from him. Moreover the figure moves from Jacob = descendants of Jacob to only a part of those descendants. Not all of his descendants who have experienced and are now experiencing trouble will be saved. Only a remnant (i.e., the good figs, cf., e.g., Jer 23:3; 31:7) will see the good things that the LORD has in store for them (Jer 24:5-6). The bad figs will suffer destruction through war, starvation, and disease (cf., e.g., Jer 24:8-10 among many other references).

⁵ **tn** Heb "And it shall happen in that day."

sn The *time for them to be rescued* (Heb "that day") is the day of deliverance from the trouble alluded to at the end of the preceding verse, not the day of trouble mentioned at the beginning. Israel (even the good figs) will still need to go through the period of trouble (cf. vv. 10-11).

⁶ **tn** Heb "Oracle of Yahweh of armies." See the study note on 2:19 for explanation of the title for God.

⁷ **tn** Heb "I will break his yoke from upon your neck." For the explanation of the figure see the study note on 27:2. The shift from third person at the end of v. 7 to second person in v. 8c, d and back to third person in v. 8e is typical of Hebrew poetry in the book of Psalms and in the prophetic books (cf., GKC 351 §114.p and compare usage in Deut 32:15; Isa 5:8 listed there). The present translation, like several other modern ones, has typically leveled them to the same person to

I will deliver you from captivity.⁸

Foreigners will then no longer subjugate them.

30:9 But they will be subject⁹ to the LORD their God

and to the Davidic ruler whom I will raise up as king over them.¹⁰

30:10 So I, the LORD, tell you not to be afraid, you descendants of Jacob, my servants.¹¹

Do not be terrified, people of Israel.

For I will rescue you and your descendants from a faraway land where you are captives.¹²

The descendants of Jacob will return to their land and enjoy peace.

They will be secure and no one will terrify them.¹³

30:11 For I, the LORD, affirm¹⁴ that

I will be with you and will rescue you.

I will completely destroy all the nations where I scattered you.

But I will not completely destroy you.

I will indeed discipline you, but only in due measure.

I will not allow you to go entirely unpunished."¹⁵

avoid confusion for modern readers who are not accustomed to this poetic tradition.

sn In the immediate context the reference to *the yoke of their servitude to foreign domination* (Heb "his yoke") should be understood as a reference to the yoke of servitude to Nebuchadnezzar which has been referred to often in Jer 27-28 (see, e.g., 27:8, 12; 28:2, 4, 11). The end of that servitude has already been referred to in 25:11-14; 29:11-14. Like many other passages in the OT it has been given a later eschatological reinterpretation in the light of subsequent bondages and lack of complete fulfillment, i.e., of restoration to the land and restoration of the Davidic monarchy.

⁸ **tn** Heb "I will tear off their bands." The "bands" are the leather straps which held the yoke bars in place (cf. 27:2). The metaphor of the "yoke on the neck" is continued. The translation reflects the sense of the metaphor but not the specific referent.

⁹ **tn** The word "subject" in this verse and "subjugate" are from the same root word in Hebrew. A deliberate contrast is drawn between the two powers that they will serve.

¹⁰ **tn** Heb "and to David their king whom I will raise up for them."

sn The *Davidic ruler which I will raise up as king over them* refers to a descendant of David who would be raised up over a regathered and reunited Israel and Judah. He is called "David" in Hos 3:5, Ezek 34:23-24; 37:24-25 and referred to as a shoot or sprig of Jesse in Isa 11:1, 10 and a "righteous branch" springing from David (the Davidic line). He is called "David" because he is from the Davidic line and because David is the type of the ideal king whom the prophets looked forward to. See further the study notes on 23:5 for this ideal king and for his relation to the NT fulfillment in the person of Jesus the Christ.

¹¹ **tn** Heb "So do not be afraid, my servant Jacob, oracle of the LORD." Here and elsewhere in the verse the terms Jacob and Israel are poetic for the people of Israel descended from the patriarch Jacob. The terms have been supplied throughout with plural referents for greater clarity.

¹² **tn** Heb "For I will rescue you from far away, your descendants from the land of their captivity."

¹³ **sn** Compare the ideals of the Mosaic covenant in Lev 26:6, the Davidic covenant in 2 Sam 7:10-11, and the new covenant in Ezek 34:25-31.

¹⁴ **tn** Heb "Oracle of the LORD."

¹⁵ **tn** The translation "entirely unpunished" is intended to

The Lord Will Heal the Wounds of Judah

30:12 Moreover,¹ the LORD says to the people of Zion,²

“Your injuries are incurable;
your wounds are severe.³

30:13 There is no one to plead your cause.
There are no remedies for your wounds.⁴
There is no healing for you.

30:14 All your allies have abandoned you.⁵
They no longer have any concern for you.
For I have attacked you like an enemy
would.

I have chastened you cruelly.
For your wickedness is so great
and your sin is so much.⁶

30:15 Why do you complain about your
injuries,
that your pain is incurable?

I have done all this to you
because your wickedness is so great
and your sin is so much.

30:16 But⁷ all who destroyed you will be
destroyed.

All your enemies will go into exile.
Those who plundered you will be plun-
dered.

I will cause those who pillaged you to be
pillaged.⁸

reflect the emphatic construction of the infinitive absolute before the finite verb.

1 tn The particle כִּי (*ki*) here is parallel to the one in v. 5 that introduces the first oracle. See the discussion in the translator’s note there.

2 tn The pronouns in vv. 10-17 are second feminine singular referring to a personified entity. That entity is identified in v. 17 as Zion, which here stands for the people of Zion.

3 sn The wounds to the body politic are those of the incursions from the enemy from the north referred to in Jer 4:6; 6:1 over which Jeremiah and even God himself have lamented (Jer 8:21; 10:19; 14:17). The enemy from the north has been identified as Babylon and has been identified as the agent of God’s punishment of his disobedient people (Jer 1:15; 4:6; 25:9).

4 tc The translation of these first two lines follows the redivision of the lines suggested in NIV and NRSV rather than that of the Masoretes who read, “There is no one who pleads your cause with reference to [your] wound.”

sn This verse exhibits a mixed metaphor of an advocate pleading someone’s case (cf., Jer 5:28; 22:18) and of a physician applying medicine to wounds and sores resulting from them (see, e.g., Jer 8:18 for the latter metaphor). Zion’s sins are beyond defense and the wounds inflicted upon her beyond healing. However, God, himself, in his own time will forgive her sins (Jer 31:34; 33:8) and heal her wounds (Jer 30:17).

5 tn Heb “forgotten you.”

6 tn Heb “attacked you like...with the chastening of a cruel one because of the greatness of your iniquity [and because] your sins are many.” The sentence has been broken down to conform to contemporary English style and better poetic scansion.

7 tn For the translation of this particle, which is normally translated “therefore” and often introduces an announcement of judgment, compare the usage at Jer 16:14 and the translator’s note there. Here as there it introduces a contrast, a rather unexpected announcement of salvation. For a similar use see also Hos 2:14 (2:16 HT). Recognition of this usage makes the proposed emendation of BHS of לַכְּחֵן לִבְרִי (lakhen kol) to וְכִי (v’khol) unnecessary.

8 sn With the exception of the second line there is a definite attempt at wordplay in each line to underline the principle of

30:17 Yes,⁹ I will restore you to health.
I will heal your wounds.
I, the LORD, affirm it!¹⁰
For you have been called an outcast,
Zion, whom no one cares for.”

The Lord Will Restore Israel and Judah

30:18 The LORD says,

“I will restore the ruined houses of the
descendants of Jacob.

I will show compassion on their ruined
homes.¹¹

Every city will be rebuilt on its former
ruins.¹²

Every fortified dwelling will occupy its
traditional site.¹³

30:19 Out of those places you will hear
songs of thanksgiving¹⁴
and the sounds of laughter and merriment.

I will increase their number and they will
not dwindle away.¹⁵

I will bring them honor and they will no
longer be despised.

30:20 The descendants of Jacob will enjoy
their former privileges.

Their community will be reestablished in
my favor¹⁶

lex talionis on a national and political level. This principle has already been appealed to in the case of the end of Babylonian sovereignty in 25:14; 27:7.

9 tn Again the particle כִּי (*ki*) appears to be intensive rather than causal. Compare the translator’s note on v. 12. It is possible that it has an adversative sense as an implicit contrast with v. 13 which expresses these concepts in the negative (cf. BDB 474 s.v. כִּי 3.e for this use in statements which are contextually closer to one another).

10 tn Heb “Oracle of the LORD.”

11 tn Heb “I will restore the fortunes of the tents of Jacob and will have compassion on his habitations.” For the meaning of the idiom “restore the fortunes of” see the translator’s note on 29:14. The “tents of Jacob” refers to their homes or houses (see BDB 14 s.v. מִדְּבַר 2 and compare usage in Judg 19:9; Mal 2:12). The word “ruined” has been supplied in the translation to show more clearly the idea of restoration of their houses on their former sites in conformity to the concepts in the latter half of the verse.

12 sn Heb “on its tel.” A tel is a site where successive layers of occupation are built upon one another after the destruction or decay of the former city. The original site was not abandoned because it had been chosen for strategic purposes, such as proximity to water or ease of defense. Many modern archaeological sites have the designation “Tel” as a component of their name because of this practice.

13 tn Heb “according to its custom [or plan].” Cf. BDB 1049 s.v. כִּי בִּשְׁמֵהוּ 6.d and compare usage in 1 Sam 27:11.

14 tn Heb “Out of them will come thanksgiving and a sound of those who are playful.”

15 sn Compare Jer 29:6.

16 tn Heb “his children will be as in former times and his congregation/community will be established before me.” “His children” refers to “Jacob” who has been referred to in v. 18 in the phrase “I will restore the fortunes of the tents of Jacob.” “His children” are thus the restored exiles. Some commentaries see the reference here to the restoration of numbers in accordance with the previous verse. However, the last line of this verse and the reference to the ruler in the following verse suggests rather restoration of the religious and political institutions to their former state. For the use of the word translated “community” (עֵדָה, *edah*) to refer to a political congrega-

and I will punish all who try to oppress them.

30:21 One of their own people will be their leader.

Their ruler will come from their own number.¹

I will invite him to approach me, and he will do so.²

For no one would dare approach me on his own.³

I, the LORD, affirm it!⁴

30:22 Then you will again be my people and I will be your God.⁵

30:23 Just watch! The wrath of the LORD will come like a storm.

Like a raging storm it will rage down on the heads of those who are wicked.

30:24 The anger of the LORD will not turn back

until he has fully carried out his intended purposes.

In days to come you will come to understand this.⁶

31:1 At that time I will be the God of all

the clans of Israel⁷
and they will be my people.
I, the LORD, affirm it!⁸

Israel Will Be Restored and Join Judah in Worship

31:2 The LORD says,

“The people of Israel who survived death at the hands of the enemy⁹ will find favor in the wilderness as they journey to find rest for themselves.

31:3 In a far-off land the LORD will manifest himself to them.

He will say to them, ‘I have loved you with an everlasting love.

That is why I have continued to be faithful to you.¹⁰

31:4 I will rebuild you, my dear children Israel,¹¹

so that you will once again be built up.

Once again you will take up the tambourine

and join in the happy throng of dancers.¹²

tion as well as its normal use to refer to a religious one see 1 Kgs 12:20. For the idea of “in my favor” (i.e., under the eye and regard of) for the Hebrew phrase used here (יָנִי, *lʹfanay*) see BDB 817 s.v. יָנִי II.4.a(b).

¹ **sn** The statement *their ruler will come from their own number* accords with the regulation in Deut 17:15. They would not be ruled by a foreign leader but by one of their own people. In v. 9 he is specifically said to come from the Davidic line. See the study note there.

² **sn** Ordinarily this prerogative was confined to the priests and the Levites and even then under strict regulations (cf., e.g., Num 8:19; 16:10; Lev 16:10; 21:17; 22:3). Uzziah king of Judah violated this and suffered leprosy for having done so (2 Chr 26:16-20). It is clear, however, that both David and Solomon on occasion exercised priestly functions in the presence of the ark or the altar which it was normally lawful for only the priests to approach (cf., e.g., 2 Sam 6:13-14; 1 Kgs 8:22, 54-55). Here reference is probably not to the normal prerogatives of offering sacrifice or burning incense but access to God’s special presence at special times for the purpose of consultation.

³ **tn** *Heb* “For who is he who would pledge his heart to draw near to me.” The question is a rhetorical one expecting the answer “no one” and is a way of expressing an emphatic negative (see BDB 566 s.v. כִּי f[c]). The concept of “pledging” something refers to putting up security in guarantee of payment. Here the word is used figuratively of “putting up one’s heart [i.e., his very being (cf. BDB 524 s.v. לֵב 7 and Ps 22:26)]” for the privilege of access to God. The rhetorical question denies that any one would do that if he were not bidden by God to do so.

⁴ **tn** *Heb* “Oracle of the LORD.”

⁵ **sn** This was their highest privilege (cf. Exod 6:7, Lev 26:12; Jer 24:7) but also their greatest responsibility (cf. Jer 7:3; 11:4). It is a formula referring to a covenant relationship in which God pledges to protect, provide, and be present with his people and they in turn promise to be loyal and obedient to him (see Deut 26:17-18; 29:10-13).

⁶ **sn** Jer 30:23-24 are almost a verbatim repetition of 23:19-20. There the verses were addressed to the people of Jerusalem as a warning that the false prophets had no intimate awareness of the LORD’s plans which were plans of destruction for wicked Israel not plans of peace and prosperity. Here they function as further assurance that the LORD will judge the wicked nations oppressing them when he reverses their fortunes and restores them once again to the land as his special people (cf. vv. 18-22).

⁷ **sn** This verse repeats v. 22 but with specific reference to *all the clans of Israel*, i.e., to all Israel and Judah. It functions here as a transition to the next section which will deal with the restoration of Israel (31:3-20) and Judah (31:21-25) and their reunification in the land (31:27-29) under a new covenant relation with God (31:31-37). See also the study note on 30:3 for further reference to this reunification in Jeremiah and the other prophets.

⁸ **tn** *Heb* “Oracle of the LORD.”

⁹ **tn** *Heb* “who survived the sword.”

¹⁰ **sn** This refers to the remnant of northern Israel who had not been killed when Assyria conquered Samaria in 722 B.C. or who had not died in exile. References to Samaria in v. 5 and to Ephraim in vv. 6, 9 make clear that northern Israel is in view here.

¹¹ **tn** Or “The people of Israel who survived the onslaughts of Egypt and Amalek found favor in the wilderness as they journeyed to find rest. At that time long ago the LORD manifested himself to them. He said, ‘I have...That is why I have drawn you to myself through my unfailing kindness.’” For the basis for each of these translations see the translator’s note. There is debate whether the reference here is to God’s preservation of Israel during their wandering in the Sinai desert or his promise to protect and preserve them on their return through the Arabian desert on the way back from Assyria and Babylon (see e.g., Isa 42:14-16; 43:16-21; Jer 16:14-15; 23:7-8). The only finite verbs in vv. 2-3a before the introduction of the quote are perfects which can denote either a past act or a future act viewed as certain of fulfillment (the prophetic perfect; see GKC 312-13 §106.n and see examples in Jer 11:16; 13:17; 25:14; 28:4). The phrase at the beginning of v. 3 can either refer to temporal (cf. BDB 935 s.v. רָחֵק 2.b and Isa 22:11) or spatial distance (cf. BDB 935 s.v. רָחֵק 2.a[2] and Isa 5:29; 59:14). The verb in the final clause in v. 3 can refer to either the continuance of God’s love as in Ps 36:10 (cf. BDB 604 s.v. יָסֵךְ Qal.5) or drawing someone to him in electing, caring love as in Hos 11:4 (cf. BDB 604 s.v. יָסֵךְ Qal.1). The translation has opted for the prophetic reference to future deliverance because of the preceding context, the use of *merakhoq* to refer to the far off land of exile in Jer 30:10; 46:27; 51:50, and the reference to survivors from the sword being called on to remember the LORD in that far off land in 51:50.

¹² **tn** *Heb* “Virgin Israel.”

sn For the significance of this metaphor see the note on Jer 14:17. Here the emphasis appears on his special love and care for his people and the hint (further developed in vv. 21-22) that, though guilty of sin, he considers them like an innocent young virgin.

¹³ **sn** Contrast Jer 7:34 and 25:10.

31:5 Once again you will plant vineyards on the hills of Samaria.¹

Those who plant them will once again enjoy their fruit.²

31:6 Yes, a time is coming when watchmen³ will call out on the mountains of Ephraim, "Come! Let us go to Zion to worship the LORD our God!"⁴

31:7 Moreover,⁵ the LORD says,

"Sing for joy for the descendants of Jacob.

Utter glad shouts for that foremost of the nations.⁶

Make your praises heard.⁷

Then say, 'LORD, rescue your people.

Deliver those of Israel who remain alive.'⁸

¹ **map** For location see Map2-B1; Map4-D3; Map5-E2; Map6-A4; Map7-C1.

² **sn** The terms used here refer to the enjoyment of a period of peace and stability and the reversal of the curse (contrast, e.g., Deut 28:30). The Hebrew word translated "enjoy its fruit" is a technical one that refers to the owner of a vineyard getting to enjoy its fruit in the fifth year after it was planted, the crops of the first three years lying fallow, and that of the fourth being given to the LORD (cf. Lev 19:23-25).

³ **sn** *Watchmen* were stationed at vantage points to pass on warning of coming attack (Jer 6:17; Ezek 33:2, 6) or to spread the news of victory (Isa 52:8). Here reference is made to the watchmen who signaled the special times of the year such as the new moon and festival times when Israel was to go to Jerusalem to worship. Reference is not made to these in the Hebrew Bible but there is a good deal of instruction regarding them in the later Babylonian Talmud.

⁴ **sn** Not only will Israel and Judah be reunited under one ruler (cf. 23:5-6), but they will share a unified place and practice of worship once again in contrast to Israel using the illicit places of worship, illicit priesthood, and illicit feasts instituted by Jeroboam (1 Kgs 12:26-31) and continued until the downfall of Samaria in 722 b.c.

⁵ **tn** See the translator's notes on 30:5, 12.

⁶ **tn** *Heb* "for the head/chief of the nations." See BDB 911 s.v. ראש 3.c and compare usage in Ps 18:44 referring to David as the "chief" or "foremost ruler" of the nations.

⁷ **tn** It is unclear who the addressees of the masculine plural imperatives are in this verse. Possibly they are the implied exiles who are viewed as in the process of returning and praying for their fellow countrymen.

⁸ **tc** Or "The LORD will rescue his people. He will deliver those of Israel who remain alive." The translation used in the text follows the Hebrew: "Rescue your people, O LORD, the remnant of Israel." The alternate translation which is preferred by several modern English versions (e.g., REB, TEV) and a majority of modern commentaries (see, e.g., J. A. Thompson, *Jeremiah* [NICOT], 569; J. Bright, *Jeremiah* [AB], 273, n. s-s) follows the reading of the Greek version and the Aramaic Targum and appears more appropriate to the context of praise presupposed by the preceding imperatives. The difference in the two readings are the omission of one vowel letter and the confusion of a final כ (*kaf*) and a ו (*holem-vav*) which are very similar in form. (The Greek presupposes אֶתְּנוּ אֶתְּנוּ [hoshi'a y^hvah 'et-'ammō] for the Hebrew אֶתְּנוּ אֶתְּנוּ [hoshi'a y^hvah 'et-'amm^hkh].) The key to a decision here is the shift from the verbs of praise to the imperative "say" which introduces the quotation; there is a shift from praise to petition. The shift in mood is not uncommon, occurring, for example, in Ps 118:25 and 126:4; it is the shift in mood between praise for what has begun to petition for what is further hoped for. It is easier to explain the origin contextually of the Greek and Targum than it is the Hebrew text, thus the Greek and Targum are probably a secondary smoothing of the text (this is the de-

31:8 Then I will reply,⁹ 'I will bring them back from the land of the north.

I will gather them in from the distant parts of the earth.

Blind and lame people will come with them,

so will pregnant women and women about to give birth.

A vast throng of people will come back here.

31:9 They will come back shedding tears of contrition.

I will bring them back praying prayers of repentance.¹⁰

I will lead them besides streams of water, along smooth paths where they will never stumble.¹¹

I will do this because I am Israel's father; Ephraim¹² is my firstborn son."¹³

31:10 Hear what the LORD has to say, O nations.

Proclaim it in the faraway lands along the sea.

Say, "The one who scattered Israel will regather them.

He will watch over his people like a shepherd watches over his flock."

31:11 For the LORD will rescue the descendants of Jacob.

He will secure their release¹³ from those

cision of the D. Barthélemy, ed., *Preliminary and Interim Report on the Hebrew Old Testament Text Project*, 4:263). The mood of prayer also shows up in v. 9 and again in vv. 17-18.

⁹ **tn** The words "And I will reply" are not in the text but the words vv. 8-9 appear to be the answer to the petition at the end of v. 7. These words are supplied in the translation for clarity.

¹⁰ **tn** *Heb* "They will come with weeping; I will bring them with supplication." The ideas of contrition and repentance are implicit from the context (cf. vv. 18-19) and are supplied for clarity.

¹¹ **sn** Jer 31:8-9 are reminiscent of the "New Exodus" motif of Isa 40-66 which has already been referred to in Jer 16:14-15; 23:7-8. See especially Isa 35:3-10; 40:3-5, 11; 41:17-20; 42:14-17; 43:16-21; 49:9-13. As there, the New Exodus will so outstrip the old that the old will pale in comparison and be almost forgotten (see Jer 23:7-8).

¹² **sn** *Ephraim* was the second son of Joseph who was elevated to a place of prominence in the family of Jacob by the patriarch's special blessing. It was the strongest tribe in northern Israel and Samaria lay in its territory. It is often used as a poetic parallel for Israel as here. The poetry is not speaking of two separate entities here; it is a way of repeating an idea for emphasis. Moreover, there is no intent to show special preference for northern Israel over Judah. All Israel is metaphorically God's son and the object of his special care and concern (Exod 4:22; Deut 32:6).

¹³ **sn** Two rather theologically significant metaphors are used in this verse. The Hebrew word translated "will secure... release" is a word used in the legal sphere for paying a redemption price to secure the freedom of a person or thing (see, e.g., Exod 13:13, 15). It is used metaphorically and theologically to refer to Israel's deliverance from Egyptian bondage (Deut 15:15; Mic 6:4) and its deliverance from Babylonian exile (Isa 35:10). The word translated "secure their release" is a word used in the sphere of family responsibility where a person paid the price to free an indentured relative (Lev 25:48, 49) or paid the price to restore a relative's property seized to pay a debt (Lev 25:25, 33). This word, too, was used to refer metaphorically and theologically to Israel's deliverance from Egyptian bondage (Exod 6:6) or release from

who had overpowered them.¹

31:12 They will come and shout for joy on Mount Zion.

They will be radiant with joy² over the good things the LORD provides, the grain, the fresh wine, the olive oil, the young sheep and calves he has given to them.

They will be like a well-watered garden and will not grow faint or weary any more.

31:13 The LORD says,³ “At that time young women will dance and be glad.

Young men and old men will rejoice.⁴

I will turn their grief into gladness. I will give them comfort and joy in place of their sorrow.

31:14 I will provide the priests with abundant provisions.⁵

My people will be filled to the full with the good things I provide.”

31:15 The LORD says,

“A sound is heard in Ramah,⁶ a sound of crying in bitter grief.

It is the sound of Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted, because her children are gone.”⁷

Babylonian exile (Isa 43:1-4; 44:22). These words are traditionally translated “ransom” and “redeem” and are a part of traditional Jewish and Christian vocabulary for physical and spiritual deliverance.

¹ **tn** *Heb* “from the hand/power of the one too strong for him.”

² **tn** Reading a Qal perfect from the root *נָהַר* (*nahar*); so KBL 509 s.v. and HALOT 639 s.v.) rather than *נָהַר* (so BDB 625 s.v.).

³ **tn** *Heb* “Oracle of the LORD.” This phrase has been brought up to the beginning of v. 13 from the end of v. 14 to introduce the transition from third person description by Jeremiah to first person address by the LORD.

⁴ **tc** The translation follows the reading of the LXX (Greek version). The Hebrew reads “will dance and be glad, young men and old men together.” The Greek version presupposes a Qal imperfect of a rare verb (*יָהַד*) [yakhadu] from the verb *יָהַד* [*khadah*]; see BDB 292 s.v. *יָהַד* (Qal) as opposed to the Hebrew text which reads a common adverb *יָהַד* (*yakhdav*). The consonantal text is the same but the vocalization is different. There are no other examples of the syntax of the adverb used this way (i.e., of a compound subject added to a third subject) and the vocalization of the Hebrew text can be explained on the basis of a scribe misvocalizing the text based on his greater familiarity with the adverb.

⁵ **tn** *Heb* “I will satiate the priests with fat.” However, the word translated “fat” refers literally to the fat ashes of the sacrifices (see Lev 1:16; 4:2 and cf. BDB 206 s.v. *חֵמֶן* 2). The word is used more abstractly for “abundance” or “rich food” (see Job 36:16 and BDB 206 s.v. *חֵמֶן* 1). The people and the priests were prohibited from eating the fat (Lev 7:23-24).

⁶ **sn** *Ramah* is a town in Benjamin approximately five miles (8 km) north of Jerusalem. It was on the road between Bethel and Bethlehem. Traditionally, Rachel’s tomb was located near there at a place called Zelzah (1 Sam 10:2). Rachel was the mother of Joseph and Benjamin and was very concerned about having children because she was barren (Gen 30:1-2) and went to great lengths to have them (Gen 30:3, 14-15, 22-24). She was the grandmother of Ephraim and Manasseh which were two of the major tribes in northern Israel. Here Rachel is viewed metaphorically as weeping for her “children,” the descendants of Ephraim and Manasseh, who had been carried away into captivity in 722 B.C.

⁷ **tn** Or “gone into exile” (cf. v. 16), though some English ver-

31:16 The LORD says to her,⁸ “Stop crying! Do not shed any more tears!⁹

For your heartfelt repentance¹⁰ will be rewarded.

Your children will return from the land of the enemy.

I, the LORD, affirm it!¹¹

31:17 Indeed, there is hope for your posterity.¹²

Your children will return to their own territory.

I, the LORD, affirm it!¹³

31:18 I have indeed¹⁴ heard the people of Israel¹⁵ say mournfully,

“We were like a calf untrained to the yoke.¹⁶

You disciplined us and we learned from it.¹⁷

Let us come back to you and we will do so,¹⁸

sions take this as meaning “dead” (e.g., NCV, CEV, NLT), presumably in light of Matt 2:18.

⁸ **tn** The words “to her” are not in the text but are implicit from the context. They are supplied in the translation for clarity.

⁹ **tn** *Heb* “Refrain your voice from crying and your eyes from tears.”

¹⁰ **tn** *Heb* “your work.” Contextually her “work” refers to her weeping and refusing to be comforted, that is, signs of genuine repentance (v. 15).

¹¹ **tn** *Heb* “Oracle of the LORD.”

¹² **tn** For this nuance for the Hebrew word *אַחֲרַיִת* (*’akharit*) see BDB 31 s.v. *אַחֲרַיִת* d and compare usage in Pss 37:38; 109:13. Others translate “your future” but the “future” lies with the return of her descendants, her posterity.

¹³ **tn** *Heb* “Oracle of the LORD.”

¹⁴ **tn** The use of “indeed” is intended to reflect the infinitive absolute which precedes the verb for emphasis (see *IBHS* 585-86 §35.3.1f).

¹⁵ **tn** *Heb* “Ephraim.” See the study note on 31:9. The more familiar term is used, the term “people” added to it, and plural pronouns used throughout the verse to aid in understanding.

¹⁶ **tn** *Heb* “like an untrained calf.” The metaphor is that of a calf who has never been broken to bear the yoke (cf. Hos 4:16; 10:11).

¹⁷ **sn** Jer 2:20; 5:5 already referred to Israel’s refusal to bear the yoke of loyalty and obedience to the LORD’s demands. Here Israel expresses that she has learned from the discipline of exile and is ready to bear his yoke.

¹⁸ **tn** The verb here is from the same root as the preceding and is probably an example of the “tolerative Niphal,” i.e., “I let myself be disciplined/I responded to it.” See *IBHS* 389-90 §23.4g and note the translation of some of the examples there, especially Isa 19:22; 65:1.

¹⁹ **tn** *Heb* “Bring me back in order that I may come back.” For the use of the plural pronouns see the marginal note at the beginning of the verse. The verb “bring back” and “come back” are from the same root in two different verbal stems and in the context express the idea of spiritual repentance and restoration of relationship not physical return to the land. (See BDB 999 s.v. *שׁוּב* Hiph.2.a for the first verb and 997 s.v. Qal.6.c for the second.) For the use of the cohortative to express purpose after the imperative see GKC 320 §108.d or *IBHS* 575 §34.5.2b.

²⁰ **sn** There is a wordplay on several different nuances of the same Hebrew verb in vv. 16-19. The Hebrew verb *shub* refers both to their turning away from God (v. 19) and to their turning back to him (v. 18). It is also the word that is used for their return to their homeland (vv. 16-17).

for you are the LORD our God.
31:19 For after we turned away from you we repented.
 After we came to our senses⁴ we struck our thigh in sorrow.²
 We are ashamed and humiliated because of the disgraceful things we did previously.³
31:20 Indeed, the people of Israel are my dear children.
 They are the children I take delight in.⁴
 For even though I must often rebuke them,
 I still remember them with fondness.
 So I am deeply moved with pity for them⁵
 and will surely have compassion on them.
 I, the LORD, affirm it!⁶
31:21 I will say,⁷ ‘My dear children of Israel,⁸ keep in mind the road you took when you were carried off.’⁹

Mark off in your minds the landmarks.
 Make a mental note of telltale signs marking the way back.
 Return, my dear children of Israel.
 Return to these cities of yours.
31:22 How long will you vacillate,¹⁰ you who were once like an unfaithful daughter?¹¹
 For I, the LORD, promise¹² to bring about something new¹³ on the earth, something as unique as a woman protecting a man!¹⁴

Judah Will Be Restored

31:23 The LORD God of Israel who rules over all¹⁵ says,

¹ **tn** For this meaning of the verb see HAL 374 s.v. יָרַע Nif 5 or W. L. Holladay, *Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon*, 129. REB translates “Now that I am submissive” relating the verb to a second root meaning “be submissive.” (See HALOT 375 s.v. יָרַע II and J. Barr, *Comparative Philology and the Text of the Old Testament*, 19-21, for evidence for this verb. Other passages cited with this nuance are Judg 8:16; Prov 10:9; Job 20:20.)

² **sn** This was a gesture of grief and anguish (cf. Ezek 21:12 [21:17 HT]). The modern equivalent is “to beat the breast.”

³ **tn** Heb “because I bear the reproach of my youth.” For the plural referents see the note at the beginning of v. 18.

sn The expression *the disgraceful things we did in our earlier history* refers to the disgrace that accompanied the sins that Israel did in her earlier years before she learned the painful lesson of submission to the LORD through the discipline of exile. For earlier references to the sins of her youth (i.e., in her earlier years as a nation) see 3:24-25; 22:21 and see also 32:29. At the time that these verses were written, neither northern Israel or Judah had expressed the kind of contrition voiced in vv. 18-19. As one commentator notes, the words here are both prophetic and instructive.

⁴ **tn** Heb “Is Ephraim a dear son to me or a child of delight?” For the substitution of Israel for Ephraim and the plural pronouns for the singular see the note on v. 18. According to BDB 210 s.v. הָיָה 1.c the question is rhetorical having the force of an impassioned affirmation. See 1 Sam 2:27; Job 41:9 (41:1 HT) for parallel usage.

⁵ **tn** Heb “my stomach churns for him.” The parallelism shows that this refers to pity or compassion.

⁶ **tn** Heb “Oracle of the LORD.”

⁷ **tn** The words “I will say” are not in the text. They are supplied in the translation to mark the transition from the address about Israel in a response to Rachel’s weeping (vv. 15-20) to a direct address to Israel which is essentially the answer to Israel’s prayer of penitence (cf. G. L. Keown, P. J. Scalise, T. G. Smothers, *Jeremiah* 26-52 [WBC], 121.)

sn The LORD here invites Israel to stop dilly-dallying and prepare themselves to return because he is prepared to do something new and miraculous.

⁸ **tn** Heb “Virgin Israel.” For the significance see the study note on 31:3.

⁹ **tn** Heb “Set your mind to the highway, the way which you went.” The phrase “the way you went” has been translated “the road you took when you were carried off” to help the reader see the reference to the exile implicit in the context. The verb “which you went” is another example of the old second feminine singular which the Masoretes typically vocalize (*Kethib* הָלַכְתְּי [*halakhti*]; *Qere* הָלַכְתְּי [*halakhti*]). The vocalization has been supplied in the translation at the beginning to help

make the transition from third person reference to Ephraim/Israel in the preceding to second person in the following and to identify the referent of the imperatives. Likewise, this line has been moved to the front to show that the reference to setting up sign posts and landmarks is not literal but figurative, referring to making a mental note of the way they took when carried off so that they can easily find their way back. Lines three and four in the Hebrew text read, “Set up sign posts for yourself; set up guideposts/landmarks for yourself.” The word translated “telltale signs marking the way” occurs only here. Though its etymology and precise meaning are unknown, all the lexicons agree in translating it as “sign post” or something similar based on the parallelism.

¹⁰ **tn** The translation “dilly-dally” is suggested by J. Bright, *Jeremiah* (AB), 276. The verb occurs only here in this stem (the Hitpael) and only one other time in any other stem (the Qal in Song 5:6). The dictionaries define it as “to turn this way and that” (cf., e.g., BDB 330 s.v. הִתְהַלַּךְ Hitph.). In the context it refers to turning this way and that looking for the way back.

¹¹ **sn** Israel’s backsliding is forgotten and forgiven. They had once been characterized as an apostate people (3:14, 22; the word “apostate” and “unfaithful” are the same in Hebrew) and figuratively depicted as an adulterous wife (3:20). Now they are viewed as having responded to his invitation (compare 31:18-19 with 3:22-25). Hence they are no longer depicted as an unfaithful daughter but as an unsullied virgin (see the literal translation of “my dear children” in vv. 4, 21 and the study note on v. 4.)

¹² **tn** Heb “For the LORD will create.” The person has been shifted to avoid the possible confusion for some readers of a third person reference to the LORD in what has otherwise been a first person address. The verb “will create” is another one of the many examples of the prophetic perfect that have been seen in the book of Jeremiah. For the significance of the verb “create” here see the study note on “bring about something new.”

¹³ **sn** Heb “create.” This word is always used with God as the subject and refers to the production of something new or unique, like the creation of the world and the first man and woman (Gen 1:1; 2:3; 1:27; 5:1) or the creation of a new heavens and a new earth in a new age (Isa 65:17), or the bringing about of new and unique circumstances (Num 16:30). Here reference is made contextually to the new exodus, that marvelous deliverance which will be so great that the old will pale in comparison (see the first note on v. 9).

¹⁴ **tn** The meaning of this last line is uncertain. The translation has taken it as proverbial for something new and unique. For a fairly complete discussion of most of the options see C. Feinberg, “Jeremiah,” *EBC* 6:571. For the nuance of “protecting” for the verb here see BDB 686 s.v. קָבַב Po’ 1 and compare the usage in Deut 32:10.

¹⁵ **tn** Heb “Yahweh of armies, the God of Israel.” See 7:3 and the study note of 2:19 for the rendering of this title and an explanation of its significance.

“I will restore the people of Judah to their land and to their towns. When I do, they will again say¹ of Jerusalem,² ‘May the LORD bless you, you holy mountain, the place where righteousness dwells.’³ 31:24 The land of Judah will be inhabited by people who live in its towns as well as by farmers and shepherds with their flocks.⁴ 31:25 I will fully satisfy the needs of those who are weary and fully refresh the souls of those who are faint.⁵ 31:26 Then they will say, ‘Under these conditions I can enjoy sweet sleep when I wake up and look around.’”⁶

Israel and Judah Will Be Repopulated

31:27 “Indeed, a time is coming,”⁷ says the LORD,⁸ “when I will cause people and animals to sprout up in the lands of Israel and Judah.⁹ 31:28 In the past I saw to it that they were uprooted and torn down, that they were destroyed and demolished. But now I will see to it that they are built up and firmly planted.¹⁰ I, the LORD, affirm it!”¹¹

The Lord Will Make a New Covenant with Israel and Judah

31:29 “When that time comes, people will no longer say, ‘The parents have eaten sour grapes, but the children’s teeth have grown numb.’¹² 31:30 Rather, each person will die for his own

¹ **tn** Heb “They [i.e., people (the indefinite plural, GKC 460 §144.g)] will again say in the land of Judah and in its cities when I restore their fortunes.” For the meaning of the idiom “to restore the fortunes” see the translator’s note on 29:14.

² **tn** The words “of Jerusalem” are not in the text but it is implicit in the titles that follow. They have been supplied in the translation for clarity to aid in identifying the referent.

map For location see Map5-B1; Map6-F3; Map7-E2; Map8-F2; Map10-B3; JP1-F4; JP2-F4; JP3-F4; JP4-F4.

³ **sn** The blessing pronounced on the city of Zion/Jerusalem by the restored exiles looks at the restoration of its once exalted state as the city known for its sanctity and its just dealing (see Isa 1:21 and Ps 122). This was a reversal of the state of Jerusalem in the time of Isaiah and Jeremiah where wickedness not righteousness characterized the inhabitants of the city (cf. Isa 1:21; Jer 4:14; 5:1; 13:27). The blessing here presupposes the rebuilding of the city of Jerusalem and the temple which gave the city its sanctity.

⁴ **tn** The translation “those who move about with their flocks” is based on an emendation of the Hebrew text which reads a third plural Qal perfect (נוֹסְוּ, *nos’u*) to a masculine plural Qal participle in the construct (נוֹסְוֵי, *nos’ei*) as suggested in the BHS fn. For the use of the construct participle before a noun with a preposition see GKC 421 §130.a. It is generally agreed that three classes of people are referred to here, townspeople, farmers, and shepherds. But the syntax of the Hebrew sentence is a little awkward: “And they [i.e., “people” (the indefinite plural, GKC 460 §144.g)] will live in it, Judah and all its cities [an apposition of nearer definition (GKC 425-26 §131.n)], [along with] farmers and those who move about with their flocks.” The first line refers awkwardly to the townspeople and the other two classes are added asyndetically (i.e., without the conjunction “and”).

⁵ **tn** The verbs here again emphasize that the actions are as good as done (i.e., they are prophetic perfects; cf. GKC 312-13 §106.n).

sn For the concept here compare Jer 31:12 where the promise was applied to northern Israel. This represents the reversal of the conditions that would characterize the exiles according to the covenant curse of Deut 28:65-67.

⁶ **tn** Or “When I, Jeremiah, heard this, I woke up and looked around. My sleep had been very pleasant.” The text is somewhat enigmatic. It has often been explained as an indication that Jeremiah had received this communication (30:3-31:26) while in a prophetic trance (compare Dan 10:9). However, there is no other indication that this is a vision or a vision report. G. L. Keown, P. J. Scalise, and T. G. Smothers (*Jeremiah* 26-52 [WBC], 124, 128-29) suggest that this is a speech of the restored (and refreshed) exiles like that which is formally introduced in v. 23. This speech, however, is not formally introduced. This interpretation is also reflected in TEV, CEV and is accepted here as fitting the context better and demanding less presuppositions. The Hebrew text reads literally, “Upon this I awoke and looked and my sleep was sweet to me.” Keown, Scalise, and Smothers have the best discussion of these

two options as well as several other options.

⁷ **tn** Heb “Behold days are coming!” The particle “Behold” is probably used here to emphasize the reality of a fact. See the translator’s note on 1:6.

sn This same expression is found in the introduction to the Book of Consolation (Jer 30:1-3) and in the introduction to the promise of a new covenant (or covenant; 31:31). In all three passages it is emphasized that the conditions apply to both Israel and Judah. The LORD will reverse their fortunes and restore them to their lands (30:3), increase their numbers and build them up (31:27-28), and make a new covenant with them involving forgiveness of sins (31:31-34).

⁸ **tn** Heb “Oracle of the LORD.”

⁹ **tn** Heb “Behold, the days are coming and [= when] I will sow the house of Israel and the house of Judah with the seed of people and of animals.” For the significance of the metaphor see the study note.

sn The metaphor used here presupposes that drawn in Hos 2:23 (2:25 HT) which is in turn based on the wordplay with Jezreel (meaning “God sows”) in Hos 2:22. The figure is that of plant seed in the ground which produces a crop; here what are sown are the “seeds of people and animals.” For a similar picture of the repopulating of Israel and Judah see Ezek 36:10-11. The promise here reverses the scene of devastation that Jeremiah had depicted apocalyptically and hyperbolically in Jer 4:23-29 as judgment for Judah’s sins.

¹⁰ **tn** Heb “Just as I watched over them to uproot and to tear down, to destroy and demolish, so I will watch over them to build and to plant.” The words here repeat those of 1:10 and 1:12.

¹¹ **tn** Heb “Oracle of the LORD.”

¹² **tn** This word only occurs here and in the parallel passage in Ezek 18:2 in the Qal stem and in Eccl 10:10 in the Piel stem. In the latter passage it refers to the bluntness of an ax that has not been sharpened. Here the idea is of the “bluntness” of the teeth, not from having ground them down due to the bitter taste of sour grapes but to the fact that they have lost their “edge,” “bite,” or “sharpness” because they are numb from the sour taste. For this meaning for the word see W. L. Holladay, *Jeremiah* (Hermeneia), 2:197.

sn This is a proverbial statement that is also found in Ezek 18:2. It served to articulate the complaint that the present generation was suffering for the accrued sins of their ancestors (cf. Lam 5:7) and that the LORD was hence unjust (Ezek 18:25, 29). However, Jeremiah had repeatedly warned his own generation that they were as guilty or even more so than their ancestors. The ancestors were indeed guilty of sin but the present generation had compounded the problem by their stubborn refusal to turn back to God despite repeated warnings from the prophets and hence God would withhold judgment no longer (cf. especially Jer 16:10-13 and compare Jer 7:24-34; 9:12-16 (9:11-15 HT); 11:1-13).

sins. The teeth of the person who eats the sour grapes will themselves grow numb.¹

31:31 “Indeed, a time is coming,” says the LORD,² “when I will make a new covenant³ with the people of Israel and Judah.⁴ **31:32** It will not be like the old⁵ covenant that I made with their ancestors⁶ when I delivered them⁷ from Egypt. For they violated that covenant, even though I was like a faithful husband to them,”⁸ says the LORD.⁹ **31:33** “But I will make a new covenant with the whole nation of Israel¹⁰ after I plant them back in the land,”¹¹ says the LORD.¹² “I

will¹³ put my law within them¹⁴ and write it on their hearts and minds.¹⁵ I will be their God and they will be my people.¹⁶

31:34 “People will no longer need to teach their neighbors and relatives to know me.¹⁷ For all of them, from the least important to the most important, will know me,”¹⁸ says the LORD. “For¹⁹ I will forgive their sin and will no longer call to mind the wrong they have done.”

1 sn The LORD answers their charge by stating that each person is responsible for his own sin and will himself bear the consequences. Ezek 18 has a more extended treatment of this and shows that this extends not just to the link between parents and children but between former behavior and future behavior of the same individual. To a certain extent the principle articulated here is anticipatory of the statement in v. 34 which refers to the forgiveness of former sins.

2 tn Heb “Oracle of the LORD.”

3 tn Or “a renewed covenant” (also in vv. 22-23).

4 tn Heb “the house of Israel and the house of Judah.”

5 tn The word “old” is not in the text but is implicit in the use of the word “new.” It is supplied in the translation for greater clarity.

6 tn Heb “fathers.”

sn This refers to the Mosaic covenant which the nation entered into with God at Sinai and renewed on the plains of Moab. The primary biblical passages explicating this covenant are Exod 19–24 and the book of Deuteronomy; see as well the study note on Jer 11:2 for the form this covenant took and its relation to the warnings of the prophets. The renewed document of Deuteronomy was written down and provisions made for periodic public reading and renewal of commitment to it (Deut 31:9-13). Josiah had done this after the discovery of the book of the law (which was either Deuteronomy or a synopsis of it) early in the ministry of Jeremiah (2 Kgs 23:1-4; the date would be near 622 B.C. shortly after Jeremiah began prophesying in 627 [see the note on Jer 1:2]). But it is apparent from Jeremiah’s confrontation with Judah after that time that the commitment of the people was only superficial (cf. Jer 3:10). The prior history of the nations of Israel and Judah and Judah’s current practice had been one of persistent violation of this covenant despite repeated warnings of the prophets that God would punish them for that (see especially Jer 7, 11). Because of that, Israel had been exiled (cf., e.g., Jer 3:8), and now Judah was threatened with the same (cf., e.g., Jer 7:15). Jer 30–31 look forward to a time when both Israel and Judah will be regathered, reunited, and under a new covenant which includes the same stipulations but with a different relationship (v. 32).

7 tn Heb “when I took them by the hand and led them out.”

8 tn Or “I was their master.” See the study note on 3:14.

sn The metaphor of Yahweh as husband and Israel as wife has been used already in Jer 3 and is implicit in the repeated allusions to idolatry as spiritual adultery or prostitution. The best commentary on the faithfulness of God to his “husband-like” relation is seen in the book of Hosea, especially in Hos 1-3.

9 tn Heb “Oracle of the LORD.”

10 tn Heb “with the house of Israel.” All commentators agree that the term here refers to both the whole nation which was divided into the house of Israel and the house of Judah in v. 30.

11 tn Heb “after those days.” Commentators are generally agreed that this refers to the return from exile and the repopulation of the land referred to in vv. 27-28 and not to something subsequent to the time mentioned in v. 30. This is the sequencing that is also presupposed in other new covenant passages such as Deut 30:1-6; Ezek 11:17-20; 36:24-28.

12 tn Heb “Oracle of the LORD.”

13 tn Heb “‘But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after these days:’ says the LORD, ‘I will....’” The sentence has been reworded and restructured to avoid the awkwardness of the original style.

14 tn Heb “in their inward parts.” The Hebrew word here refers to the seat of the thoughts, emotions, and decisions (Jer 9:8 [9:7 HT]). It is essentially synonymous with “heart” in Hebrew psychological terms.

15 tn The words “and minds” is not in the text but is supplied in the translation to bring the English psychology more into line with the Hebrew where the “heart” is the center both of knowing/thinking/reflecting and deciding/willing.

sn Two contexts are relevant for understanding this statement. First is the context of the first or old covenant which was characterized by a law written on stone tablets (e.g., Exod 32:15-16; 34:1, 28; Deut 4:13; 5:22; 9:10) or in a “book” or “scroll” (Deut 31:9-13) which could be lost (cf. 2 Kgs 22:8), forgotten (Hos 4:6), ignored (Jer 6:19; Amos 4:2), or altered (Jer 8:8). Second is the context of the repeated fault that Jeremiah has found with their stubborn (3:17; 7:24; 9:14; 11:8; 13:10; 16:12; 18:12; 23:17), uncircumcised (4:4; 9:26), and desperately wicked hearts (4:4; 17:9). Radical changes were necessary to get the people to obey the law from the heart and not just pay superficial or lip service to it (3:10; 12:2). Deut 30:1-6; Ezek 11:17-20; 36:24-28 speak of these radical changes. The LORD will remove the “foreskin” of their heart and give them a circumcised heart, or take away their “stony” heart and give them a new heart. With this heart they will be able to obey his laws, statutes, ordinances, and commands (Deut 30:8; Ezek 11:20; 36:27). The new covenant does not entail a new law; it is the same law that Jeremiah has repeatedly accused them of rejecting or ignoring (6:19; 9:13; 16:11; 26:4; 44:10). What does change is their inner commitment to keep it. Jeremiah has already referred to this in Jer 24:7 and will refer to it again in Jer 32:39.

16 sn Compare Jer 24:7; 30:22; 31:1 and see the study note on 30:2.

17 tn Heb “teach....,” saying, “Know the LORD.” The indirect quote has been chosen for stylistic reasons, i.e., to better parallel the following line.

sn As mentioned in the translator’s note on 9:3 (9:2 HT) “knowing” God in covenant contexts like this involves more than just an awareness of who he is (9:23 [9:22 HT]). It involves an acknowledgment of his sovereignty and whole hearted commitment to obedience to him. This is perhaps best seen in the parallelisms in Hos 4:1; 6:6 where “the knowledge of God” is parallel with faithful and steadfast love and in the context of Hos 4 refers to obedience to the LORD’s commands.

18 sn This statement should be understood against the background of Jer 8:8-9 where class distinctions were drawn and certain people were considered to have more awareness and responsibility for knowing the law and also Jer 5:1-5 and 9:3-9 where the sinfulness of Israel was seen to be universal across these class distinctions and no trust was to be placed in friends, neighbors, or relatives because all without distinction had cast off God’s yoke (i.e., refused to submit themselves to his authority).

19 tn The Hebrew particle כִּי (*ki*) that introduces this clause refers to more than just the preceding clause (i.e., that all will know the LORD) but to all of vv. 31-34a (See BDB 474 s.v. כִּי 3.c).

The Lord Guarantees Israel's Continuance

31:35 The LORD has made a promise to Israel.

He promises it as the one who fixed the sun to give light by day and the moon and stars to give light by night.

He promises it as the one who stirs up the sea so that its waves roll.

He promises it as the one who is known as the LORD who rules over all.¹

31:36 The LORD affirms,² “The descendants of Israel will not cease forever to be a nation in my sight. That could only happen if the fixed ordering of the heavenly lights were to cease to operate before me.”³

31:37 The LORD says, “I will not reject all the descendants of Israel because of all that they have done.⁴ That could only happen if the heavens above could be measured or the foundations of the earth below could all be explored,”⁵ says the LORD.⁶

¹ **tn** *Heb* “Yahweh of armies.” See the study note on 2:19 for this title. In the Hebrew text the verse reads: “Thus says the LORD who provides the sun for light by day, the fixed ordering of the moon and stars for light by night, who stirs up the sea and its waves roar, whose name is Yahweh of armies, ‘...’” The hymnic introduction to the quote which does not begin until v. 36 has been broken down to avoid a long awkward sentence in English. The word “said” has been translated “made a promise” to reflect the nature of the content in vv. 36-37. The first two lines of the Hebrew poetry are a case of complex or supplementary ellipsis where the complete idea of “providing/establishing the fixed laws” is divided between the two lines (cf. E. W. Bullinger, *Figures of Speech*, 110-13). The necessity for recombining the ellipsis is obvious from reference to the fixed ordering in the next verse. (Some commentators prefer to delete the word as an erroneous glossing of the word in the following line (see, e.g., J. Bright, *Jeremiah* [AB], 277, n. y).

² **tn** *Heb* “Oracle of the LORD.”

³ **tn** *Heb* “If these fixed orderings were to fail to be present before me,” oracle of the LORD, “then the seed of Israel could cease from being a nation before me forever (or more literally, “all the days”).” The sentence has been broken up to conform more to modern style. The connection has been maintained by reversing the order of condition and consequence and still retaining the condition in the second clause. For the meaning of “cease to operate” for the verb מוּשׁ (mush) compare the usage in Isa 54:10; Ps 55:11 (55:12 HT); Prov 17:13 where what is usually applied to persons or things is applied to abstract things like this (see HALOT 506 s.v. מוּשׁ Qal for general usage).

⁴ **sn** This answers Jeremiah’s question in 14:19.

⁵ **tn** *Heb* “If the heavens above could be measured or the foundations of the earth below be explored, then also I could reject all the seed of Israel for all they have done.”

⁶ **tn** *Heb* “Oracle of the LORD.”

Jerusalem Will Be Enlarged

31:38 “Indeed a time is coming,”⁷ says the LORD,⁸ “when the city of Jerusalem⁹ will be rebuilt as my special city.¹⁰ It will be built from the Tower of Hananel westward to the Corner Gate.¹¹

31:39 The boundary line will extend beyond that, straight west from there to the Hill of Gareb and then turn southward to Goah.¹² **31:40** The whole valley where dead bodies and sacrificial ashes are thrown¹³ and all the terraced fields¹⁴ out to the Kidron Valley¹⁵ on the east as far north¹⁶ as the Horse Gate¹⁷ will be included within this city that is sacred to the LORD.¹⁸ The city will never again be torn down or destroyed.”

⁷ **tc** The words “is coming” (בָּאִים, *ba'im*) are not in the written text (*Kethib*) but are supplied in the margin (*Qere*), in several Hebrew MSS and in the versions. It is part of the idiom that also occurs in vv. 27, 31.

sn On this idiom compare vv. 27, 31.

⁸ **tn** *Heb* “Oracle of the LORD.”

⁹ **map** For location see Map5-B1; Map6-F3; Map7-E2; Map8-F2; Map10-B3; JP1-F4; JP2-F4; JP3-F4; JP4-F4.

¹⁰ **tn** *Heb* “the city will be built to [or for] the LORD.” The words “of Jerusalem” are not in the text but are implicit from the context. They have been supplied in the translation for clarity. However, the word occurs in a first person speech so the translation has accommodated the switch in person as it has in a number of other places (compare also NIV, TEV, ICV).

¹¹ **tn** The word “westward” is not in the text but is supplied in the translation to give some orientation.

sn The Tower of Hananel is referred to in Neh 3:1; 12:39; Zech 14:10. According to the directions given in Neh 3 it was in the northern wall, perhaps in the northeast corner, north of the temple mount. The Corner Gate is mentioned again in 2 Kgs 14:13; 2 Chr 25:23; 26:9; Zech 14:10. It is generally agreed that it was located in the northwest corner of the city.

¹² **tn** The words “west” and “southward” are not in the text but are supplied in the translation to give some orientation.

sn The location of the Hill of Gareb and the place called Goah are not precisely known. However, it has been plausibly suggested from the other localities mentioned that the reference is to the hill west of the Hinnom valley mentioned in Josh 15:8. The location of Goah is generally placed south of that near the southwest corner of the Hinnom Valley which is referred to in the next verse.

¹³ **sn** It is generally agreed that this refers to the Hinnom Valley which was on the southwestern and southern side of the city. It was here where the people of Jerusalem had burned their children as sacrifices and where the LORD had said that there would be so many dead bodies when he punished them that they would be unable to bury all of them (cf. Jer 7:31-32). Reference here may be to those dead bodies and to the ashes of the cremated victims. This defiled place would be included within the holy city.

¹⁴ **tc** The translation here follows the *Qere* and a number of Hebrew MSS in reading שְׂדֵמוֹת (*sh'demot*) for the otherwise unknown word שְׂרֵמוֹת (*sh'remot*) exhibiting the common confusion of ר (*resh*) and ד (*daleth*). The fields of Kidron are mentioned also in 2 Kgs 23:4 as the place where Josiah burned the cult objects of Baal.

¹⁵ **sn** The Kidron Valley is the valley that joins the Hinnom Valley in the southeastern corner of the city and runs northward on the east side of the city.

¹⁶ **tn** The words “on the east” and “north” are not in the text but are supplied in the translation to give orientation.

¹⁷ **sn** The Horse Gate is mentioned in Neh 3:28 and is generally considered to have been located midway along the eastern wall just south of the temple area.

¹⁸ **tn** The words “will be included within this city that is” are not in the text. The text merely says that “The whole valley... will be sacred to the LORD.” These words have been supplied in the translation because they are really implicit in the de-

Jeremiah Buys a Field

32:1 In the tenth year that Zedekiah was ruling over Judah the LORD spoke to Jeremiah.¹ That was the same as the eighteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar.

32:2 Now at that time,² the armies of the king of Babylon were besieging Jerusalem.³ The prophet Jeremiah was confined in the courtyard of the guardhouse⁴ attached to the royal palace

scription of the whole area as being included within the new city plan, not just the Hinnom and terraced fields as far as the Kidron Valley.

sn The area that is here delimited is larger than any of the known boundaries of Jerusalem during the OT period. Again, this refers to the increase in population of the restored community (cf. 31:27).

1 tn *Heb* “The word which came to Jeremiah from the LORD in the eleventh year of...” See 7:1; 11:1; 18:1; 21:1; 30:1 for this same formula.

sn The dating formulas indicate that the date was 588/87 b.c. Zedekiah had begun to reign in 598/97 and Nebuchadnezzar had begun to reign in 605/604 b.c. The dating of Nebuchadnezzar’s rule here includes the partial year before he was officially crowned on New Year’s day. See the translator’s note on 25:1 for the method of dating a king’s reign.

2 sn Jer 32:2-5 are parenthetical, giving the background for the actual report of what the LORD said in v. 7. The background is significant because it shows that Jeremiah was predicting the fall of the city and the kingdom and was being held prisoner for doing so. Despite this pessimistic outlook, the LORD wanted Jeremiah to demonstrate his assurance of the future restoration (which has been the topic of the two preceding chapters) by buying a field as a symbolic act that the Israelites would again one day regain possession of their houses, fields, and vineyards (vv. 15, 44). (For other symbolic acts with prophetic import see Jer 13, 19.)

3 sn According to Jer 39:1 the siege began in Zedekiah’s ninth year (i.e., in 589/88 b.c.). It had been interrupted while the Babylonian army was occupied with fighting against an Egyptian force that had invaded Judah. During this period of relaxed siege Jeremiah had attempted to go to his home town in Anathoth to settle some property matters, had been accused of treason, and been thrown into a dungeon (37:11-15). After appealing to Zedekiah he had been moved from the dungeon to the courtyard of the guardhouse connected to the palace (37:21) where he remained confined until Jerusalem was captured in 587/86 b.c. (38:28).

map For location see Map5-B1; Map6-F3; Map7-E2; Map8-F2; Map10-B3; JP1-F4; JP2-F4; JP3-F4; JP4-F4.

4 tn *Heb* “the courtyard of the guarding” or “place of guarding.” This expression occurs only in the book of Jeremiah (32:2, 8, 12; 33:1; 37:21; 38:6, 12, 28; 39:14, 15) and in Neh 3:25. It is not the same as an enclosed prison which is where Jeremiah was initially confined (37:15-16; literally a “house of imprisoning” [בֵּית הַחֲסוּרָה, *bet ha’asur*] or “house of confining” [בֵּית הַקֶּלֶה, *bet hakkele’*]). It is said to have been in the palace compound (32:2) near the citadel or upper palace (Neh 3:25). Though it was a place of confinement (32:2; 33:1; 39:15) Jeremiah was able to receive visitors, e.g., his cousin Hanamel (32:8) and the scribe Baruch (32:12), and conduct business there (32:12). According to 32:12 other Judeans were also housed there. A cistern of one of the royal princes, Malkijah, was located in this courtyard, so this is probably not a “prison compound” as NJPS interpret but a courtyard adjacent to a guardhouse or guard post (so G. L. Keown, P. J. Scalise, T. G. Smothers, *Jeremiah* 26-52 [WBC], 151, and compare Neh 12:39 where reference is made to a Gate of the Guard/Guardhouse) used here for housing political prisoners who did not deserve death or solitary confinement as some of the officials thought Jeremiah did.

of Judah. **32:3** For King Zedekiah⁵ had confined Jeremiah there after he had reproved him for prophesying as he did. He had asked Jeremiah, “Why do you keep prophesying these things? Why do you keep saying that the LORD says, ‘I will hand this city over to the king of Babylon? I will let him capture it.’” **32:4** King Zedekiah of Judah will not escape from the Babylonians.⁷ He will certainly be handed over to the king of Babylon. He must answer personally to the king of Babylon and confront him face to face.⁸ **32:5** Zedekiah will be carried off to Babylon and will remain there until I have fully dealt with him.⁹ I, the LORD, affirm it!¹⁰ Even if you¹¹ continue to fight against the Babylonians,¹² you cannot win.”

32:6 So now, Jeremiah said, “The LORD told me,¹³ **32:7** ‘Hanamel, the son of your uncle Shallum, will come to you soon. He will say to

5 tn *Heb* “Zedekiah king of Judah.”

6 tn The translation represents an attempt to break up a very long Hebrew sentence with several levels of subordination and embedded quotations and also an attempt to capture the rhetorical force of the question “Why...” which is probably an example of what E. W. Bullinger (*Figures of Speech*, 953-54) calls a rhetorical question of expostulation or remonstrance (cf. the note on 26:9 and compare also the question in 36:29. In all three of these cases NJPS translates “How dare you...” which captures the force nicely). The Hebrew text reads, “For Zedekiah king of Judah had confined him, saying, ‘Why are you prophesying, saying, “Thus says the LORD, ‘Behold I am giving this city into the hands of the king of Babylon and he will capture it.’””

7 tn *Heb* “The Chaldeans.” See the study note on 21:4 for further explanation.

8 tn *Heb* “his [Zedekiah’s] mouth will speak with his [Nebuchadnezzar’s] mouth and his eyes will see his eyes.” The verbs here are an obligatory imperfect and its *vav* consecutive perfect equivalent. (See *IBHS* 508-9 §31.4g for discussion and examples of the former and *IBHS* 528 §32.2.1d, n. 16, for the latter.)

9 tn This is the verb (פָּקַד, *paqad*) that has been met with several times in the book of Jeremiah, most often in the ominous sense of “punish” (e.g., 6:15; 11:22; 23:24) but also in the good sense of “resume concern for” (e.g., 27:22; 29:10). Here it is obviously in the ominous sense referring to his imprisonment and ultimate death (52:11).

sn Compare Jer 34:2-3 for this same prophecy. The incident in Jer 34:1-7 appears to be earlier than this one. Here Jeremiah is confined to the courtyard of the guardhouse; there he appears to have freedom of movement.

10 tn *Heb* “Oracle of the LORD.”

11 sn The pronouns are plural here, referring to the people of Judah and Jerusalem. Jeremiah had counseled that they surrender (cf. 27:12; 21:8-10) because they couldn’t succeed against the Babylonian army even under the most favorable circumstances (37:3-10).

12 tn *Heb* “The Chaldeans.” See the study note on 21:4 for further explanation.

13 tn *Heb* “The word of the LORD came to me, saying.” This verse resumes the narrative introduction in v. 1 which was interrupted by the long parenthetical note about historical background. There is again some disjunction in the narrative (compare the translator’s notes on 27:2 and 28:1). What was begun as a biographical (third person) narrative turns into an autobiographical (first person) narrative until v. 26 where the third person is again resumed. Again this betrays the hand of the narrator, Baruch.

you, “Buy my field at Anathoth because you are entitled¹ as my closest relative to buy it.”² **32:8** Now it happened just as the LORD had said! My cousin Hanamel³ came to me in the courtyard of the guardhouse. He said to me, ‘Buy my field which is at Anathoth in the territory of the tribe of Benjamin. Buy it for yourself since you are entitled as my closest relative to take possession of it for yourself.’ When this happened, I recognized that the LORD had indeed spoken to me. **32:9** So I bought the field at Anathoth from my cousin Hanamel. I weighed out seven ounces of silver and gave it to him to pay for it.⁴ **32:10** I signed the deed of purchase,⁵ sealed it, and had some men serve as witnesses to the purchase.⁶ I weighed out the silver for him on a scale. **32:11** There were two copies of the deed of purchase. One was sealed and contained the order of transfer and the conditions of purchase.⁷ The other was left unsealed. **32:12** I took both copies of the deed of purchase⁸ and gave them to Baruch son of Neriah, the son of Mahseiah. I gave them to

him in the presence⁹ of my cousin¹⁰ Hanamel, the witnesses who had signed the deed of purchase, and all the Judeans who were housed in the courtyard of the guardhouse. **32:13** In the presence of all these people I instructed Baruch, **32:14** ‘The LORD God of Israel who rules over all¹¹ says, “Take these documents, both the sealed copy of the deed of purchase and the unsealed copy. Put them in a clay jar so that they may be preserved for a long time to come.”’¹² **32:15** For the LORD God of Israel who rules over all¹³ says, “Houses, fields, and vineyards will again be bought in this land.”¹⁴

Jeremiah's Prayer of Praise and Bewilderment

32:16 “After I had given the copies of the deed of purchase to Baruch son of Neriah, I prayed to the LORD, **32:17** ‘Oh, Lord GOD,¹⁵ you

¹ **tn** *Heb* “your right.” The term *יְשִׁיבָה* (*ishpat*) here and in v. 8 refers to legal entitlement for the option to purchase a property (BDB 1049 s.v. *יְשִׁיבָה* 5; cf. Deut 21:17).

² **sn** Underlying this request are the laws of redemption of property spelled out in Lev 25:25-34 and illustrated in Ruth 4:3-4. Under these laws, if a property owner became impoverished and had to sell his land, the nearest male relative had the right and duty to buy it so that it would not pass out of the use of the extended family. The land, however, would not actually belong to Jeremiah because in the year of Jubilee it reverted to its original owner. All Jeremiah was actually buying was the right to use it (Lev 25:13-17). Buying the field, thus, did not make any sense (thus Jeremiah's complaint in v. 25) other than the fact that the LORD intended to use Jeremiah's act as a symbol of a restored future in the land.

³ **tn** *Heb* “And according to the word of the LORD my cousin Hanamel came to me to the courtyard of the guardhouse and said, ‘...’” The sentence has been broken down to conform better with contemporary English style.

⁴ **tn** *Heb* “I weighed out the money [more literally, “silver”] for him, seventeen shekels of silver.”

sn Coins were not in common use until the postexilic period. Payment in gold and silver was made by cutting off pieces of silver or gold and weighing them in a beam balance using standard weights as the measure. A shekel weighed approximately 0.4 ounce or 11.4 grams. The English equivalents are only approximations.

⁵ **tn** The words “of purchase” are not in the text but are implicit. The qualification is spelled out explicitly in vv. 11, 12, 13. These words are supplied in the translation for clarity. An alternative translation would be “I put the deed in writing.” However, since the same idiom *כָּתַב בְּסֵפֶר* (*catav b'sefer*) is used later in v. 12 with respect to the witnesses, it is likely that it merely refers to signing the document.

⁶ **tn** The words “to the purchase” are not in the text but are implicit in the idiom “I had some witnesses serve as witness.” The words are supplied in the translation for clarity.

⁷ **tn** There is some uncertainty about the precise meaning of the phrases translated “the order of transfer and the regulations.” The translation follows the interpretation suggested by J. Bright, *Jeremiah* (AB), 237; J. A. Thompson, *Jeremiah* (NICOT), 586, n. 5; and presumably BDB 349 s.v. *הָק* 7, which defines the use of *הָק* (*khôq*) here as “conditions of the deed of purchase.”

⁸ **tn** *Heb* “the deed, the purchase.” This is a case of apposition of species in place of the genitive construction (cf. GKC 423 §131.b and compare the usage in Exod 24:5).

⁹ **tn** *Heb* “I took the deed of purchase, both that which was sealed [and contained] the order and the regulations and that which was open [i.e., unsealed], and I gave the deed of purchase to Baruch...in the presence of my cousin Hanamel and in the presence of...and in the presence of...” It is awkward to begin a sentence with “I took...” without finishing the thought, and the long qualifiers in v. 12 make that sentence too long. The sentence is broken up in accordance with contemporary English style. The reference to the “deed of purchase” in v. 12 should be viewed as a plural consisting of both written and sealed copies as is clear from v. 11 and also v. 14. Part of the confusion is due to the nature of this document which consisted of a single papyrus scroll, half of which was rolled up and sealed and the other half which was left “opened” or unsealed. J. Bright (*Jeremiah* [AB], 237-38) is probably incorrect in assuming that the copies were duplicate since the qualification “containing the order of transfer and the regulations” is only applied to the appositional participle, “the sealed one [or copy].”

sn Aramaic documents from a slightly later period help us understand the nature of such deeds. The document consisted of a single papyrus sheet divided in half. One half contained all the particulars and was tightly rolled up, bound with strips of cloth or thread, sealed with wax upon which the parties affixed their seal, and signed by witnesses. The other copy consisted of an abstract and was left loosely rolled and unsealed (i.e., open to be consulted at will). If questions were raised about legality of the contract then the sealed copy could be unsealed and consulted.

¹⁰ **tc** The translation follows a number of Hebrew MSS and the Greek and Syriac versions in reading “the son of my uncles (= my cousin; *בֶּן דּוּדִי*, *ben dodî*.)” The majority of Hebrew MSS do not have the word “son of (בֶּן).”

¹¹ **tn** *Heb* “Yahweh of armies, the God of Israel.” For this title see 7:3 and the study notes on 2:19.

¹² **tn** *Heb* “many days.” See BDB s.v. *יָמִים* 5.b for this usage.

¹³ **tn** *Heb* “Yahweh of armies, the God of Israel.” For this title see 7:3 and the study notes on 2:19.

¹⁴ **sn** The significance of the symbolic act performed by Jeremiah as explained here was a further promise (see the “again” statements in 31:4, 5, 23 and the “no longer” statements in 31:12, 29, 34, 40) of future restoration beyond the destruction implied in vv. 3-5. After the interruption of exile, normal life of buying and selling of fields, etc. would again be resumed and former property rights would be recognized.

¹⁵ **tn** *Heb* “Lord Yahweh.” For an explanation of the rendering here see the study note on 1:6.

sn The parallel usage of this introduction in Jer 1:6; 4:10; 14:13 shows that though this prayer has a lengthy introductory section of praise in vv. 17-22, this prayer is really one of complaint or lament.

did indeed¹ make heaven and earth by your mighty power and great strength.² Nothing is too hard for you! **32:18** You show unfailing love to thousands.³ But you also punish children for the sins of their parents.⁴ You are the great and powerful God who is known as the LORD who rules over all.⁵ **32:19** You plan great things and you do mighty deeds.⁶ You see everything people do.⁷ You reward each of them for the way they live and for the things they do.⁸ **32:20** You did miracles and amazing deeds in the land of Egypt which have had lasting effect. By this means you gained both in Israel and among humankind a renown that lasts to this day.⁹

¹ **tn** This is an attempt to render the Hebrew participle normally translated “behold.” See the translator’s note on 1:6 for the usage of this participle.

² **tn** *Heb* “by your great power and your outstretched arm.” See 21:5; 27:5 and the marginal note on 27:5 for this idiom.

³ **tn** Or “to thousands of generations.” The contrast of showing steadfast love to “thousands” to the limitation of punishing the third and fourth generation of children for their parents’ sins in Exod 20:5-6; Deut 5:9-10; Exod 34:7 has suggested to many commentators and translators (cf., e.g., NRSV, TEV, NJPS) that reference here is to “thousands of generations.” The statement is, of course, rhetorical emphasizing God’s great desire to bless as opposed to the reluctant necessity to punish. It is part of the attributes of God spelled out in Exod 34:6-7.

⁴ **tn** *Heb* “pays back into the bosom of their children the sin of their parents.”

⁵ **tn** *Heb* “Nothing is too hard for you who show...and who punishes...the great [and] powerful God whose name is Yahweh of armies, [you who are] great in counsel...whose eyes are open...who did signs...” Jer 32:18-22 is a long series of relative clauses introduced by participles or relative pronouns in vv. 18-20a followed by second person *vav* consecutive imperatives carrying on the last of these relative clauses in vv. 20b-22. This is typical of hymnic introductions to hymns of praise (cf., e.g., Ps 136) but it is hard to sustain the relative subordination which all goes back to the suffix on “hard for you.” The sentences have been broken up but the connection with the end of v. 17 has been sacrificed for conformity to contemporary English style.

⁶ **tn** *Heb* “[you are] great in counsel and mighty in deed.”

⁷ **tn** *Heb* “your eyes are open to the ways of the sons of men.”

⁸ **tn** *Heb* “giving to each according to his way [= behavior/conduct] and according to the fruit of his deeds.”

⁹ **tn** Or “You did miracles and amazing deeds in the land of Egypt. And you continue to do them until this day both in Israel and among mankind. By this means you have gained a renown...” The translation here follows the syntactical understanding reflected also in NJPS. The Hebrew text reads: “you did miracles and marvelous acts in the land of Egypt until this day and in Israel and in mankind and you made for yourself a name as this day.” The majority of English versions and commentaries understand the phrases “until this day and in Israel and in mankind” to be an elliptical sentence with the preceding verb and objects supplied as reflected in the alternate translation. However, the emphasis on the miraculous deeds in Egypt in this section both before and after this elliptical phrase and the dominant usage of the terms “signs and wonders” to refer to the plagues and other miraculous signs in Egypt calls this interpretation into question. The key here is understanding “both in Israel and in mankind” as an example of a *casus pendens* construction (a dangling subject, object, or other modifier) before a conjunction introducing the main clause (cf. GKC 327 §111.h and 458 §143.d and compare the usage in Jer 6:19; 33:24; 1 Kgs 15:13). This verse is the topic sentence which is developed further in v. 21 and initiates a narrative history of the distant past that continues until v. 22b where reference is made to the long history of disobedience which has led to the present crisis.

32:21 You used your mighty power and your great strength to perform miracles and amazing deeds and to bring great terror on the Egyptians. By this means you brought your people Israel out of the land of Egypt.¹⁰ **32:22** You kept the promise that you swore on oath to their ancestors.¹¹ You gave them a land flowing with milk and honey.¹² **32:23** But when they came in and took possession of it, they did not obey you or live as you had instructed them. They did not do anything that you commanded them to do.¹³ So you brought all this disaster on them. **32:24** Even now siege ramps have been built up around the city¹⁴ in order to capture it. War,¹⁵ starvation, and disease are sure to make the city fall into the hands of the Babylonians¹⁶ who are attacking it.¹⁷ LORD,¹⁸ you threatened that this would happen. Now you can see that it is already taking place.¹⁹ **32:25** The city is sure to fall into the hands of the Babylonians.²⁰ Yet, in spite of this,²¹ you, Lord God,²² have said to me, “Buy that field with silver and have the transaction legally witnessed.””²³

¹⁰ **tn** *Heb* “You brought your people Israel out of the land of Egypt with signs and wonders and with a mighty hand and with outstretched arm and with great terror.” For the figurative expressions involved here see the marginal notes on 27:5. The sentence has been broken down to better conform to contemporary English style.

¹¹ **tn** *Heb* “fathers.”

¹² **tn** For an alternative translation of the expression “a land flowing with milk and honey” see the translator’s note on 11:5.

¹³ **tn** Or “They did not do everything that you commanded them to do.” This is probably a case where the negative (אֵין, *lo’*) negates the whole category indicated by “all” (כָּל, *kol*; see BDB 482 s.v. כָּל 1.e(c) and compare usage in Deut 12:16; 28:14). Jeremiah has repeatedly emphasized that the history of Israel since their entry into the land has been one of persistent disobedience and rebellion (cf., e.g. 7:22-26; 11:7-8). The statement, of course, is somewhat hyperbolic as all categorical statements of this kind are.

¹⁴ **tn** *Heb* “Siege ramps have come up to the city to capture it.”

¹⁵ **tn** *Heb* “sword.”

¹⁶ **tn** *Heb* “The Chaldeans.” See the study note on 21:4 for further explanation.

¹⁷ **tn** *Heb* “And the city has been given into the hands of the Chaldeans who are fighting against it because of the sword, starvation, and disease.” The verb “has been given” is one of those perfects that view the action as good as done (the perfect of certainty or prophetic perfect).

¹⁸ **tn** The word “LORD” is not in the text but is supplied in the translation as a reminder that it is he who is being addressed.

¹⁹ **tn** *Heb* “And what you said has happened and behold you see it.”

²⁰ **tn** *Heb* “The Chaldeans.” See the study note on 21:4 for further explanation.

²¹ **tn** *Heb* “And you, Lord Yahweh, have said to me, ‘Buy the field for...’ even though the city will be given into the hands of the Babylonians.” The sentence has been broken up and the order reversed for English stylistic purposes. For the rendering “is sure to fall into the hands of” see the translator’s note on the preceding verse.

²² **tn** *Heb* “Lord God.” For the rendering of this title see the study note on 1:6.

²³ **tn** *Heb* “call in witnesses to witness.”

The Lord Answers Jeremiah's Prayer

32:26 The LORD answered Jeremiah.¹ **32:27** “I am the LORD, the God of all humankind. There is, indeed, nothing too difficult for me.”² **32:28** Therefore I, the LORD, say:³ “I will indeed hand⁴ this city over to King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon and the Babylonian army.⁵ They will capture it. **32:29** The Babylonian soldiers⁶ that are attacking this city will break into it and set it on fire. They will burn it down along with the houses where people have made me angry by offering sacrifices to the god Baal and by pouring out drink offerings to other gods on their rooftops.”⁷ **32:30** This will happen because the people of Israel and Judah have repeatedly done what displeases me⁸ from their earliest history until now⁹ and because they¹⁰ have repeatedly made me angry by the things they have done.¹¹ I, the LORD, affirm it!¹² **32:31** This will happen because¹³ the people of this city have aroused

my anger and my wrath since the time they built it until now.¹⁴ They have made me so angry that I am determined to remove¹⁵ it from my sight. **32:32** I am determined to do so because the people of Israel and Judah have made me angry with all their wickedness – they, their kings, their officials, their priests, their prophets, and especially the people of Judah and the citizens of Jerusalem¹⁶ have done this wickedness.¹⁷ **32:33** They have turned away from me instead of turning to me.¹⁸ I tried over and over again¹⁹ to instruct them, but they did not listen and respond to correction.²⁰ **32:34** They set up their disgusting idols in the temple which I have claimed for my own²¹ and defiled it. **32:35** They built places of worship for the god Baal in the Valley of Ben Hinnom so that they could sacrifice their sons and daughters to the god Molech.²² Such a dis-

¹ **tn** Heb “The word of the LORD came to Jeremiah, saying.”
² **tn** Heb “Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh. Is anything too hard for me?” The question is rhetorical expecting an emphatic negative answer (cf. E. W. Bullinger, *Figures of Speech*, 949, citing the parallel in Gen 18:14). The Hebrew particle “Behold” (הִנֵּה, *hinneh*) introduces the grounds for this rhetorical negative (cf. T. O. Lambdin, *Introduction to Biblical Hebrew*, 170, §135 [3]), i.e., “Since I am the LORD, the God of all mankind, there is indeed nothing too hard for me [or is there anything too hard for me?].”

sn This statement furnishes the grounds both for the assurance that the city will indeed be delivered over to Nebuchadnezzar (vv. 28-29a) and that it will be restored and repopulated (vv. 37-41). This can be seen from the parallel introductions in v. 28, “Therefore the LORD says” and “Now therefore the LORD says.” As the creator of all and God of all mankind he has the power and authority to do with his creation what he wishes (cf. Jer 27:5-6).

³ **tn** Heb “Thus says the LORD.” However, the speech has already been introduced as first person. So the first person style has been retained for smoother narrative style.

⁴ **tn** Heb “Behold, I will give this city into the hand of...”
⁵ **tn** Heb “The Chaldeans.” See the study note on 21:4 for further explanation.

⁶ **tn** Heb “The Chaldeans.” See the study note on 21:4 for further explanation.

⁷ **sn** Compare Jer 19:13.
⁸ **tn** Heb “that which is evil in my eyes.” For this idiom see BDB 744 s.v. עָוֶן 3.c and compare usage in 18:10.

⁹ **tn** Heb “from their youth.”
^{sn Compare Jer 3:24-25; 11:21. The nation is being personified and reference is made to her history from the time she left Egypt onward (cf. 2:2).}

¹⁰ **tn** Heb “the people of Israel.” However, since “people of Israel” has been used in the preceding line for the northern kingdom as opposed to the kingdom of Judah, it might lead to confusion to translate literally. Moreover, the pronoun “they” accomplishes the same purpose.

¹¹ **tn** Heb “by the work of their hands.” See the translator’s note on 25:6 and the parallelism in 25:14 for this rendering rather than referring it to the making of idols as in 1:16; 10:3.

¹² **tn** Heb “Oracle of the LORD.”

¹³ **tn** The statements in vv. 28-29 regarding the certain destruction of the city are motivated by three parallel causal clauses in vv. 30a, b, 31, the last of which extends through subordinate and coordinate clauses until the end of v. 35. An attempt has been made to bring out this structure by repeating the idea “This/it will happen” in front of each of these causal clauses in the English translation.

¹⁴ **tn** Heb “from the day they built it until this day.”
^{sn The Israelites did not in fact “build” Jerusalem. They captured it from the Jebusites in the time of David. This refers perhaps to the enlarging and fortifying of the city after it came into the hands of the Israelites (2 Sam 5:6-10).}

¹⁵ **tn** Heb “For this city has been to me for a source of my anger and my wrath from the day they built it until this day so as remove it.” The preposition ל (*lamed*) with the infinitive (Heb “so as to remove it”; לְהַסִּירָה, *lahasirah*) expresses degree (cf. R. J. Williams, *Hebrew Syntax*, 37, §199, and compare usage in 2 Sam 13:2).

¹⁶ **map** For location see Map5-B1; Map6-F3; Map7-E2; Map8-F2; Map10-B3; JP1-F4; JP2-F4; JP3-F4; JP4-F4.

¹⁷ **tn** Heb “remove it from my sight **32:33** because of all the wickedness of the children of Israel and the children of Judah which they have done to make me angry, they, their kings, their officials, their priests, and their prophets, and the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem.” The sentence has been broken up in conformity with contemporary English style and an attempt has been made to preserve the causal connections.

¹⁸ **tn** Heb “they have turned [their] backs to me, not [their] faces.” Compare the same idiom in 2:27.

¹⁹ **tn** For the idiom involved here see the translator’s note on 7:13. The verb that introduces this clause is a Piel infinitive absolute which is functioning in place of the finite verb (see, e.g., GKC 346 §113.ff and compare usage in Jer 8:15; 14:19. This grammatical point means that the versions cited in *BHS* fn a may not be reading a different text after all, but may merely be interpreting the form as syntactically equivalent to a finite verb as the present translation has done.)

sn This refers to God teaching them through the prophets whom he has sent as indicated by the repeated use of this idiom elsewhere in 7:13, 25; 11:7; 25:3, 4; 26:5, 19.

²⁰ **tn** Heb “But they were not listening so as to accept correction.”

²¹ **tn** Heb “the house which is called by my name.” Cf. 7:10, 11, 14 and see the translator’s note on 7:10 for the explanation for this rendering.

²² **sn** Compare Jer 7:30-31; 19:5 and the study notes on 7:30. The god *Molech* is especially associated with the practice of child sacrifice (Lev 18:21; 20:2-5; 2 Kgs 23:10). In 1 Kgs 11:7 this god is identified as the god of the Ammonites who is also called Milcom in 1 Kgs 11:5; 2 Kgs 23:13. Child sacrifice, however, was not confined to this god; it was also made to the god Baal (Jer 19:5) and to other idols that the Israelites had set up (Ezek 16:20-21). This practice was, however, strictly prohibited in Israel (Lev 18:21; 20:2-5; Deut 12:31; 18:10). It was this practice as well as other pagan rites that Manasseh had instituted in Judah that ultimately led to Judah’s demise (2 Kgs 24:3-4). Though Josiah tried to root these pagan practices (2 Kgs 23:4-14) out of Judah he could not do so. The people had only made a pretense of following his reforms; their hearts were still far from God (Jer 3:10; 12:2).

gusting practice was not something I commanded them to do! It never even entered my mind to command them to do such a thing! So Judah is certainly liable for punishment.¹

32:36 “You and your people² are right in saying, ‘War,³ starvation, and disease are sure to make this city fall into the hands of the king of Babylon.’⁴ But now I, the LORD God of Israel, have something further to say about this city:⁵ **32:37** ‘I will certainly regather my people from all the countries where I will have exiled⁶ them

in my anger, fury, and great wrath. I will bring them back to this place and allow them to live here in safety. **32:38** They will be my people, and I will be their God.’⁷ **32:39** I will give them a single-minded purpose to live in a way that always shows respect for me. They will want to do that for⁸ their own good and the good of the children who descend from them. **32:40** I will make a lasting covenant⁹ with them that I will

¹ **tn** *Heb* “They built high places to Baal which are in the Valley of Ben Hinnom to cause their sons and daughters to pass through [the fire] to Molech [a thing] which I did not command them and [which] did not go up into my heart [= “mind” in modern psychology] to do this abomination so as to make Judah liable for punishment.” For the use of the Hiphil of **כָּחַטָּה** (*khata*) to refer to the liability for punishment see BDB s.v. **כָּחַטָּה** Hiph.3 and compare the usage in Deut 24:8. Coming at the end as this does, this nuance is much more likely than “cause Judah to sin” which is the normal translation assigned to the verb here. The particle **לְמַאן** (*l’ma’an*) that precedes it is here once again introducing a result and not a purpose (compare other clear examples in 27:10, 15). The sentence has been broken down in conformity to contemporary English style and an attempt has been made to make clear that what is detestable and not commanded is not merely child sacrifice to Molech but child sacrifice in general.

² **tn** *Heb* “you.” However, the pronoun is plural and is addressed to more than just Jeremiah (v. 26). It includes Jeremiah and those who have accepted his prophecy of doom.

³ **tn** *Heb* “sword.”

⁴ **sn** Compare Jer 32:24, 28. In 32:24 this is Jeremiah’s statement just before he expresses his perplexity about the LORD’s command to buy the field of his cousin in spite of the certainty of the city’s demise. In 32:28 it is the LORD’s affirmation that the city will indeed fall. Here, the LORD picks up Jeremiah’s assessment only to add a further prophesy (vv. 37-41) of what is just as sure to happen (v. 42). This is the real answer to Jeremiah’s perplexity. Verses 28-35 are an assurance that the city will indeed be captured and a reiteration again of the reason for its demise. The structure of the two introductions in v. 28 and v. 36 are parallel and flow out of the statement that the LORD is God of all mankind and nothing is too hard for him (neither destruction nor restoration [cf. 1:10]).

⁵ **tn** *Heb* “And now therefore thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, concerning this city which you [masc. pl.] are saying has been given [prophetic perfect = will be given] into the hand of the king of Babylon through sword, starvation, and disease.” The translation attempts to render the broader structure mentioned in the study note and to break the sentence down in a way that conforms more to contemporary English style and that will lead into the speech which does not begin until the next verse. As in v. 28 the third person introduction has been changed to first person for smoother narrative style in a first person speech (i.e., vv. 27-44 are all the LORD’s answer to Jeremiah’s prayer). The words “right in” added to “are saying” are intended to reflect the connection between v. 28 and the statement here (which is a repetition of v. 24). I.e., God does not deny that Jeremiah’s assessment is correct; he affirms it but has something further to say in answer to Jeremiah’s prayer.

⁶ **tn** The verb here should be interpreted as a future perfect; though some of the people have already been exiled (in 605 and 597 B.C.), some have not yet been exiled at the time this prophesy is given (see study note on v. 1 for the date). However, contemporary English style does not regularly use the future perfect, choosing instead to use the simple future or the simple perfect as the present translation has done here.

⁷ **sn** The covenant formula setting forth the basic relationship is reinstated along with a new covenant (v. 40). See also 24:7; 30:22; 31:1 and the study note on 30:22.

⁸ **tn** *Heb* “I will give to them one heart and one way to [= in order that they may] fear me all the days for good to them.” The phrase “one heart” refers both to unanimity of will and accord (cf. 1 Chr 12:38 [12:39 HT]; 2 Chr 30:12) and to singleness of purpose or intent (cf. Ezek 11:19 and see BDB 525 s.v. **בָּרַח** 4 where reference is made to “inclinations, resolutions, and determinations of the will”). The phrase “one way” refers to one way of life or conduct (cf. BDB 203 s.v. **דָּרַךְ** 6.a where reference is made to moral action and character), a way of life that is further qualified by the goal of showing “fear, reverence, respect” for the LORD. The Hebrew sentence has been broken up to avoid a long complex sentence in English which is contrary to contemporary English style. However, an attempt has been made to preserve all the connections of the original.

sn Other passages also speak about the “single-minded purpose” (*Heb* “one heart”) and “living in a way that shows respect for me.” Deut 30:6-8 speaks of a circumcised heart that will love him, obey him, and keep his commands. Ezek 11:20-21 speaks of the removal of a stony heart and the giving of a single-minded, “fleshy” heart and a new spirit that will follow his decrees and keep his laws. Ezek 36:26-27 speaks of the removal of a stony heart and the giving of a new, “fleshy” heart and a new spirit and an infusion of God’s own spirit so that they will be able to follow his decrees and keep his laws. Jer 24:7 speaks of the giving of a (new) heart so that they might “know” him. And Jer 31:33 speaks of God writing his law on their hearts. All this shows that there is a new motivation and a new enablement for fulfilling the old stipulations, especially that of whole-hearted devotion to him (cf. Deut 6:4-6).

⁹ **tn** *Heb* “an everlasting covenant.” For the rationale for the rendering “agreement” and the nature of the biblical covenants see the study note on 11:2.

sn For other references to the lasting (or everlasting) nature of the new covenant see Isa 55:3; 61:8; Jer 50:5; Ezek 16:60; 37:26. The new covenant appears to be similar to the ancient Near Eastern covenants of grants whereby a great king gave a loyal vassal a grant of land or dynastic dominion over a realm in perpetuity in recognition of past loyalty. The right to such was perpetual as long as the great king exercised dominion, but the actual enjoyment could be forfeited by individual members of the vassal’s dynasty. The best example of such an covenant in the OT is the Davidic covenant where the dynasty was given perpetual right to rule over Israel. Individual kings might be disciplined and their right to enjoy dominion taken away, but the dynasty still maintained the right to rule (see 2 Sam 23:5; Ps 89:26-37 and note especially 1 Kgs 11:23-39). The new covenant appears to be the renewal of God’s promise to Abraham to always be the God of his descendants and for his descendants to be his special people (Gen 17:7) something they appear to have forfeited by their disobedience (see Hos 1:9). However, under the new covenant he promises to never stop doing them good and grants them a new heart, a new spirit, the infusion of his own spirit, and the love and reverence necessary to keep from turning away from him. The new covenant is not based on their past loyalty but on his gracious forgiveness and his gifts.

never stop doing good to them.¹ I will fill their hearts and minds with respect for me so that² they will never again turn³ away from me. **32:41** I will take delight in doing good to them. I will faithfully and wholeheartedly plant them⁴ firmly in the land.⁵

32:42 “For I, the LORD, say:⁶ ‘I will surely bring on these people all the good fortune that I am hereby promising them. I will be just as sure to do that as I have been in bringing all this great disaster on them.’⁶ **32:43** You and your people⁷ are saying that this land will become desolate, uninhabited by either people or animals. You are saying that it will be handed over to the Babylonians.⁸ But fields⁹ will again be bought in this land.¹⁰ **32:44** Fields will again be bought with silver, and deeds of purchase signed, sealed, and witnessed. This will happen in the territory of Benjamin, the villages surrounding Jerusalem, the towns in Judah, the southern hill country, the western foothills, and southern Judah.¹¹ For I

will restore them to their land.¹² I, the LORD, affirm it!”¹³

The Lord Promises a Second Time to Restore Israel and Judah

33:1 The LORD spoke¹⁴ to Jeremiah a second time while he was still confined in the courtyard of the guardhouse.¹⁵ **33:2** “I, the LORD, do these things. I, the LORD, form the plan to bring them about.¹⁶ I am known as the LORD. I say to you, **33:3** ‘Call on me in prayer and I will answer you. I will show you great and mysterious¹⁷ things which you still do not know about.’ **33:4** For I, the LORD God of Israel, have something more to say about the houses in this city and the royal buildings which have been torn down for defenses against the siege ramps and military

¹ **tn** Or “stop being gracious to them” or “stop blessing them with good”; *Heb* “turn back from them to do good to them.”

² **tn** Or “I will make them want to fear and respect me so much that”; *Heb* “I will put the fear of me in their hearts.” However, as has been noted several times, “heart” in Hebrew is more the center of the volition (and intellect) than the center of emotions as it is in English. Both translations are intended to reflect the difference in psychology.

³ **tn** The words “never again” are not in the text but are implicit from the context and are supplied not only by this translation but by a number of others.

⁴ **tn** *Heb* “will plant them in the land with faithfulness with all my heart and with all my soul.” The latter expressions are, of course, anthropomorphisms (see Deut 6:5).

⁵ **tn** *Heb* “For thus says the LORD.” See the translator’s notes on 32:27, 36.

⁶ **tn** *Heb* “As I have brought all this great disaster on these people so I will bring upon them all the good fortune which I am promising them.” The translation has broken down the longer Hebrew sentence to better conform to English style.

sn See the same guarantee in Jer 31:27.

⁷ **tn** *Heb* “you.” However, the pronoun is plural and is addressed to more than just Jeremiah (v. 26). It includes Jeremiah and those who have accepted his prophecy of doom.

⁸ **tn** *Heb* “The Chaldeans.” See the study note on 21:4 for further explanation.

⁹ **tn** The noun is singular with the article, but it is a case of the generic singular (cf. GKC 406 §126.m).

¹⁰ **tn** *Heb* “Fields will be bought in this land of which you [masc. pl.] are saying, ‘It will be desolate [a perfect of certainty or prophetic perfect] without man or beast; it will be given into the hand of the Chaldeans.’” The original sentence has been broken down to better conform to contemporary English style.

¹¹ **tn** *Heb* “They will buy fields with silver and write in the deed and seal [it] and have witnesses witness [it] in the land of Benjamin, in the environs of Jerusalem, in the towns in Judah, in the towns in the hill country, in the towns in the Shephelah, and in the towns in the Negev.” The long Hebrew sentence has again been restructured to better conform to contemporary English style. The indefinite “they will buy” is treated as a passive. It is followed by three infinitive absolutes which substitute for the finite verb (cf. GKC 345 §113.y) which is a common feature of the style of the book of Jeremiah.

sn For the geographical districts mentioned here compare Jer 17:26.

¹² **tn** Or “I will reverse their fortunes.” For this idiom see the translator’s note on 29:14 and compare the usage in 29:14; 30:3, 18; 31:23.

¹³ **tn** *Heb* “Oracle of the LORD.”

¹⁴ **sn** The introductory statement here ties this incident in with the preceding chapter which was the first time that the LORD spoke to him about the matters discussed here. There is no indication of how much time passed between the two incidents though it appears that the situation has worsened somewhat (cf. v. 4).

¹⁵ **tn** *Heb* “And the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah a second time...., saying.”

¹⁶ **tn** Or “I, the LORD, made the earth. I formed it in such a way as to firmly establish it”; *Heb* “Thus says the LORD who makes/does it, the LORD who forms it to establish it, whose name is the LORD.” It is unclear what the antecedent of “it” is. The Greek version supplies the object “the earth.” However, as D. Barthélemy, ed., *Preliminary and Interim Report on the Hebrew Old Testament Text Project*, 4:269, notes, this is probably a smoothing of a text which had no object other than the pronoun. No other text or version has an object other than the pronoun. It could be argued that “the earth” is to be understood as the intended referent from other contexts within the book of Jeremiah (Jer 10:12, 16; 51:15) where these verbs refer to the LORD as creator and from the prior context in 32:17 where the LORD’s power as creator is the basis for the assertion that nothing is too hard for him. This is the object that is supplied in a number of modern English versions and commentaries. However, the use of the feminine singular pronoun in other contexts to refer to an indefinite reality which is spelled out in the preceding or following context (cf. 2 Kgs 19:25; Isa 22:11; 37:26; 44:7) lends credence to the suggestion by the committee for *The Hebrew Old Testament Text Project* that the pronoun refers to the work or plan of the LORD, a view which is reflected in the NJPS and has been adopted here. For the use of the verb “form” here in the sense of “plan” see BDB 427 s.v. **נָצַח**; 2.b and compare the usage in Isa 22:11; 37:26. The best discussion of options is given in G. L. Keown, P. J. Scalise, T. G. Smothers, *Jeremiah 26-52* (WBC), 169-70, who see the pronoun referring ahead to the great and hidden things of v. 3. As in several other cases our translation has opted for a first person introduction rather than the third person of the original because the LORD himself is speaking.

¹⁷ **tn** This passive participle or adjective is normally used to describe cities or walls as “fortified” or “inaccessible.” All the lexicons, however, agree in seeing it used here metaphorically of “secret” or “mysterious” things, things that Jeremiah could not know apart from the LORD’s revelation. G. L. Keown, P. J. Scalise, and T. G. Smothers (*Jeremiah 26-52* [WBC], 170) make the interesting observation that the word is used here in a context in which the fortifications of Jerusalem are about to fall to the Babylonians; the fortified things in God’s secret counsel fall through answer to prayer.

incursions of the Babylonians.¹ 33:5 ‘The defenders of the city will go out and fight with the Babylonians.² But they will only fill those houses and buildings with the dead bodies of the people that I will kill in my anger and my wrath.³ That will happen because I have decided to turn my back on⁴ this city on account of the wicked things they have done.⁵ 33:6 But I will

¹ *tn* Heb “the sword.” The figure has been interpreted for the sake of clarity.

² *tn* Heb “The Chaldeans.” See the study note on 21:4 for further explanation.

³ *sn* This refers to the tearing down of buildings within the city to strengthen the wall or to fill gaps in it which had been broken down by the Babylonian battering rams. For a parallel to this during the siege of Sennacherib in the time of Hezekiah see Isa 22:10; 2 Chr 32:5. These torn-down buildings were also used as burial mounds for those who died in the fighting or through starvation and disease during the siege. The siege prohibited them from taking the bodies outside the city for burial and leaving them in their houses or in the streets would have defiled them.

⁴ *tn* Heb “Because I have hidden my face from.” The modern equivalent for this gesture of rejection is “to turn the back on.” See Ps 13:1 for comparable usage. The perfect is to be interpreted as a perfect of resolve (cf. *IBHS* 488-89 §30.5.1d and compare the usage in Ruth 4:3).

⁵ *tn* The translation and meaning of vv. 4-5 are somewhat uncertain. The translation and precise meaning of vv. 4-5 are uncertain at a number of points due to some difficult syntactical constructions and some debate about the text and meaning of several words. The text reads more literally, “33:4 For thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, concerning the houses of this city and concerning the houses of the kings of Judah which have been torn down on account the siege ramps and the sword 33:5 going to fight the Chaldeans and to fill them with the dead bodies of the men whom I have killed in my anger and in my wrath and on account of all whose wickedness I have hidden my face from this city.” There are two difficult syntactical forms (1) the participle at the beginning of v. 5 “going [or those going] to fight” (בָּאִים, *ba'im*) and (2) the infinitive plus suffix that introduces the next clause “and to fill them” (וּלְמַלְאֵם, *u'le-mal'am*). The translation has interpreted the former as a verbal use of the participle with an indefinite subject “they” (= the defenders of Jerusalem who have torn down the buildings; cf. GKC 460-61 §144.i for this point of grammar). The conjunction plus preposition plus infinitive construct has been interpreted as equivalent to a finite verb (cf. *IBHS* 611 §36.3.2a, i.e., “and they will fill them [the houses and buildings of v. 4]”). Adopting the Greek text of these two verses would produce a smoother reading. It reads “For thus says the LORD concerning the houses of this city and concerning the houses of the kings of Judah which have been pulled down for mounds and fortifications to fight against the Chaldeans and to fill it [should be “them”] with the corpses of men whom I smote in my anger and my wrath and I turned away my face from them [rather than from “this city” of the Hebrew text] for all their wickedness: Behold I will...” The Greek does not have the problem with the participle because it has seen it as part of a word meaning fortification. This also eliminates the problem with the infinitive because it is interpreted as parallel with “to fight.” i.e., the defenders used these torn-down buildings for defensive fortifications and for burial places. It would be tempting to follow this reading. However, there is no graphically close form for “fortification” that would explain how the more difficult בָּאִים הִקְרַב (hekharev *ba'im*) of the Hebrew text arose and there is doubt whether סִלְלוֹת (*sol'lot*) can refer to a defense mound. W. L. Holladay (*Jeremiah* [Hermeneia], 2:221, 225) has suggested reading הִקְרַבִּים (*hakharakim*) in place of הִקְרַב (hekharev) in the technical sense of “crenels,” the gaps between the raised portion on top of the wall (which raised portion he calls “merlons” and equates with סִלְלוֹת, *sol'lot*). He does not, however, further suggest seeing בָּאִים (*ba'im*) as part of this corrupted form, choosing

most surely⁶ heal the wounds of this city and restore it and its people to health.⁷ I will show them abundant⁸ peace and security. 33:7 I will restore Judah and Israel⁹ and will rebuild them as they were in days of old.¹⁰ 33:8 I will purify them from all the sin that they committed against me. I will forgive all their sins which they committed in rebelling against me.¹¹ 33:9 All the nations will hear about all the good things which I will do to them. This city will bring me fame, honor, and praise before them for the joy that I bring it. The nations will tremble in awe at all the peace and prosperity that I will provide for it.¹²

33:10 “I, the LORD, say:¹³ ‘You and your people are saying¹⁴ about this place, ‘It lies in ruins. There are no people or animals in it.’ That

to see it rather as a gloss. His emendation and interpretation, however, have been justly criticized as violating the usage of both סִלְלוֹת which is elsewhere “siege mound” and הִקְרַבִּים (*hakharakim*) which elsewhere refers only to the latticed opening of a window (Song 2:9). Until a more acceptable explanation of how the difficult Hebrew text could have arisen from the Greek, the Hebrew should be retained, though it is admittedly awkward. G. L. Keown, P. J. Scalise, and T. G. Smothers (*Jeremiah* 26-52 [WBC], 166, 172) have perhaps the best discussion of the issues and the options involved here.

⁶ *tn* Heb “Behold I am healing.” For the usage of the participle “behold” indicating certainty see the translator’s note on 1:6. These are the great and hidden things that the LORD promised to reveal. The statements in v. 5 have been somewhat introductory. See the usage of הִנְיִי (*hinni*) after the introductory “Thus says the LORD” in Jer 32:28, 37.

⁷ *sn* Compare Jer 30:17. Jerusalem is again being personified and her political and spiritual well-being are again in view.

⁸ *tn* The meaning and text of this word is questioned by KBL 749 s.v. עֲתָרָה. However, KBL also emends both occurrences of the verb from which BDB 801 s.v. עֲתָרָה derives this noun. BDB is more likely correct in seeing this and the usage of the verb in Prov 27:6; Ezek 35:13 as Aramaic loan words from a root meaning to be rich (equivalent to the Hebrew אָשַׁר, *’ashar*).

⁹ *tn* Heb “I will reverse [or restore] the fortunes of Judah and the fortunes of Israel.” For this idiom see the translator’s note on Jer 29:14 and see the usage in 30:3, 18; 31:23; 32:44.

¹⁰ *tn* This phrase simply means “as formerly” (BDB 911 s.v. כְּרִאֲשֵׁי 3.a). The reference to the “as formerly” must be established from the context. See the usage in Judg 20:32; 1 Kgs 13:6; Isa 1:26.

¹¹ *sn* Reference is to the reunification of Israel and Judah to the state that they were before the division after Solomon. Compare Jer 3:18; 30:3; 31:27 and see the study note on 30:3.

¹² *sn* Compare Jer 31:34; Ezek 36:25, 33.

¹³ *tn* Heb “And it [the city] will be to me for a name for joy and for praise and for honor before all the nations of the earth which will hear of all the good things which I will do for them and which will be in awe and tremble for all the good things and all the peace [or prosperity] which I will do for them.” The long complex Hebrew sentence has been broken down to better conform with contemporary English style.

¹⁴ *tn* Heb “Thus says the LORD.” For the first person rendering see the translator’s note at the end of v. 2.

sn The phrase here is parallel to that in v. 4 and introduces a further amplification of the “great and mysterious things” of v. 3.

¹⁵ *tn* Heb “You.” However, the pronoun is plural as in 32:36, 43. See the translator’s note on 32:36.

is true. The towns of Judah and the streets of Jerusalem¹ will soon be desolate, uninhabited either by people or by animals. But happy sounds will again be heard in these places. **33:11** Once again there will be sounds² of joy and gladness and the glad celebrations of brides and grooms.³ Once again people will bring their thank offerings to the temple of the LORD and will say, "Give thanks to the LORD who rules over all. For the LORD is good and his unfailing love lasts forever."⁴ For I, the LORD, affirm⁵ that I will restore the land to what it was⁶ in days of old.⁷

33:12 "I, the LORD who rules over all, say:⁸ 'This place will indeed lie in ruins. There will be no people or animals in it. But there will again be in it and in its towns sheepfolds where shepherds can rest their sheep. **33:13** I, the LORD, say that shepherds will once again count their sheep as they pass into the fold.⁹ They will do this in all the towns in the southern hill country, the western foothills, the southern hill country, the territory of Benjamin, the villages surrounding Jerusalem, and the towns of Judah."¹⁰

The Lord Reaffirms His Covenant with David, Israel, and Levi

33:14 "I, the LORD, affirm:¹¹ 'The time will certainly come when I will fulfill my gracious promise concerning the nations of Israel and Judah.¹² **33:15** In those days and at that time I will raise up for them a righteous descendant¹³ of David.

"He will do what is just and right in the land. **33:16** Under his rule Judah will enjoy safety¹⁴ and Jerusalem¹⁵ will live in security. At that time Jerusalem will be called "The LORD has provided us with justice."¹⁶ **33:17** For I, the LORD, promise: "David will never lack a successor to occupy¹⁷ the throne over the nation of Israel.¹⁸ **33:18** Nor will the Levitical priests ever lack someone to stand before me and continually offer up burnt offerings, sacrifice cereal offerings, and offer the other sacrifices."¹⁹

33:19 The LORD spoke further to Jeremiah.²⁰ **33:20** "I, LORD, make the following promise:²¹

¹¹ *tn Heb* "Oracle of the LORD." For the first person form of address see the translator's notes on vv. 2, 10, 12.

¹² *sn* This refers to the very least to the promises of Jer 23:5-6, 7-8; 30:3; 31:27, 31 where the same formula "The time will certainly come (*Heb* "Behold the days are coming")" occurs. Reference may also be to the promises through the earlier prophets of what is alluded to here, i.e., the restoration of Israel and Judah under a Davidic ruler and the revival of the offerings (cf. Hos 1:10-11; 3:4-5; Amos 9:11-12; Isa 11:1-5, 10-16; Jer 30:9, 21 for the former and Jer 31:14; 33:11 for the latter).

¹³ *tn Heb* "sprig" or "shoot."

sn For the meaning of this term and its significance in biblical prophecy see the study note on 23:5.

¹⁴ *tn* For the translation of this term in this context see the parallel context in 23:6 and consult the translator's note there.

¹⁵ *map* For location see Map5-B1; Map6-F3; Map7-E2; Map8-F2; Map10-B3; JP1-F4; JP2-F4; JP3-F4; JP4-F4.

¹⁶ *tn Heb* "And this is what will be called to it: 'The LORD our righteousness.'"

sn For the significance of this title see the study note on the parallel text in 23:6. Other titles by which Jerusalem is to be known are found in Isa 62:2-4; Jer 3:17; Ezek 48:35; Zech 8:3 emphasizing that the LORD takes up his relation with it once again, dwells in it, delights in it, and finds it faithful once more (cf. Isa 1:26). In 23:6 the title is applied to the Davidic ruler that the LORD will raise up over them who will do what is just and right. God's vindication of the city by its restoration after exile and his provision of this just ruler over it is the probable source for the title.

¹⁷ *tn Heb* "a man shall not be cut off to David [i.e., belonging to the Davidic line] sitting on the throne of the house of Israel."

¹⁸ *sn* It should be noted once again that the reference is to all Israel, not just to Judah (cf. Jer 23:5-6; 30:9).

¹⁹ *tn Heb* "And to the Levites, the priests [= the Levitical priests, the apposition in place of the adjective] there shall not be cut off a man from before me who offers up burnt offering, sacrifices a cereal offering, or makes a sacrifice all the days."

²⁰ *tn Heb* "And the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah, saying." See v. 1. This is a continuation of "the second time."

²¹ *tn Heb* "Thus says the LORD." However, the LORD is speaking so the first person introduction has again been adopted. The content of the verse shows that it is a promise to David (vv. 21-22) and the Levites based on a contrary to fact condition (v. 20). See further the translator's note at the end of the next verse for explanation of the English structure adopted here.

¹ *map* For location see Map5-B1; Map6-F3; Map7-E2; Map8-F2; Map10-B3; JP1-F4; JP2-F4; JP3-F4; JP4-F4.

² *tn Heb* "33:10 Thus says the LORD, 'There will again be heard in this place of which you are saying [masc. pl.], "It is a ruin without people and without animals," [that is] in the towns of Judah and the streets of Jerusalem which are desolate without people and without inhabitants and without animals 33:11 the sound of....'" The long run-on sentence in Hebrew has been broken down to better conform with contemporary English style.

³ *sn* What is predicted here is a reversal of the decimation caused by the Babylonian conquest that had been threatened in 7:34; 16:9; 25:10.

⁴ *sn* This is a common hymnic introduction to both individual songs of thanksgiving (e.g., Ps 118:1) and communal songs of thanksgiving (e.g., Ps 136 where it is a liturgical refrain accompanying a recital of Israel's early history and of the LORD's continuing providence).

⁵ *tn Heb* "Oracle of the LORD."

⁶ *tn* Or "I will restore the fortunes of the land."

sn See the study note on Jer 29:18 and compare 29:14; 30:3, 18; 31:23; 32:44; 33:7 for the meaning and usage of this idiom. The promise here repeats that in 33:7.

⁷ *tn* This phrase simply means "as formerly" (BDB 911 s.v. רִאשִׁוֹן 3.a). The reference to the "as formerly" must be established from the context. See the usage in Judg 20:32; 1 Kgs 13:6; Isa 1:26.

sn This refers to the reunification of Israel and Judah to the state that they were before the division after Solomon. Compare Jer 3:18; 30:3; 31:27 and see the study note on 30:3.

⁸ *tn Heb* "Thus says Yahweh of armies." For the explanation for the first person introduction see the translator's notes on 33:2, 10. Verses 4, 10, 12 introduce three oracles, all under the answer to the LORD's promise to Jeremiah to show him "great and mysterious things which you still do not know about."

⁹ *sn Heb* "Sheep will again pass under the hands of the counter." This appears to be a reference to counting the sheep to make sure that none was missing as they returned to the fold. See the same idiom in Lev 27:32 and in the metaphor in Ezek 20:37.

¹⁰ *sn* Compare Jer 32:44.

‘I have made a covenant with the day¹ and with the night that they will always come at their proper times. Only if you people² could break that covenant 33:21 could my covenant with my servant David and my covenant with the Levites ever be broken. So David will by all means always have a descendant to occupy his throne as king and the Levites will by all means always have priests who will minister before me.’³ 33:22 I will make the children who follow one another in the line of my servant David very numerous. I will also make the Levites who minister before me very numerous. I will make them all as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sands which are on the seashore.’”⁴

¹ **tn** Heb *yomam* (yomam) is normally an adverb meaning “daytime, by day, daily.” However, here and in v. 25 and in Jer 15:9 it means “day, daytime” (cf. BDB 401 s.v. יוֹמָם 1).

² **tn** Heb “you.” The pronoun is plural as in 32:36, 43; 33:10.

³ **tn** The very complex and elliptical syntax of the original Hebrew of vv. 20-21 has been broken down to better conform with contemporary English style. The text reads somewhat literally (after the addition of a couple of phrases which have been left out by ellipsis): “Thus says the LORD, ‘If you can break my covenant with the day and my covenant with the night so that there is not to be daytime and night in their proper time then also my covenant can be broken with my servant David so that there is not to him a son reigning upon his throne [and also my covenant can be broken] with the Levites [so there are not] priests who minister to me.’” The two phrases in brackets are elliptical, the first serving double duty for the prepositional phrase “with the Levites” as well as “with David” and the second serving double duty with the noun “priests” which parallels “a son.” The noun “priests” is not serving here as appositional because that phrase is always “the priests, the Levites,” never “the Levites, the priests.”

sn This refers to a reaffirmation of the Davidic covenant (cf., e.g., 2 Sam 7:11-16, 25-29; Ps 89:3-4, 19-29) and God’s covenant with the Levites (cf. Num 25:10-13; Mal 2:4-6; Deut 32:8-11).

⁴ **tn** Heb “Just as the stars in the sky cannot be numbered or the sand on the seashore cannot be measured, so I will greatly increase [or multiply] the seed of my servant David and the Levites who minister before me.” The word “seed of” does not carry over to the “the Levites” as a noun governing two genitives because “the Levites” has the accusative marker in front of it. The sentence has been broken down in conformity with contemporary English style.

sn Context makes it clear that what is in view is an innumerable line of descendants from the righteous ruler that the LORD raises up over Israel and Judah after their regathering and restoration to the land. What is in view, then, is a reinstatement or reinstatement of the Davidic covenant of grant, the perpetual right of the Davidic dynasty to rule over the nation of Israel for all time (see also v. 26). This is guaranteed by the creation order which is the object of both God’s creative decree (Gen 1:14-19) and his covenant with Noah after the flood (Gen 8:22). (For further discussion on the nature of a covenant of grant see the study note on 32:40.) The rejection of the lines of Jehoiakim (36:30) and Jeconiah (22:30) and the certain captivity and death of Zedekiah (32:4) may have called into question the continuance of the Davidic promise which always had a certain conditional nature to it (cf. 1 Kgs 2:4; 8:25; 9:5). This promise and this guarantee show that the covenant of grant still stands and will ultimately find its fulfillment. Because this promise never found its fulfillment after the return from exile, it is left to the NT to show how it is fulfilled (cf., e.g., Matt 1:1-17 where it is emphasized that Jesus is the son (and heir) of both Abraham and David).

33:23 The LORD spoke still further to Jeremiah.⁵ 33:24 “You have surely noticed what these people are saying, haven’t you? They are saying,⁶ ‘The LORD has rejected the two families of Israel and Judah⁷ that he chose.’ So they have little regard that my people will ever again be a nation.⁸ 33:25 But I, the LORD, make the following promise:⁹ I have made a covenant governing the coming of day and night. I have established the fixed laws governing heaven and earth. 33:26 Just as surely as I have done this, so surely will I never reject the descendants of Jacob. Nor will I ever refuse to choose one of my servant David’s descendants to rule over the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Indeed,¹⁰ I will restore them¹¹ and show mercy to them.”

⁵ **tn** Heb “And the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah, saying.” See v. 1. This is a continuation of “the second time.”

⁶ **tn** Heb “Have you not seen what this people have said, saying.” The question is rhetorical and expects a positive answer. The sentence has been broken in two to better conform with contemporary English style.

⁷ **tn** Heb “The two families which the LORD chose, he has rejected them.” This is an example of an object prepositioned before the verb and resumed by a redundant pronoun to throw emphasis of focus on it (called *casus pendens* in the grammars; cf. GKC 458 §143.d). Some commentators identify the “two families” as those of David and Levi mentioned in the previous verses, and some identify them as the families of the Israelites and of David mentioned in the next verse. However, the next clause in this verse and the emphasis on the restoration and regathering of Israel and Judah in this section (cf. 33:7, 14) show that the reference is to Israel and Judah (see also 30:3, 4; 31:27, 31 and 3:18).

⁸ **tn** Heb “and my people [i.e., Israel and Judah] they disdain [or look down on] from being again a nation before them.” The phrase “before them” refers to their estimation, their mental view (cf. BDB s.v. נָזַח II.4.a[g]). Hence it means they look with disdain on the people being a nation again (cf. BDB s.v. עָוֵר 1.a[b] for the usage of עָוֵר [‘od] here).

⁹ **tn** Heb “Thus says the LORD.” See the translator’s note at the beginning of v. 20 for the style adopted here. Here the promise is in v. 26 following the contrary to fact condition in v. 25. The Hebrew text of vv. 25-26 reads: “Thus says the LORD, ‘If I have not established my covenant with day and night [and] the laws/statutes of heaven and earth, also I could reject the seed of Jacob and David my servant from taking from his seed as rulers over the seed of Abraham...’” The syntax of the original is a little awkward because it involves the verbs “establish” and “reject” governing two objects, the first governing two similar objects “my covenant” and “the regulations” and the second governing two dissimilar objects “the seed of Jacob” and “my servant David from taking [so as not to take].” The translation has sought to remove these awkward syntactical constructions and also break down the long complex original sentence in such a way as to retain its original intent, i.e., the guarantee of the continuance of the seed of Jacob and of the rule of a line of David’s descendants over them based on the fixed order of God’s creation decrees.

¹⁰ **tn** The Hebrew particle כִּי (*ki*) is probably intensive here as it has been on a number of occasions in the book of Jeremiah (see BDB 472 s.v. כִּי 1.e for the category).

¹¹ **tn** Or “I will make them prosperous once again,” or “I will bring them back from captivity.”

sn For the meaning of this idiom see the translator’s note on Jer 29:14 and compare the usage in 29:14; 30:3, 18; 31:23; 32:44; 33:7, 11. This has been the emphasis on this section which is called by some commentators “The Book of Consolation.” Jeremiah’s emphasis up until chapters 30-33 had been on judgment but he was also called to be the prophet of restoration (cf. Jer 1:10). Promises of restoration though rare up to this point have, however, occurred on occasion (see, e.g., Jer

The Lord Makes an Ominous Promise to Zedekiah

34:1 The LORD spoke to Jeremiah while King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon was attacking Jerusalem¹ and the towns around it with a large army. This army consisted of troops from his own army and from the kingdoms and peoples of the lands under his dominion.² **34:2** The LORD God of Israel told Jeremiah³ to go and give King Zedekiah of Judah a message. He told Jeremiah⁴ to tell him, “The LORD says, ‘I am going to⁵ hand this city over to the king of Babylon and he will burn it down. **34:3** You yourself will not escape his clutches, but will certainly be captured and handed over to him. You must confront the king of Babylon face to face and answer to him personally.⁶ Then you must go to

Babylon. **34:4** However, listen to what I, the LORD, promise you, King Zedekiah of Judah. I, the LORD, promise that⁷ you will not die in battle or be executed.⁸ **34:5** You will die a peaceful death. They will burn incense at your burial just as they did at the burial of your ancestors, the former kings who preceded you.⁹ They will mourn for you, saying, “Poor, poor master!”¹⁰ Indeed, you have my own word on this.¹¹ I, the LORD, affirm it!”¹²

34:6 The prophet Jeremiah told all this to King Zedekiah of Judah in Jerusalem. **34:7** He did this while the army of the king of Babylon was attacking Jerusalem and the cities of Lachish and Azekah. He was attacking these cities because they were the only fortified cities of Judah which were still holding out.¹³

The Lord Threatens to Destroy Those Who Wronged Their Slaves

34:8 The LORD spoke to Jeremiah after King Zedekiah had made a covenant¹⁴ with all the

3:18; 23:5-7; 24:6-7; 29:10-14).

¹ **map** For location see Map5-B1; Map6-F3; Map7-E2; Map8-F2; Map10-B3; JP1-F4; JP2-F4; JP3-F4; JP4-F4.

² **tn Heb** “The word which came to Jeremiah from the LORD while Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and all his army and all the kingdoms of the earth under the dominion of his hand and all the peoples were fighting against Jerusalem and against all its towns, saying.” The sentence is obviously too long and the qualifiers obviously too ill-defined to translate literally. This same introductory formula has occurred in 7:1; 11:1; 18:1; 21:1; 30:1; 32:1 but without such a long introductory phrase. It is generally agreed that the phrase “all the peoples” should be seen as a parallel term to “all the kingdoms” under the qualifying “under the dominion of his hand/ control” and what is referred to are contingent forces supplied by these vassal kingdoms and peoples under the terms of their vassal treaties with Nebuchadnezzar. Some of the nature of the make-up of these forces may be seen from a reference to Babylonian, Aramean, Moabite, and Ammonite raiders in the earlier attacks on Jerusalem during the reign of Jehoiakim (2 Kgs 24:2).

³ **sn** It is difficult to assign dates to passages which have no dating formulas but there is sufficient detail in this passage to show that this incident occurred sometime early in the siege of Jerusalem while Jeremiah was still free to come and go (see v. 2 and compare 37:4 and see the second study note on 32:2). The Babylonian forces blockaded Jerusalem and attacked the outlying cities, reducing them one by one until Jerusalem had no further help. According to v. 7 Azekah and Lachish in the western foothills still held out and there is evidence from some of the correspondence from Lachish at this period that help was being sought from Egypt.

⁴ **tn Heb** “told him”; the referent (Jeremiah) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

⁵ **tn Heb** “told him”; the referent (Jeremiah) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

⁶ **tn Heb 34:1** “The word which came to Jeremiah from the LORD...saying, ‘Thus says the LORD God of Israel, ‘Go and speak to Zedekiah king of Judah and say to him, ‘Thus says the LORD, ‘I am going to...’”” The translation has tried to avoid some of the confusion that is created by embedding quotations within quotations by using indirect quotation in some instances; the conceptualization is the same but the style is simpler.

⁷ **tn Heb** “Your eyes will see the eyes of the king of Babylon and his mouth will speak with your mouth.” For this same idiom in reverse order see 32:4 and consult the translator’s note there for the obligatory nuance given to the verbs.

⁸ **sn** For the fulfillment of this see Jer 52:7-11.

⁷ **tn Heb** “However, hear the word of the LORD, Zedekiah king of Judah, ‘Thus says the LORD to you, ‘You will not die by the sword.’” The translation has tried to avoid the complexity created by embedding quotes within quotes and has used the first person address within the LORD’s speech as has also been done elsewhere.

⁸ **tn Heb** “by the sword.”

⁹ **sn** The contrast is between death in battle or by execution and death in the normal course of life. Zedekiah was captured, had to witness the execution of his sons, had his eyes put out, and was taken to Babylon where he died after a lengthy imprisonment (Jer 52:10-11).

¹⁰ **tn Heb** “And like the burning [of incense] for your fathers, the former kings who were before you, so will they burn [incense] for you.” The sentence has been reversed for easier style and the technical use of the terms interpreted.

¹¹ **sn** For the custom referred to compare 2 Chr 16:14; 21:19.

¹² **sn** The intent of this oracle may have been to contrast the fate of Zedekiah with that of Jehoiakim who was apparently executed, went unburied, and was left unburied (contrast Jer 22:18-19).

¹³ **tn Heb** “For [or Indeed] I myself have spoken [this] word.”

¹⁴ **tn Heb** “Oracle of the LORD.”

¹³ **tn Heb** “And the army of the king of Babylon was fighting against Jerusalem and against all the cities of Judah which were left, [namely] against Lachish and Azekah for they alone were left of the cities of Judah as fortified cities.” The intent of this sentence is to serve as a circumstantial sentence to v. 6 (= “while the army...”). That thought is picked up by “he did this while....” The long complex sentence in v. 7 has been broken down and qualifying material placed in the proper places to convey the same information in shorter English sentences in conformity with contemporary English style.

¹⁴ **tn Or** “agreement.” See the study note on 11:2 for discussion.

¹⁵ **sn** There are no details regarding the nature of this covenant, but it was probably a parity covenant in which the people agreed to free their slaves in exchange for some concessions from the king (see the study note on 11:2 for more details on the nature of ancient Near Eastern covenants). More details about this covenant are given in vv. 15, 18-19 where it is said to have been made before the LORD in the temple and involved passing between the pieces of a cut-up calf. Hence it involved their swearing an oath invoking the LORD’s name (cf. Gen 21:23; 31:51-53; 1 Sam 20:42) and pronouncing self-maledictory curses on themselves calling down on themselves a fate similar to that of the dead calf if they failed to keep it. (This latter practice is illustrated in treaty documents from the ancient Near East and is reflected in the covenant ceremony in Gen 15:8-16.)

people in Jerusalem¹ to grant their slaves their freedom. **34:9** Everyone was supposed to free their male and female Hebrew slaves. No one was supposed to keep a fellow Judean enslaved.² **34:10** All the people and their leaders had agreed to this. They had agreed to free their male and female slaves and not keep them enslaved any longer. They originally complied with the covenant and freed them.³ **34:11** But later⁴ they had changed their minds. They had taken back their male and female slaves that they had freed and forced them to be slaves again.⁵ **34:12** That was

when the LORD spoke to Jeremiah,⁶ **34:13** “The LORD God of Israel has a message for you.”⁷ “I made a covenant with your ancestors⁸ when I brought them out of Egypt where they had been slaves.”⁹ It stipulated,¹⁰ **34:14** “Every seven years each of you must free any fellow Hebrews who have sold themselves to you. After they have served you for six years, you shall set them free.”¹¹ But your ancestors did not obey me or pay any attention to me. **34:15** Recently, however, you yourselves¹² showed a change of heart and did what is pleasing to me. You granted your fellow countrymen their freedom and you made a covenant to that effect in my presence in the house that I have claimed for my own.¹³ **34:16** But then you turned right around¹⁴ and showed that you did not honor me.¹⁵ Each of you took back your male and female slaves whom you had freed as they desired, and you forced them to be your slaves again.¹⁶ **34:17** So I, the LORD, say: “You have not really obeyed me

¹ map For location see Map5-B1; Map6-F3; Map7-E2; Map8-F2; Map10-B3; JP1-F4; JP2-F4; JP3-F4; JP4-F4.

² tn Heb “after King Zedekiah made a covenant...to proclaim liberty to them [the slaves mentioned in the next verse] so that each would send away free his male slave and his female slave, the Hebrew man and the Hebrew woman, so that a man would not hold them in bondage, namely a Judean, his brother [this latter phrase is explicative of “them” because it repeats the preposition in front of “them].” The complex Hebrew syntax has been broken down into shorter English sentences but an attempt has been made to retain the proper subordinations.

³ sn Through economic necessity some of the poorer people of the land had on occasion to sell themselves or their children to wealthier Hebrew landowners. The terms of their servitude were strictly regulated under Hebrew law (cf. Exod 21:2-11; Lev 25:39-55; Deut 15:12-18). In brief, no Hebrew was to serve a fellow Hebrew for any longer than six years. In the seventh year he or she was to go free. The period could even be shortened if the year of jubilee intervened since all debts were to be canceled, freedom restored, and indentured property returned in that year. Some see the covenant here coming in conjunction with such a jubilee year since it involved the freedom of all slaves regardless of how long they had served. Others see this covenant as paralleling an old Babylonian practice of a king declaring liberty for slaves and canceling all debts generally at the beginning of his reign (but also at other significant times within it) in order to ingratiate himself with his subjects.

³ tn Heb “And they complied, [that is] all the leaders and all the people who entered into the covenant that they would each let his male slave and his female slave go free so as not to hold them in bondage any longer; they complied and they let [them] go.” The verb “they complied” (Heb “they hearkened”) is repeated at the end after the lengthy description of the subject. This is characteristic of Hebrew style. The translation has resolved the complex sentence by making the relative clauses modifying the subject independent sentences describing the situational background before mentioning the main focus, “they had complied and let them go.”

⁴ sn Most commentators are agreed that the incident referred to here occurred during the period of relief from the siege provided by the Babylonians going off to fight against the Egyptians who were apparently coming to Zedekiah’s aid (compare vv. 21-22 with 37:5, 7). The freeing of the slaves had occurred earlier, under the crisis of the siege while the people were more responsive to the LORD due to the threat of destruction (cf. v. 15).

⁵ tn Heb “they had brought them into subjection for male and female slaves.” However, the qualification of “male and female” is already clear from the preceding and is unnecessary to the English sentence.

⁶ tn Heb “And the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying.” This is the resumption of the introduction in v. 8 after the lengthy description of the situation that had precipitated the LORD’s message to Jeremiah. “That was when” is intended to take the reader back to v. 8.

⁷ tn Heb “Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, ‘...’” The style adopted here has been used to avoid a longer, more complex English sentence.

⁸ tn Heb “fathers” (also in vv. 14, 15).

⁹ tn Heb “out of the house of bondage.”

³ sn This refers to the Mosaic covenant, initiated at Mount Sinai and renewed on the plains of Moab. The statement “I brought you out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage” functions as the “historical prologue” in the Ten Commandments which is the LORD’s vassal treaty with Israel in miniature. (See the study note on 11:2 and see Exod 20:2; Deut 5:6 and Exod 34:8. As such it was a motivating factor in their pledge of loyalty to him. This statement was also invoked within the law itself as a motivation for kindly treatment of slaves including their emancipation (see Deut 15:15).)

¹⁰ tn Heb “made a covenant, saying.” This was only one of several stipulations of the covenant. The form used here has been chosen as an indirect way of relating the specific stipulation that is being focused upon to the general covenant that is referred to in v. 13.

¹¹ sn Compare Deut 15:12-18 for the complete statement of this law. Here only the first part of it is cited.

¹² tn The presence of the independent pronoun in the Hebrew text is intended to contrast their actions with those of their ancestors.

¹³ sn This refers to the temple. See Jer 7:10, 11, 14, 30 and see the translator’s note on 7:10 and the study note on 10:25 for the explanation of the idiom involved here.

¹⁴ sn The verb at the beginning of v. 15 and v. 16 are the same in the Hebrew. They had two changes of heart (Heb “you turned”), one that was pleasing to him (Heb “right in his eyes”) and one that showed they did not honor him (Heb “profaned [or belittled] his name”).

¹⁵ sn Heb “you profaned my name.” His name had been invoked in the oath confirming the covenant. Breaking the covenant involved taking his name in vain (cf. Exod 20:7; Deut 5:11; Jer 5:2). Hence the one who bore the name was not treated with the special honor and reverence due him (see the study note on 23:27 for the significance of “name” in the OT).

¹⁶ tn Heb “and you brought them into subjection to be to you for male and female slaves.” See the translator’s note on v. 11 for the same redundant repetition which is not carried over into the contemporary English sentence.

and granted freedom to your neighbor and fellow countryman.¹ Therefore, I will grant you freedom, the freedom² to die in war, or by starvation or disease. I, the LORD, affirm it!³ I will make all the kingdoms of the earth horrified at what happens to you.⁴ **34:18** I will punish those people who have violated their covenant with me. I will make them like the calf they cut in two and passed between its pieces.⁵ I will do so because they did not keep the terms of the covenant they made in my presence.⁶ **34:19** I will punish the leaders of Judah and Jerusalem, the court officials,⁷ the priests, and all the other people of the land who passed between the pieces of the calf.⁸ **34:20** I will hand them over to their enemies who want to kill them. Their dead bodies will become food for the birds and the wild animals.⁹ **34:21** I will also hand King Zedekiah of Judah and his officials over to their enemies who want to kill them. I will hand them over to the army of the king of Babylon, even though

they have temporarily withdrawn from attacking you.¹⁰ **34:22** For I, the LORD, affirm that¹¹ I will soon give the order and bring them back to this city. They will fight against it and capture it and burn it down. I will also make the towns of Judah desolate so that there will be no one living in them.”¹²

Judah's Unfaithfulness Contrasted with the Rechabites' Faithfulness

35:1 The LORD spoke to Jeremiah when Jehoiakim¹³ son of Josiah was ruling over Judah.¹⁴ **35:2** “Go to the Rechabite community.¹⁴ Invite them to come into one of the side rooms¹⁵ of the LORD's temple and offer them some wine to

¹ **tn** The Hebrew text has a compound object, the two terms of which have been synonyms in v. 14, 15. G. L. Keown, P. J. Scalise, and T. G. Smothers (*Jeremiah 26-52* [WBC], 189) make the interesting observation that these two terms (*Heb* “brother” and “neighbor”) emphasize the relationships that should have taken precedence over their being viewed as mere slaves.

² **sn** This is, of course, a metaphorical and ironical use of the term “to grant freedom to.” It is, however, a typical statement of the concept of talionic justice which is quite often operative in God's judgments in the OT (cf., e.g., Obad 15).

³ **tn** *Heb* “Oracle of the LORD.”

⁴ **sn** Compare Jer 15:4; 24:9; 29:18.

⁵ **sn** See the study note on v. 8 for explanation and parallels.

⁶ **tn** There is a little confusion in the syntax of this section because the noun “the calf” does not have any formal conjunction or preposition with it showing how it relates to the rest of the sentence. KJV treats it and the following words as though they were a temporal clause modifying “covenant which they made.” The majority of modern English versions and commentaries, however, understand it as a second accusative after the verb + object “I will make the men.” This fits under the category of what GKC 375 §118, calls an accusative of comparison (compare usage in Isa 21:8; Zech 2:8). Stated baldly, “I will make the people...the calf,” it is, however, more forceful than the formal use of the noun + preposition כ just as metaphors are generally more forceful than similes. The whole verse is one long, complex sentence in Hebrew: “I will make the men who broke my covenant [referring to the Mosaic covenant containing the stipulation to free slaves after six years] [and] who did not keep the terms of the covenant which they made before me [referring to their agreement to free their slaves] [like] the calf which they cut in two and passed between its pieces.” The sentence has been broken down into shorter sentences in conformity with contemporary English style.

⁷ **tn** For the rendering of this term see the translator's note on 29:2.

⁸ **tn** This verse is not actually a sentence in the Hebrew original but is a prepositioned object to the verb in v. 20, “I will hand them over.” This construction is called *casus pendens* in the older grammars and is used to call attention to a subject or object (cf. GKC 458 §143.d and compare the usage in 33:24). The same nondescript “I will punish” which was used to resolve the complex sentence in the previous verse has been chosen to introduce the objects here before the more specific “I will hand them over” in the next verse.

⁹ **sn** See this same phrase in Jer 7:33; 16:4; 19:7.

¹⁰ **tn** *Heb* “And Zedekiah king of Judah and his officials I will give into the hand of their enemies and into the hand of those who seek their lives and into the hands of the army of the king of Babylon which has gone up from against them.” The last two “and into the hand” phrases are each giving further explication of “their enemies” (the conjunction is explicative [cf. BDB 252 s.v. 1.b]). The sentence has been broken down into shorter English sentences in conformity with contemporary English style.

sn This refers to the relief offered by the withdrawal of the Babylonian troops to fight against the Egyptians which were coming to Zedekiah's aid (cf. 37:5, 7, 11).

¹¹ **tn** *Heb* “Oracle of the LORD.”

¹² **sn** The introductory statement here shows that this incident is earlier than those in Jer 32–34 which all take place in the reign of Zedekiah. Jehoiakim ruled from 609/8 b.c. until 598/97 b.c. and his brother Zedekiah followed him after a brief reign of three months by Jehoiakim's son who was captured by Nebuchadnezzar and taken to Babylon. Zedekiah ruled from 598/7 b.c. until the kingdom fell in 587/86. The position of this chapter is out of chronological order emphasizing the theme of covenant infidelity (Jer 34; 35:12-17) versus the faithfulness to his commands that God expected from Israel as illustrated by the Rechabites' faithfulness to the commands of their progenitor. This is thus another one of those symbolic acts in Jeremiah which have significance to the message of the book (compare Jer 13, 19). This incident likely took place during the time that people living in the countryside like the Rechabites were forced to take shelter in the fortified cities because of the raiding parties that Nebuchadnezzar had sent against Jehoiakim after he had rebelled against him in 603 b.c. (compare v. 11 and Jer 4:5 with 2 Kgs 24:1-2).

¹³ **tn** *Heb* “The word which came to Jeremiah from the LORD in the days of Jehoiakim son of Josiah king of Judah, saying.”

¹⁴ **tn** *Heb* “the house of the Rechabites.” “House” is used here in terms of “household” or “family” (cf. BDB 109 s.v. בית 5.a, b).

sn Nothing is known about the *Rechabite community* other than what is said about them in this chapter. From vv. 7-8 it appears that they were a nomadic tribe that had resisted settling down and taking up farming. They had also agreed to abstain from drinking wine. Most scholars agree in equating the Jonadab son of Rechab mentioned as the leader who had instituted these strictures as the same Jonadab who assisted Jehu in his religious purge of Baalism following the reign of Ahab (2 Kgs 10:15, 23-24). If this is the case, the Rechabites followed these same rules for almost 250 years because Jehu's purge of Baalism and the beginning of his reign was in 841 b.c. and the incident here took place some time after Jehoiakim's rebellion in 603 b.c. (see the study note on v. 1).

¹⁵ **sn** This refers to one of the rooms built on the outside of the temple that were used as living quarters for the priests and for storage rooms (cf. Neh 13:4-5; 1 Kgs 6:5; 1 Chr 28:12; 2 Chr 31:11 and compare Ezek 41:1-14).

drink.” 35:3 So I went and got Jaazaniah son of Jeremiah the grandson of Habazziniah, his brothers, all his sons, and all the rest of the Rechabite community. 35:4 I took them to the LORD’s temple. I took them into the room where the disciples of the prophet Hanan son of Igdaliah stayed.¹ That room was next to the one where the temple officers stayed and above the room where Maaseiah son of Shallum, one of the doorkeepers² of the temple, stayed. 35:5 Then I set cups and pitchers full of wine in front of the members of the Rechabite community and said to them, “Have some wine.”³ 35:6 But they answered, “We do not drink wine because our ancestor Jonadab son of Rechab commanded us not to. He told us, ‘You and your children must never drink wine. 35:7 Do not build houses. Do not plant crops. Do not plant a vineyard or own one.⁴ Live in tents all your lives. If you do these things you will⁵ live a long time in the land that you wander about on.’”⁶ 35:8 We and our wives and our sons and daughters have obeyed everything our ancestor Jonadab commanded us. We have never drunk wine.⁷ 35:9 We have not built any houses to live in. We do not own any vineyards, fields, or crops. 35:10 We have lived in tents. We have obeyed our ancestor Jonadab and done exactly as he commanded us.⁸ 35:11 But when King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon invaded the land we said, ‘Let’s get up and go to

Jerusalem⁹ to get away from the Babylonian¹⁰ and Aramean armies.’ That is why we are staying here in Jerusalem.”

35:12 Then the LORD spoke to Jeremiah. 35:13 The LORD God of Israel who rules over all¹¹ told him, “Go and speak to the people of Judah and the citizens of Jerusalem. Tell them,¹² ‘I, the LORD, say,¹³ “You must learn a lesson from this¹⁴ about obeying what I say!¹⁵ 35:14 Jonadab son of Rechab ordered his descendants not to drink wine. His orders have been carried out.¹⁶ To this day his descendants have drunk no wine because they have obeyed what their ancestor commanded them. But I¹⁷ have spoken to you over and over again,¹⁸ but you have not obeyed me! 35:15 I sent all my servants the prophets to warn you over and over again. They said, “Every one of you, stop doing the evil things you have been doing and do what is right.¹⁹ Do not pay allegiance to other gods²⁰ and worship them. Then you can continue to live in this land that I gave to you and your ancestors.” But you did not pay any attention or listen to me. 35:16 Yes,²¹ the descendants of Jonadab son of

⁹ map For location see Map5-B1; Map6-F3; Map7-E2; Map8-F2; Map10-B3; JP1-F4; JP2-F4; JP3-F4; JP4-F4.

¹⁰ tn Heb “Chaldean.” For explanation see the study note on 21:4.

¹¹ tn Heb “Yahweh of armies, the God of Israel.” For this title see 7:3 and the study note on 2:19.

¹² tn Heb “35:12 And the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah, saying, ‘Thus says Yahweh of armies the God of Israel, “Go and say...“Will you not learn...”’” The use of the indirect introduction has been chosen here as in 34:1-2 to try to cut down on the confusion created by embedding quotations within quotations.

¹³ tn Heb “Oracle of the LORD.”

¹⁴ tn The words “from this” are not in the text but are implicit from the context. They have been supplied in the translation for the sake of clarity.

¹⁵ tn Heb “Will you not learn a lesson...?” The rhetorical question here has the force of an imperative, made explicit in the translation.

¹⁶ tn Heb “The words of Jonadab son of Rechab which he commanded his descendants not to drink wine have been carried out.” (For the construction of the accusative of subject after a passive verb illustrated here see GKC 388 §121.b.) The sentence has been broken down and made more direct to better conform to contemporary English style.

¹⁷ tn The vav (ו) plus the independent pronoun before the verb is intended to mark a sharp contrast. It is difficult, if not impossible to mark this in English other than “But I.”

¹⁸ tn On this idiom (which occurs again in the following verse) see the translator’s note on 7:13 for this idiom and compare its use in 7:13, 25; 11:7; 25:3, 4; 26:5; 29:19; 32:33; 35:14, 15; 44:9.

¹⁹ tn Heb “Turn, each of you, from his [= your] wicked way and make good your deeds.” Compare 18:11 where the same idiom occurs with the added term of “make good your ways.”

²⁰ tn Heb “Don’t go after/follow other gods.” See the translator’s note on 2:5 for an explanation of the idiom and see 11:10; 13:10; 25:6 for the same idiom.

²¹ tn This is an attempt to represent the particle כִּי (*ki*) which is probably not really intensive here (cf. BDB 472 s.v. כִּי 1.e) but is one of those causal uses of כִּי that BDB discusses on 473-74 s.v. כִּי 3.c where the cause is really the failure of the people of Judah and Jerusalem to listen/obey. I.e., the causal particle is at the beginning of the sentence so as not to interrupt the contrast drawn.

¹ tn Heb “the sons of Hanan son of Igdaliah, the man of God.” The reference to “sons” and to “man of God” fits the usage of these terms elsewhere to refer to prophets and their disciples (see BDB 43-44 s.v. אֱלֹהִים 3(b) and compare usage in 2 Kgs 4:40 for the former and BDB 121 s.v. בָּן 7.a and compare the usage in 2 Kgs 4:38 for the latter).

² sn According to Jer 52:24; 2 Kgs 25:18 there were three officers who carried out this duty. It was their duty to guard the entrance of the temple to keep people out that did not belong there, such as those who were foreigners or ritually unclean (see 2 Kgs 12:9 and compare Ps 118:19-20).

³ tn Heb “Drink wine.”

⁴ tn Heb “Don’t plant a vineyard and it shall not be to you [= and you shall/must not have one].”

⁵ tn Heb “Don’t...and don’t...but live...in order that you might...”

⁶ sn Heb “where you are sojourning.” The terms “sojourn” and “sojourner” referred to a person who resided in a country not his own, without the rights and privileges of citizenship as a member of a nation, state, or principality. In the ancient Near East such people were dependent on the laws of hospitality rather than the laws of state for protection and provision of legal rights. Perhaps the best illustration of this is Abraham who “sojourned” among the Philistines and the Hittites in Canaan and was dependent upon them for grazing and water rights and for a place to bury his wife (cf. Gen 20-24). What is described here is the typical lifestyle of a nomadic tribe.

⁷ tn Heb “We have not drunk wine all our days.” Actually v. 8b-9a are a series of infinitive constructs plus the negative לֹבֵלִיתִי (*l’viliti*) explaining the particulars of how they have obeyed, i.e., by not drinking wine...and by not building...” The more direct declarative statement is used here to shorten the sentence and is more in keeping with contemporary style.

⁸ tn Heb “We have obeyed and done according to all which our ancestor Jonadab commanded us.”

Rechab have carried out the orders that their ancestor gave them. But you people¹ have not obeyed me! **35:17** So I, the LORD, the God who rules over all, the God of Israel, say:² “I will soon bring on Judah and all the citizens of Jerusalem all the disaster that I threatened to bring on them. I will do this because I spoke to them but they did not listen. I called out to them but they did not answer.””

35:18 Then Jeremiah spoke to the Rechabite community, “The LORD God of Israel who rules over all³ says, ‘You have obeyed the orders of your ancestor Jonadab. You have followed all his instructions. You have done exactly as he commanded you.’ **35:19** So the LORD God of Israel who rules over all says, ‘Jonadab son of Rechab will never lack a male descendant to serve me.’”⁴

Jehoiakim Burns the Scroll Containing the Lord's Messages

36:1 The LORD spoke to Jeremiah in the fourth year⁵ that Jehoiakim son of Josiah was

¹ *tn Heb* “this people.” However, the speech is addressed to the people of Judah and the citizens of Jerusalem, so the second person is retained in English. In addition to the stylistic difference that Hebrew exhibits in the rapid shift between persons (second to third and third to second, which have repeatedly been noted and documented from GK 462 §144. *p*) there may be a subtle rhetorical reason for the shift here. The shift from direct address to indirect address which characterizes this verse and the next may reflect the LORD's rejection of the people he is addressing. A similar shift takes place in Wisdom's address to the simple minded, fools, and mockers in Prov 1:28-32 after the direct address of 1:22-27.

² *tn Heb* “Therefore, thus says the LORD, the God of armies, the God of Israel.” For the title see 7:13 and the study note on 2:19. The first person address is again used in the translation because this whole section is a speech from the LORD (see vv. 12-13).

³ *tn Heb* “Yahweh of armies, the God of Israel.” For this title, which occurs again in the following verse, see the notes on 7:3 and the study note on 2:19.

⁴ *tn Heb* “There shall not be cut to Jonadab son of Rechab a man standing before me all the days.” For the first part of this idiom see 33:17-18 where it is applied to David always having a descendant to occupy the throne and the Levites will always have priests to offer up sacrifices. For the latter part of the idiom “to stand before” referring to service see BDB 764 s.v. עָמַד 1.e and compare the usage in 1 Kgs 1:2; 2 Kgs 3:14; Jer 15:19; Deut 10:8. As comparison with those passages will show, it refers to attending on, or serving a superior, a king, or the LORD. It is used of both prophets (e.g., 1 Kgs 17:1) and priests (e.g., Deut 10:8) serving the LORD. Its most common use is to refer to priestly service. The nature of the service is not further defined in this case, though several of the commentaries point out a Mishnaic tradition that the Rechabites later were given the function of bringing wood for the altar.

⁵ *sn* The fourth year that Jehoiakim...was ruling over Judah would have been 605/4 b.c. Jehoiakim began his rule in 609/8 b.c. after his father Josiah was killed by Pharaoh Necho at Megiddo. Necho had installed him as puppet king in place of his brother Jehoahaz who was deposed by Necho after a reign of only three months (2 Kgs 23:31-35). According to Jer 46:2 that was the year in which Nebuchadnezzar defeated Jehoiakim's suzerain Necho at Carchemish. That was also the same year that Jerusalem came under attack and submitted to Babylonian control after a brief siege (Dan 1:1; see the study note on 25:1 for the reason for the difference in the dating between Jer 25:1; 36:2 and Dan 1:1). These events confirmed what Jeremiah had been saying about the foe from the north (4:6; 6:1; 15:12) and would have provided the impetus for the hopes that the people would repent if they were

ruling over Judah.⁶ **36:2** “Get a scroll.⁷ Write on it everything I have told you to say⁸ about Israel, Judah, and all the other nations since I began to speak to you in the reign of Josiah until now.⁹ **36:3** Perhaps when the people of Judah hear about all the disaster I intend to bring on them, they will all stop doing the evil things they have been doing.¹⁰ If they do, I will forgive their sins and the wicked things they have done.”¹¹

36:4 So Jeremiah summoned Baruch son of Neriah. Then Jeremiah dictated to Baruch everything the LORD had told him to say and Baruch wrote it all down in a scroll.¹² **36:5** Then Jeremiah told Baruch, “I am no longer allowed to go¹³ into the LORD's temple. **36:6** So you go

reminded about what Jeremiah had been saying.

⁶ *tn Heb* “This word came to Jeremiah from the LORD in the fourth year of Jehoiakim son of Josiah the king of Judah, saying.”

⁷ *sn Heb* “a roll [or scroll] of a document.” Scrolls consisted of pieces of leather or parchment sewn together and rolled up on wooden rollers. The writing was written from right to left and from top to bottom in columns and the scroll unrolled from the left roller and rolled onto the right one as the scroll was read. The scroll varied in length depending on the contents. This scroll was probably not all that long since it was read three times in a single day (vv. 10-11, 15-16, 21-23).

⁸ *sn* The intent is hardly that of giving a verbatim report of everything that the LORD had told him to say or of everything that he had actually said. What the scroll undoubtedly contained was a synopsis of Jeremiah's messages as constructed from his memory.

⁹ *sn* This refers to the messages that Jeremiah delivered during the last eighteen years of Josiah, the three month reign of Jehoahaz and the first four years of Jehoiakim's reign (the period between Josiah's thirteenth year [cf. 1:2] and the fourth year of Jehoiakim [v. 1]). The exact content of this scroll is unknown since many of the messages in the present book are undated. It is also not known what relation this scroll had to the present form of the book of Jeremiah, since this scroll was destroyed and another one written that contained more than this one did (cf. v. 32). Since Jeremiah continued his ministry down to the fall of Jerusalem in 587/6 b.c. (1:2) and beyond (cf. Jer 40-44) much more was added to those two scrolls even later.

¹⁰ *tn Heb* “will turn each one from his wicked way.”

¹¹ *tn Heb* “their iniquity and their sin.”

sn The offer of withdrawal of punishment for sin is consistent with the principles of Jer 18:7-8 and the temple sermon delivered early in the reign of this king (cf. 26:1-3; 7:5-7).

¹² *tn Heb* “Then Baruch wrote down on a scroll from the mouth of Jeremiah all the words of the LORD which he [the LORD] had spoken to him [Jeremiah].” The syntax of the Hebrew sentence is awkward and hard to reproduce “literally” in any meaningful way. The English sentence has been restructured to reproduce all the pertinent facts in more simplified language.

¹³ *tn Heb* “I am restrained; I cannot go into.” The word “restrained” is used elsewhere in Jeremiah of his being confined to the courtyard of the guardhouse (33:1; 39:15). However, that occurred only later during the tenth year of Zedekiah (Jer 32:1-2) and Jeremiah appears here to be free to come and go as he pleased (vv. 19, 26). The word is used in the active voice of the LORD preventing Sarah from having a baby (Gen 16:2). The probable nuance is here “I am prevented/ debarred” from being able to go. No reason is given why he was prevented/debarred. It has been plausibly suggested that he was prohibited from going into the temple any longer because of the scathing sermon he delivered there earlier (Jer 26:1-3; 7:1-15).

there the next time all the people of Judah come in from their towns to fast¹ in the LORD's temple. Read out loud where all of them can hear you what I told you the LORD said, which you wrote in the scroll.² **36:7** Perhaps then they will ask the LORD for mercy and will all stop doing the evil things they have been doing.³ For the LORD has threatened to bring great anger and wrath against these people."⁴

36:8 So Baruch son of Neriah did exactly what the prophet Jeremiah had told him to do. He read what the LORD had said from the scroll in the temple of the LORD.⁵ **36:9** All the people living in Jerusalem⁶ and all the people who came into Jerusalem from the towns of Judah came to observe a fast before the LORD. The fast took place in the ninth month of the fifth year that Jehoiakim son of Josiah was ruling over Judah.⁷

1 sn Regular fast days were not a part of Israel's religious calendar. Rather fast days were called on special occasions, i.e., in times of drought or a locust plague (Joel 1:14; 2:15), or during a military crisis (2 Chr 20:3), or after defeat in battle (1 Sam 31:13; 2 Sam 1:12). A fast day was likely chosen for the reading of the scroll because the people would be more mindful of the crisis they were in and be in more of a repentant mood. The events referred to in the study note on v. 1 would have provided the basis for Jeremiah's anticipation of a fast day when the scroll could be read.

2 tn *Heb* "So you go and read from the scroll which you have written from my mouth the words of the LORD in the ears of the people in the house of the LORD on a fast day, and in that way [for the explanation of this rendering see below] you will be reading them in the ears of all Judah [= the people of Judah] who come from their towns [i.e., to the temple to fast]." Again the syntax of the original is awkward, separating several of the qualifying phrases from the word or phrase they are intended to modify. In most of the "literal" English versions the emphasis on "what the LORD said" tends to get lost and it looks like two separate groups are to be addressed rather than one. The intent of the phrase is to define who the people are who will hear; the ו that introduces the clause is explicative (BDB 252 s.v. ו 1.b) and the גַּם (*gam*) is used to emphasize the explicative "all Judah who come in from their towns" (cf. BDB 169 s.v. גַּם 2). If some force were to be given to the "literal" rendering of that particle here it would be "actually." This is the group that is to be addressed according to v. 3. The complex Hebrew sentence has been restructured to include all the relevant information in more comprehensible and shorter English sentences.

3 tn *Heb* "will turn each one from his wicked way."

4 tn *Heb* "For great is the anger and the wrath which the LORD has spoken against this people." The translation uses the more active form which is more in keeping with contemporary English style.

5 tn *Heb* "And Baruch son of Neriah did according to all that the prophet Jeremiah commanded him with regard to reading from the scroll the words of the LORD in the temple of the LORD." The sentence has been broken down and the modifiers placed where they belong to better conform to contemporary English style.

6 map For location see Map5-B1; Map6-F3; Map7-E2; Map8-F2; Map10-B3; JP1-F4; JP2-F4; JP3-F4; JP4-F4.

7 tn There is some debate about the syntax of the words translated "All the people living in Jerusalem and all the people who came into Jerusalem from the towns in Judah." As the sentence is structured in Hebrew it looks like these words are the subject of "proclaim a fast." However, most commentaries point out that the people themselves would hardly proclaim a fast; they would be summoned to fast (cf. 1 Kgs 21:9, 12; Jonah 3:7). Hence many see these words as the object of the verb which has an impersonal subject "they." This is most likely unless with J. Bright (*Jeremiah* [AB], 180) the word

36:10 At that time Baruch went into the temple of the LORD. He stood in the entrance of the room of Gemariah the son of Shaphan who had been the royal secretary.⁸ That room was in the upper court⁹ near the entrance of the New Gate.¹⁰ There, where all the people could hear him, he read from the scroll what Jeremiah had said.¹¹

36:11 Micaiah, who was the son of Gemariah and the grandson of Shaphan, heard Baruch read from the scroll everything the LORD had said.¹² **36:12** He went down to the chamber of the royal

"proclaim" is used in a looser sense as "observed." The translation has chosen to follow this latter tack rather than use the impersonal (or an equivalent passive) construction in English. For a similar problem see Jonah 3:5 which precedes the official proclamation in 3:7. The Hebrew text reads: "In the fifth year of Jehoiakim son of Josiah king of Judah, in the ninth month they proclaimed a fast before the LORD, all the people in Jerusalem and all the people who came from the cities of Judah into Jerusalem." The sentence has been broken down and restructured to better conform with contemporary English style.

sn Judging from v. 22 this was one of the winter months meaning that the reckoning is based on the calendar which starts with April rather than the one which starts with September (Nisan to Nisan rather than Tishri to Tishri). The ninth month would have been Kislev which corresponds roughly to December. According to Babylonian historical records this is the same year and the same month when Ashkelon was captured and sacked. The surrender of Jerusalem and the subsequent looting of the temple in the previous year (Dan 1:1) and the return of the menacing presence of Nebuchadnezzar in the near vicinity were probably the impetus for the fast.

8 sn *Shaphan* had been the royal secretary under Jehoiakim's father's rule. During the course of his official duties the book of the law had been discovered and he had read it and reported its contents to Josiah who instituted sweeping reforms on the basis of his obedience to it. (See 2 Kgs 22 and note especially vv. 3, 8, 10.) If the *Shaphan* mentioned in 26:14 is the same person as this, Gemariah would have been the brother of the man who spoke up on Jeremiah's behalf when the priests and prophets sought to have him killed.

9 sn It is generally agreed that this is the same as the inner court mentioned in 1 Kgs 6:36; 7:12. It is called "upper" here because it stood above (cf. 1 Kgs 7:12) the outer court where all the people were standing.

10 sn The *New Gate* is the same gate where Jeremiah had been accused of falsely claiming the LORD's authority for his "treasonous" prophecies according to 26:10-11. See the study note on 26:10 for more details about the location of this gate.

11 tn The syntax of the original is complicated due to all the qualifying terms: *Heb* "And Baruch read from the scroll the words of Jeremiah in the house of the LORD in (i.e., in the entrance of) the room of Gemariah son of Shaphan the scribe in the upper court at the entrance of the New Gate in the house of the LORD in the ears of all the people." The sentence has been broken down and restructured to contain all the same information in shorter English sentences that better conform with contemporary English style.

12 tn *Heb* "Micaiah son of Gemariah son of Shaphan heard all the words of the LORD from upon the scroll." The words "heard Baruch read" are implicit from the context and are supplied in the translation for smoothness.

secretary in the king's palace and found all the court officials in session there. Elishama¹ the royal secretary, Delaiah son of Shemaiah, Elnathan son of Achbor,² Gemariah son of Shaphan, Zedekiah son of Hananiah, and all the other officials were seated there. **36:13** Micaiah told them everything he had heard Baruch read from the scroll in the hearing of the people.³ **36:14** All the officials sent Jehudi, who was the son of Nethaniah and the grandson of Cushi, to Baruch. They ordered him to tell Baruch, "Come here and bring with you⁴ the scroll you read in the hearing of the people."⁵ So Baruch son of Neriah went to them, carrying the scroll in his hand.⁶ **36:15** They said to him, "Please sit down and read it to us."⁷ So Baruch sat down and read it to them.⁸ **36:16** When they had heard it all,⁹ they expressed their alarm to one another.⁹ Then they said to Baruch, "We must certainly give the king a report about everything you have read!"¹⁰ **36:17** Then they asked Baruch, "How did you come to write all these words? Do they actually

come from Jeremiah's mouth?"¹¹ **36:18** Baruch answered, "Yes, they came from his own mouth. He dictated all these words to me and I wrote them down in ink on this scroll."¹² **36:19** Then the officials said to Baruch, "You and Jeremiah must go and hide. You must not let anyone know where you are."¹³

36:20 The officials put the scroll in the room of Elishama, the royal secretary, for safekeeping.¹⁴ Then they went to the court and reported everything¹⁵ to the king.¹⁶ **36:21** The king sent Jehudi to get the scroll. He went and got it from the room of Elishama, the royal secretary. Then he himself¹⁷ read it to the king and all the officials who were standing around him. **36:22** Since it was the ninth month of the year, the king was sitting in his winter quarters.¹⁸ A fire was burn-

¹ **sn** If, as many believe, this man was the same as the Elishama mentioned in Jer 41:1; 2 Kgs 25:25, he was also a member of the royal family.

² **sn** This man has already been mentioned in Jer 26:22 as the official who was sent to Egypt to extradite the prophet Uriah that Jehoiakim had executed. Though he was instrumental in the death of that prophet, he appears to have been favorably disposed to Jeremiah or at least impressed by the seriousness of his messages, because he is one of the officials that urged Baruch and Jeremiah to hide (v. 19), and he counseled Jehoiakim not to burn the scroll (v. 25).

³ **tn** *Heb* "Micaiah reported to them all the words which he heard when Baruch read from the scroll in the ears of the people."

⁴ **tn** *Heb* "in your hand."

⁵ **tn** The original has another example of a prepositioned object (called *casus pendens* in the grammars; cf. GKC 458 §143.b) which is intended to focus attention on "the scroll." The Hebrew sentence reads: "The scroll which you read from it in the ears of the people take it and come." Any attempt to carry over this emphasis into the English translation would be awkward. Likewise, the order of the two imperatives has been reversed as more natural in English.

⁶ **tn** *Heb* "So Baruch son of Neriah took the scroll in his hand and went to them." The clause order has been rearranged in the translation for stylistic reasons.

⁷ **tn** Or "'to us personally'...to them personally"; *Heb* "'in our ears'...in their ears." Elsewhere this has been rendered "in the hearing of" or "where they could hear." All three of those idioms sound unnatural in this context. The mere personal pronoun seems adequate.

⁸ **tn** *Heb* "all the words."

⁹ **tn** According to BDB 808 s.v. פָּרַד Qal.1 and 40 s.v. אָלָה 3.a, this is an example of the "pregnant" use of a preposition where an implied verb has to be supplied in the translation to conform the normal range of the preposition with the verb that is governing it. The Hebrew text reads: "they feared unto one another." BDB translates "they turned in dread to each other." The translation adopted seems more appropriate in this context.

¹⁰ **tn** *Heb* "We must certainly report to the king all these things." Here the word דְּבָרִים (*d'varim*) must mean "things" (cf. BDB 183 s.v. דָּבַר IV.3) rather than "words" because a verbatim report of all the words in the scroll is scarcely meant. The present translation has chosen to use a form that suggests a summary report of all the matters spoken about in the scroll rather than the indefinite "things."

¹¹ **tn** Or "Did Jeremiah dictate them to you?" The words "Do they actually come from Jeremiah's mouth?" assume that the last phrase (מִפִּי, *mippiv*) is a question, either without the formal *he* (ה) interrogative (see GKC 473 §150.a and compare usage in 1 Sam 16:4; Prov 5:16) or with a letter supplied from the end of the preceding word (single writing of a letter following the same letter [haplography]; so the majority of modern commentaries). The word is missing in the Greek version. The presence of this same word at the beginning of the answer in the next verse suggests that this was a question (probably without the *he* (ה) interrogative to make it more emphatic) since the common way to answer affirmatively is to repeat the emphatic word in the question (cf. GKC 476 §150.n and compare usage in Gen 24:58). The intent of the question is to make sure that these were actually Jeremiah's words, not Baruch's own creation (cf. Jer 43:2-3 for a similar suspicion).

¹² **tn** The verbal forms emphasize that each word came from his mouth. The first verb is an imperfect which emphasizes repeated action in past time and the second verb is a participle which emphasizes ongoing action. However, it is a little awkward to try to express this nuance in contemporary English. Even though it is not reflected in the translation, it is noted here for future reference.

¹³ **tn** The verbs here are both direct imperatives but it sounds awkward to say "You and Jeremiah, go and hide" in contemporary English. The same force is accomplished by phrasing the statement as strong advice.

¹⁴ **tn** *Heb* "they deposited." For the usage of the verb here see BDB 824 s.v. פָּקַד Hiph.2.b and compare the usage in Jer 37:21 where it is used for "confining" Jeremiah in the courtyard of the guardhouse.

¹⁵ **tn** *Heb* "all the matters." Compare the translator's note on v. 16.

¹⁶ **tn** Both here and in the next verse the Hebrew has "in the ears of" before "the king" (and also before "all the officials"). As in v. 15 these words are not represented in the translation due to the awkwardness of the idiom in contemporary English (see the translator's note on v. 15).

¹⁷ **tn** *Heb* "and Jehudi read it." However, Jehudi has been the subject of the preceding; so it would be awkward in English to use the personal subject. The translation has chosen to bring out the idea that Jehudi himself read it by using the reflexive.

¹⁸ **tn** *Heb* "in the autumn house." Commentators are agreed that this was not a separate building or palace but the winter quarters in the palace.

sn Larger houses, including the palace, were two-storied buildings with a lower quarters better suited for the cold of winter and an upper quarters which was better ventilated to provide cool in the summer. Since this was the ninth month (December) the king had taken up residence in the lower, warmer quarters which were equipped with a portable fire pot or brazier to keep him warm.

ing in the firepot in front of him.¹ **36:23** As soon as Jehudi had read three or four columns² of the scroll, the king³ would cut them off with a penknife⁴ and throw them on the fire in the firepot. He kept doing so until the whole scroll was burned up in the fire.⁵ **36:24** Neither he nor any of his attendants showed any alarm when they heard all that had been read. Nor did they tear their clothes to show any grief or sorrow.⁶ **36:25** The king did not even listen to Elnathan, Delaiah, and Gemariah, who had urged him not to burn the scroll.⁷ **36:26** He also ordered Jerahmeel, who was one of the royal princes,⁸ Seraiah

son of Azriel, and Shelemiah son of Abdeel to arrest the scribe Baruch and the prophet Jeremiah. However, the LORD hid them.

Baruch and Jeremiah Write Another Scroll

36:27 The LORD spoke to Jeremiah after Jehoiakim had burned the scroll containing what Jeremiah had spoken and Baruch had written down.⁹ **36:28** “Get another¹⁰ scroll and write on it everything¹¹ that was written on the original scroll¹² that King Jehoiakim of Judah burned. **36:29** Tell King Jehoiakim of Judah, ‘The LORD says, “You burned the scroll. You asked¹³ Jeremiah, ‘How dare you write in this scroll that the king of Babylon will certainly come and destroy this land and wipe out all the people and animals on it?’”¹⁴ **36:30** So the LORD says concerning King Jehoiakim of Judah, “None of his line will occupy the throne of David.¹⁵ His dead body will be thrown out to be exposed to scorching heat by day and frost by night.¹⁶ **36:31** I will punish him and his descendants and the officials who serve him for the wicked things they have done.¹⁷ I will bring on them, the citizens of

¹ **tc** Heb “the fire in the firepot was burning before him.” The translation assumes that the word “fire” (אֵשׁ, *esh*) has dropped out after the particle אֵת (*et*) because of the similar beginnings of the two words. The word “fire” is found in the Greek, Syriac, and Targumic translations according to BHS. The particle אֵת should be retained rather than dropped as an erroneous writing of אֵשׁ. Its presence is to be explained as the usage of the sign of the accusative introducing a new subject (cf. BDB 85 s.v. אֵת 3.α and compare the usage in 27:8; 38:16 [in the *Kethib*]; 45:4).

² **tn** Heb “doors.” This is the only time the word “door” is used in this way but all the commentaries and lexicons agree that it means “columns.” The meaning is figurative based on the similarity of shape.

³ **tn** Heb “he.” The majority of commentaries and English versions are agreed that “he” is the king. However, since a penknife (Heb “a scribe’s razor”) is used to cut the columns off, it is possible that Jehudi himself did it. However, even if Jehudi himself did it, he was acting on the king’s orders.

⁴ **sn** Heb “a scribe’s razor.” There is some irony involved here since a scribe’s razor was used to trim the sheets to be sewn together, scrape them in preparation for writing, and to erase errors. What was normally used to prepare the scroll was used to destroy it.

⁵ **tn** Heb “until the whole scroll was consumed upon the fire which was in the fire pot.”

⁶ **tn** Heb “Neither the king nor any of his servants who heard all these words were afraid or tore their clothes.” The sentence has been broken up into two shorter sentences to better conform to English style and some of the terms explained (e.g., tore their clothes) for the sake of clarity.

sn There are some interesting wordplays and contrasts involved here. The action of the king and his attendants should be contrasted with that of the officials who heard the same things read (v. 16). The king and his officials did not tear their garments in grief and sorrow; instead the king cut up the scroll (the words “tear” and “cut off” are the same in Hebrew [קָרַע, *qara*]). Likewise, the actions of Jehoiakim and his attendants is to be contrasted with that of his father Josiah who some twenty or more years earlier tore his clothes in grief and sorrow (2 Kgs 22:11-20) and led the people in renewing their commitment to the covenant (2 Kgs 23:1-3). That was what the LORD had hoped would happen when the king and the people heard the warnings of Jeremiah (Jer 36:2-3). Instead, Jehoiakim expressed his contempt for the word of God by destroying the scroll.

⁷ **tn** Heb “And also Elnathan, Delaiah, and Gemariah urged [or had urged] the king not to burn the scroll, but he did not listen to them.” The translation attempts to lessen the clash in chronological sequencing with the preceding. This sentence is essentially a flash back to a time before the scroll was totally burned (v. 23).

⁸ **tn** Heb “the son of the king.” Many of the commentaries express doubt that this actually refers to Jehoiakim’s own son since Jehoiakim was only about thirty at this time and one of his sons would not have been old enough to have been in such a position of authority. The same doubt is expressed about the use of this term in 38:6 and in 1 Kgs 22:26. The term need not refer to the ruling king’s own son but one of the royal princes.

⁹ **tn** Heb “Then the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah after the king had burned the scroll and the words [= containing the words] which Baruch wrote down from the mouth of Jeremiah, saying.”

¹⁰ **tn** Heb “Return, take another.” The verb “return” is used in the sense of repetition “take again” (cf. BDB 998 s.v. שׁוּב Qal.8). The idea is already contained in “Get another” so most modern English versions do not represent it.

¹¹ **tn** Heb “all the former words/things.”

¹² **tn** Heb “first [or former] scroll.”

¹³ **tn** Or “In essence you asked.” For explanation see the translator’s note on the end of the verse.

¹⁴ **tn** Heb “You burned this scroll, saying, ‘Why did you write on it, saying, “The king of Babylon will certainly come [the infinitive absolute before the finite verb expresses certainty here as several places elsewhere in Jeremiah] and destroy this land and exterminate from it both man and beast.’” The sentence raises several difficulties for translating literally. I.e., the “you” in “why did you write” is undefined, though it obviously refers to Jeremiah. The gerund “saying” that introduces “Why did you write” does not fit very well with “you burned the scroll.” Gerunds of this sort are normally explanatory. Lastly, there is no indication in the narrative that Jehoiakim ever directly asked Jeremiah this question. In fact, he had been hidden out of sight so Jehoiakim couldn’t confront him. The question is presented rhetorically, expressing Jehoiakim’s thoughts or intents and giving the rational for burning the scroll, i.e., he questioned Jeremiah’s right to say such things. The translation has attempted to be as literal as possible without resolving some of these difficulties. One level of embedded quotes has been eliminated for greater simplicity. For the rendering of “How dare you” for the interrogative “why do you” see the translator’s note on 26:9.

¹⁵ **sn** This prophesy was not “totally” fulfilled because his son Jehoiachin (Jechoniah) did occupy the throne for three months (2 Kgs 23:8). However, his rule was negligible and after his capitulation and exile to Babylon, he himself was promised that neither he nor his successors would occupy the throne of David (cf. Jer 22:30; and see the study notes on 22:24, 30).

¹⁶ **sn** Compare the more poetic prophecy in Jer 22:18-19 and see the study note on 22:19.

¹⁷ **tn** Heb “for their iniquity.”

Jerusalem,¹ and the people of Judah all the disaster that I threatened to do to them. I will punish them because I threatened them but they still paid no heed.”² **36:32** Then Jeremiah got another scroll and gave it to the scribe Baruch son of Neriah. As Jeremiah dictated, Baruch wrote on this scroll everything that had been on the scroll that King Jehoiakim of Judah burned in the fire. They also added on this scroll several other messages of the same kind.³

Introduction to Incidents During the Reign of Zedekiah

37:1 Zedekiah son of Josiah succeeded Jehoiah⁴ son of Jehoiakim as king. He was elevated to the throne of the land of Judah by King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon.⁵ **37:2** Neither he nor the officials who served him nor the people of Judah paid any attention to what the LORD said through the prophet Jeremiah.⁶

The Lord Responds to Zedekiah's Hope for Help

37:3 King Zedekiah sent⁷ Jehucal⁸ son of Shelemiah and the priest Zephaniah⁹ son of Maaseiah to the prophet Jeremiah. He told them to say, “Please pray to the LORD our God on our behalf.” **37:4** (Now Jeremiah had not yet been put in prison.¹⁰ So he was still free to come and go among the people as he pleased.¹¹ **37:5** At that time the Babylonian forces¹² had temporarily given up their siege against Jerusalem.¹³ They had had it under siege, but withdrew when they heard that the army of Pharaoh had set out from Egypt.¹⁴) **37:6** The LORD gave the prophet

⁷ **sn** This is the second of two delegations that Zedekiah sent to Jeremiah to ask him to pray for a miraculous deliverance. Both of them are against the background of the siege of Jerusalem which was instigated by Zedekiah's rebelling against Nebuchadnezzar and sending to Egypt for help (cf. Ezek 17:15). The earlier delegation (21:1-2) was sent before Nebuchadnezzar had clamped down on Jerusalem because the Judean forces at that time were still fighting against the Babylonian forces in the open field (see 21:4 and the translator's note there). Here the siege has been lifted because the Babylonian troops had heard a report that the Egyptian army was on the way into Palestine to give the Judeans the promised aid (vv. 5, 7). The request is briefer here than in 21:2 but the intent is no doubt the same (see also the study note on 21:2).

⁸ **sn** Jehucal was one of the officials who later sought to have Jeremiah put to death for what they considered treason (38:1-4).

⁹ **sn** The priest Zephaniah son of Maaseiah was a member of the earlier delegation (21:2) and the chief of security in the temple to whom the Babylonian false prophet wrote a letter complaining that Jeremiah should be locked up for his treasonous prophecies (29:25-26). See the study notes on 21:2 and 29:25 for further details.

¹⁰ **sn** This statement anticipates v. 15. Verses 3-4 are parenthetical to the narrative thread which is picked up in v. 5. They provide background information necessary for understanding the situation at the time the delegation comes to Jeremiah.

¹¹ **tn** The words “as he pleased” are not in the text but are implicit in the idiom both in Hebrew and in English. They have been supplied in the translation for clarity and the sake of English idiom.

¹² **tn** Heb “the Chaldeans.” See the study note on 21:4 for the rendering “Babylonian.” The word “forces” is supplied in the translation here for the sake of clarity.

¹³ **map** For location see Map5-B1; Map6-F3; Map7-E2; Map8-F2; Map10-B3; JP1-F4; JP2-F4; JP3-F4; JP4-F4.

¹⁴ **tn** Heb “And the army of Pharaoh had set out from Egypt and the Chaldeans who were besieging Jerusalem heard a report about them and they went up from besieging them.” The sentence has been restructured and reworded to give greater emphasis to the most pertinent fact, i.e., that the siege had been temporarily lifted. The word “temporarily” is not in the text but is implicit from the rest of the context. It is supplied in the translation here to better show that the information in vv. 4-5 is all parenthetical, providing a background for the oracle that will follow. For the meaning “given up their siege against” (Heb “had taken themselves away from against”) see BDB 749 s.v. נָחַץ Niph.1.c(2); 759 s.v. אָנַח IV.2.b.

sn The Pharaoh referred to here is Pharaoh Hophra who is named in Jer 44:30. He ruled from 589-570 B.C. Shortly after he began to rule, Zedekiah had been enticed by some of the officials in his court to appeal to him for aid. This act of rebellion quickly brought Nebuchadnezzar's wrath and he invaded Judah, blockading Jerusalem and reducing the fortified cities of Judah one by one. According to Jer 39:1 the siege began in Zedekiah's ninth year (589/88 B.C.) and lasted until his eleventh year when Jerusalem fell (587/86 B.C.). The army of Pharaoh likely came sometime during 588 B.C.

¹ **map** For location see Map5-B1; Map6-F3; Map7-E2; Map8-F2; Map10-B3; JP1-F4; JP2-F4; JP3-F4; JP4-F4.

² **tn** Heb “all the disaster which I spoke against them and they did not listen [or obey].”

³ **tn** Heb “And he wrote upon it from the mouth of Jeremiah all the words of the scroll which Jehoiakim king of Judah burned in the fire. And many words like these were added to them besides [or further].” The translation uses the more active form in the last line because of the tendency in contemporary English style to avoid the passive. It also uses the words “everything” for “all the words” and “messages” for “words” because those are legitimate usages of these phrases, and they avoid the mistaken impression that Jeremiah repeated verbatim the words on the former scroll or repeated verbatim the messages that he had delivered during the course of the preceding twenty-three years.

⁴ **tn** Heb “Coniah.” For explanation of the rendering here see the translator's note on 22:24.

⁵ **tn** Heb “And Zedekiah son of Josiah whom Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon made king in the land of Judah ruled as king instead of Coniah son of Jehoiakim.” The sentence has been restructured and simplified to better conform to contemporary English style.

⁶ **sn** These two verses (37:1-2) are introductory to chs. 37-38 and are intended to characterize Zedekiah and his regime as disobedient just like Jehoiakim and his regime had been (Jer 36:27; cf. 2 Kgs 24:19-20). This characterization is important because Zedekiah is portrayed in the incidents that follow in 37-38 as seeking the LORD's help or seeking a word from the LORD. However though he did send to inquire of Jeremiah three times, he did not pay attention to the warnings that he received in reply and was ultimately responsible for the fall of Jerusalem (Jer 39). As elsewhere in the book of Jeremiah, Jeconiah's reign is passed over in silence because it was negligible and because Jeremiah did not wish to legitimize the hopes that many in Israel and Babylon had in his returning from exile and resuming rule over Judah (see further the study notes on 22:24, 30 and 33:30).

Jeremiah a message for them. He told him to tell them,¹ 37:7 “The LORD God of Israel says, ‘Give a message to the king of Judah who sent you to ask me to help him.’² Tell him, “The army of Pharaoh that was on its way to help you will go back home to Egypt.³ 37:8 Then the Babylonian forces⁴ will return. They will attack the city and will capture it and burn it down. 37:9 Moreover, I, the LORD, warn you not to deceive yourselves into thinking that the Babylonian forces⁵ will go away and leave you alone. For they will not go away.⁶ 37:10 For even if you were to defeat all the Babylonian forces⁷ fighting against you so badly that only wounded men were left lying in their tents, they would get up and burn this city down.”⁸

Jeremiah is Charged with Deserting, Arrested, and Imprisoned

37:11 The following events also occurred⁹ while the Babylonian forces¹⁰ had temporarily withdrawn from Jerusalem¹¹ because the army of Pharaoh was coming. 37:12 Jeremiah started to leave Jerusalem to go to the territory of Benjamin. He wanted to make sure he got his share of the property that was being divided up among his family there.¹² 37:13 But he only got as far as the Benjamin Gate.¹³ There an officer in charge of the guards named Irijah,¹⁴ who was the son of Shelemiah and the grandson of Hananiah,

¹ **tn** *Heb* “And the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah, saying.”

² **tn** Or “to ask me what will happen.” The dominant usage of the verb דָּרַשׁ (*darash*) is to “inquire” in the sense of gaining information about what will happen (cf., e.g., 1 Kgs 14:5; 2 Kgs 8:8; 22:7-8) but it is also used in the sense of “seeking help” from (cf., e.g., Isa 31:1; 2 Chr 16:12; 20:3). The latter nuance appears appropriate in Jer 20:2 where Zedekiah is hoping for some miraculous intervention. That nuance also appears appropriate here where Zedekiah has sent messengers to ask Jeremiah to intercede on their behalf. However, it is also possible that the intent of both verbs is to find out from God whether the Egyptian mission will succeed and more permanent relief from the siege will be had.

³ **tn** *Heb* “will go back to its land, Egypt.”

⁴ **tn** *Heb* “the Chaldeans.” See the study note on 21:4 for the rendering “Babylonian.” The word “forces” is supplied in the translation here for the sake of clarity.

⁵ **tn** *Heb* “the Chaldeans.” See the study note on 21:4 for the rendering “Babylonian.” The word “forces” is supplied in the translation here for the sake of clarity.

⁶ **tn** *Heb* “Thus says the LORD, ‘Do not deceive yourselves, saying, “The Chaldeans will surely go away from against us” because they will not go away.’” The first person “I, the LORD,” has been used because the whole of vv. 7-8 has been a quote from the LORD and it would be confusing to go back and start a separate quote. The indirect quote has been used instead of the direct quote to avoid the proliferation of quote marks at the end and the possible confusion that creates.

⁷ **tn** *Heb* “all the army of the Chaldeans.” For the rendering “Babylonian” in place of Chaldean see the study note on 21:4.

⁸ **tn** The length and complexity of this English sentence violates the more simple style that has been used to conform such sentences to contemporary English style. However, there does not seem to be any alternative that would enable a simpler style and still retain the causal and conditional connections that give this sentence the rhetorical force that it has in the original. The condition is, of course, purely hypothetical and the consequence a poetic exaggeration. The intent is to assure Zedekiah that there is absolutely no hope of the city being spared.

⁹ **tn** The words “The following events also occurred” are not in the text. They are a way to introduce the incidents recorded in 37:11-21 without creating a long complex sentence in English like the Hebrew does. The Hebrew of vv. 11-12a reads “And it was/happened while the army of the Chaldeans had taken themselves up from against Jerusalem, Jeremiah set out from Jerusalem to go to the land of Benjamin to take part...” For the rendering “temporarily withdrawn from Jerusalem” see the translator’s note on v. 5. The words “was coming” are not in the text either but are implicit and have been supplied in the translation for clarity and smoothness of English expression.

¹⁰ **tn** *Heb* “the Chaldeans.” See the study note on 21:4 for the rendering “Babylonian.” The word “forces” is supplied in the translation here for the sake of clarity.

¹¹ **tn** *Map* For location see Map5-B1; Map6-F3; Map7-E2; Map8-F2; Map10-B3; JP1-F4; JP2-F4; JP3-F4; JP4-F4.

¹² **tn** The meaning of this last sentence is somewhat uncertain. The Hebrew expression here occurs nowhere else in the Hebrew Bible and its meaning is debated. The verb is pointed as a shortened form of the Hiphil infinitive construct of הִלַּק (*khalag*; see GKC 148 §53.q for explanation of the phenomenon and other examples). There are, however, no other examples of the use of this verb in the Hiphil. BDB 324 s.v. הִלַּק Hiphil defines it as “receive a portion” and explains it as a denominative from הִלַּק (*kheleq*, “portion”) but says that the form is dubious. KBL s.v. הִלַּק Hif defines it as “take part in dividing” but that does not fit the prepositional phrase that follows (מִשָּׁם, *misham*, “from there”) as well as “to receive a portion.” The Greek version did not understand this of dividing property but of conducting business. Later revisions of the Greek and the Latin version, however, did understand it of “taking a share.” The translation of BDB has been expanded to better reflect the probable situation. For the meaning of “his family” for the noun אָמ (*am*) compare the usage in Job 18:19. For a fuller discussion of the probable situation see J. A. Thompson, *Jeremiah* (NICOT), 633-34.

¹³ **sn** Though some commentators disagree, this transaction should not be viewed as subsequent to the transaction recorded in Jer 32 and seen as an attempt to take possession of a field that he had already bought. That transaction took place sometime later after he had been confined to the courtyard of the guardhouse (compare 32:2 with 37:21) and involved his buying a near relative’s field. The word used here refers to “getting one’s own share” (compare 1 Sam 30:24; Josh 15:13, and see also Mic 2:4) not taking possession of someone else’s. “There” refers to the territory of Benjamin just mentioned but more specifically to Jeremiah’s hometown, Anathoth (cf. 1:1).

¹⁴ **sn** The Benjamin Gate would have been a gate in the northern wall leading out toward the territory of Benjamin. It is mentioned only here and in Jer 38:7 and Zech 14:10.

¹⁵ **sn** Nothing further is known about Irijah. It is generally agreed that the Hananiah mentioned here is not the same as the false prophet of the same name whom Jeremiah confronted approximately six years earlier (28:1, 5, 10, 15).

stopped him. He seized Jeremiah and said,¹ “You are deserting to the Babylonians!”² **37:14** Jeremiah answered, “That’s a lie! I am not deserting to the Babylonians.”³ But Irijah would not listen to him. Irijah put Jeremiah under arrest and took him to the officials. **37:15** The officials were very angry⁴ at Jeremiah. They had him flogged and put in prison in the house of Jonathan, the royal secretary, which they had converted into a place for confining prisoners.⁵

37:16 So⁶ Jeremiah was put in prison in a cell in the dungeon in Jonathan’s house.⁷ He⁸ was kept there for a long time. **37:17** Then King Zedekiah had him brought to the palace. There he questioned him privately and asked him,⁹ “Is there any message from the LORD?” Jeremiah answered, “Yes, there is.” Then he announced,¹⁰ “You will be handed over to the king of Babylon.”¹¹ **37:18** Then Jeremiah asked King

Zedekiah, “What crime have I committed against you, or the officials who serve you, or the people of Judah? What have I done to make you people throw me into prison?¹² **37:19** Where now are the prophets who prophesied to you that¹³ the king of Babylon would not attack you or this land? **37:20** But now please listen, your royal Majesty,¹⁴ and grant my plea for mercy.¹⁵ Do not send me back to the house of Jonathan, the royal secretary. If you do, I will die there.”¹⁶ **37:21** Then King Zedekiah ordered that Jeremiah be committed to the courtyard of the guardhouse. He also ordered that a loaf of bread¹⁷ be given to him every day from the baker’s street until all the bread in the city was gone. So Jeremiah was kept¹⁸ in the courtyard of the guardhouse.

Jeremiah Is Charged with Treason and Put in a Cistern to Die

38:1 Now Shephatiah son of Mattan, Gedaliah son of Pashhur, Jehucal¹⁹ son of Shelemiah, and Pashhur²⁰ son of Malkijah had heard²¹ the

¹ **tn** *Heb* “And he was in the gate of Benjamin and there was an officer of the guard whose name [more literally, and his name] was Irijah...and he seized the prophet Jeremiah, saying.” The sentence has been broken down and simplified to better conform with contemporary English style.

² **tn** *Heb* “the Chaldeans.” See the study note on 21:4 for explanation.

sn Irijah’s charge was based on the suspicion that Jeremiah was following his own counsel to the people to surrender to the Babylonians if they wanted to save their lives (Jer 21:9).

³ **tn** *Heb* “the Chaldeans.” See the study note on 21:4 for explanation.

⁴ **sn** The officials mentioned here are not the same as those mentioned in Jer 36:12, most of whom were favorably disposed toward Jeremiah, or at least regarded what he said with enough trepidation to try to protect Jeremiah and preserve the scroll containing his messages (36:16, 19, 24). All those officials had been taken into exile with Jeconiah in 597 B.C. (2 Kgs 24:14).

⁵ **tn** *Heb* “for they had made it into the house of confinement.” The causal particle does not fit the English sentence very well and “house of confinement” needs some explanation. Some translate this word “prison” but that creates redundancy with the earlier word translated “prison” (בֵּית הַאֲסוּרִים, *bet ha’asur*, “house of the band/binding”) which is more closely related to the concept of prison [cf. אָסִיר, *’asir*, “prisoner”]. It is clear from the next verse that Jeremiah was confined in a cell in the dungeon of this place.

⁶ **tn** The particle כִּי (*ki*) here is probably temporal, introducing the protasis to the main clause in v. 17 (cf. BDB 473 s.v. כִּי 2.a). However, that would make the translation too long, so the present translation does what several modern English versions do here, though there are no parallels listed for this nuance in the lexicons.

⁷ **tn** *Heb* “Jeremiah came into the house of the pit [= “dungeon,” BDB 92 s.v. בּוֹר 4 and compare usage in Gen 40:15; 41:14] and into the cells [this word occurs only here; it is defined on the basis of the cognate languages (cf. BDB 333 s.v. [הַ]תּוֹכָה).” The sentence has been restructured and some words supplied in the translation to better relate it to the preceding context.

⁸ **tn** *Heb* “Jeremiah.” But the proper name is somewhat redundant and unnecessary in a modern translation.

⁹ **tn** *Heb* “Then King Zedekiah sent and brought him and the king asked him privately [or more literally, in secret] and said.”

¹⁰ **tn** *Heb* “Then he said.”

¹¹ **sn** Jeremiah’s answer even under duress was the same that he had given Zedekiah earlier. (See Jer 34:3 and see the study note on 34:1 for the relative timing of these two incidents.)

¹² **tn** *Heb* “What crime have I committed against you, or your servants, or this people that you [masc. pl.] have put me in prison?” Some of the terms have been expanded for clarification and the sentence has been broken in two to better conform with contemporary English style. The masculine plural is used here because Zedekiah is being addressed as representative of the whole group previously named.

¹³ **tn** *Heb* “And where are your prophets who prophesied to you, saying, ‘The king of Babylon will not come against you or against this land?’” The indirect quote has been used in the translation because of its simpler, more direct style.

¹⁴ **tn** *Heb* “My lord, the king.”

¹⁵ **tn** *Heb* “let my plea for mercy fall before you.” I.e., let it come before you and be favorably received (= granted; by metonymical extension).

¹⁶ **tn** Or “So that I will not die there,” or “I will die there”; *Heb* “and I will not die there.” The particle that introduces this clause (וְאִם) regularly introduces negative purpose clauses after the volitive sequence (אִם [’a/] + jussive here) according to GKC 323 §109.g. However, purpose and result clauses in Hebrew (and Greek) are often indistinguishable. Here the clause is more in the nature of a negative result.

¹⁷ **tn** *Heb* “And/Then King Zedekiah ordered and they committed Jeremiah to [or deposited...in] the courtyard of the guardhouse and they gave to him a loaf of bread.” The translation has been structured the way it has to avoid the ambiguous “they” which is the impersonal subject which is sometimes rendered passive in English (cf. GKC 460 §144.d). This text also has another example of the *vav* (ו) + infinitive absolute continuing a finite verbal form (וַיִּתֵּן [vayyiten] = “and they gave”; cf. GKC 345 §113.y and see Jer 32:44; 36:23).

¹⁸ **tn** *Heb* “stayed,” “remained,” “lived.”

¹⁹ **tn** The name is spelled “Jucal” in the Hebrew text here rather than “Jehucal” as in Jer 37:3. The translation uses the same spelling throughout so that the English reader can identify these as the same individual.

sn *Jehucal* was a member of the delegation sent to Jeremiah by Zedekiah in Jer 37:3.

²⁰ **sn** *Pashhur* was a member of the delegation sent to Jeremiah in 21:2. For the relative sequence of these two delegations see the study note on 21:1.

²¹ **tn** J. Bright (*Jeremiah* [AB], 226, 30) is probably correct in translating the verbs here as pluperfects and in explaining that these words are prophecies that Jeremiah uttered before his arrest not prophecies that were being delivered to the people through intermediaries sent by Jeremiah who was confined in the courtyard of the guardhouse. For the use of the *vav* consecutive + imperfect to denote the pluperfect see

things that Jeremiah had been telling the people. They had heard him say, **38:2** “The LORD says, ‘Those who stay in this city will die in battle or of starvation or disease.’¹ Those who leave the city and surrender to the Babylonians² will live. They will escape with their lives.”³ **38:3** They had also heard him say,⁴ “The LORD says, ‘This city will certainly be handed over to the army of the king of Babylon. They will capture it.’”⁵ **38:4** So these officials said to the king, “This man must be put to death. For he is demoralizing⁶ the soldiers who are left in the city as well as all the other people there by these things he is saying.⁷ This⁸ man is not seeking to help these people but is trying to harm them.”⁹ **38:5** King Zedekiah said to them, “Very well, you can do what you want with him.¹⁰ For I cannot do anything to stop you.”¹¹ **38:6** So the officials¹² took Jeremiah

and put him in the cistern¹³ of Malkijah, one of the royal princes,¹⁴ that was in the courtyard of the guardhouse. There was no water in the cistern, only mud. So when they lowered Jeremiah into the cistern with ropes he sank in the mud.¹⁵

An Ethiopian Official Rescues Jeremiah from the Cistern

38:7 An Ethiopian, Ebed Melech,¹⁶ a court official in the royal palace, heard that Jeremiah had been put¹⁷ in the cistern. While the king was holding court¹⁸ at the Benjamin Gate, **38:8** Ebed Melech departed the palace and went to speak to the king. He said to him, **38:9** “Your royal Majesty, those men have been very wicked in all that they have done to the prophet Jeremiah. They have thrown him into a cistern and he is sure to die of starvation there because there is no food left in the city.”¹⁹ **38:10** Then the king gave Ebed Melech the Ethiopian the following order: “Take

the discussion and examples in *IBHS* 552-53 §33.2.3a and see the usage in *Exod* 4:19. The words that are cited in v. 2 are those recorded in 21:9 on the occasion of the first delegation and those in v. 3 are those recorded in 21:10; 34:2; 37:8; 32:28 all except the last delivered before Jeremiah was confined in the courtyard of the guardhouse.

1 *tn Heb* “by sword, by starvation, or by disease.”

2 *tn Heb* “those who go out to the Chaldeans.” For the rendering “Babylonians” for “Chaldeans” see the study note on 21:4.

3 *tn Heb* “his life will be to him for spoil and he will live.” For the meaning of this idiom see the study note on 21:9. The words and “he will live” have been left out of the translation because they are redundant after “will live” and “they will escape with their lives.”

sn See *Jer* 21:9 for this prophecy.

4 *tn* The words “They had also heard him say,” are not in the Hebrew text. They are supplied in the translation for clarity so as to avoid any possible confusion that might be created by saying merely “And the LORD says,” without any introduction.

5 *sn* See *Jer* 21:10; 32:28; 34:2; 37:8 for this same prophecy. Jeremiah had repeatedly said this or words to the same effect.

6 *tn Heb* “weakening the hands of.” For this idiom see *BDB* 951 s.v. *חָיַל* *Pi*. and compare the usage in *Isa* 13:7; *Ezek* 21:7 (21:12 HT).

7 *tn Heb* “by saying these things.”

8 *tn* The Hebrew particle *כי* (*ki*) has not been rendered here because it is introducing a parallel causal clause to the preceding one. To render “For” might be misunderstood as a grounds for the preceding statement. To render “And” or “Moreover” sounds a little odd here. If it must be represented, “Moreover” is perhaps the best rendering.

9 *tn* Or “is not looking out for these people’s best interests but is really trying to do them harm”; *Heb* “is not seeking the welfare [or “well-being”; Hebrew *shalom*] of this people but [their] harm [more literally, evil].”

10 *tn Heb* “Behold, he is in your hands [= power/control].”

11 *tn Heb* “For the king cannot do a thing with/against you.” The personal pronoun “I” is substituted in the English translation due to differences in style; Hebrew style often uses the third person or the title in speaking of oneself but English rarely if ever does. Compare the common paraphrase of “your servant” for “I” in Hebrew (cf. *BDB* 714 s.v. *עָבַד* 6 and usage in 1 *Sam* 20:7, 8) and compare the usage in *Pss* 63:11 (63:12 HT); 61:6 (61:7 HT) where the king is praying for himself. For the meaning of *יָכוֹל* (*yakhol*) as “to be able to do anything,” see *BDB* 407 s.v. *יָכַל*, 1.g.

12 *tn Heb* “they.”

13 *sn* A cistern was a pear-shaped pit with a narrow opening. Cisterns were cut or dug in the limestone rock and lined with plaster to prevent seepage. They were used to collect and store rain water or water carried up from a spring.

14 *tn Heb* “the son of the king.” See the translator’s note on *Jer* 36:26 for the rendering here.

15 *tn Heb* “And they let Jeremiah down with ropes and in the cistern there was no water, only mud, and Jeremiah sank in the mud.” The clauses have been reordered and restructured to create a more natural and smoother order in English.

16 *sn* This individual, *Ebed Melech*, is mentioned only here. Later he will be promised deliverance from destruction when the city falls because he had shown trust in God (see *Jer* 39:16-18).

17 *tn Heb* “Ebed Melech, the Cushite, a man, an eunuch/official, and he was [= who was; a circumstantial clause] in the house of the king, heard that they had put Jeremiah...” The passive construction “Jeremiah had been put” has been used to avoid the indefinite subject “they” or the addition of “the officials.” For the translation of *סָרִיס* (*saris*) as “official” here rather than “eunuch” see the translator’s note on 29:2 and see also the usage in 34:19. For the translation of “Cushite” as Ethiopian see the study note on 13:23.

18 *tn Heb* “And the king was sitting in the Benjamin Gate.” This clause is circumstantial to the following clause; thus “while the king was...” Most commentators agree that the reference to sitting in the gate here likely refers to the same kind of judicial context that has been posited for 26:10 (see the translator’s note there for further references). Hence the translation uses “sitting” with the more technical “holding court” to better reflect the probable situation.

19 *tn Heb* “Those men have made evil all they have done to the prophet Jeremiah in that they have thrown him into the cistern and he will die of starvation in the place where he is because there is no more food in the city.” The particle *עַתָּה* (*et*) before “they have thrown” (*וְאֵת אֲשֶׁר הִשְׁלִיכוּ*, *et asher hishlikhu*) is explanatory or further definition of “all they have done to” (i.e., the particle is repeated for apposition). The verb form “and he is sure to die” is an unusual use of the *vav* (ו) consecutive + imperfect that the grammars see as giving a logical consequence without a past nuance (cf. *GKC* 328 §111./ and *IBHS* 557-58 §33.3.1f).

sn “Because there isn’t any food left in the city” is rhetorical exaggeration; the food did not run out until just before the city fell. Perhaps the intent is to refer to the fact that there was no food in the city for people so confined (i.e., in solitary confinement).

thirty¹ men with you from here and go pull the prophet Jeremiah out of the cistern before he dies.”
38:11 So Ebed Melech took the men with him and went to a room under the treasure room in the palace.² He got some worn-out clothes and old rags³ from there and let them down by ropes to Jeremiah in the cistern. **38:12** Ebed Melech⁴ called down to Jeremiah, “Put these rags and worn-out clothes under your armpits to pad the ropes.”⁵ Jeremiah did as Ebed Melech instructed.⁶ **38:13** So they pulled Jeremiah up from the cistern with ropes. Jeremiah, however, still remained confined⁷ to the courtyard of the guardhouse.

Jeremiah Responds to Zedekiah’s Request for Secret Advice

38:14 Some time later⁸ Zedekiah sent and had Jeremiah brought to him at the third entrance⁹ of the LORD’s temple. The king said to Jeremiah, “I would like to ask you a question. Do not hide anything from me when you

answer.”¹⁰ **38:15** Jeremiah said to Zedekiah, “If I answer you, you will certainly kill me.”¹¹ If I give you advice, you will not listen to me.” **38:16** So King Zedekiah made a secret promise to Jeremiah and sealed it with an oath. He promised,¹² “As surely as the LORD lives who has given us life and breath,¹³ I promise you this: I will not kill you or hand you over to those men who want to kill you.”¹⁴

38:17 Then Jeremiah said to Zedekiah, “The LORD, the God who rules over all, the God of Israel,¹⁵ says, ‘You must surrender to the officers of the king of Babylon. If you do, your life will be spared¹⁶ and this city will not be burned down. Indeed, you and your whole family will be spared. **38:18** But if you do not surrender to the officers of the king of Babylon, this city will be handed over to the Babylonians¹⁷ and they will burn it down. You yourself will not escape from them.’”¹⁸ **38:19** Then King Zedekiah said to Jeremiah, “I am afraid of the Judeans who have deserted to the Babylonians.¹⁹ The Babylonians might hand me over to them and they will torture me.”²⁰ **38:20** Then Jeremiah answered, “You will not be handed over to them. Please obey the

¹ **tc** Some modern English versions (e.g., NRSV, REB, TEV) and commentaries read “three” on the basis that thirty men would not be necessary for the task (cf. J. Bright, *Jeremiah* [AB], 231). Though the difference in “three” and “thirty” involves minimal emendation (שְׁלוֹשָׁה [sheloshah] for שְׁלִישִׁים [sheloshim]) there is no textual or versional evidence for it except for one Hebrew ms. Perhaps the number was large to prevent the officials from hindering Ebed Melech from accomplishing the task.

² **tn** *Heb* “went into the palace in under the treasury.” Several of the commentaries (e.g., J. Bright, *Jeremiah* [AB], 227; J. A. Thompson, *Jeremiah* [NICOT], 639, n. 6) emend the prepositional phrase “in under” אֶל־תַּחַת, *el-takhat*) to the noun “wardrobe” plus the preposition “to” אֶל־מִלְתַּחַת, *el-meltakhat*). This is a plausible emendation which would involve dropping out מֵל (mel) due to its similarity with the אֵל (el) which precedes it. However, there is no textual or versional evidence for such a reading and the compound preposition is not in itself objectionable (cf. BDB 1066 s.v. תַּחַת III.1.a). The Greek version reads “the part underground” (representing a Hebrew Vorlage of אֵל תַּחַת הָאֲרֵצִים, *el takhat ha’arets*) in place of אֵל תַּחַת הָאֲרֵצִים (*el takhat ha’otsar*). The translation follows the Hebrew text but adds the word “room” for the sake of English style.

³ **tn** *Heb* “worn-out clothes and worn-out rags.”

⁴ **tn** *Heb* “Ebed Melech the Ethiopian.” The words “the Ethiopian” are unnecessary and are not repeated in the translation because he has already been identified as such in vv. 7, 10.

⁵ **tn** *Heb* “under the joints of your arms under the ropes.” The two uses of “under” have different orientations and are best reflected by “between your armpits and the ropes” or “under your armpits to pad the ropes.”

⁶ **tn** Or “Jeremiah did so.” The alternate translation is what the text reads literally.

⁷ **tn** *Heb* “Jeremiah remained/stayed in the courtyard of the guardhouse.” The translation is meant to better reflect the situation; i.e., Jeremiah was released from the cistern but still had to stay in the courtyard of the guardhouse.

⁸ **tn** The words “Some time later” are not in the text but are a way of translating the conjunction “And” or “Then” that introduces this narrative.

⁹ **sn** The precise location of this entrance is unknown since it is mentioned nowhere else in the OT. Many commentators equate this with the “king’s outer entry” (mentioned in 2 Kgs 16:18) which appears to have been a private entryway between the temple and the palace.

¹⁰ **tn** The words “when you answer” are not in the text but are implicit in the connection. They are supplied in the translation for the sake of clarity and smoothness of style.

¹¹ **tn** Or “you will most certainly kill me, won’t you?” *Heb* “Will you not certainly kill me?” The question is rhetorical and expects a positive answer. In situations like this BDB s.v. לֹא 4.b(β) says that אֵלֶּה (*halo*) “has a tendency to become little more than an affirmative particle, declaring with some rhetorical emphasis what is, or might be, well known.” The idea of certainty is emphasized here by the addition of the infinitive absolute before the finite verb (Joüon 2:422 §123.e).

¹² **tn** *Heb* “So King Zedekiah secretly swore an oath to Jeremiah, saying.”

¹³ **tn** *Heb* “who has made this life/soul/ breath נְפֶשׁ, *nefesh*) for us.” The Hebrew term נְפֶשׁ refers to the living, breathing substance of a person which constitutes his very life (cf. BDB 659 s.v. נְפֶשׁ 1; 3).

¹⁴ **tn** *Heb* “who are seeking your life.”

¹⁵ **tn** *Heb* “Yahweh, the God of armies, the God of Israel.” Compare 7:3 and 35:17 and see the study note on 2:19.

¹⁶ **tn** *Heb* “Your life/soul will live.” The quote is a long condition-consequence sentence with compound consequential clauses. It reads, “If you will only go out to the officers of the king of Babylon, your soul [= you yourself; BDB 660 s.v. שָׁרַף 4.a] will live and this city will not be burned with fire and you and your household will live.” The sentence has been broken down and restructured to better conform with contemporary English style. The infinitive absolute in the condition emphasizes the one condition, i.e., going out or surrendering (cf. Joüon 2:423 §123.g, and compare usage in Exod 15:26). For the idiom “go out to” = “surrender to” see the full idiom in 21:9 “go out and fall over to” which is condensed in 38:2 to “go out to.” The expression here is the same as in 38:2.

¹⁷ **tn** *Heb* “Chaldeans.” See the study note on 21:4 for explanation.

¹⁸ **tn** *Heb* “will not escape from their hand.”

¹⁹ **sn** Zedekiah held out this hope of escape until the end and attempted to do so but was unsuccessful (cf. 39:4-5).

²⁰ **tn** *Heb* “Chaldeans.” See the study note on 21:4 for explanation.

²¹ **tn** Or “and they will badly abuse me.” For the usage of this verb in the situation presupposed see Judg 19:25 and 1 Sam 31:4.

LORD by doing what I have been telling you.¹ Then all will go well with you and your life will be spared.² **38:21** But if you refuse to surrender, the LORD has shown me a vision of what will happen. Here is what I saw: **38:22** All the women who are left in the royal palace of Judah will be led out to the officers of the king of Babylon. They will taunt you saying,³

‘Your trusted friends misled you;
they have gotten the best of you.
Now that your feet are stuck in the mud,
they have turned their backs on you.’⁴

38:23 “All your wives and your children will be turned over to the Babylonians.⁵ You yourself will not escape from them but will be captured by the⁶ king of Babylon. This city will be burned down.”⁷

38:24 Then Zedekiah told Jeremiah, “Do not let anyone know about the conversation we have had.⁸ If you do, you will die.⁹ **38:25** The officials may hear that I have talked with you. They may come to you and say, ‘Tell us what you said to the king and what the king said to you.’¹⁰ Do not hide anything from us. If you do, we will kill you.”¹¹ **38:26** If they do this, tell¹² them, ‘I was pleading with the king not to send me back to die in the dungeon of Jonathan’s house.’”¹³ **38:27** All the officials did indeed come and question Jeremiah.¹⁴ He told them exactly what the king had instructed him to say.¹⁵ They stopped questioning him any further because no one had actually heard their conversation.¹⁶ **38:28** So Jeremiah remained confined¹⁷ in the courtyard of

¹ **tn** *Heb* “Please listen to the voice of the LORD with regard to what I have been telling you.” For the idiom “listen to the voice” = “obey” see BDB 1034 s.v. שָׁמַעַ 1.m. Obedience here is expressed by following the advice in the qualifying clause, i.e., what I have been telling you.

² **tn** *Heb* “your life [or you yourself] will live.” Compare v. 17 and the translator’s note there for the idiom.

³ **tn** *Heb* “And they will say.” The words “taunt you” are supplied in the translation to give the flavor of the words that follow.

⁴ **tn** *Heb* “The men of your friendship incited you and prevailed over you. Your feet are sunk in the mud. They turned backward.” The term “men of your friendship” (cf. BDB 1023 s.v. שָׁלוֹם 5.a) is used to refer to Jeremiah’s “so-called friends” in 20:10, to the trusted friend who deserted the psalmist in Ps 41:10, and to the allies of Edom in Obad 7. According to most commentators it refers here to the false prophets and counselors who urged the king to rebel against Nebuchadnezzar. The verb translated “misled” is a verb that often refers to inciting or instigating someone to do something, often with negative connotations (so BDB 694 s.v. סוּחַ Hiph.2). It is generally translated “deceive” or “mislead” in 2 Kgs 18:32; 2 Chr 32:11, 15. Here it refers to the fact that his pro-Egyptian counselors induced him to rebel. They have proven too powerful for him and prevailed on him (יָכַח, *yakhol*!; see BDB 408 s.v. יָכַח 2.b) to follow a policy which will prove detrimental to him, his family, and the city. The phrase “your feet are sunk in the mud” is figurative for being entangled in great difficulties (so BDB 371 s.v. נָכַח Hoph and compare the usage in the highly figurative description of trouble in Ps 69:2 [69:3 HT]).

⁵ **sn** The taunt song here refers to the fact that Zedekiah had been incited into rebellion by pro-Egyptian nobles in his court who prevailed on him to seek aid from the new Egyptian Pharaoh in 589 b.c. and withhold tribute from Nebuchadnezzar. This led to the downfall of the city which is depicted in Jeremiah’s vision from the standpoint of its effects on the king himself and his family.

⁶ **tn** *Heb* “Chaldeans.” See the study note on 21:4 for explanation.

⁷ **tn** *Heb* “you yourself will not escape from their hand but will be seized by [caught in] the hand of the king of Babylon.” Neither use of “hand” is natural to the English idiom.

⁸ **tc** This translation follows the reading of the Greek version and a few Hebrew mss. The majority of the Hebrew mss read “and you will burn down this city.” This reading is accepted by the majority of modern commentaries and English versions. Few of the commentaries, however, bother to explain the fact that the particle אֵת (*et*), which normally marks the accusative object, is functioning here as the subject. For this point of grammar see BDB 85 s.v. אֵת 1.b. Or this may be another case where אֵת introduces a new subject (see BDB 85 s.v. אֵת 3.a and see usage in 27:8; 36:22).

⁸ **tn** *Heb* “about these words.”

⁹ **tn** Or “so that you will not die.” Or “or you will die.” See the similar construction in 37:20 and the translator’s note there.

¹⁰ **sn** This is probably not a threat that the king himself will kill Jeremiah, but a premonition that if the pro-Egyptian party that was seeking to kill Jeremiah found out about the conversation they would go ahead and kill Jeremiah (cf. 38:2-4).

¹¹ **tn** The phrase “and what the king said to you” is actually at the end of the verse, but most commentators see it as also under the governance of “tell us” and many commentaries and English versions move the clause forward for the sake of English style as has been done here.

¹² **tn** Or “lest we kill you”; *Heb* “and we will not kill you,” which as stated in the translator’s note on 37:20 introduces a negative purpose (or result) clause. See 37:20, 38:24 for parallel usage.

¹³ **tn** Verses 25-26 form a long compound, complex conditional sentence. The condition is found in v. 25 and contains a long quote. The consequence is found in v. 26 and contains another long quote. The Hebrew sentence literally reads: “And if the officials hear that I have talked with you and come to you and say to you, ‘Please tell us what you said to the king. Do not hide from us and we will not kill you [so that we will not kill you] and [tell us] what the king said to you,’ then tell them.” The sentence has been broken up to better conform with contemporary English style.

¹⁴ **tn** *Heb* “I was causing to fall [= presenting] my petition before the king not to send me back to Jonathan’s house to die there.” The word “dungeon of” is supplied in the translation to help the reader connect this petition with Jeremiah’s earlier place of imprisonment where the officials had put him with every intention of letting him die there (37:15-16, 20).

¹⁵ **sn** See Jer 37:15-16, 20.

¹⁶ **tn** *Heb* “All the officials came to Jeremiah and questioned him.”

¹⁷ **tn** *Heb* “And he reported to them according to all these words which the king had commanded.”

¹⁸ **tn** *Heb* “And they were silent from him because the word/matter [i.e., the conversation between Jeremiah and the king] had not been heard.” According to BDB 578 s.v. שָׁמַע 1.a the preposition “from” is significant in this construction, implying a verb of motion. I.e., “they were [fell] silent [and turned away] from him.”

¹⁹ **tn** *Heb* “And Jeremiah stayed/ remained in the courtyard of the guardhouse...” The translation once again intends to reflect the situation. Jeremiah had a secret meeting with the king at the third entrance to the temple (v. 14). He was returned to the courtyard of the guardhouse (cf. v. 13) after the conversation with the king where the officials came to question him (v. 27). He was not sent back to the dungeon in Jonathan’s house as he feared, but was left confined in the courtyard of the guardhouse.

the guardhouse until the day Jerusalem⁴ was captured.

The Fall of Jerusalem and Its Aftermath

The following events occurred when Jerusalem² was captured.³

39:1 King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon came against Jerusalem with his whole army and laid siege to it. The siege began in the tenth month of the ninth year that Zedekiah ruled over Judah.⁴ **39:2** It lasted until the ninth day of the fourth month of Zedekiah's eleventh year.⁵ On that day they broke through the city walls. **39:3** Then Nergal-Sharezzer of Samgar, Nebo-Sarsekim, who was a chief officer, Nergal-Sharezzer, who was a high official,⁶ and all the other officers of

the king of Babylon came and set up quarters⁷ in the Middle Gate.⁸ **39:4** When King Zedekiah of Judah and all his soldiers saw them, they tried to escape. They departed from the city during the night. They took a path through the king's garden and passed out through the gate between the two walls.⁹ Then they headed for the Jordan Valley.¹⁰ **39:5** But the Babylonian¹¹ army chased after them. They caught up with Zedekiah in the plains of Jericho¹² and captured him.¹³ They took him to King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon at Riblah¹⁴ in the territory of Hamath and Nebuchadnezzar passed sentence on him there. **39:6** There at Riblah the king of Babylon had Zedekiah's sons put to death while Zedekiah was forced to watch. The king of Babylon also had all the nobles of Judah put to death. **39:7** Then he had Zedekiah's eyes put out and had him bound in chains¹⁵ to be led off to Babylon. **39:8** The Babylonians¹⁶ burned down the royal palace, the temple of the LORD, and the people's

¹ map For location see Map5-B1; Map6-F3; Map7-E2; Map8-F2; Map10-B3; JP1-F4; JP2-F4; JP3-F4; JP4-F4.

² map For location see Map5-B1; Map6-F3; Map7-E2; Map8-F2; Map10-B3; JP1-F4; JP2-F4; JP3-F4; JP4-F4.

³ tc The precise meaning of this line and its relation to the context are somewhat uncertain. This line is missing from the Greek and Syriac versions and from a few Hebrew MSS. Some English versions and commentaries omit it as a double writing of the final words of the preceding line (see, e.g., REB; W. L. Holladay, *Jeremiah* [Hermeneia], 2:268). Others see it as misplaced from the beginning of 39:3 (see, e.g., NRSV, TEV, J. Bright, *Jeremiah* [AB], 245). The clause probably does belong syntactically with 39:3 (i.e., כַּאֲשֶׁר [ka'asher] introduces a temporal clause which is resumed by the *vav* consecutive on וַיִּבְנוּ (*vayyavov'u*; see BDB 455 s.v. כַּאֲשֶׁר 3), but it should not be moved there because there is no textual evidence for doing so. The intervening verses are to be interpreted as parenthetical, giving the background for the events that follow (see, e.g., the translation in D. Barthélemy, ed., *Preliminary and Interim Report on the Hebrew Old Testament Text Project*, 4:280). The chapter is not so much concerned with describing how Jerusalem fell as it is with contrasting the fate of Zedekiah who disregarded the word of the LORD with the fate of Jeremiah and that of Jeremiah's benefactor Ebed Melech. The best way to treat the line without actually moving it before 39:3a is to treat it as a heading as has been done here.

⁴ sn 2 Kgs 25:1 and Jer 52:4 give the more precise date of the tenth day of the tenth month of the ninth year which would have been Jan 15, 588 b.c. The reckoning is based on the calendar that begins the year in the spring (Nisan = March/April).

⁵ sn According to modern reckoning that would have been July 18, 586 b.c. The siege thus lasted almost a full eighteen months.

⁶ tn English versions and commentaries differ on the number of officials named here and the exact spelling of their names. For a good discussion of the options see F. B. Huey, *Jeremiah, Lamentations* (NAC), 341, n. 71. Most commentaries follow the general lead of J. Bright (*Jeremiah* [AB], 243) as the present translation has done here. However, the second name is not emended on the basis of v. 13 as Bright does, nor is the second Nergal-Sharezzer regarded as the same man as the first and the information on the two combined as he does. The first Nergal-Sharezzer is generally identified on the basis of Babylonian records as the man who usurped the throne from Nebuchadnezzar's son, Awel-Marduk or Evil-Merodach as he is known in the OT (Jer 52:31; 2 Kgs 25:27). The present translation renders the two technical Babylonian terms "Rab-Saris" (only in Jer 39:3, 13; 2 Kgs 18:17) and "Rab-Mag" (only in Jer 39:3, 13) as "chief officer" and "high official" without knowing precisely what offices they held. This has been done to give the modern reader some feeling of their high position without specifying exactly what their precise positions were (i.e., the generic has been used for the [unknown] specific).

⁷ tn Heb "sat." The precise meaning of this phrase is not altogether clear, but J. Bright (*Jeremiah* [AB], 243) is undoubtedly correct in assuming that it had to do with setting up a provisional military government over the city.

⁸ tn The Hebrew style here is typically full or redundant, giving a general subject first and then listing the specifics. The Hebrew text reads: "Then all the officers of the king of Babylon came and sat in the Middle Gate, Nergal-Sharezzer...and all the rest of the officers of the king of Babylon." In the translation the general subject has been eliminated and the list of the "real" subjects used instead; this eliminates the dashes or commas typical of some modern English versions.

⁹ sn The identification of the location of the *Middle Gate* is uncertain since it is mentioned nowhere else in the OT.

¹⁰ sn The *king's garden* is mentioned again in Neh 3:15 in conjunction with the pool of Siloam and the stairs that go down from the City of David. This would have been in the southern part of the city near the Tyropean Valley which agrees with the reference to the "two walls" which were probably the walls on the eastern and western hills.

¹¹ sn Heb "toward the Arabah." The Arabah was the rift valley north and south of the Dead Sea. Here the intention was undoubtedly to escape across the Jordan to Moab or Ammon. It appears from 40:14; 41:15 that the Ammonites were known to harbor fugitives from the Babylonians.

¹² tn Heb "The Chaldeans." See the study note on 21:4 for explanation.

¹³ map For location see Map5-B2; Map6-E1; Map7-E1; Map8-E3; Map10-A2; Map11-A1.

¹⁴ sn 2 Kgs 25:5 and Jer 52:8 mention that the soldiers all scattered from him. That is why the text focuses on Zedekiah here.

¹⁵ sn *Riblah* was a strategic town on the Orontes River in Syria. It was at a crossing of the major roads between Egypt and Mesopotamia. Pharaoh Necho had earlier received Jehoaahaz there and put him in chains (2 Kgs 23:33) prior to taking him captive to Egypt. Nebuchadnezzar had set up his base camp for conducting his campaigns against the Palestinian states there and was now sitting in judgment on prisoners brought to him.

¹⁶ tn Heb "fettlers of bronze." The more generic "chains" is used in the translation because "fettlers" is a word unfamiliar to most modern readers.

¹⁷ tn Heb "Chaldeans." See the study note on 21:4 for explanation.

homes,¹ and they tore down the wall of Jerusalem.² 39:9 Then Nebuzaradan, the captain of the royal guard,³ took captive the rest of the people who were left in the city. He carried them off to Babylon along with the people who had deserted to him.⁴ 39:10 But he⁵ left behind in the land of Judah some of the poor people who owned nothing. He gave them fields and vineyards at that time.

39:11 Now King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon had issued orders concerning Jeremiah. He had passed them on through Nebuzaradan, the captain of his royal guard,⁶ 39:12 “Find Jeremiah⁷ and look out for him.⁸ Do not do any-

thing to harm him,⁹ but do with him whatever he tells you.” 39:13 So Nebuzaradan, the captain of the royal guard, Nebushazban, who was a chief officer, Nergal-Sharezzer, who was a high official,¹⁰ and all the other officers of the king of Babylon 39:14 sent and had Jeremiah brought from the courtyard of the guardhouse. They turned him over to Gedaliah,¹¹ the son of Ahikam and the grandson of Shaphan, to take him home with him.¹² But Jeremiah stayed among the people.¹³

Ebed Melech Is Promised Deliverance because of His Faith

39:15¹⁴ Now the LORD had spoken to Jeremiah while he was still confined in the courtyard of the guardhouse,¹⁵ 39:16 “Go¹⁶ and

1 tc The reading here is based on an emendation following the parallels in Jer 52:13 and 2 Kgs 25:9. The Hebrew text here does not have “the temple of the LORD” and reads merely “house of the people.” The text here is probably corrupt. It reads *וְאֶת־בֵּית הָעָם* (*et-bet ha'am*), “and the house of the people”), which many explain as a collective use of *בַּיִת* (*bayit*). However, no parallels are cited by any of the commentaries, grammars, or lexicons for such a use. It is more likely that the words *יְהוָה וְאֶת־בֵּיתֵי* (*yehvah et-bate*) have fallen out of the text due to similar beginnings. The words *וְאֶת־בֵּית יְהוָה* (*et-bet yehvah*) are found in the parallel texts cited in the marginal note. The Greek version is no help here because vv. 4-13 are omitted, probably due to the similarities in ending of vv. 3, 13 (i.e., homoioteleuton of *בָּבֶל* *בְּלָךְ*, *melekh bavel*).

2 sn According to the parallels in 2 Kgs 25:8-9; Jer 52:12-13 this occurred almost a month after the wall was breached and Zedekiah's failed escape. It took place under the direction of Nebuzaradan, the captain of the king's special guard who is mentioned in the next verse.

3 tn For the meaning of this phrase see BDB 371 s.v. *נְבֻזַדָּן* 2 and compare the usage in Gen 39:1.

4 tc The translation is based on an emendation of the text which leaves out “the rest of the people who were left” as a double writing of the same phrase at the beginning of the verse. Some commentators emend the phrase “the rest of the people who were left” (*הַנִּשְׁאָרִים וְאֶת־הַר הָעָם*), *hannish'arim v'et yeter ha'am*) to read “the rest of the craftsmen who were left” (*וְאֶת־יְתֵר הַחַמְצָנִים הַנִּשְׁאָרִים*) (*et-yeter ha'amon hannish'arim*) on the basis of the parallel in Jer 52:15 (which does not have *הַנִּשְׁאָרִים*, *hannish'arim*). However, it is easier to explain the phrase as a dittography of the phrase at the beginning (which is exactly the same except *הַיְתֵר* [*ha'ir*] follows it). The text is redundant because it refers twice to the same group of people. The Hebrew text reads: “And the rest of the people who were left in the city and the deserters who had deserted to him and the rest of the people Nebuzaradan, the captain of the guard, carried into exile to Babylon.” The text has also been divided up to create two shorter sentences to better conform with contemporary English style.

5 tn *Heb* “Nebuzaradan, the captain of the royal guard.” However, the subject is clear from the preceding and contemporary English style would normally avoid repeating the proper name and title.

6 tn *Heb* “And Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon commanded concerning Jeremiah by the hand of Nebuzaradan, the captain of the guard, saying.” Since Nebuchadnezzar is at Riblah (v. 6) and Nebuzaradan and the other officers named in the next verse are at Jerusalem, the *vav* consecutive imperfect should again be translated as a pluperfect (see 38:2 and the translator's notes there for explanation). For the meaning of “through” or “through the agency of” for the phrase *בְּיַד* (*b'yad*) see BDB 391 s.v. *יָד* 5.d. The sentence has been broken up to better conform with contemporary English style.

7 tn *Heb* “Get [or fetch] him.” The referent is supplied for clarity.

8 tn Or “take care of him”; *Heb* “set your eyes on him.” For the meaning of this idiom see BDB 963 s.v. *עָיַן* 2.c and compare 24:6 where the phrase “for good” is added.

9 tn *Heb* “Don't do anything evil [= harmful] to him.”

10 tn See the translator's notes on 39:3, 9 for the names and titles here.

11 sn *Gedaliah*. This is the first reference to this individual whom Nebuchadnezzar appointed governor over the people who were left to live in Judah (cf. 40:5; 2 Kgs 25:22). His father was the man who spoke up for Jeremiah when he was accused of being a false prophet by some of the priests and prophets (26:24). His grandfather was the royal secretary under Josiah who brought the discovery of the book of the law to Josiah's attention, read it to him, and was involved in helping Josiah institute his reforms (2 Kgs 22:8-10).

12 tn The meaning of the last phrase is uncertain. An alternate translation is “to take him home with him.” The text reads literally “to bring him into the house.” However, it is unclear whether “the house” refers to Jeremiah's house or to Gedaliah's. The fact that Nebuzaradan later offers Jeremiah the option of going back to Gedaliah (40:5) suggests that the house is here Gedaliah's where Jeremiah would be looked out for in accord with Nebuchadnezzar's command (v. 12).

13 tn Many translate this last clause as a conclusion or summary remark, “So Jeremiah stayed...” However, it is better to translate it as an adversative because it probably refers to the fact that rather than staying with Gedaliah in the governor's residence Jeremiah stayed among the people. That is how he wound up being led off as a prisoner to Ramah. See further the study note on 40:1. According to *IBHS* 550 §33.2.1d the *vav* (ו) consecutive can have either of these values (see examples 11 and 12 for the adversative or contrastive nuance).

14 sn *Jer 39:15-18*. This incident is out of chronological order (see Jer 38:7-13). It is placed here either due to a desire not to interrupt the sequential ordering of events centering on Jeremiah's imprisonment and his release (38:14-39:14) or to contrast God's care and concern for the faithful (*Ebed-Melech* who, though a foreigner, trusted in God) with his harsh treatment of the faithless (*Zedekiah* who, though informed of God's will, was too weak-willed in the face of opposition by his courtiers to carry it out).

15 tn *Heb* “Now the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah while he...saying.” The form of this clause is disjunctive showing that it does not follow the preceding events in either chronological or logical sequence. For a discussion of the form and function of such disjunctive clauses see *IBHS* 650-52 §39.2.3. This example most closely fits the description and function of example 12, Ruth 4:18, 21-22 on p. 652.

16 sn Even though Jeremiah was confined to the courtyard of the guardhouse, he was still free to entertain visitors (32:2, 8). Moreover, *Ebed-Melech* was an official attached to the royal court and would have had access to the courtyard of the guardhouse (38:7, 13). Jeremiah would not have had to leave the courtyard of the guardhouse to “go and tell” him something.

tell Ebed-Melech the Ethiopian, “The LORD God of Israel who rules over all says, “I will carry out against this city what I promised. It will mean disaster and not good fortune for it.¹ When that disaster happens, you will be there to see it.”² **39:17** But I will rescue you when it happens.³ I, the LORD, affirm it!⁴ You will not be handed over to those whom you fear.⁵ **39:18** I will certainly save you. You will not fall victim to violence.⁶ You will escape with your life⁷ because you trust in me. I, the LORD, affirm it!”⁸

Jeremiah Is Set Free A Second Time

40:1 The LORD spoke to Jeremiah⁹ after Nebuzaradan the captain of the royal guard had set him free at Ramah.¹⁰ He had taken him there in chains¹¹ along with all the people from Jerusalem¹² and Judah who were being carried off to exile to Babylon. **40:2** The captain of the royal guard took Jeremiah aside and said to him, “The LORD your God threatened this place with this disaster. **40:3** Now he has brought it about. The LORD has done just as he threatened to do. This disaster has happened because you people sinned against the LORD and did not obey him.¹³ **40:4** But now, Jeremiah, today I will set you

⁹ **tn** *Heb* “The word which came to Jeremiah from the LORD.” This phrase regularly introduces the LORD’s directions to Jeremiah which immediately follow (cf. 7:1; 11:1; 18:1; 30:1; 34:1; 35:1). In 21:1; 44:1 it introduces a word of the LORD that Jeremiah communicates to others. However, no directions to Jeremiah follow here nor does any oracle that Jeremiah passes on to the people. Some commentators explain this as a heading parallel to that in 1:1-3 (which refers to messages and incidents in the life of Jeremiah up to the fall of Jerusalem) introducing the oracles that Jeremiah delivered after the fall of Jerusalem. However, no oracles follow until 42:9. It is possible that the intervening material supply background material for the oracle that is introduced in 42:7. An analogy to this structure but in a much shorter form may be found in 34:8-12. Another possible explanation is that the words of the captain of the guard in vv. 2-3 are to be seen as the word of the LORD to Jeremiah. In this case, it is a rather ironical confirmation of what Jeremiah had been saying all along. If it is thought strange that a pagan soldier would have said these words, it should be remembered that foreign soldiers knew through their intelligence sources what kings and prophets were saying (cf. Isa 36:7), and it is not unusual for God to speak through pagan prophets (cf. Balaam’s oracles, e.g. Num 23:7-10) or even a dumb animal (e.g., Balaam’s donkey [Num 22:28, 30]). Given the penchant for the use of irony in the book of Jeremiah, this is the most likely explanation. For further discussion on this view see G. L. Keown, P. J. Scalise, T. G. Smothers, *Jeremiah 26-52* (WBC), 235-36.

¹⁰ **sn** Some commentators see the account of Jeremiah’s release here in 40:1-6 as an alternate and contradictory account to that of Jeremiah’s release in 39:11-14. However, most commentators see them as complementary and sequential. Jeremiah had been released from the courtyard of the guardhouse on orders of the military tribunal there shortly after Nebuzaradan got to Jerusalem and passed on Nebuchadnezzar’s orders to them. He had been released to the custody of Gedaliah who was to take him back to the governor’s residence and look after him there. However, Jeremiah remained in Jerusalem among the people there. He was mistakenly rounded up with them and led off as a prisoner to be deported with the rest of the exiles. However, when he got to Ramah which was a staging area for deportees, Nebuzaradan recognized him among the prisoners and released him a second time.

¹¹ **tn** *Heb* “when he took him and he was in chains.” The subject is probably Nebuzaradan or the indefinite third singular (GKC 460 §144.d). The *Kethib* of the word for בְּאִזְקִים (*ba’izqim*) is to be explained as a secondary formation with prosthetic א (*aleph*) from the normal word for “fetter” (זֶקֶן, *zeq*) according to HALOT 27 s.v. אִזְקִים (see GKC 70 §19.m and 235-36 §85.b for the phenomenon).

¹² **map** For location see Map5-B1; Map6-F3; Map7-E2; Map8-F2; Map10-B3; JP1-F4; JP2-F4; JP3-F4; JP4-F4.

¹³ **tn** *Heb* “Because you [masc. pl.] sinned against the LORD and did not hearken to his voice [a common idiom for “obey him”], this thing has happened to you [masc. pl.]”

¹ **tn** *Heb* “Behold, I will bring to pass my words against this city for evil/disaster and not for good/good fortune.” For the form of the verb בְּרִי [mevi] *Kethib*, בְּרִיָּה [mevi] *Qere* see GKC 206-7 §74.k, where the same form is noted for the *Kethib* in 2 Sam 5:2; 1 Kgs 21:21; Jer 19:15 all of which occur before a word beginning with א. For the nuance “carry out” (or “bring to pass”) see BDB 99 s.v. בְּרִיָּה Hiph.2.b.

² **tn** *Heb* “And they [= my words for disaster] will come to pass [= happen] before you on that day [i.e., the day that I bring them to pass/carry them out].”

³ **tn** *Heb* “But I will rescue you on that day” (referring to the same day mentioned in the preceding verse).

⁴ **tn** *Heb* “Oracle of the LORD.”

⁵ **sn** Some commentators see this as a reference to the princes from whose clutches Ebed-Melech delivered Jeremiah (38:7-13). However, it is clear that in this context it refers to those that he would fear when the LORD brings about the threatened disaster, i.e., the Babylonians who are attacking the city.

⁶ **sn** *Heb* “you will not fall by the sword.” In the context this would include death in battle and execution as a prisoner of war.

⁷ **tn** *Heb* “your life will be to you for spoil.” For the meaning of this idiom see the study note on 21:9 and compare the usage in 21:9; 38:2; 45:4.

⁸ **tn** *Heb* “Oracle of the LORD.”

free⁴ from the chains on your wrists. If you would like to come to Babylon with me, come along and I will take care of you.² But if you prefer not to come to Babylon with me, you are not required to do so.³ You are free to go anywhere in the land you want to go.⁴ Go wherever you choose.”⁵ 40:5 Before Jeremiah could turn to leave, the captain of the guard added, “Go back⁶ to Gedaliah, the son of Ahikam and grandson of Shaphan, whom the king of Babylon appointed to govern⁷ the towns of Judah. Go back and live with him⁸ among the people. Or go wherever else you choose.” Then the captain of the guard gave Jeremiah some food and a present and let

him go. 40:6 So Jeremiah went to Gedaliah son of Ahikam at Mizpah⁹ and lived there with him. He stayed there to live among the people who had been left in the land of Judah.¹⁰

A Small Judean Province is Established at Mizpah

40:7 Now some of the officers of the Judean army and their troops had been hiding in the countryside. They heard that the king of Babylon had appointed Gedaliah son of Ahikam to govern¹¹ the country. They also heard that he had been put in charge over the men, women, and children from the poorer classes of the land who had not been carried off into exile in Babylon.¹² 40:8 So¹³ all these officers and their troops came to Gedaliah at Mizpah. The officers who came were Ishmael son of Nethaniah, Johanan and Jonathan the sons of Kareah, Seraiah son of Tanhumeth, the sons of Ephai the Netophathite, and Jezeaniah son of the Maacathite.¹⁴ 40:9 Gedaliah, the son of Ahikam and grandson of Shaphan, took an oath so as to give them and their troops some assurance of safety.¹⁵ “Do not

¹ **tn** The verb here is an example of the perfect of resolve where the speaker announces his intention to do something according to *IBHS* 488-89 §30.5.1d. The word “Jeremiah” is supplied in the translation to avoid the possible misunderstanding that the you is still plural.

² **tn** Or “look out for you.” See 39:12 and the translator’s note there.

³ **tn** Or “Stay here”; *Heb* “Forbear.” The imperative is used in a permissive sense; “you may forbear.” See *GKC* 324 §110. b and compare usage in *Gen* 50:6.

⁴ **tn** *Heb* “See all the land [or the whole land] is before you.” For this idiom see *BDB* 817 s.v. פנה II.4.a(f) and compare the usage in *Gen* 20:15; 47:6.

⁵ **tn** *Heb* “Unto the good and the right in your eyes to go, go there.”

⁶ **tc** Or “Before Jeremiah could answer, the captain of the guard added.” Or “But if you remain, then go back.” The meaning of the first part of v. 5 is uncertain. The text is either very cryptic here or is corrupt, perhaps beyond restoration. The Hebrew text reads, “and he was not yet turning and return to Gedaliah” (וְעָדָה לֹא יָשׁוּב וְשָׁבָה אֶל־גְּדַלְיָה) which is very cryptic. The Greek version lacks everything in v. 4 after “I will look out for you” and begins v. 5 with “But if not, run, return to Gedaliah” (= וְאִם לֹא רוּן וְשָׁבָה אֶל־גְּדַלְיָה). The Latin version reads the same as the Hebrew in v. 4 but reads “and don’t come with me but stay with Gedaliah” (= a possible Hebrew text of וְעָדָה לֹא יָשׁוּב וְשָׁבָה אֶת־גְּדַלְיָה). The Syriac version reads “But if you are remaining then return to Gedaliah” (reading a possible Hebrew text of יָשׁוּב וְשָׁבָה אֶל־גְּדַלְיָה וְעָדָה לֹא with an abnormal writing of a conditional particle normally written לו [lu] and normally introducing conditions assumed to be untrue or reading וְעָדָה לֹא יָשׁוּב וְשָׁבָה אֶל־גְּדַלְיָה with an emphatic לו [lu], see *IBHS* 211-12 §11.2.10i) and an informally introduced condition). NRSV does not explain the Hebrew base for its reading but accepts the Syriac as the original. It does appear to be the most likely alternative if the Hebrew is not accepted. However, the fact that none of the versions agree and all appear to be smoother than the Hebrew text suggests that they were dealing with an awkward original that they were trying to smooth out. Hence it is perhaps best to retain the Hebrew and make the best sense possible out of it. The most common reading of the Hebrew text as it stands is “and while he was not yet turning [= but before he was able to turn (to go)] [Nebuzaradan continued], ‘Go back to Gedaliah.’” (The imperfect in this case is an imperfect of capability [see *IBHS* 507 §31.4c, examples 2, 4, 5].) That is the reading that is adopted here. REB and TEV appear to accept a minor emendation of the verb “turn to leave” (יָשׁוּב, *yashuv*, a Qal imperfect) to “answer” (יָשִׁיב, *yashiv*, a Hiphil imperfect with an elided object [see *BDB* 999 s.v. שׁוּב Hiph.3 and compare 2 Chr 10:16]). All of this shows that the meaning of the text at this point is very uncertain.

⁷ **tn** *Heb* “set him over/ made him overseer over.” See *BDB* 823-24 s.v. פָּקֵד Hiph.1 and compare usage in *Gen* 39:4-5.

⁸ **tn** *Heb* “Go back to Gedaliah...and live with him among the people.” The long Hebrew sentence has been restructured to better conform with contemporary English style.

⁹ **sn** *Mizpah*. It is generally agreed that this is the Mizpah that was on the border between Benjamin and Judah. It was located approximately eight miles north of Jerusalem and had been an important military and religious center from the time of the judges on (cf., e.g., *Judg* 20:1-3; 1 Sam 7:5-14; 1 Sam 10:17; 1 Kgs 15:22). It was not far from Ramah which was approximately four miles north of Jerusalem.

¹⁰ **tn** *Heb* “So Jeremiah went to Gedaliah...and lived with him among the people who had been left in the land.” The long Hebrew sentence has been divided in two to better conform with contemporary English style.

¹¹ **tn** *Heb* “set him over/ made him overseer over.” See *BDB* 823-24 s.v. פָּקֵד Hiph.1 and compare usage in *Gen* 39:4-5.

¹² **sn** Compare *Jer* 39:10.

¹³ **tn** Verse 6 consists of a very long conditional clause whose main clause is found in v. 7. The text reads literally “When all the officers of the forces who were in the countryside heard, they and their men, that the king of Babylon had appointed Gedaliah...over the land and that he had committed to him men, women, and children, even from the poorest of the land from those who had not been carried off into exile to Babylon, they came.” The sentence has been broken up to better conform with contemporary English style. The phrase “the forces who were in the countryside” has been translated to reflect the probable situation, i.e., they had escaped and were hiding in the hills surrounding Jerusalem waiting for the Babylonians to leave (cf. *Judg* 6:2).

¹⁴ **sn** The name of these officers is given here because some of them become important to the plot of the subsequent narrative, in particular, Ishmael and Johanan. Ishmael was a member of the royal family (41:1). He formed an alliance with the king of Ammon, assassinated Gedaliah, killed the soldiers stationed at Mizpah and many of Gedaliah’s followers, and attempted to carry off the rest of the people left at Mizpah to Ammon (40:13; 41:1-3, 10). Johanan was the leading officer who sought to stop Ishmael from killing Gedaliah (40:13-16) and who rescued the Jews that Ishmael was trying to carry off to Ammon (41:11-15). He along with another man named Jezeaniah and these other officers were the leaders of the Jews who asked for Jeremiah’s advice about what they should do after Ishmael had killed Gedaliah (43:1-7).

¹⁵ **tn** The words “so as to give them some assurance of safety” are not in the text but are generally understood by all commentators. This would be a case of substitution of cause for effect, the oath, put for the effect, the assurance of safety (*NIPS* translates directly “reassured them”).

be afraid to submit to the Babylonians.¹ Settle down in the land and submit to the king of Babylon. Then things will go well for you. **40:10** I for my part will stay at Mizpah to represent you before the Babylonians² whenever they come to us. You for your part go ahead and harvest the wine, the dates, the figs,³ and the olive oil, and store them in jars. Go ahead and settle down in the towns that you have taken over."⁴ **40:11** Moreover, all the Judeans who were in Moab, Ammon, Edom, and all the other countries heard what had happened. They heard that the king of Babylon had allowed some people to stay in Judah and that he had appointed Gedaliah, the son of Ahikam and grandson of Shaphan, to govern them. **40:12** So all these Judeans returned to the land of Judah from the places where they had been scattered. They came to Gedaliah at Mizpah. Thus they harvested a large amount of wine and dates and figs.⁵

Ishmael Murders Gedaliah and Carries Off the Judeans at Mizpah as Captives

40:13 Johanan and all the officers of the troops that had been hiding in the open country came to Gedaliah at Mizpah. **40:14** They said to him, "Are you at all aware⁶ that King Baalis of Ammon has sent Ishmael son of Nethaniah to kill you?" But Gedaliah son of Ahikam would not believe them. **40:15** Then Johanan son of Kareah spoke privately to Gedaliah there at Mizpah, "Let me go and kill Ishmael the son of Nethaniah before anyone knows about it. Otherwise he will kill you⁷ and all the Judeans who have rallied around you will be scattered. Then what remains of Judah will disappear." **40:16** But Gedaliah son of Ahikam said to Johanan son of

Kareah, "Do not do that⁸ because what you are saying about Ishmael is not true."⁹

41:1 But in the seventh month¹⁰ Ishmael, the son of Nethaniah and grandson of Elishama who was a member of the royal family and had been one of Zedekiah's chief officers, came with ten of his men to Gedaliah son of Ahikam at Mizpah. While they were eating a meal together with him there at Mizpah, **41:2** Ishmael son of Nethaniah and the ten men who were with him stood up, pulled out their swords, and killed Gedaliah, the son of Ahikam and grandson of Shaphan. Thus Ishmael killed the man that the king of Babylon had appointed to govern the country. **41:3** Ishmael also killed all the Judeans¹¹ who were with Gedaliah at Mizpah and the Babylonian¹² soldiers who happened to be there.¹³

41:4 On the day after Gedaliah had been murdered, before anyone even knew about it, **41:5** eighty men arrived from Shechem, Shiloh, and Samaria.¹⁴ They had shaved off their beards,

⁸ tn Heb "this thing."

⁹ tn Heb "is false" or "is a lie."

¹⁰ sn It is not altogether clear whether this is in the same year that Jerusalem fell or not. The wall was breached in the fourth month (= early July; 39:2) and Nebuzaradan came and burned the palace, the temple, and many of the houses and tore down the wall in the fifth month (= early August; 52:12). That would have left time between the fifth month and the seventh month (October) to gather in the harvest of grapes, dates and figs, and olives (40:12). However, many commentators feel that too much activity takes place in too short a time for this to have been in the same year and posit that it happened the following year or even five years later when a further deportation took place, possibly in retaliation for the murder of Gedaliah and the Babylonian garrison at Mizpah (52:30). The assassination of Gedaliah had momentous consequences and was commemorated in one of the post exilic fast days lamenting the fall of Jerusalem (Zech 8:19).

¹¹ sn *All the Judeans*. This can scarcely refer to all the Judeans who had rallied around Gedaliah at Mizpah because v. 10 later speaks of Ishmael carrying off "the rest of the people who were at Mizpah." Probably what is meant is "all the Judeans and Babylonian soldiers" that were also at the meal. It is possible that this meal was intended to seal a covenant between Gedaliah and Ishmael of Ishmael's allegiance to Gedaliah and his Babylonian overlords (cf. Gen 26:30-31; 31:53-54; Exod 24:11). In any case, this act of treachery and deceit was an extreme violation of the customs of hospitality practiced in the ancient Near East.

¹² tn Heb "Chaldean." See the study note on 21:4 for explanation. There are two cases of apposition with the repetition of the preposition or of the sign of the accusative in this verse, e.g., "who were with him, [namely] with Gedaliah" and "all the Chaldeans who happened to be there, [namely] the soldiers."

¹³ tn Heb "were found there." For this nuance of the verb see BDB 594 s.v. נִפְּחָה Niph.2.c.

¹⁴ sn *Shechem, Shiloh, and Samaria* were all cities in the northern kingdom of Israel with important religious and political histories. When Israel was destroyed in 722 b.c., some of the Israelites had been left behind and some of the Judeans had taken up residence in these northern cities. People residing there had participated in the reforms of Hezekiah (2 Chr 30:11) and Josiah (2 Chr 34:9) and were evidently still faithfully following the Jewish calendar. They would have been on their way to Jerusalem to celebrate the Jewish New Year and the Feast of Tabernacles (Lev 23:34).

map For the location of Samaria see Map2-B1; Map4-D3; Map5-E2; Map6-A4; Map7-C1.

¹ tn Heb "Chaldeans." See the study note on 21:4 for explanation.

² tn Heb "Chaldeans." See the study note on 21:4 for explanation.

³ tn Heb "summer fruit." "Summer fruit" is meaningless to most modern readers; dates and figs are what is involved.

⁴ tn This plus "Things will go well with you" is in essence the substance of the oath. The pronouns are emphatic, "And I, behold I will stay...and you, you may gather." The imperatives in the second half of the verse are more a form of permission than of command or advice (cf. NJPS, REB, TEV and compare the usage in 40:4 and the references in the translator's note there).

⁵ tn Heb "summer fruit." "Summer fruit" is meaningless to most modern readers; dates and figs are what is involved.

⁶ tn The translation is intended to reflect the emphasizing infinitive absolute before the finite verb.

⁷ tn Heb "Why should he kill you?" However, this is one of those cases listed in BDB 554 s.v. מָה 4.d(b) where it introduces a question introducing rhetorically the reason why something should not be done. In cases like this BDB notes that it approximates the meaning "lest" and is translated in Greek by μήποτε (*mēpote*) or μη (*mē*) as the Greek version does here. Hence it is separated from the preceding and translated "otherwise" for the sake of English style.

torn their clothes, and cut themselves to show they were mourning.¹ They were carrying grain offerings and incense to present at the temple of the LORD in Jerusalem.² 41:6 Ishmael son of Nethaniah went out from Mizpah to meet them. He was pretending to cry³ as he walked along. When he met them, he said to them, “Come with me to meet Gedaliah son of Ahikam.”⁴ 41:7 But as soon as they were inside the city, Ishmael son of Nethaniah and the men who were with him slaughtered them and threw their bodies⁵ in a cistern. 41:8 But there were ten men among them who said⁶ to Ishmael, “Do not kill us. For we will give you the stores of wheat, barley, olive oil, and honey we have hidden in a field.”⁷ So he spared their lives and did not kill⁸ them along with the rest.⁹ 41:9 Now the cistern where Ishmael threw all the dead bodies of those he had killed was a large one¹⁰ that King Asa had con-

structed as part of his defenses against King Baasha of Israel.¹¹ Ishmael son of Nethaniah filled it with dead bodies.¹² 41:10 Then Ishmael took captive all the people who were still left alive in Mizpah. This included the royal princesses¹³ and all the rest of the people in Mizpah that Nebuzaradan, the captain of the royal guard, had put under the authority of Gedaliah son of Ahikam. Ishmael son of Nethaniah took all these people captive and set out to cross over to the Ammonites.

Johanan Rescues the People Ishmael Had Carried Off

41:11 Johanan son of Kareah and all the army officers who were with him heard about all the atrocities¹⁴ that Ishmael son of Nethaniah had committed. 41:12 So they took all their troops and went to fight against Ishmael son of Nethaniah. They caught up with him near the large pool¹⁵ at Gibeon. 41:13 When all the people that Ishmael had taken captive saw¹⁶ Johanan son of Kareah and all the army officers with him, they were glad. 41:14 All those people that Ishmael had taken captive from Mizpah turned and went over to Johanan son of Kareah. 41:15 But Ishmael son of Nethaniah managed to escape from Johanan along with eight of his men, and he went on over to Ammon.

41:16 Johanan son of Kareah and all the army officers who were with him led off all the people who had been left alive at Mizpah. They had rescued them from Ishmael son of Nethaniah after he killed Gedaliah son of Ahikam. They led off the men, women, children, soldiers, and court officials whom they had brought away from Gibeon. 41:17 They set out to go to Egypt to get away from the Babylonians,¹⁷ but stopped

¹ **tn** The words “to show they were mourning” are not in the text but are implicit in the acts. They are supplied in the translation for clarification for readers who may not be familiar with ancient mourning customs.

² **tn** The words “in Jerusalem” are not in the text but are implicit. They are supplied in the translation for clarity.

map For location see Map5-B1; Map6-F3; Map7-E2; Map8-F2; Map10-B3; JP1-F4; JP2-F4; JP3-F4; JP4-F4.

³ **tn** *Heb* “he was weeping/crying.” The translation is intended to better reflect the situation.

⁴ **tn** *Heb* “Come to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam.” The words that are supplied in the translation are implicit to the situation and are added for clarity.

⁵ **tn** The words “and threw their bodies” result from the significant use of the preposition על (*el*, so GKC 384 §119. gg and BDB 39 s.v. על 1). Hence the suggestion in *BHS* (fn a) that the Syriac and two Greek mss are reading a different text is not really a textual issue but a translational one; the versions are supplying the words for stylistic purposes as has been done here.

⁶ **tn** *Heb* “But there were ten men found among them and they said.” However, for the use of “were found” = “be, happened to be” see BDB 594 s.v. נָצַח 2.c and compare the usage in 41:3.

⁷ **tn** This sentence is a good example of the elliptical nature of some of the causal connections in the Hebrew Bible. All the Hebrew says literally is “For we have hidden stores of wheat, barley, olive oil, and honey in a field.” However, it is obvious that they are using this as their bargaining chip to prevent Ishmael and his men from killing them. For the use of “for” (כי, *ki*) for such elliptical thoughts see BDB 473-74 s.v. כי 3.c.

⁸ **tn** Or “So he refrained from killing them”; *Heb* “he refrained and did not kill them.”

⁹ **tn** *Heb* “in the midst of their brothers/fellow countrymen.”

¹⁰ **tc** The translation here follows the reading of the Greek version. The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain; some understand it to mean “because of Gedaliah [i.e., to cover up the affair with Gedaliah]” and others understand it to mean “alongside of Gedaliah.” The translation presupposes that the Hebrew text reads בור גדול רואה (*bor gadol ruah*) in place of the Hebrew בְּיַד גְּדַלְיָהוּ (*beyad-gedalyahu*). The meaning of בְּיַד (*beyad*) does not fit any of the normal ones given for this expression and those who retain the Hebrew text normally explain it as an unparalleled use of “because” or “in the affair of” (so NJPS) or a rare use meaning “near, by the side of” (see BDB 391 s.v. יָד; 5.d where only Ps 141:6 and Zech 4:12 are cited. BDB themselves suggest reading with the Greek version as the present translation does [so BDB 391 s.v. יָד; 5.c(3)]). For the syntax presupposed by the Greek text which has been followed consult *IBHS* 298 §16.3.3d and 133 §8.4.2b. The first clause is a classifying clause with normal order of subject-predicate-copulative pronoun and it is followed by a further qualifying relative clause.

¹¹ **sn** It is generally agreed that the cistern referred to here is one of several that Asa dug for supplying water as part of the defense system constructed at Mizpah (cf. 1 Kgs 15:22; 2 Chr 16:6).

¹² **tn** Or “with corpses”; *Heb* “with the slain.”

¹³ **tn** *Heb* “the daughters of the king.” Most commentators do not feel that this refers to the actual daughters of Zedekiah since they would have been too politically important to have escaped exile with their father. As noted in the translator’s note on 36:26 this need not refer to the actual daughters of the king but may refer to other royal daughters, i.e., the daughters of other royal princes.

¹⁴ **tn** Or “crimes,” or “evil things”; *Heb* “the evil.”

¹⁵ **tn** *Heb* “the many [or great] waters.” This is generally identified with the pool of Gibeon mentioned in 2 Sam 2:13.

¹⁶ **tn** *Heb* “all the people who were with Ishmael.” However, this does not refer to his own troops but to those he had taken with him from Mizpah, i.e., the captives. The phrase is specifically clarified in the next verse, i.e. “the people whom Ishmael had taken captive from Mizpah.” Hence the phrase is translated here according to sense, not according to the literal wording.

¹⁷ **tn** *Heb* “Chaldeans.” See the study note on 21:4 for explanation.

at Geruth Kimham¹ near Bethlehem.² **41:18** They were afraid of what the Babylonians might do³ because Ishmael son of Nethaniah had killed Gedaliah son of Ahikam, whom the king of Babylon had appointed to govern the country.

The Survivors Ask the Lord for Advice but Refuse to Follow It

42:1 Then all the army officers, including Johanan son of Kareah and Jezaniah son of Hoshaiah⁴ and all the people of every class,⁵ went to the prophet Jeremiah. **42:2** They said to him, “Please grant our request⁶ and pray to the LORD your God for all those of us who are still left

alive here.⁷ For, as you yourself can see, there are only a few of us left out of the many there were before.⁸ **42:3** Pray that the LORD your God will tell us where we should go and what we should do.” **42:4** The prophet Jeremiah answered them, “Agreed!⁹ I will indeed pray to the LORD your God as you have asked. I will tell you everything the LORD replies in response to you.¹⁰ I will not keep anything back from you.” **42:5** They answered Jeremiah, “May the LORD be a true and faithful witness against us if we do not do just as¹¹ the LORD sends you to tell us to do. **42:6** We will obey what the LORD our God to whom we are sending you tells us to do. It does not matter whether we like what he tells us or not. We will obey what he tells us to do so that things will go well for us.”¹²

42:7 Ten days later the LORD spoke to Jeremiah. **42:8** So Jeremiah summoned Johanan son of Kareah and all the army officers who were with him and all the people of every class.¹³ **42:9** Then Jeremiah said to them, “You sent me to the LORD God of Israel to make your request known to him. Here is what he says to you:¹⁴ **42:10** ‘If you will just stay¹⁵ in this land, I

¹ **sn** Geruth Kimham is nowhere else mentioned in the Bible and its precise location is unknown. Many commentators relate the second part of the name to the name of the son of David’s benefactor when he fled from Absalom (2 Sam 19:38-39) and see this as a reference to an estate that David assigned this son as reward for his father’s largess. Gibeon was about six miles northwest of Jerusalem and Benjamin is approximately the same distance southwest of it. Hence, the people mentioned here had not traveled all that far.

² **map** For location see Map5-B1; Map7-E2; Map8-E2; Map10-B4.

³ **tn** Verses 16-18a are a long complex sentence in the Hebrew text with some rather awkward placement of qualifying terms. In the Hebrew text these verses read: “**41:16** And he took, Johanan...and all the army officers with him, all the people who were left alive which he [Johanan] had taken back from Ishmael son of Nethaniah from Mizpah after he [Ishmael] had killed Gedaliah...men, men of war, and women and children and court officials which he [Johanan] had brought back from Gibeon **41:17** and they went and they stayed at Geruth Kimham...to go to enter Egypt **41:18** because of the Chaldean because they were afraid of them because Ishmael...” The sentence has been broken down and restructured to reflect all the relevant data in shorter sentences which better conform with contemporary English style. There are a couple of places where the text and syntax are debated. Many modern English versions and commentaries read “They led off/took control of/took all survivors of the people whom Ishmael...had taken captive [reading אֶתֵּם שְׁבִיָּה (shavah ‘otam) in place of הַשִּׁבִּי מֵעֵת (heshiv me’et), “whom he (Johanan) had taken back/rescued from Ishmael] from Mizpah after he had...” This is a decidedly smoother text but there is no manuscript or versional evidence for it and so it has been rejected here. Some commentators and English versions see the words “men of war” (“soldiers”) following the word “men” as appositional to that word and hence see only one category. However, there are no parallels to these words used in this kind of apposition. So the translation reflects two categories.

⁴ **sn** Jezaniah son of Hoshaiah may have been the same as the Jezaniah son of the Maacathite mentioned in 40:8. The title “the Maacathite” would identify the locality from which his father came, i.e., a region in northern Transjordan east of Lake Huleh. Many think he is also the same man who is named “Azariah” in Jer 43:2 (the Greek version has Azariah both here and in 43:2). It was not uncommon for one man to have two names, e.g., Uziah who was also named Azariah (compare 2 Kgs 14:21 with 2 Chr 26:1).

⁵ **tn** Or “without distinction,” or “All the people from the least important to the most important”; *Heb* “from the least to the greatest.” This is a figure of speech that uses polar opposites as an all-inclusive designation of everyone without exception (i.e., it included all the people from the least important or poorest to the most important or richest.)

⁶ **tn** *Heb* “please let our petition fall before you.” For the idiom here see 37:20 and the translator’s note there.

⁷ **tn** *Heb* “on behalf of us, [that is] on behalf of all this remnant.”

⁸ **tn** This refers to the small remnant of people who were left of those from Mizpah who had been taken captive by Ishmael after he had killed Gedaliah and who had been rescued from him at Gibeon. There were other Judeans still left in the land of Judah who had not been killed or deported by the Babylonians.

⁹ **tn** *Heb* “For we are left a few from the many as your eyes are seeing us.” The words “were before” are not in the text but are implicit. These words are supplied in the translation for clarity and smoothness of English style.

¹⁰ **tn** *Heb* “I have heard” = “I agree.” For this nuance of the verb see BDB 1034 s.v. שָׁמַע Qal.1.j and compare the usage in Gen 37:27 and Judg 11:17 listed there.

¹¹ **tn** *Heb* “all the word which the LORD will answer you.

¹² **tn** *Heb* “do according to all the word which.”

¹³ **tn** *Heb* “Whether good or whether evil we will hearken to the voice of the LORD our God to whom we are sending you in order that it may go well for us because/when we hearken to the voice of the LORD our God.” The phrase “whether good or whether evil” is an abbreviated form of the idiomatic expressions “to be good in the eyes of” = “to be pleasing to” (BDB 374 s.v. טוֹב 2.f and see 1 Kgs 21:2) and “to be bad in the eyes of” = “to be displeasing to” (BDB 948 s.v. רַע 3 and see Num 22:34). The longer Hebrew sentence has been broken down and restructured to better conform with contemporary English style.

¹⁴ **tn** Or “without distinction,” or “All the people from the least important to the most important”; *Heb* “from the least to the greatest.” This is a figure of speech that uses polar opposites as an all-inclusive designation of everyone without exception (i.e., it included all the people from the least important or poorest to the most important or richest.)

¹⁵ **tn** *Heb* “Thus says the LORD God of Israel to whom you sent me to present your petition before him, ‘...’” The sentence has been restructured to cut down on the length of the introduction leading in to the long quote.

sn Their “request” is that Jeremiah would tell them where to go and what to do (v. 3).

¹⁶ **tn** The word “just” is intended to reflect the infinitive absolute before the finite verb emphasizing here the condition rather than the verb root (see Joüon 2:423 §123.g, and compare the usage in Exod 15:26). The form looks like the infinitive absolute of the verb שָׁוָה (*shav*), but all the versions interpret it as though it is from יָשָׁב (*yashav*) which is the root

will build you up. I will not tear you down. I will firmly plant you.¹ I will not uproot you. For I am filled with sorrow because of the disaster that I have brought on you. **42:11** Do not be afraid of the king of Babylon whom you now fear.² Do not be afraid of him because I will be with you to save you and to rescue you from his power. I, the LORD, affirm it!³ **42:12** I will have compassion on you so that he in turn will have mercy on you and allow you to return to your land.⁴

42:13 “You must not disobey the LORD your God by saying, ‘We will not stay in this land.’ **42:14** You must not say, ‘No, we will not stay. Instead we will go and live in the land of Egypt where we will not face war,⁵ or hear the enemy’s trumpet calls,⁶ or starve for lack of food.’⁶ **42:15** If you people who remain in Judah do that, then listen to what the LORD says. The LORD God of Israel who rules over all⁷ says, ‘If you are so determined⁸ to go to Egypt that you go and settle there, **42:16** the wars you fear will catch up with you there in the land of Egypt. The starvation you are worried about will follow you there to⁹ Egypt. You will die there.¹⁰ **42:17** All the people

who are determined to go and settle in Egypt will die from war, starvation, or disease. No one will survive or escape the disaster I will bring on them.’ **42:18** For¹¹ the LORD God of Israel who rules over all¹² says, ‘If you go to Egypt, I will pour out my wrath on you just as I poured out my anger and wrath on the citizens of Jerusalem.’¹³ You will become an object of horror and ridicule, an example of those who have been cursed and that people use in pronouncing a curse.¹⁴ You will never see this place again.’¹⁵

42:19 “The LORD has told you people who remain in Judah, ‘Do not go to Egypt.’ Be very sure of this: I warn you¹⁶ here and now.¹⁷ **42:20** You are making a fatal mistake.¹⁸ For you sent me to the LORD your God and asked me, ‘Pray to the LORD our God for us. Tell us what the LORD our God says and we will do it.’¹⁹ **42:21** This day²⁰ I have told you what he said.²¹ But you do not want to obey the LORD by doing what he sent me to tell you.²² **42:22** So now be

¹ **tn** Or “Indeed.”

² **tn** *Heb* “Yahweh of armies, the God of Israel.” See the study note on 2:19 for the translation and significance of this title.

³ **map** For location see Map5-B1; Map6-F3; Map7-E2; Map8-F2; Map10-B3; JP1-F4; JP2-F4; JP3-F4; JP4-F4.

⁴ **tn** See the study note on 24:9 and the usage in 29:22 for the meaning and significance of this last phrase.

⁵ **tn** Or “land.” The reference is, of course, to the land of Judah.

⁶ **tn** *Heb* “Know for certain that I warn you...” The idea of “for certain” is intended to reflect the emphatic use of the infinitive absolute before the volitive use of the imperfect (see *IBHS* 587-88 §35.3.1h and 509 §31.5b). The substitution “of this:” for “that” has been made to shorten the sentence in conformity with contemporary English style.

⁷ **tn** *Heb* “today.”

⁸ **tn** *Heb* “you are erring at the cost of your own lives” (BDB 1073 s.v. הָקַדַּח Hiph.3 and *HALOT* 1626 s.v. הָקַדַּח Hif 4, and cf. BDB 90 s.v. בָּ 3 and see parallels in 1 Kgs 2:23; 2 Sam 23:17 for the nuance of “at the cost of your lives”). This fits the context better than “you are deceiving yourselves” (KBL 1035 s.v. הָקַדַּח Hif 4). The reading here follows the *Qere* הָרַעְתֶּם (hā’rētem) rather than the *Kethib* which has a metathesis of ו (yod) and ת (tav), i.e., הָרַעְתֶּם. The Greek text presupposes הָרַעְתֶּם (hā’rētem, “you have done evil”), but that reading is generally rejected as secondary.

⁹ **tn** *Heb* “According to all which the LORD our God says so tell us and we will do.” The restructuring of the sentence is intended to better reflect contemporary English style.

¹⁰ **tn** Or “Today.”

¹¹ **tn** The words “what he said” are not in the text but are implicit and seem necessary for clarity.

¹² **tn** *Heb* “But you have not hearkened to the voice of [idiomatic for “obeyed” see BDB 1034 s.v. שָׁמַע Qal.1.m] the LORD your God, namely [cf. BDB 252 s.v. 1.b] with respect [cf. BDB 514 s.v. לָּ 5.f(c)] all which he has sent to us.” The verb is translated “don’t seem to want to obey” because they have not yet expressed their refusal or their actual disobedience. Several commentaries sensing this apparent discrepancy suggest that 42:19-22 are to be transposed after 43:1-3 (see, e.g., *BHS* note 18a, W. L. Holladay, *Jeremiah* [Hermeneia], 2:275; J. Bright, *Jeremiah* [AB], 252, 256, 258). However, there is absolutely no textual evidence for the transposition and little reason to suspect an early scribal error (in spite of Holladay’s suggestion). It is possible that Jeremiah here anticipates this answer in 43:1-3 through the response on their faces (so Bright, 256; F. B. Huey, *Jeremiah, Lamentations* [NAC], 361). G. L. Keown, P. J. Scalise, and T. G. Smothers (*Jeremiah* 26-52 [WBC], 249) also call attention to the stated intention in 41:17 and the fact that the strong warning in 42:15-17 seems

of the verb that follows it. Either this is a textual error of the loss of a *v* (*yod*) or this is one of the cases that GK 69 §19.i list as the possible loss of a weak consonant at the beginning of a word.

¹ **tn** Or “I will firmly plant you in the land,” or “I will establish you.” This is part of the metaphor that has been used of God (re)establishing Israel in the land. See 24:6; 31:28; 32:41.

² **sn** See Jer 41:18 for their reason for fear.

³ **tn** *Heb* “oracle of the LORD.”

⁴ **tn** *Heb* “see [or experience] war.”

⁵ **tn** *Heb* “hear the sound of the trumpet.” The trumpet was used to gather the troops and to sound the alarm for battle.

⁶ **tn** Jer 42:13-14 are a long complex condition (protasis) whose consequence (apodosis) does not begin until v. 15. The Hebrew text of vv. 13-14 reads: **42:13** “But if you say [or continue to say (the form is a participle)], ‘We will not stay in this land’ with the result that you do not obey [or “more literally, do not hearken to the voice of] the LORD your God, **42:14** saying, ‘No, but to the land of Egypt we will go where we...and there we will live,’ **42:15** now therefore hear the word of the LORD...” The sentence has been broken up and restructured to better conform with contemporary English style but an attempt has been made to maintain the contingencies and the qualifiers that are in the longer Hebrew original.

⁷ **tn** *Heb* “Yahweh of armies, the God of Israel.” See the study note on 2:19 for the translation and significance of this title.

⁸ **tn** *Heb* “set your face to.” See Jer 42:17; 44:11; Dan 11:17; 2 Kgs 12:17 (12:18 HT) for parallel usage.

⁹ **tn** Or “will follow you right into Egypt,” or “will dog your steps all the way to Egypt”; *Heb* “cling after.” This is the only case of this verb with this preposition in the Qal stem. However, it is used with this preposition several times in the Hiphil, all with the meaning of “to pursue closely.” See BDB 180 s.v. רָבַקַּח Hiph.2 and compare Judg 20:45; 1 Sam 14:22; 1 Chr 10:2.

¹⁰ **tn** The repetition of the adverb “there” in the translation of vv. 14, 16 is to draw attention to the rhetorical emphasis on the locale of Egypt in the original text of both v. 14 and v. 16. In v. 14 they say, “to the land of Egypt we will go...and there we will live.” In v. 16 God says, “wars...there will catch up with you...the hunger...there will follow after you...and there you will die.” God rhetorically denies their focus on Egypt as a place of safety and of relative prosperity. That can only be found in Judah under the protective presence of the LORD (vv. 10-12).

very sure of this: You will die from war, starvation, or disease in the place where you want to go and live.”

43:1 Jeremiah finished telling all the people all these things the LORD their God had sent him to tell them.¹ **43:2** Then Azariah² son of Hoshaiiah, Johanan son of Kareah, and other arrogant men said to Jeremiah, “You are telling a lie! The LORD our God did not send you to tell us, ‘You must not go to Egypt and settle there.’” **43:3** But Baruch son of Neriah is stirring you up against us.³ He wants to hand us over⁴ to the Babylonians⁵ so that they will kill us or carry us off into exile in Babylon.” **43:4** So Johanan son of Kareah, all the army officers, and all the rest of the people did not obey the LORD’s command to stay in the land. **43:5** Instead Johanan son of Kareah and all the army officers led off all the Judean remnant who had come back to live in the land of Judah from all the nations where they had been scattered.⁶ **43:6** They also led off all the men, women, children, and royal princesses⁷ that Nebuzaradan, the captain of the royal guard, had left with Gedaliah,⁸ the son of Ahikam and

grandson of Shaphan. This included the prophet Jeremiah and Baruch son of Neriah. **43:7** They went on to Egypt⁹ because they refused to obey the LORD, and came to Tahpanhes.¹⁰

Jeremiah Predicts that Nebuchadnezzar Will Plunder Egypt and Its Gods

43:8 At Tahpanhes the LORD spoke to Jeremiah.¹¹ **43:9** “Take some large stones¹² and bury them in the mortar of the clay pavement¹³ at the entrance of Pharaoh’s residence¹⁴ here in Tahpanhes. Do it while the people of Judah present there are watching.¹⁵ **43:10** Then tell them,¹⁶ ‘The LORD God of Israel who rules over all¹⁷ says, ‘I will bring¹⁸ my servant¹⁹ King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. I will set his throne over these stones which I²⁰ have buried. He will pitch

to imply that a negative response is expected). The use of the perfect here is perhaps to be related to the perfect expressing resolve or determination (see *IBHS* 489 §30.5.1d). It is also conceivable that these two verses are part of a conditional sentence which has no formal introduction. I.e., “And if you will not obey...then you should know for certain that...” For examples of this kind of conditional clause introduced by two vavs (v) see *Joüon* 2:628-29 §167.b, and compare *Jer* 18:4; *Judg* 6:13. However, though this interpretation is within the possibilities of Hebrew grammar, I know of no translation or commentary that follows it. So it has not been followed in the translation or given as an alternate translation.

¹ **tn** This sentence contains an emphasis that is impossible to translate into idiomatic English that would not sound redundant. In Hebrew the sentence reads: “When Jeremiah finished [the temporal subordination is left out here because it would make the sentence too long] telling all the people all the words [or all the things] which the LORD their God had sent him [to say] to them, namely all these words,....” The last phrase has been left out of the translation as already having been included. Though they have been left out of the translation, attention is called to their presence here.

² **sn** See the study note on 42:1 for the possible identification of this man with Jezeaniah son of Hoshaiiah and Jezeaniah the son of the Maacathite.

³ **tn** Or “is inciting you against us.”

⁴ **tn** *Heb* “in order to give us into the hands of the Chaldeans.” The substitution “he wants to” as the equivalent of the purpose clause has been chosen to shorten the sentence to better conform with contemporary English style.

⁵ **tn** *Heb* “Chaldeans.” See the study note on 21:4 for explanation.

⁶ **sn** These are the people who are referred to in *Jer* 40:11-12.

⁷ **tn** *Heb* “the daughters of the king.” See the translator’s note on 41:10.

⁸ **sn** This refers to the group mentioned in *Jer* 40:7 and 41:10. The two groups together constituted all the people who were at Mizpah when Gedaliah was murdered, had been taken captive by Ishmael, had been rescued by Johanan and the other army officers, and had consulted Jeremiah at Geruth Chimham.

⁹ **sn** This had been their intention all along (41:17). Though they consulted the LORD and promised to do what he told them whether they agreed with it or not (42:5-6), it is clear that they had no intention of doing so. Jeremiah could see that (42:19-22). They refused to believe that the LORD had really said what Jeremiah told them (43:4) and feared reprisal from the Babylonians more than any potential destruction from the LORD (43:3).

¹⁰ **sn** *Tahpanhes* was an important fortress city on the northern border of Egypt in the northeastern Nile delta. It is generally equated with the Greek city of Daphne. It has already been mentioned in 2:16 in conjunction with Memphis (the Hebrew name is “Noph”) as a source of soldiers who did violence to the Israelites in the past.

¹¹ **tn** *Heb* “The word of the LORD came to Jeremiah at Tahpanhes, saying.”

¹² **tn** *Heb* “Take some large stones in your hands.”

¹³ **tn** The meaning of the expression “mortar of the clay pavement” is uncertain. The noun translated “mortar” occurs only here and the etymology is debated. Both BDB 572 s.v. מַלְחָה and KBL 529 s.v. מַלְחָה give the meaning “mortar.” The noun translated “clay pavement” is elsewhere used of a “brick mold.” Here BDB 527 s.v. מַלְחָה 2 gives “quadrangle” and KBL 527 s.v. מַלְחָה 2 gives “terrace of bricks.” *HALOT* 558 s.v. מַלְחָה and 527 s.v. מַלְחָה 2 give “loamy soil” for both words, seeing the second noun as a dittography or gloss of the first (see also note c in *BHS*).

¹⁴ **sn** All the commentaries point out that this was not Pharaoh’s (main) palace but a governor’s residence or other government building that Pharaoh occupied when he was in Tahpanhes.

¹⁵ **tn** *Heb* “in Tahpanhes in the eyes of the men of Judah.”

¹⁶ **sn** This is another of those symbolic prophecies of Jeremiah which involved an action and an explanation. Compare *Jer* 19, 27.

¹⁷ **tn** *Heb* “Yahweh of armies, the God of Israel.” Compare 7:3 and see the study note on 2:19 for explanation of the translation and significance of this title.

¹⁸ **tn** *Heb* “send and take/fetch.”

¹⁹ **sn** See the study note on *Jer* 25:9 for the use of this epithet for foreign rulers. The term emphasizes God’s sovereignty over history.

²⁰ **tn** The Greek version reads the verbs in this sentence as third person, “he will set,” and second person, “you have buried.” This fits the context better but it is difficult to explain how the Hebrew could have arisen from this smoother reading. The figure of substitution (metonymy of cause for effect) is probably involved: “I will have him set” and “I have had you bury.” The effect of these substitutions is to emphasize the sovereignty of God.

his royal tent¹ over them. **43:11** He will come and attack Egypt. Those who are destined to die of disease will die of disease. Those who are destined to be carried off into exile will be carried off into exile. Those who are destined to die in war will die in war.² **43:12** He will set fire³ to the temples of the gods of Egypt. He will burn their gods or carry them off as captives.⁴ He will pick Egypt clean like a shepherd picks the lice from his clothing.⁵ He will leave there unharmed.⁶ **43:13** He will demolish the sacred pillars in the temple of the sun⁷ in Egypt and will burn down the temples of the gods of Egypt.”

The Lord Will Punish the Judean Exiles in Egypt for Their Idolatry

44:1 The LORD spoke to Jeremiah concerning⁸ all the Judeans who were living in the land

¹ **tn** The meaning of this word is uncertain. The word here (שַׁפְּרִירו [shafriro] Qere, שַׁפְּרִירו [shafriro] Kethib) occurs only here in the Hebrew Bible. According to the lexicons it refers to either the carpet for his throne or the canopy over it. See, e.g., HALOT 1510 s.v. שַׁפְּרִירו.

² **tn** As in 15:2 the Hebrew is very brief and staccato-like: “those to death to death, and those to captivity to captivity, and those to the sword to the sword.” As in 15:2 most commentaries and English versions assume that the word “death” refers to death by disease. See the translator’s note on 15:2 and compare also 18:21 where the sword is distinctly connected with “war” or “battle” and is distinct from “killed by death [i.e., disease].”

³ **tc** The translation follows the Greek, Syriac, and Latin versions. The Hebrew text reads: “I will set fire to.” While it would be possible to explain the first person subject here in the same way as in the two verbs in v. 12b, the corruption of the Hebrew text is easy to explain here as a metathesis of two letters, י (yod) and ת (tav). The Hebrew reads הִצִּיתִי (hitsuṭti) and the versions presuppose הִצִּיתִי (hitsuṭti).

⁴ **tn** Heb “burn them or carry them off as captives.” Some of the commentaries and English versions make a distinction between the objects of the verbs, i.e., burn the temples and carry off the gods. However, the burning down of the temples is referred to later in v. 13.

sn It was typical in the ancient Near East for the images of the gods of vanquished nations to be carried off and displayed in triumphal procession on the return from battle to show the superiority of the victor’s gods over those of the vanquished (cf., e.g., Isa 46:1-2).

⁵ **tn** Or “he will take over Egypt as easily as a shepherd wraps his cloak around him.” The translation follows the interpretation of HALOT 769 s.v. אָחַז Qal, the Greek translation, and a number of the modern commentaries (e.g., J. A. Thompson, *Jeremiah* [NICOT], 671). The only other passage where that translation is suggested for this verb is Isa 22:17 according to HAL. The alternate translation follows the more normal meaning of אָחַז (’atah; cf. BDB 741 s.v. אָחַז Qal which explains “so completely will it be in his power”). The fact that the subject is “a shepherd” lends more credence to the former view though there may be a deliberate double meaning playing on the homonyms (cf. W. L. Holladay, *Jeremiah* [Hermeneia], 2:302).

⁶ **tn** Heb “in peace/wholeness/well-being/safety [shalom].”

⁷ **sn** It is generally agreed that the temple of the sun was located in Heliopolis, which is elsewhere referred to as On (cf. Gen 41:45). It was the center for the worship of Amon-Re, the Egyptian sun god, and was famous for its obelisks (conical shaped pillars) dedicated to that god. It was located about 6 miles (10 km) northeast of modern-day Cairo.

⁸ **tn** Heb “The word came to Jeremiah concerning.” Though the phrase “from the LORD” is missing from this formula which

of Egypt, those in Migdol, Tahpanhes, Memphis, and in the region of southern Egypt.⁹ **44:2** “The LORD God of Israel who rules over all¹⁰ says, ‘You have seen all the disaster I brought on Jerusalem¹¹ and all the towns of Judah. Indeed, they now lie in ruins and are deserted.’” **44:3** This happened because of the wickedness the people living there did.¹³ They made me angry¹⁴ by worshiping and offering sacrifice to¹⁵ other gods whom neither they nor you nor your ancestors¹⁶ previously knew.¹⁷ **44:4** I sent my servants the prophets to you people over and over¹⁸ again warning you not to do this disgusting thing I hate.¹⁹ **44:5** But the people of Jerusalem and Judah²⁰ would not listen or pay any attention.

occurs elsewhere at 7:1; 11:1; 18:1; 21:1; 30:1; 32:1; 34:1; 8; 35:1; 40:1, it is clearly implied from the words that follow. As in these other passages, the more active form has been chosen for the translation to better conform with contemporary English style.

⁹ **sn** The first three cities, Migdol, Tahpanhes, and Memphis, are located in Northern or Lower Egypt. Memphis (Heb “Noph”) was located south of Heliopolis (which was referred to earlier as “the temple of the sun”) and was about fourteen miles (23 km) south of Cairo. For the identification and location of Tahpanhes see the study note on Jer 43:7. The location of Migdol has been debated but is tentatively identified with a border fortress about twenty-five miles (42 km) east-northeast of Tahpanhes. The “region of southern Egypt” is literally “the land of Pathros,” the long Nile valley extending north and south between Cairo and Aswan (biblical Syene). For further information see the discussion in G. L. Keown, P. J. Scalise, T. G. Smothers, *Jeremiah* 26-52 (WBC), 262-63. Reference here is to Judean exiles who had fled earlier as well as to those from Mizpah who were led into Egypt by Johanan and the other arrogant men (43:3, 5).

¹⁰ **tn** Heb “Yahweh of armies, the God of Israel.” Compare 7:3 and see the study note on 2:19 for explanation and translation of this title.

¹¹ **map** For location see Map5-B1; Map6-F3; Map7-E2; Map8-F2; Map10-B3; JP1-F4; JP2-F4; JP3-F4; JP4-F4.

¹² **tn** Heb “Behold, they are in ruins this day and there is no one living in them.”

¹³ **tn** Heb “they.” The referent must be supplied from the preceding, i.e., Jerusalem and all the towns of Judah. “They” are those who have experienced the disaster and are distinct from those being addressed and their ancestors (44:3b).

¹⁴ **tn** Heb “thus making me angry.” However, this is a good place to break the sentence to create a shorter sentence that is more in keeping with contemporary English style.

¹⁵ **tn** Heb “by going to offer sacrifice in serving/worshiping.” The second י (yod) [amed] + infinitive is expegetical of the first (cf. IBHS 608-9 §36.2.3e).

¹⁶ **tn** Heb “fathers” (also in vv. 9, 10, 17, 21).

¹⁷ **sn** Compare Jer 19:4 for the same thought and see also 7:9.

¹⁸ **tn** See 7:13 for an explanation of this idiom and compare 7:25; 25:4; 26:5; 29:19; 35:15 for similar references to the persistent warnings of the prophets.

¹⁹ **tn** Heb “sent...over again, saying, ‘Do not do this terrible thing that I hate.’” The indirect quote has been used to shorten the sentence and eliminate one level of embedded quotes.

sn This refers to the worship of other gods mentioned in the previous verse.

²⁰ **tn** There appears to be a deliberate shift in the pronouns used in vv. 2-5. “You” refers to the people living in Egypt who are being addressed (v. 2) and to the people of present and past generations to whom the LORD persistently sent the prophets (v. 4). “They” refers to the people of Jerusalem and the towns of Judah who have suffered disaster (v. 2) because of the wickedness of sacrificing to other gods (vv. 3, 5). The referents have been explicitly identified in the translation for

They would not stop the wickedness they were doing nor quit sacrificing to other gods.¹ 44:6 So my anger and my wrath were poured out and burned like a fire through the towns of Judah and the streets of Jerusalem. That is why they have become the desolate ruins that they are today.²

44:7 “So now the LORD, the God who rules over all, the God of Israel,² asks, ‘Why will you do such great harm to yourselves? Why should every man, woman, child, and baby of yours be destroyed from the midst of Judah? Why should you leave yourselves without a remnant? 44:8 That is what will result from your making me angry by what you are doing.³ You are making me angry by sacrificing to other gods here in the land of Egypt where you live. You will be destroyed for doing that! You will become an example used in curses⁴ and an object of ridicule among all the nations of the earth.⁵ 44:9 Have you forgotten all the wicked things that have been done in the towns of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem by your ancestors, by the

kings of Judah and their⁶ wives, by you and your wives? 44:10 To this day your people⁷ have shown no contrition! They have not revered me nor followed the laws and statutes I commanded⁸ you and your ancestors.’

44:11 “Because of this, the LORD God of Israel who rules over all says, ‘I am determined to bring disaster on you,⁹ even to the point of destroying all the Judeans here.¹⁰ 44:12 I will see to it that all the Judean remnant that was determined to go¹¹ and live in the land of Egypt will be destroyed. Here in the land of Egypt they will fall in battle¹² or perish from starvation. People of every class¹³ will die in war or from starvation. They will become an object of horror and ridicule, an example of those who have been cursed and that people use in pronouncing a curse.¹⁴ 44:13 I will punish those who live in the land of Egypt with war, starvation, and disease just as I punished Jerusalem. 44:14 None of the Judean remnant who have come to live in the land of Egypt will escape or survive to return to

the sake of clarity.

¹ **tn** *Heb* “They did not listen or incline their ear [= pay attention] by turning from their wickedness by not sacrificing to other gods.” The *lamed* (ל) + the negative + the infinitive is again epexegetical. The sentence has been restructured and more idiomatic English expressions have been used to better conform with contemporary English style but an attempt has been made to retain the basic relationships of subordination.

² **tn** *Heb* “Yahweh, the God of armies, the God of Israel.” Compare 35:17; 38:17 and for the title “God of armies” see the study note on 2:19.

³ **tn** *Heb* “the works of your hands.” Here the phrase is qualified by the epexegetical ל (lamed) + infinitive, לַעֲשׂוֹת (l³qatter, “by sacrificing [to other gods]”). For further discussion on the use of this phrase see the translator’s note on 25:6.

⁴ **tn** *Heb* “a curse.” For the meaning of this phrase see the translator’s note on 24:9 and see the usage in 24:9; 25:18; 26:6; 29:22.

⁵ **tn** Verses 7b-8 are all one long, complex sentence governed by the interrogative “Why.” The Hebrew text reads: “Why are you doing great harm to your souls [= “yourselves” (cf. BDB 660 s.v. נַפְשׁוֹת 4.b[6])] so as to cut off [= “destroy”] from yourselves man and woman, child and baby [the terms are collective singulars and are to be interpreted as plurals] from the midst of Judah so as not to leave to yourselves a remnant by making me angry with the works of your hands by sacrificing to other gods in the land of Egypt where you have come to live so as to cut off [an example of result rather than purpose after the particle לַעֲשׂוֹת (l³ma’an; see the translator’s note on 25:7)] yourselves and so that you may become a curse and an object of ridicule among all the nations of the earth.” The sentence has been broken down and restructured to better conform with contemporary English style. An attempt has been made to retain an equivalent for all the subordinations and qualifying phrases.

sn What is being threatened is not the total destruction of a remnant of Judah. Jeremiah recognizes those who have been carried off to Babylon as well as other places as seeds for a new beginning (e.g., 24:5-6; 29:14; 30:3). But he denies here that any of those who have gone to Egypt and are continuing to practice idolatry will be among them. All of them will be cut off (i.e., destroyed) from the midst of Judah so that not a remnant of them will be left.

⁶ **tn** *Heb* “his.” This should not be viewed as a textual error but as a distributive singular use of the suffix, i.e., the wives of each of the kings of Judah (cf. GKC 464 §145.I and compare the usage in Isa 2:8; Hos 4:8).

⁷ **tn** *Heb* “they” but as H. Freedman (*Jeremiah* [SoBB], 284) notes the third person is used here to include the people just referred to as well as the current addressees. Hence “your people” or “the people of Judah.” It is possible that the third person again reflects the rhetorical distancing that was referred to earlier in 35:16 (see the translator’s note there for explanation) in which case one might translate “you have shown,” and “you have not revered.”

⁸ **tn** *Heb* “to set before.” According to BDB 817 s.v. נָתַן II.4.b(g) this refers to “propounding to someone for acceptance or choice.” This is clearly the usage in Deut 30:15, 19; Jer 21:8 and is likely the case here. However, to translate literally would not be good English idiom and “proposed to” might not be correctly understood, so the basic translation of נָתַן (natan) has been used here.

⁹ **tn** *Heb* “Behold I am setting my face against you for evil/disaster.” For the meaning of the idiom “to set the face to/against” see the translator’s note on 42:15 and compare the references listed there.

¹⁰ **tn** *Heb* “and to destroy all Judah.” However, this statement must be understood within the rhetoric of the passage (see vv. 7-8 and the study note on v. 8) and within the broader context of the LORD’s promises to restore the remnant who are in Babylon and those scattered in other lands (23:3; 24:5-6; 29:14; 30:3; 32:27). In this context “all Judah” must refer to all the Judeans living in Egypt whom Jeremiah is now addressing. This involves the figure of synecdoche where all does not extend to all individuals but to all that are further specified or implied (see E. W. Bullinger, *Figures of Speech*, 616-18, and the comments in H. Freedman, *Jeremiah* [SoBB], 285). The “and” in front of “to destroy” is to be understood as an example of the epexegetical use of the conjunction ו (vav); see BDB 252 s.v. ו 1.b and compare the translation of J. Bright, *Jeremiah* [AB], 260).

¹¹ **tn** *Heb* “they set their face to go.” Compare 44:11 and 42:14 and see the translator’s note at 42:15.

¹² **tn** *Heb* “fall by the sword.”

¹³ **tn** Or “All of them without distinction,” or “All of them from the least important to the most important”; *Heb* “From the least to the greatest.” See the translator’s note on 42:1 for the meaning of this idiom.

¹⁴ **tn** See the study note on 24:9 and the usage in 29:22 for the meaning and significance of this last phrase.

sn See Jer 42:18 for parallel usage.

the land of Judah. Though they long to return and live there, none of them shall return except a few fugitives.³”¹

44:15 Then all the men who were aware that their wives were sacrificing to other gods, as well as all their wives, answered Jeremiah. There was a great crowd of them representing all the people who lived in northern and southern Egypt.² They answered, **44:16** “We will not listen to what you claim the LORD has spoken to us!³ **44:17** Instead we will do everything we vowed we would do.⁴ We will sacrifice and pour out drink offerings to the goddess called the Queen of Heaven⁵ just as we and our ancestors,

our kings, and our leaders previously did in the towns of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem. For then we had plenty of food, were well-off, and had no troubles.⁶ **44:18** But ever since we stopped sacrificing and pouring out drink offerings to the Queen of Heaven, we have been in great need. Our people have died in wars or of starvation.”⁷ **44:19** The women added,⁸ “We did indeed sacrifice and pour out drink offerings to the Queen of Heaven. But it was with the full knowledge and approval of our husbands that we made cakes in her image and poured out drink offerings to her.”⁹

1 tn *Heb* “There shall not be an escapee or a survivor to the remnant of Judah who came to sojourn there in the land of Egypt even to return to the land of Judah which they are lifting up their souls [= “longing/desiring” (BDB 672 s.v. נָשָׂא; Piel.2)] to return to live there; for none shall return except fugitives.” The long, complex Hebrew original has been broken up and restructured to better conform with contemporary English style. Another possible structure would be “None of the Judean remnant who have come to live in the land of Egypt will escape or survive. None of them will escape or survive to return to the land of Judah where they long to return to live. Indeed (emphatic use of כִּי [ki]; cf. BDB 472 s.v. כִּי 1.e) none of them shall return except a few fugitives.” This verse is a good example of rhetorical hyperbole where a universal negative does not apply to absolutely all the particulars. Though the LORD denies at the outset that any will escape or survive the punishment of vv. 12-13 to return to Judah, he says at the end that a few fugitives will return (the two words for fugitive are from the same root and mean the same thing). (E. W. Bullinger, *Figures of Speech*, 618-19, might classify this as a synecdoche of genus where a universal negative does not deny particularity.) That this last statement is not a gloss or an afterthought is supported by what is said later in v. 28.

2 tn The translation is very interpretive at several key points: *Heb* “Then all the men who were aware that their wives were sacrificing to other gods and all their wives who were standing by, a great crowd/congregation, and all the people who were living in the land of Egypt in Pathros answered, saying.” It is proper to assume that the phrase “a great crowd” is oppositional to “all the men...and their wives...” It is also probably proper to assume that the phrase “who were standing by” is unnecessary to the English translation. What is interpretive is the assumption that the “and all the people who were living in Egypt in Pathros” is explicative of “the great crowd” and that the phrase “in Pathros” is conjunctive and not oppositional. Several commentaries and English versions (e.g., J. A. Thompson, *Jeremiah* [NICOT], 678-79, n. 2; NJPS) assume that the phrase is descriptive of a second group, i.e., all the Jews from Pathros in Egypt (i.e., southern Egypt [see the study note on 44:1]). Those who follow this interpretation generally see this as a gloss (see Thompson, 678, n. 2, and also W. L. Holladay, *Jeremiah* [Hermeneia], 2:279, n. 15b). It is probably better to assume that the phrase is explicative and that “all” is used in the same rhetorical way that it has been used within the chapter, i.e., “all” = representatives of all. Likewise the phrase “in Pathros” should be assumed to be conjunctive as in the Syriac translation and as suggested by BHS fn c since Jeremiah’s answer in vv. 24, 26 is directed to all the Judeans living in Egypt.

3 tn *Heb* “the word [or message] you have spoken to us in the name of the LORD.” For an explanation of the rendering of “in the name of the LORD” see the study notes on 10:25 and 23:27.

4 tn *Heb* “that went out of our mouth.” I.e., everything we said, promised, or vowed.

5 tn *Heb* “sacrifice to the Queen of Heaven and pour out drink offerings to her.” The expressions have been combined to simplify and shorten the sentence. The same combination also occurs in vv. 18, 19.

6 sn See the translator’s note and the study note on 7:18 for the problem of translation and identification of the term translated here “the goddess called the Queen of Heaven.”

6 tn *Heb* “saw [or experienced] no disaster/trouble/harm.”

7 tn *Heb* “we have been consumed/destroyed by sword or by starvation.” The “we” cannot be taken literally here since they are still alive.

8 sn What is being contrasted here is the relative peace and prosperity under the reign of Manasseh, who promoted all kinds of pagan cults including the worship of astral deities (2 Kgs 21:2-9), and the disasters that befell Judah after the reforms of Josiah, which included the removal of all the cult images and altars from Jerusalem and Judah (2 Kgs 23:4-15). The disasters included the death of Josiah himself at the battle of Megiddo, the deportation of his son Jehoahaz to Egypt, the death of Jehoiakim, the deportation of Jehoiachin (Jeconiah) and many other Judeans in 597 b.c., the death by war, starvation, and disease of many Judeans during the siege of Jerusalem in 588-86 b.c., and the captivity of many of those who survived. Instead of seeing these as punishments for their disobedience to the LORD as Jeremiah had preached to them, they saw these as consequences of their failure to continue the worship of the foreign gods.

8 tc The words “And the women added” are not in the Hebrew text. They are, however, implicit in what is said. They are found in the Syriac version and in one recension of the Greek version. W. L. Holladay (*Jeremiah* [Hermeneia], 2:279, n. 19a) suggests that these words are missing from the Hebrew text because of haplography, i.e., that the scribe left out הַנְּשִׂיִם אֲמָרוּ כִּי (vahnashim omru khi) because his eye jumped from the ו at the beginning to the כִּי (ki) that introduced the temporal clause and left out everything in between. It is, however, just as likely, given the fact that there are several other examples of quotes which have not been formally introduced in the book of Jeremiah, that the words were not there and are supplied by these two ancient versions as a translator’s clarification.

9 tn Or “When we sacrificed and poured out drink offering to the Queen of Heaven and made cakes in her image, wasn’t it with the knowledge and approval of our husbands?” *Heb* “When we sacrificed to the Queen of Heaven and poured out drink offerings [for the use of ל (lamed) + the infinitive construct to carry on the tense of the preceding verb see BDB 518 s.v. ל 7.b(h)] to her, did we make cakes to make an image of her and pour out drink offerings apart from [i.e., “without the knowledge and consent of,” so BDB 116 s.v. בְּלִבְּנֵי b(a)] our husbands?” The question expects a positive answer and has been rendered as an affirmation in the translation. The long, complex Hebrew sentence has again been broken in two and restructured to better conform with contemporary English style.

9 sn According to Jer 7:18-19 it was not only with the full knowledge and approval of their husbands but also with their active participation. Most of the commentaries call attention to the fact that what is being alluded to here is that a woman’s vow had to have her husband’s conscious approval to have any validity (cf. Num 30:7-16 and see the reference to the vow in v. 17).

44:20 Then Jeremiah replied to all the people, both men and women, who responded to him in this way.¹ 44:21 “The LORD did indeed remember and call to mind what you did! He remembered the sacrifices you and your ancestors, your kings, your leaders, and all the rest of the people of the land offered to other gods² in the towns of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem.³ 44:22 Finally the LORD could no longer endure your wicked deeds and the disgusting things you did. That is why your land has become the desolate, uninhabited ruin that it is today. That is why it has become a proverbial example used in curses.⁴ 44:23 You have sacrificed to other gods! You have sinned against the LORD! You have not obeyed the LORD! You have not followed his laws, his statutes, and his decrees! That is why this disaster that is evident to this day has happened to you.”⁵

44:24 Then Jeremiah spoke to all the people, particularly to all the women.⁶ “Listen to what the LORD has to say all you people of Judah who are in Egypt. 44:25 The LORD God of Israel who rules over all says, ‘You women⁷ have con-

firmed by your actions what you vowed with your lips! You said, “We will certainly carry out our vows to sacrifice and pour out drink offerings to the Queen of Heaven.” Well, then fulfill your vows! Carry them out!”⁸ 44:26 But⁹ listen to what the LORD has to say, all you people of Judah who are living in the land of Egypt. The LORD says, ‘I hereby swear by my own great name that none of the people of Judah who are living anywhere in Egypt will ever again invoke my name in their oaths! Never again will any of them use it in an oath saying, “As surely as the Lord GOD lives....”’¹⁰ 44:27 I will indeed¹¹ see to it that disaster, not prosperity, happens to them.¹² All the people of Judah who are in the land of Egypt will die in war or from starvation until not one of them is left. 44:28 Some who survive in battle will return to the land of Judah from the land of Egypt. But they will be very few indeed!¹³ Then the Judean remnant who have

ta'asenah] your [masc. pl.] vows.” Older commentaries, such as K&D 22:165, explain the feminine verbs as a matter of the women being the principle subject. Most all modern commentaries (e.g., J. A. Thompson, J. Bright, W. L. Holladay, and G. L. Keown, P. J. Scalise, T. G. Smothers) follow the reading of the Greek version which reads “you women” (= אֲתֵנָה הַנְּשִׂיִם, [*attenah hannashim*]) in place of “you and your wives” (אַתֶּם וְנִשְׁכֵּיכֶם, *'attem un'shekhem*) in the Hebrew. None of them, however, explain the use of the 2nd masc. plurals here. This is possibly a case where the masculine forms are used in the place of the feminine due to the dislike of Hebrew to use the feminine plural forms (cf. GKC 459 §144.a and 466 §145. t). This seems all the more probable when 2nd fem. pl. verbs are qualified by nouns with 2nd masc. pl. suffixes. The translation here follows this interpretation of the masc. pl. forms and reads “you women” with the Greek version in place of “you and your wives” and sees the referents throughout as the women.

⁸ **tn** Heb “Carry out your vows!”

⁹ **sn** The commands here are, of course, sarcastic and not meant to be taken literally.

¹⁰ **tn** Heb “Therefore.” This particle quite often introduces the announcement of judgment after an indictment or accusation of a crime. That is its function here after the statement of cause in vv. 24-25. However, it would not sound right after the immediately preceding ironical or sarcastic commands to go ahead and fulfill their vows. “But” is a better transition unless one wants to paraphrase “Therefore, since you are so determined to do that....”

¹¹ **tn** Heb “Behold I swear by...that my name will no more be pronounced in the mouth of any man of Judah in all the land of Egypt saying, ‘As the Lord Yahweh lives.’” The sentence has been broken up and restructured to better conform with contemporary English style and the significance of pronouncing the name has been interpreted for the sake of readers who might not be familiar with this biblical idiom.

¹² **sn** They will no longer be able to invoke his name in an oath because they will all be put to death (v. 27; cf. vv. 11-14).

¹³ **tn** Heb “Behold I.” For the use of this particle see the translator’s note on 1:6. Here it announces the reality of a fact.

¹⁴ **tn** Heb “Behold, I am watching over them for evil/disaster/harm not for good/prosperity/ blessing.” See a parallel usage in 31:28.

¹⁵ **tn** Heb “The survivors of the sword will return from the land of Egypt to the land of Judah few in number [more literally, “men of number”; for the idiom see BDB 709 s.v. מִקְבָּץ 1.a].” The term “survivors of the sword” may be intended to represent both those who survive death in war or death by starvation or disease, a synecdoche of species for all three genera.

¹⁶ **sn** This statement shows that the preceding “none,” “never

¹ **tn** Heb “And Jeremiah said to all the people, to the men and to the women, namely to all the people who answered him a word.” The appositional phrases have been combined to eliminate what would be redundant to a modern reader.

² **tn** The words “to other gods” are not in the text but are implicit from the context (cf. v. 17). They are supplied in the translation for clarity. It was not the act of sacrifice that was wrong but the recipient.

³ **tn** Heb “The sacrifices which you sacrificed in the towns of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem, you and your fathers, your kings and your leaders and the people of the land, did not the LORD remember them and [did they not] come into his mind?” The question is again rhetorical and expects a positive answer. So it is rendered here as an affirmative statement for the sake of clarity and simplicity. An attempt has been made to shorten the long Hebrew sentence to better conform with contemporary English style.

⁴ **tn** Heb “And/Then the LORD could no longer endure because of the evil of your deeds [and] because of the detestable things that you did and [or so] your land became a desolation and a waste and an occasion of a curse without inhabitant as this day.” The sentence has been broken up and restructured to better conform with contemporary English style, but an attempt has been made to preserve the causal and consequential connections.

⁵ **tn** Heb “Because you have sacrificed and you have sinned against the LORD and you have not listened to the voice of the LORD and in his laws, in his statutes, and in his decrees you have not walked, therefore this disaster has happened to you as this day.” The text has been broken down and restructured to better conform with contemporary English style.

⁶ **tn** Heb “and to all the women.” The “and” (וּ, *vav*) is to be explained here according to BDB 252 s.v. וּ 1.a. The focus of the address that follows is on the women. See the translator’s note on the next verse.

⁷ **tn** Or “You and your wives.” The text and referent here is uncertain because of the confusing picture that the alternation of pronouns presents in this verse. Three of the main verbs are second feminine plurals and one of them is second masculine plural. All the pronominal suffixes on the nouns are second masculine plurals. The Hebrew text reads: “You [masc. pl.] and your [masc. pl.] wives have spoken [2nd fem. pl.]; תִּבְרַכְיֶנָּה, *t'barber'nah*] with your [masc. pl.] mouth and you have fulfilled [masc. pl.]; מִלֵּלְתֶם, *mille'tem*] with your [masc. pl.] hands, saying, ‘We [common gender] will certainly carry out....’ Indeed fulfill [2nd fem. pl.]; תִּקְיִמְנָה, *taqimnah*] your [masc. pl.] vows and indeed carry out [2nd fem. pl.]; תִּשְׁיִנְיֶנָּה,

come to live in the land of Egypt will know whose word proves true,¹ mine or theirs.’ 44:29 Moreover the LORD says,² ‘I will make something happen to prove that I will punish you in this place. I will do it so that you will know that my threats to bring disaster on you will prove true.’ 44:30 I, the LORD, promise that⁴ I will hand Pharaoh Hophra⁵ king of Egypt over to his enemies who are seeking to kill him. I will do that just as surely as I handed King Zedekiah of Judah over to King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, his enemy who was seeking to kill him.”

Baruch is Rebuked but also Comforted

45:1 The prophet Jeremiah spoke to Baruch son of Neriah while he was writing down in a scroll the words that Jeremiah spoke to him.⁶

This happened in the fourth year that Jehoiakim son of Josiah was ruling over Judah.⁷ 45:2 “The LORD God of Israel has a message for you, Baruch. 45:3 ‘You have said, “I feel so hopeless!”⁸ For the LORD has added sorrow to my suffering.⁹ I am worn out from groaning. I can’t find any rest.””

45:4 The LORD told Jeremiah,¹⁰ “Tell Baruch,¹¹ ‘The LORD says, “I am about to tear down what I have built and to uproot what I have planted. I will do this throughout the whole earth.”¹² 45:5 Are you looking for great things for yourself? Do not look for such things. For I, the LORD, affirm¹³ that I am about to bring disaster on all humanity.¹⁴ But I will allow you to escape with your life¹⁵ wherever you go.””

again,” “all” in vv. 26-27 are rhetorical hyperbole. Not all but almost all; very few would survive. The following statement implies that the reason that they are left alive is to bear witness to the fact that the LORD’s threats were indeed carried out. See vv. 11-14 for a parallel use of “all” and “none” qualified by a “few.”

1 tn Heb “will stand,” i.e., in the sense of being fulfilled, proving to be true, or succeeding (see BDB 878 s.v. נָסַח 7.g).

2 tn Heb “oracle of the LORD.”

3 tn Heb “This will be to you the sign, oracle of the LORD, that I will punish you in this place in order that you may know that my threats against you for evil/disaster/harm will certainly stand [see the translator’s note on the preceding verse for the meaning of this word here].” The word “sign” refers to an event that is a pre-omen or portent of something that will happen later (see BDB 16 s.v. אִיּוֹר 2 and compare usage in 1 Sam 14:10; 2 Kgs 19:29). The best way to carry that idea across in this context seems to be “I will make something happen to prove [or portend].” Another possibility would be “I will give you a pre-omen that,” but many readers would probably not be familiar with “omen/pre-omen.” Again the sentence has been broken in two and restructured to better conform with English style.

4 tn Heb “Thus says the LORD, ‘Behold I will hand...’” The first person and indirect quote have been chosen because the LORD is already identified as the speaker and the indirect quote eliminates an extra level of embedded quotes.

5 sn Hophra ruled over Egypt from 589-570 B.C. He was the Pharaoh who incited Zedekiah to rebel against Nebuchadnezzar and whose army proved ineffective in providing any long-term relief to Jerusalem when it was under siege (see Jer 37 and especially the study note on 37:5). He was assassinated following a power struggle with a court official who had earlier saved him from a rebellion of his own troops and had ruled as co-regent with him.

6 sn It is unclear whether this refers to the first scroll (36:4) or the second (36:32). Perhaps from the reactions of Baruch this refers to the second scroll which was written after he had seen how the leaders had responded to the first (36:19). Baruch was from a well-placed family; his grandfather, Mahseiah (32:12) had been governor of Jerusalem under Josiah (2 Chr 34:8) and his brother was a high-ranking official in Zedekiah’s court (Jer 51:59). He himself appears to have had some personal aspirations that he could see were being or going to be jeopardized (v. 5). The passage is both a rebuke to Baruch and an encouragement that his life will be spared wherever he goes. This latter promise is perhaps the reason that the passage is placed where it is, i.e., after the seemingly universal threat of destruction of all who have gone to Egypt in Jer 44.

7 tn Heb “[This is] the word/message which Jeremiah the prophet spoke to Baruch son of Neriah when he wrote these words on a scroll from the mouth of Jeremiah in the fourth year of Jehoiakim son of Josiah king of Judah, saying.”

8 tn Heb “Woe to me!” See the translator’s note on 4:13 and 10:19 for the rendering of this term.

9 sn From the context it appears that Baruch was feeling sorry for himself (v. 5) as well as feeling anguish for the suffering that the nation would need to undergo according to the predictions of Jeremiah that he was writing down.

10 tn The words, “The LORD told Jeremiah” are not in the text but are implicit in the address that follows, “Thus you shall say to him.” These words are supplied in the translation for clarity.

11 tn Heb “Thus you shall say to him [i.e., Baruch].”

12 tn Heb “and this is with regard to the whole earth.” The feminine pronoun הִיא (*hi*) at the end refers to the verbal concepts just mentioned, i.e., this process (cf. GKC 459 §144.b and compare the use of the feminine singular suffix in the same function GKC 440-41 §135.p). The particle הִיא (*er*) is here functioning to introduce emphatically the object of the action (cf. BDB 85 s.v. הִיא 3.α). There is some debate whether הִיא (*erets*) here applies to the whole land of Israel or to the whole earth. However, the reference to “all mankind” (Heb “all flesh”) in the next verse as well as “anywhere you go” points to “the whole earth” as the referent.

13 tn Heb “oracle of the LORD.”

14 sn Compare Jer 25:31, 33. The reference here to universal judgment also forms a nice transition to the judgments on the nations that follow in Jer 46-51 which may be another reason for the placement of this chapter here, out of its normal chronological order (see also the study note on v. 1).

15 tn Heb “I will give you your life for a spoil.” For this idiom see the translator’s note on 21:9 and compare the usage in 21:9; 38:2; 39:18.

*Prophecies Against Foreign Nations*¹

46:1 The LORD spoke to Jeremiah about the nations.²

The Prophecy about Egypt's Defeat at Carchemish

46:2 He spoke about Egypt and the army of Pharaoh Necho king of Egypt which was encamped along the Euphrates River at Carchemish. Now this was the army that King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon defeated in the fourth year that Jehoiakim son of Josiah was ruling³ over Judah.⁴

46:3 “Fall into ranks with your shields ready!⁵

¹ **sn** Jeremiah was called to be a prophet not only to Judah and Jerusalem but to the nations (1:5, 10). The prophecies or oracles that are collected here in Jer 46-51 are found after 25:13a in the Greek version where they are also found in a different order and with several textual differences. The issue of which represents the original placement is part of the broader issue of the editorial or redactional history of the book of Jeremiah which went through several editions, two of which are referred to in Jer 36, i.e., the two scrolls written in the fourth year of Jehoiakim (605 B.C.), a third which included all the preceding plus the material down to the time of the fall of Jerusalem (cf. the introduction in 1:1-3) and a fourth that included all the preceding plus the materials in Jer 40-44. The oracles against the foreign nations collected here are consistent with the note of judgment sounded against all nations (including some not mentioned in Jer 46-51) in Jer 25. See the translator's note on 25:13 for further details regarding the possible relationship of the oracles to the foreign nations to the judgment speeches in Jer 25.

² **tn** *Heb* “That which came [as] the word of the LORD to Jeremiah about the nations.” See the translator's note on 14:1 for the construction here.

³ **sn** The fourth year of Jehoiakim's reign proved very significant in the prophecies of Jeremiah. It was in that same year that he issued the prophecies against the foreign nations recorded in Jer 25 (and probably the prophecies recorded here in Jer 46-51) and that he had Baruch record and read to the people gathered in the temple all the prophecies he had uttered against Judah and Jerusalem up to that point in the hopes that they would repent and the nation would be spared. The fourth year of Jehoiakim (605 B.C.) marked a significant shift in the balance of power in Palestine. With the defeat of Necho at Carchemish in that year the area came under the control of Nebuchadnezzar and Judah and the surrounding nations had two options, submit to Babylon and pay tribute or suffer the consequences of death in war or exile in Babylon for failure to submit.

⁴ **tn** *Heb* “Concerning Egypt: Concerning the army of Pharaoh Necho king of Egypt which was beside the Euphrates River at Carchemish which Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon defeated in the fourth year of Jehoiakim son of Josiah king of Judah.” The sentence has been broken up, restructured, and introductory words supplied in the translation to make the sentences better conform with contemporary English style. The dating formula is placed in brackets because the passage is prophetic about the battle, but the bracketed words were superscription or introduction and thus were added after the outcome was known.

⁵ **tn** This is often translated “prepare your shields, both small and large.” However, the idea of “prepare” is misleading because the Hebrew word here (אַרַח, *'arakh*) refers in various senses to arranging or setting things in order, such as altars in a row, dishes on a table, soldiers in ranks. Here it refers to the soldiers lining up in rank with ranks of soldiers holding at the ready the long oval or rectangular “shield” (שִׁנְיָהּ [sinnyah]; cf. BDB 857 s.v. III שִׁנְיָהּ) which protected the whole body and the smaller round “buckler” (מַגֵּן, *maghen*) which only protected the torso (the relative size of these two kinds of shields can

Prepare to march into battle!
46:4 Harness the horses to the chariots!
Mount your horses!
Put on your helmets and take your positions!

Sharpen your spears!
Put on your armor!

46:5 What do I see?⁶ says the LORD.⁷
“The soldiers⁸ are terrified.

They are retreating.

They have been defeated.

They are overcome with terror;⁹
they desert quickly
without looking back.

46:6 But even the swiftest cannot get away.

Even the strongest cannot escape.¹⁰

There in the north by the Euphrates River
they stumble and fall in defeat.¹¹

46:7 “Who is this that rises like the Nile,
like its streams¹² turbulent at flood stage?

be seen from the weight of each in 1 Kgs 10:16-17). These were to be arranged in solid ranks to advance into battle. It would be pedantic and misleading to translate here “Fall into ranks with your large and small shields at the ready” because that might suggest that soldiers had more than one kind. It is uncertain who is issuing the commands here. TEV adds “The Egyptian officers shout,” which is the interpretation of J. A. Thompson (*Jeremiah* [NICOT], 688).

⁶ **tn** *Heb* “Why do I see?” The rendering is that of J. A. Thompson (*Jeremiah* [NICOT], 685, 88) and J. Bright (*Jeremiah* [AB], 301; TEV; NIV). The question is not asking for information but is expressing surprise or wonder (see E. W. Bullinger, *Figures of Speech*, 951).

sn The passage takes an unexpected turn at v. 5. After ironically summoning the Egyptian army to battle, the LORD rhetorically expresses his surprise that they are so completely routed and defeated.

⁷ **tn** *Heb* “oracle of the LORD.” This phrase, which is part of a messenger formula (i.e., that the words that are spoken are from him), are actually at the end of the verse. They have been put here for better poetic balance and to better identify the “I.”

⁸ **tn** *Heb* “Their soldiers.” These words are actually at the midpoint of the stanza as the subject of the third of the five verbs. However, as G. L. Keown, P. J. Scalise, and T. G. Smothers (*Jeremiah* 26-52 [WBC], 291) note, this is the subject of all five verbs “are terrified,” “are retreating,” “have been defeated,” “have run away,” and “have not looked back.” The subject is put at the front to avoid an unidentified “they.”

⁹ **tn** *Heb* “terror is all around.”

¹⁰ **tn** The translation assumes that the adjectives with the article are functioning as superlatives in this context (cf. GKC 431 §133.g). It also assumes that אַל (*al*) with the jussive is expressing here an emphatic negative rather than a negative wish (cf. GKC 317 §107.p and compare the usage in Ps 50:3).

¹¹ **tn** *Heb* “they stumble and fall.” However, the verbs here are used of a fatal fall, of a violent death in battle (see BDB 657 s.v. שָׁבַע; Qal.2.a), and a literal translation might not be understood by some readers.

¹² **tn** The word translated “streams” here refers to the streams of the Nile (cf. Exod 7:19; 8:1) for parallel usage.

sn The hubris of the Egyptian Pharaoh is referred to in vv. 7-8 as he compares his might to that of the Nile River whose annual flooding was responsible for the fertility of Egypt. A very similar picture of the armies of Assyria overcoming everything in its path is presented in Isa 8:7-8.

46:8 Egypt rises like the Nile,
like its streams turbulent at flood stage.
Egypt says, 'I will arise and cover the
earth.

I will destroy cities and the people who
inhabit them.'

46:9 Go ahead and¹ charge into battle, you
horsemen!

Drive furiously, you charioteers!
Let the soldiers march out into battle,
those from Ethiopia and Libya who carry
shields,
and those from Lydia² who are armed
with the bow.³

46:10 But that day belongs to the Lord
God who rules over all.⁴

It is the day when he will pay back his
enemies.⁵

His sword will devour them until its ap-
petite is satisfied!

It will drink their blood until it is full!⁶

For the Lord GOD who rules over all⁷ will
offer them up as a sacrifice
in the land of the north by the Euphrates
River.

46:11 Go up to Gilead and get medicinal
ointment,⁸
you dear poor people of Egypt.⁹

But it will prove useless no matter how
much medicine you use;¹⁰
there will be no healing for you.

46:12 The nations will hear of your devas-
tating defeat,¹¹
your cries of distress will echo through-
out the earth.

In the panic of their flight one soldier will
trip over another
and both of them will fall down de-
feated."¹²

*The Lord Predicts that Nebuchadnezzar Will
Attack and Plunder Egypt*

46:13 The LORD spoke to the prophet Jeremiah
about Nebuchadnezzar coming to attack the land
of Egypt.¹³

46:14 "Make an announcement throughout
Egypt.

Proclaim it in Migdol, Memphis, and
Tahpanhes.¹⁴

'Take your positions and prepare to do
battle.

For the enemy army is destroying all the
nations around you."¹⁵

¹ **tn** The words "Go ahead and" are not in the text but are in-
tended to suggest the ironical nature of the commands here.
The LORD is again setting them up for a fall (v. 10). See the
translator's note on v. 4.

² **sn** The peoples that are referred to here are all known to
have been mercenaries in the army of Egypt (see Nah 3:9;
Ezek 30:5). The place names in Hebrew are actually Cush,
Put, and Lud. "Cush" has already been identified in Jer 13:23
as the region along the Nile south of Egypt most commonly
referred to as Ethiopia. The identification of "Put" and "Lud"
are both debated though it is generally felt that Put was a part
of Libya and Lud is to be identified with Lydia in Asia Minor.
For further discussion see M. J. Mellink, "Lud, Ludim" *IDB*
3:178, and T. O. Lambdin, "Put," *IDB* 3:971.

³ **tn** *Heb* "who grasp and bend the bow."

⁴ **tn** *Heb* "the Lord Yahweh of armies." See the study note at
2:19 for the translation and significance of this title for God.

⁵ **sn** Most commentators think that this is a reference to the
LORD exacting vengeance on Pharaoh Necho for killing Josiah,
carrying Jehoahaz off into captivity, and exacting heavy tribu-
te on Judah in 609 B.C. (2 Kgs 23:29, 33-35).

⁶ **tn** Or more paraphrastically, "he will kill them/ until he
has exacted full vengeance"; *Heb* "The sword will eat and be
sated; it will drink its fill of their blood."

⁷ **sn** This passage is, of course, highly figurative. The LORD
does not have a literal "sword," but he uses agents of de-
struction like the Assyrian armies (called his "rod" in Isa
10:5-6) and the Babylonian armies (called his war club in Jer
51:20) to wreak vengeance on his foes. Likewise, swords do
not "eat" or "drink." What is meant here is that God will use
this battle against the Egyptians to kill off many Egyptians un-
til his vengeance is fully satisfied.

⁸ **tn** *Heb* "the Lord Yahweh of armies." See the study note
at 2:19 for the translation and significance of this title for
God.

⁹ **tn** *Heb* "balm." See 8:22 and the notes on this phrase
there.

¹⁰ **sn** *Heb* "Virgin Daughter of Egypt." See the study note on
Jer 14:17 for the significance of the use of this figure. The use
of the figure here perhaps refers to the fact that Egypt's geo-
graphical isolation allowed her safety and protection that a
virgin living at home would enjoy under her father's protection
(so F. B. Huey, *Jeremiah, Lamentations* [NAC], 379). By her

involvement in the politics of Palestine she had forfeited that
safety and protection and was now suffering for it.

¹⁰ **tn** *Heb* "In vain you multiply [= make use of many] medi-
cines."

¹¹ **tn** *Heb* "of your shame." The "shame," however, applies
to the devastating defeat they will suffer.

¹² **tn** The words "In the panic of their flight" and "defeated"
are not in the text but are supplied in the translation to give
clarity to the metaphor for the average reader. The verbs in
this verse are all in the tense that emphasizes that the action
is viewed as already having been accomplished (i.e., the
Hebrew prophetic perfect). This is consistent with the *vav*
consecutive perfects in v. 10 which look to the future.

¹³ **tn** *Heb* "The word which the LORD spoke to the prophet
Jeremiah about the coming of Nebuchadnezzar king of Baby-
lon to attack the land of Egypt."

¹⁴ **sn** Though there is much debate in the commentaries re-
garding the dating and reference of this prophecy, it most
likely refers to a time shortly after 604 B.C. when Nebuchad-
nezzar followed up his successful battle against Necho at
Carchemish with a campaign into the Philistine plain which
resulted in the conquest and sacking of Ashkelon. Nebuchad-
nezzar now stood poised on the border of Egypt to invade it.
See J. A. Thompson, *Jeremiah* (NICOT), 691, and for a fuller
discussion including the other main options see G. L. Keown,
P. J. Scalise, T. G. Smothers, *Jeremiah 26-52* (WBC), 287-88.

¹⁴ **tn** *Heb* "Declare in Egypt and announce in Migdol and
announce in Noph [= Memphis] and in Tahpanhes." The sen-
tence has been restructured to reflect the fact that the first
command is a general one, followed by announcements in
specific (representative?) cities.

¹⁵ **sn** For the location of the cities of Migdol, Memphis, and
Tahpanhes see the note on Jer 44:1. These were all cities in
Lower or northern Egypt that would have been the first affected
by an invasion.

¹⁵ **tn** *Heb* "For the sword devours those who surround you."
The "sword" is again figurative of destructive forces. Here it is
a reference to the forces of Nebuchadnezzar which have al-
ready destroyed the Egyptian forces at Carchemish and have
made victorious forays into the Philistine plain.

46:15 Why will your soldiers⁴ be defeated?²

They will not stand because I, the LORD, will thrust³ them down.

46:16 I will make many stumble.⁴

They will fall over one another in their hurry to flee.⁵

¹ **tn** The word translated “soldiers” (אֲבִירִים, *’abbirim*) is not the Hebrew word that has been used of soldiers elsewhere in these oracles (גִּבּוֹרִים, *gibborim*). It is an adjective used as a noun that can apply to animals, i.e., of a bull (Ps 50:13) or a stallion (Judg 5:22). Moreover, the form is masculine plural and the verbs are singular. Hence, many modern commentaries and English versions follow the redivision of the first line presupposed by the Greek version, “Apis has fled” (גָּם הָרָף, *nas khaf*) and see this as a reference to the bull god of Memphis. However, the noun is used of soldiers in Lam 1:15 and the plural could be the distributive plural, i.e., each and every one (cf. GKC 464 §145.1 and compare usage in Gen 27:29).

² **tn** The Hebrew word used here only occurs here (in the Niphal) and in Prov 28:3 (in the Qal) where it refers to a rain that beats down grain. That idea would fit nicely with the idea of the soldiers being beaten down, or defeated. It is possible that the rarity of this verb (versus the common verb נָס, *nus*, “flee”) and the ready identification of Apis with the bull calf (אֲבִיר, *’abbir*) has led to the reading of the Greek text (so C. von Orelli, *Jeremiah*, 327). The verbs in this verse and the following are in the perfect tense but should be understood as prophetic perfects since the text is dealing with what will happen when Nebuchadnezzar comes into Egypt. The text of vv. 18-24 shows a greater mixture with some perfects and some imperfects, sometimes even within the same verse (e.g., v. 22).

³ **tn** *Heb* “the LORD will thrust them down.” However, the LORD is speaking (cf. clearly in v. 18), so the first person is adopted for the sake of consistency. This has been a consistent problem in the book of Jeremiah where the prophet is so identified with the word of the LORD that he sometimes uses the first person and sometimes the third. It creates confusion for the average reader who is trying to follow the flow of the argument and has been shifted to the first person like this on a number of occasions. TEV and CEV have generally adopted the same policy as have some other modern English versions at various points.

⁴ **tn** *Heb* “he multiplied the one stumbling.” For the first person reference see the preceding translator’s note.

⁵ **tc** The words “in their hurry to flee” are not in the text but appear to be necessary to clarify the point that the stumbling and falling here is not the same as that in vv. 6, 12 where they occur in the context of defeat and destruction. Reference here appears to be to the mercenary soldiers who in their hurried flight to escape stumble over one another and fall. This is fairly clear from the literal translation “he multiplies the stumbling one. Also [= and] a man falls against a man and they say [probably = “saying”; an epexegetical use of the *vav* (ו) consecutive (IBHS 551 §33.2.2a, and see Exod 2:10 as a parallel)] ‘Get up! Let’s go...’” A reference to the flight of the mercenaries is also seen in v. 21. Many of the modern commentaries and a few of the modern English versions follow the Greek text and read vv. 15a-16 very differently. The Greek reads “Why has Apis fled from you? Your choice calf [i.e., Apis] has not remained. For the Lord has paralyzed him. And your multitudes have fainted and fallen; and each one said to his neighbor...” (reading רָבַךְ בָּשֶׁל גָּם נָפַל וַיֵּאמְרוּ אִישׁ אֶל־רֵעֵהוּ instead of בָּשֶׁל הָרֵבֶךְ גָּם נָפַל אִישׁ אֶל־רֵעֵהוּ). One would expect אִישׁ אֶל־רֵעֵהוּ (‘ish ‘el-re’ehu) to go with וַיֵּאמְרוּ (*vayyom’ru*) because it is idiomatic in this expression (cf., e.g., Gen 11:3; Judg 6:29). However, אִישׁ אֶל־רֵעֵהוּ (‘ish ‘el-re’ehu) is also found with singular verbs as here in Exod 22:9; 33:11; 1 Sam 10:11. There is no doubt that the Hebrew text is the more difficult and thus probably original. The reading of the Greek version is not supported by any other text or version and looks like an attempt to smooth out a somewhat awkward Hebrew original.

They will say, ‘Get up!
Let’s go back to our own people.
Let’s go back to our homelands
because the enemy is coming to destroy
us.’⁶

46:17 There at home they will say, ‘Pharaoh king of Egypt is just a big noise!’⁷
He has let the most opportune moment
pass by.’⁸

46:18 I the King, whose name is the LORD
who rules over all,⁹ swear this:
I swear as surely as I live that¹⁰ a conqueror
is coming.
He will be as imposing as Mount Tabor is
among the mountains,
as Mount Carmel is against the backdrop
of the sea.¹¹

46:19 Pack your bags for exile,
you inhabitants of poor dear Egypt.¹²
For Memphis will be laid waste.

It will lie in ruins¹³ and be uninhabited.

46:20 Egypt is like a beautiful young cow.

⁶ **tn** *Heb* “to our native lands from before the sword of the oppressor.” The compound preposition “from before” is regularly used in a causal sense (see BDB 818 s.v. מִפְּנֵי 6.a, b, c). The “sword” is again interpreted as a figure for the destructive power of an enemy army.

⁷ **tn** *Heb* “is a noise.” The addition of “just a big” is contextually motivated and is supplied in the translation to suggest the idea of sarcasm. The reference is probably to his boast in v. 8.

⁸ **tn** *Heb* “he has let the appointed time pass him by.” It is unclear what is meant by the reference to “appointed time” other than the fact that Pharaoh has missed his opportunity to do what he claimed to be able to do. The Greek text is again different here. It reads “Call the name of Pharaoh Necho king of Egypt Saon esbeie moed,” reading קִרְאוּ שֵׁם (qir’u shem) for שֵׁם קִרְאוּ (qor’u) and transliterating the last line.

⁹ **tn** *Heb* “Yahweh of armies.” For the significance of this title see the note at 2:19.

¹⁰ **tn** *Heb* “As I live, oracle of the King, whose...” The indirect quote has been chosen to create a smoother English sentence and avoid embedding a quote within a quote.

¹¹ **tn** *Heb* “Like Tabor among the mountains and like Carmel by the sea he will come.” The addition of “conqueror” and “imposing” are implicit from the context and from the metaphor. They have been supplied in the translation to give the reader some idea of the meaning of the verse.

sn Most of the commentaries point out that neither Tabor nor Carmel are all that tall in terms of sheer height. Mount Tabor, on the east end of the Jezreel Valley, is only about 1800 feet (540 m) tall. Mount Carmel, on the Mediterranean Coast, is only about 1700 feet (510 m) at its highest. However, all the commentators point out that the idea of imposing height and majesty are due to the fact that they are rugged mountains that stand out dominantly over their surroundings. The point of the simile is that Nebuchadnezzar and his army will stand out in power and might over all the surrounding kings and their armies.

¹² **tn** *Heb* “inhabitants of daughter Egypt.” Like the phrase “daughter Zion,” “daughter Egypt” is a poetic personification of the land, here perhaps to stress the idea of defenselessness.

¹³ **tn** For the verb here see HALOT 675 s.v. II נָצַח; Nif and compare the usage in Jer 4:7; 9:11 and 2 Kgs 19:25. BDB derives the verb from נִיצַח (so BDB 428 s.v. נִיצַח; Niph meaning “kindle, burn”) but still give it the meaning “desolate” here and in 2:15 and 9:11.

But northern armies will attack her like swarms of stinging flies.¹

46:21 Even her mercenaries² will prove to be like pampered,³ well-fed calves.

For they too will turn and run away. They will not stand their ground when⁴ the time for them to be destroyed comes, the time for them to be punished.

46:22 Egypt will run away, hissing like a snake,⁵ as the enemy comes marching up in force.

They will come against her with axes as if they were woodsmen chopping down trees.

46:23 The population of Egypt is like a vast, impenetrable forest.

But I, the LORD, affirm⁶ that the enemy will cut them down.

For those who chop them down will be more numerous than locusts.

They will be too numerous to count.⁷

46:24 Poor dear Egypt⁸ will be put to shame.

She will be handed over to the people from the north.”

46:25 The LORD God of Israel who rules over all⁹ says, “I will punish Amon, the god of Thebes.¹⁰ I will punish Egypt, its gods, and its kings. I will punish Pharaoh and all who trust in him.¹¹ **46:26** I will hand them over to Nebuchadnezzar and his troops, who want to kill them. But later on, people will live in Egypt again as they did in former times. I, the LORD, affirm it!”¹²

A Promise of Hope for Israel

46:27¹³ “You descendants of Jacob, my servants,¹⁴ do not be afraid; do not be terrified, people of Israel. For I will rescue you and your descendants

¹ **tn** *Heb* “Egypt is a beautiful heifer. A gadfly from the north will come against her.” The metaphors have been turned into similes for the sake of clarity. The exact meaning of the word translated “stinging fly” is uncertain due to the fact that it occurs nowhere else in Hebrew literature. For a discussion of the meaning of the word which probably refers to the “gadfly,” which bites and annoys livestock, see W. L. Holladay, *Jeremiah* (Hermeneia), 2:331, who also suggests, probably correctly, that the word is a collective referring to swarms of such insects (cf. the singular אַרְבֵּה [‘arbeh] in v. 23 which always refers to swarms of locusts). The translation presupposes the emendation of the second בָּה (ba’) to בַּה (bah) with a number of Hebrew mss and a number of the versions (cf. *BHS*, fn b).

² **tn** *Heb* “her hirelings in her midst.”

³ **tn** The word “pampered” is not in the text. It is supplied in the translation to explain the probable meaning of the simile. The mercenaries were well cared for like stall-fed calves, but in the face of the danger they will prove no help because they will turn and run away without standing their ground. Some see the point of the simile to be that they too are fattened for slaughter. However, the next two lines do not fit that interpretation too well.

⁴ **tn** The temporal use of the particle כִּי (*ki*; BDB 472 s.v. כִּי 2.a) seems more appropriate to the context than the causal use.

⁵ **tn** Or “Egypt will rustle away like a snake”; *Heb* “her sound goes like the snake,” or “her sound [is] like the snake [when] it goes.” The meaning of the simile is debated. Some see a reference to the impotent hiss of a fleeing serpent (F. B. Huey, *Jeremiah, Lamentations* [NAC], 382), others the sound of a serpent stealthily crawling away when it is disturbed (H. Freedman, *Jeremiah* [SoBB], 297-98). The translation follows the former interpretation because of the irony involved.

sn Several commentators point out the irony of the snake slithering away (or hissing away) in retreat. The coiled serpent was a part of the royal insignia, signifying its readiness to strike. Pharaoh had boasted of great things (v. 8) but was just a big noise (v. 17); now all he could do was hiss as he beat his retreat (v. 22).

⁶ **tn** *Heb* “Oracle of the LORD.” Again the first person is adopted because the LORD is speaking and the indirect quotation is used to avoid an embedded quotation with quotation marks on either side.

⁷ **tn** The precise meaning of this verse is uncertain. The Hebrew text reads: “They [those who enter in great force] will cut down her forest, oracle of the LORD, though it [the forest] cannot be searched out/through for they [those who come in great force] are more numerous than locusts and there is

no number to them.” Some see the reference to the forest as metaphorical of Egypt’s population which the Babylonian army decimates (H. Freedman, *Jeremiah* [SoBB], 298, and see BDB 420 s.v. יָבֵר 1.a which refers to the forest as a figure of foes to be cut down and destroyed and compare Isa 10:34). Others see the reference to literal trees and see the decimation of Egypt in general (C. von Orelli, *Jeremiah*, 329). And some see it as a continuation of the simile of the snake fleeing, the soldiers cutting down the trees because they cannot find it (J. A. Thompson, *Jeremiah* [NICOT], 693). However, the simile of v. 22a has already been dropped in v. 22b-d; they come against her. Hence it is probably best to see this as a continuation of the simile in v. 22c-d and see the reference to the Babylonian army coming against her, i.e., Egypt (the nation or people of Egypt), like woodcutters cutting down trees.

⁸ **tn** *Heb* “Daughter Egypt.” See the translator’s note on v. 19.

⁹ **tn** *Heb* “Yahweh of armies, the God of Israel.” For the significance of this title see the note at 2:19.

¹⁰ **tn** *Heb* “Amon of No.”

sn The Egyptian city called *No* (נֹ, *no*) in Hebrew was Thebes. It is located about 400 miles (666 km) south of modern-day Cairo. It was the capital of Upper or southern Egypt and the center for the worship of the god Amon who became the state god of Egypt. Thebes is perhaps best known today for the magnificent temples at Karnak and Luxor on the east bank of the Nile.

¹¹ **tc** *Heb* “Behold I will punish Amon of No and Pharaoh and Egypt and its gods and its kings and Pharaoh and all who trust in him.” There appears to be a copyist slip involving a double writing of וְיָבֵר פְּרִיָהוּ (*v^e al-par’oh*). The present translation has followed the suggestion of *BHS* and deleted the first one since the second is necessary for the syntactical connection, “Pharaoh and all who trust in him.”

¹² **tn** *Heb* “Oracle of the LORD.”

¹³ **sn** Jer 46:27-28 are virtually the same as 30:10-11. The verses are more closely related to that context than to this. But the presence of a note of future hope for the Egyptians may have led to a note of encouragement also to the Judeans who were under threat of judgment at the same time (cf. the study notes on 46:2, 13 and 25:1-2 for the possible relative dating of these prophecies).

¹⁴ **tn** *Heb* “And/But you do not be afraid, my servant Jacob.” Here and elsewhere in the verse the terms Jacob and Israel are poetic for the people of Israel descended from the patriarch Jacob. The terms have been supplied throughout with plural referents for greater clarity.

from the faraway lands where you are captives.¹

The descendants of Jacob will return to their land and enjoy peace.

They will be secure and no one will terrify them.

46:28 I, the LORD, tell² you not to be afraid,

you descendants of Jacob, my servant, for I am with you.

Though I completely destroy all the nations where I scatter you,

I will not completely destroy you.

I will indeed discipline you but only in due measure.

I will not allow you to go entirely unpunished.³

Judgment on the Philistine Cities

47:1 The LORD spoke to the prophet Jeremiah⁴ about the Philistines before Pharaoh attacked Gaza.⁵

47:2 “Look! Enemies are gathering in the north like water rising in a river.⁶

They will be like an overflowing stream. They will overwhelm the whole country and everything in it like a flood.

They will overwhelm the cities and their inhabitants.

People will cry out in alarm.

Everyone living in the country will cry out in pain.

47:3 Fathers will hear the hoofbeats of the enemies’ horses,

the clatter of their chariots and the rumbling of their wheels.

They will not turn back to save their

children

because they will be paralyzed with fear.⁷

47:4 For the time has come

to destroy all the Philistines.

The time has come to destroy all the help that remains for Tyre⁸ and Sidon.⁹

For I, the LORD, will¹⁰ destroy the Philistines,

that remnant that came from the island of Crete.¹¹

47:5 The people of Gaza will shave their heads in mourning.

The people of Ashkelon will be struck dumb.

How long will you gash yourselves to show your sorrow,¹²

you who remain of Philistia’s power?¹³

47:6 How long will you cry out,¹⁴ ‘Oh, sword of the LORD,

¹ **tn** *Heb* “For I will rescue you from far away, your descendants from the land of their captivity.”

² **tn** *Heb* “Oracle of the LORD.” Again the first person is adopted because the LORD is speaking and the indirect quotation is used to avoid an embedded quotation with quotation marks on either side.

³ **tn** The translation “entirely unpunished” is intended to reflect the emphatic construction of the infinitive absolute before the finite verb.

⁴ **tn** *Heb* “That which came [as] the word of the LORD to Jeremiah.” For this same construction see 14:1; 46:1 and see the translator’s note at 14:1 for explanation.

⁵ **sn** The precise dating of this prophecy is uncertain. Several proposals have been suggested, the most likely of which is that the prophecy was delivered in 609 B.C. in conjunction with Pharaoh Necho’s advance into Palestine to aid the Assyrians. That was the same year that Josiah was killed by Necho at the battle of Megiddo and four years before Necho was defeated by Nebuchadnezzar, the foe from the north. The prophecy presupposes that Ashkelon is still in existence (v. 5) hence it must be before 604 B.C. For a fairly complete discussion of the options see G. L. Keown, P. J. Scalise, T. G. Smothers, *Jeremiah* 26-52 (WBC), 299-300.

⁶ **tn** *Heb* “Behold! Waters are rising from the north.” The metaphor of enemy armies compared to overflowing water is seen also in Isa 8:8-9 (Assyria) and 46:7-8 (Egypt). Here it refers to the foe from the north (Jer 1:14; 4:6; etc) which is specifically identified with Babylon in Jer 25. The metaphor has been turned into a simile in the translation to help the average reader identify that a figure is involved and to hint at the referent.

⁷ **tn** *Heb* “From the noise of the stamping of the hoofs of his stallions, from the rattling of his chariots at the rumbling of their wheels, fathers will not turn to their children from sinking of hands.” According to BDB 952 s.v. יָרָחַ the “sinking of the hands” is figurative of helplessness caused by terror. A very similar figure is seen with a related expression in Isa 35:3-4. The sentence has been restructured to put the subject up front and to suggest through shorter sentences more in keeping with contemporary English style the same causal connections. The figures have been interpreted for the sake of clarity for the average reader.

⁸ **map** For location see Map1-A2; Map2-G2; Map4-A1; JP3-F3; JP4-F3.

⁹ **map** For location see Map1-A1; JP3-F3; JP4-F3.

¹⁰ **tn** *Heb* “For the LORD will.” The first person style has been adopted because the LORD is speaking (cf. v. 2).

¹¹ **sn** *All the help that remains for Tyre and Sidon and that remnant that came from the island of Crete* appear to be two qualifying phrases that refer to the Philistines, the last with regard to their origin and the first with regard to the fact that they were allies that Tyre and Sidon depended on. “Crete” is literally “Caphtor” which is generally identified with the island of Crete. The Philistines had come from there (Amos 9:7) in the wave of migration from the Aegean Islands during the twelfth and eleventh century and had settled on the Philistine plain after having been repulsed from trying to enter Egypt.

¹² **sn** Shaving one’s head and gashing one’s body were customs to show mourning or sadness for the dead (cf. Deut 14:1; Mic 1:16; Ezek 27:31; Jer 16:6; 48:37).

¹³ **tn** Or “you who are left alive on the Philistine plain.” Or “you who remain of the Anakim.” The translation follows the suggestion of several of the modern commentaries that the word עֲנָקִים (*emeq*) means “strength” or “power” here (see J. A. Thompson, *Jeremiah* [NICOT], 698; J. Bright, *Jeremiah* [AB], 310; and see also HALOT 803 s.v. II עֲנָקִים). It is a rare homonym of the word that normally means “valley” that seems to be an inappropriate designation of the Philistine plain. Many of the modern English versions and commentaries follow the Greek version which reads here “remnant of the Anakim” עֲנָקִים [anaqim] instead of עֲנָקִים [imqam], a confusion of basically one letter). This emendation is followed by both BDB 771 s.v. עֲנָקִים and KBL 716 s.v. עֲנָקִים. The Anakim were generally associated with the southern region around Hebron but an enclave of them was known to have settled in Gaza, Gath, and Ekron, three of the Philistine cities (cf. Josh 11:22). However, the fact that this judgment is directed against the Philistines not the Anakim and that this homonym apparently appears also in Jer 49:4 makes the reading of “power” more likely here.

¹⁴ **tn** The words “How long will you cry out” are not in the text but some such introduction seems necessary because the rest of the speech assumes a personal subject.

how long will it be before you stop
killing?¹
Go back into your sheath!
Stay there and rest!²
47:7 But how can it rest³
when I, the LORD, have⁴ given it orders?
I have ordered it to attack
the people of Ashkelon and the seacoast.⁵

Judgment Against Moab

48:1 The LORD God of Israel who rules over all⁶ spoke about Moab.⁷

“Sure to be judged is Nebo! Indeed,⁸ it
will be destroyed!
Kiriathaim⁹ will suffer disgrace. It will be
captured!

¹ **tn** *Heb* “before you are quiet/at rest.”

² **sn** The passage is highly figurative. The sword of the LORD, which is itself a figure of the destructive agency of the enemy armies, is here addressed as a person and is encouraged in rhetorical questions (the questions are designed to dissuade) to “be quiet,” “be at rest,” “be silent,” all of which is designed to get the LORD to call off the destruction against the Philistines.

³ **tn** The reading here follows the Greek, Syriac, and Latin versions. The Hebrew text reads “how can you rest” as a continuation of the second person in v. 6.

⁴ **tn** *Heb* “When the LORD has.” The first person is again adopted because the LORD has been speaking.

⁵ **tn** *Heb* “Against Ashkelon and the sea coast, there he has appointed it.” For the switch to the first person see the preceding translator’s note. “There” is poetical and redundant and the idea of “attacking” is implicit in “against.”

⁶ **tn** *Heb* “Yahweh of armies, the God of Israel.” For this title see 7:3 and the study note on 2:19.

⁷ **sn** *Moab* was a country east of the Dead Sea whose boundaries varied greatly over time. Basically, it was the tableland between the Arnon River about halfway up the Dead Sea and the Zered River which is roughly at the southern tip of the Dead Sea. When the Israelites entered Palestine they were forbidden to take any of the Moabite territory but they did capture the kingdom of Sihon north of the Arnon which Sihon had taken from Moab. Several of the towns mentioned in the oracles of judgment against Moab here are in this territory north of the Arnon and were assigned to Reuben and Gad. Several are mentioned on the famous Moabite Stone which details how Mesha king of Moab recovered from Israel many of these cities during the reign of Joram (852-841 b.c.; cf. 2 Kgs 3:4-5). It is usually assumed that Moab submitted to Nebuchadnezzar after the battle of Carchemish and that they remained loyal to him throughout most of this period, though representatives were present at Jerusalem in 594 b.c. when plans for revolt were apparently being discussed (Jer 27:3). Moabite contingents were used by Nebuchadnezzar in 598 b.c. to harass Jehoiakim after he rebelled (2 Kgs 24:2) so they must have remained loyal at that time. According to the Jewish historian Josephus, Nebuchadnezzar conquered Moab in 582 b.c. and destroyed many of its cities.

⁸ **tn** *Heb* “Woe to Nebo for it is destroyed.” For the use of the Hebrew particle “Woe” (רוי, *hoy*) see the translator’s note on 22:13. The translation has taken this form because the phrase “Woe to” probably does not convey the proper meaning or significance to the modern reader. The verbs again are in the tense (Hebrew prophetic perfect) that views the action as if it were as good as done. The particle כִּי (*ki*) probably is causal but the asseverative works better in the modified translation.

⁹ **sn** *Nebo* and *Kiriathaim* were both north of the Arnon and were assigned to Reuben (Num 32:3, Josh 13:19). They are both mentioned on the Moabite Stone as having been recovered from Israel.

Its fortress¹⁰ will suffer disgrace. It will
be torn down!¹¹

48:2 People will not praise Moab any
more.

The enemy will capture Heshbon¹² and
plot¹³ how to destroy Moab,¹⁴
saying, ‘Come, let’s put an end to that
nation!’

City of Madmen, you will also be de-
stroyed.¹⁵

A destructive army will march against
you.¹⁶

48:3 Cries of anguish will arise in Horo-
naim,

‘Oh, the ruin and great destruction!’

48:4 ‘Moab will be crushed.

Her children will cry out in distress.¹⁷

¹⁰ **tn** Or “Misgab.” The translation here follows the majority of commentaries and English versions. Only REB sees this as a place name, “Misgab,” which is otherwise unknown. The constant use of this word to refer to a fortress, the presence of the article on the front of it, and the lack of any reference to a place of this name anywhere else argues against it being a place name. However, the fact that the verbs that accompany it are feminine while the noun for “fortress” is masculine causes some pause.

¹¹ **tn** For the meaning of the verb here see BDB 369 s.v. הָרַת Qal.1 and compare usage in Isa 7:8; 30:31.

¹² **sn** *Heshbon* was originally a Moabite city but was captured by Sihon king of Og and made his capital (Num 21:26-30). It was captured from Sihon and originally assigned to the tribe of Reuben (Num 32:37; Josh 13:17). Later it was made a Levitical city and was assigned to the tribe of Gad (Josh 21:39). It formed the northern limits of Moab. It was located about eighteen miles east of the northern tip of the Dead Sea.

¹³ **sn** There is a wordplay in Hebrew on the word “Heshbon” and the word “plot” (חֵשְׁבוּ, *khoshvu*).

¹⁴ **tn** *Heb* “In Heshbon they plot evil against her [i.e., Moab].” The “they” is undefined, but it would scarcely be Moabites living in Heshbon. Hence TEV and CEV are probably correct in seeing a reference to the enemy which would imply the conquest of this city which lay on the northern border of Moab.

¹⁵ **tn** The meaning of this line is somewhat uncertain. The translation here follows all the modern English versions and commentaries in reading the place name “Madmen” even though the place is otherwise unknown and the Greek, Syriac, and Latin version all read this word as an emphasizing infinitive absolute of the following verb “will be destroyed,” i.e. דָּבַיִם (damom *yiddommu*). Some see this word as a variant of the name Dimon in Isa 15:9 which in turn is a playful variant of the place name Dibon. There is once again a wordplay on the word “Madmen” and “will be destroyed”: מַדְמָנִים (*madmen*) and דָּבַיִם (*yiddommu*). For the meaning of the verb = “perish” or “be destroyed” see Jer 8:14; Ps 31:18.

¹⁶ **tn** *Heb* “A sword will follow after you.” The sword is again figurative of destructive forces, here the army of the Babylonians.

¹⁷ **tc** The reading here follows the *Qere* צְעִירֶיהָ (*ts^eireha*) which is the same noun found in Jer 14:3 in the sense of “servants.” Here it refers to the young ones, i.e., the children (cf. the use of the adjective BDB 859 s.v. צָעִיר 2 and see Gen 43:33). Many of the modern commentaries and a few of the modern English versions follow the Greek version and read “their cry is heard as far as Zoar” (reading צְעִירָהּ, *ts^earah*; see, for example, J. A. Thompson, *Jeremiah* [NICOT], 699, n. 4, and BDB 858 s.v. צָעִיר). However, that leaves the verb with an indefinite subject (the verb is active 3rd plural not passive) not otherwise identified in the preceding context. Many of the modern English versions such as NRSV, NJPS, NIV retain the Hebrew as the present translation has done. In this case the masculine plural noun furnishes a logical subject for the verb.

48:5 Indeed they will climb the slopes of
Luhith,
weeping continually as they go.¹
For on the road down to Horonaim
they will hear the cries of distress over
the destruction.²
48:6 They will hear, ‘Run! Save your-
selves!
Even if you must be like a lonely shrub in
the desert!’³
48:7 “Moab, you trust in the things you do
and in your riches.
So you too will be conquered.
Your god Chemosh⁴ will go into exile⁵

along with his priests and his officials.
48:8 The destroyer will come against ev-
ery town.
Not one town will escape.
The towns in the valley will be destroyed.
The cities on the high plain will be laid
waste.⁶
I, the LORD, have spoken!⁷
48:9 Set up a gravestone for Moab,
for it will certainly be laid in ruins!⁸

¹ **tn** Or “Indeed her fugitives will...” It is unclear what the subject of the verbs are in this verse. The verb in the first two lines “climb” (יָלַדְהוּ, *ya’aleh*) is third masculine singular and the verb in the second two lines “will hear” (שָׁמְעוּ, *shame’u*) is third common plural. The causal particles at the beginning of the two halves of the verse suggest some connection with the preceding, so the translation assumes that the children are still the subject. In this case the singular verb would be a case of the distributive singular already referred to in the translator’s note on 46:15. The parallel passage in Isa 15:5 refers to the “fugitives” (בְּרִיקְהָהוּ, *b²rikheha*) with the same singular verb as here and that may be the implied subject here.

sn The location of *Luhith* and *Horonaim* are uncertain, though, from their connection with Zoar in Isa 15:5, they appear to be located in southern Moab. Zoar was at the southern tip of the Dead Sea.

² **tn** *Heb* “the distresses of the cry of destruction.” Many commentaries want to leave out the word “distresses” because it is missing from the Greek version and the parallel passage in Isa 15:5. However, it is in all the Hebrew mss and in the other early versions, and it is hard to see why it would be added here if it were not original.

³ **tc** The meaning of this line is uncertain. The translation follows one reading of the Hebrew text. The Greek version reads “Be like a wild donkey in the desert!” There are three points of debate in this line: the syntax of the verb form “be” (תִּהְיֶנָּה, *tihyehah*) and the text and meaning of the word translated “shrub” in the Hebrew text. This word only occurs with this meaning here and in Jer 17:6. A related word occurs in Ps 102:17 (102:18 HT). Elsewhere this spelling refers to the place name Aroer which was a place in Moab on the edge of the Arnon River. Most commentators do not feel that a reference to that place is appropriate here because it was not in the desert. The Greek version reads “like a wild donkey” (reading כְּבָרָד [ke²arod] in place of כְּבָרִיד [ka²aroid]). That would make an appropriate simile here because the wild donkey enjoys its freedom and is hard to capture. G. L. Keown, P. J. Scalise, and T. G. Smothers (*Jeremiah* 26-52 [WBC], 312) explain the simile of the “shrub” as referring to the marginal and rudimentary existence of a displaced person. That may not be as optimistic as the reference to the wild donkey but it does give an appropriate meaning. The third feminine plural has been explained as the singular noun + suffix = “your-selves” (נַפְשֵׁיכֶם, *nafsh²khem*) used as a collective (so S. R. Driver, *Jeremiah*, 368, with cross reference to GKC 462-63 §145.c). J. Bright (*Jeremiah* [AB], 314, n. e-e) follows a suggestion of D. N. Freedman in seeing the form תִּהְיֶנָּה (*tihyehah*) as a mistake for the 2nd masculine plural plus energetic (תִּהְיוּ, *tihyu*). Given the number of other textual corruptions in this passage, this is possible. The resultant meaning in either case is the same.

⁴ **sn** *Chemosh* was the national god of Moab (see also Num 21:29). Child sacrifice appears to have been a part of his worship (2 Kgs 3:27). Solomon built a high place in Jerusalem for him (1 Kgs 11:7), and he appears to have been worshipped in Israel until Josiah tore that high place down (2 Kgs 23:13).

⁵ **sn** The practice of carrying off the gods of captive nations has already been mentioned in the study note on 43:12. See also Isa 46:1-2 noted there.

⁶ **tn** *Heb* “The valley will be destroyed and the tableland be laid waste.” However, in the context this surely refers to the towns and not to the valley and the tableland itself.

sn Most commentaries see a reference to the towns in the Jordan valley referred to in Josh 13:27 and the towns mentioned in Josh 13:15-17 which were on the high tableland or high plateau or plain north of the Arnon. The mention of the towns in the first half of the verse is broader than that because it would include all the towns in the southern half of Moab between the Arnon and Zered as well as those mentioned in the second half in conjunction with the valley and the high plateau north of the Arnon.

⁷ **tn** *Heb* “which/for/as the LORD has spoken.” The first person form has again been adopted because the LORD is the speaker throughout (cf. v. 1).

⁸ **tn** Or “Scatter salt over Moab for it will certainly be laid in ruins.” The meaning of these two lines is very uncertain. The Hebrew of these two lines presents several difficulties. It reads הַמְּצִיטִים לְמוֹאָב נָצְטוּ הַבְּצִיטִים (‘*nu-tsit²im l²mo’av natso’ tets²im*). Of the five words two are extremely problematic and the meaning of the second affects also the meaning of the last word which normally means “go out.” The word צִיטִים (*tsitsim*) regularly refers to a blossom or flower or the diadem on the front of Aaron’s mitre. BDB 851 s.v. II צִיטִים gives a nuance “wings (coll)” based on the interpretation of Abu Walid and some medieval Jewish interpreters who related it to an Aramaic root. But BDB says that meaning is dubious and refers to the Greek which reads σήματα (*semeia*, “sign” or “sign post”). Along with KBL 802 s.v. I צִיטִים and HALOT 959 s.v. II צִיטִים, BDB suggests that the Greek presupposes the word צִיטִים (*tsiyun*) which refers to a road marker (Jer 31:21) or a gravestone (2 Kgs 23:17). That is the meaning followed here. Several modern commentaries and English versions have followed a proposal by W. Moran that the word is related to a Ugaritic word meaning salt (cf., e.g., J. Bright, *Jeremiah* [AB], 320). However, HALOT 959 s.v. II צִיטִים questions the validity of this on philological grounds saying that the meaning of salt does not really fit the Ugaritic either. The present translation follows the suggestions of the lexicons here and reads the word as though the Greek supported the meaning “gravestone.” The other difficulty is with the word נָצְטוּ (*natso’*), which looks like a Qal infinitive absolute of an otherwise unattested root which BDB s.v. נָצַט says is defined in Gesenius’ Thesaurus as “fly.” However, see the meaning and the construction of an infinitive absolute of one root with that of another as highly improbable. Hence, most modern lexicons either emend the forms to read נָצְטוּ (*natsah* *titseh*) from the root נָצַח (*natsah*) meaning “to fall into ruins” (so KBL 629 s.v. נָצַח; Qal, and see among others J. A. Thompson, *Jeremiah* [NICOT], 700, n. 10, who notes that final נ [aleph] and final ה [he] are often confused; see the discussion and examples in GKC 216-17 §75.nn-rr). This is the option that this translation as well as a number of modern ones have taken. A second option is to see נָצְטוּ (*natso’*) as an error for נָצְטוּ (*yatso’*) and read the text in the sense of “she will certainly surrender,” a meaning that the verb נָצְטוּ (*yatsa’*) has in 1 Sam 11:3; Isa 36:6. The best discussion of this option as well as a discussion on the problem of reading צִיטִים (*tsitsim*) as salt is found in G. L. Keown, P. J. Scalise, T. G. Smothers, *Jeremiah* 26-52 (WBC), 313-14.

Its cities will be laid waste and become uninhabited.”

48:10 A curse on anyone who is lax in doing the LORD’s work!

A curse on anyone who keeps from carrying out his destruction!¹

48:11 “From its earliest days Moab has lived undisturbed.

It has never been taken into exile.

Its people are like wine allowed to settle undisturbed on its dregs,

never poured out from one jar to another. They are like wine which tastes like it always did,

whose aroma has remained unchanged.²

48:12 But the time is coming when I will send

men against Moab who will empty it out.

They will empty the towns of their people,

then will lay those towns in ruins.³

I, the LORD, affirm it!⁴

48:13 The people of Moab will be disappointed by their god Chemosh.

They will be as disappointed as the people of Israel were

when they put their trust in the calf god at Bethel.⁵

48:14 How can you men of Moab say, ‘We are heroes,

men who are mighty in battle?’

48:15 Moab will be destroyed. Its towns will be invaded.

Its finest young men will be slaughtered.⁶ I, the King, the LORD who rules over all,⁷

affirm it!⁸

48:16 Moab’s destruction is at hand.

Disaster will come on it quickly.

48:17 Mourn for that nation, all you nations living around it,

all of you nations that know of its fame.⁹ Mourn and say, ‘Alas, its powerful influence has been broken!’

Its glory and power have been done away!¹⁰

48:18 Come down from your place of honor;

sit on the dry ground,¹¹ you who live in Dibon.¹²

For the one who will destroy Moab will attack you;

he will destroy your fortifications.

48:19 You who live in Aroer,¹³ stand by the road and watch.

¹ **tn** *Heb* “who withholds his sword from bloodshed.” This verse is an editorial aside (or apostrophe) addressed to the Babylonian destroyers to be diligent in carrying out the work of the LORD in destroying Moab.

² **tn** *Heb* “Therefore his taste remains in him and his aroma is not changed.” The metaphor is changed into a simile in an attempt to help the reader understand the figure in the context.

sn The picture is that of undisturbed complacency (cf. Zeph 1:12). Because Moab had never known the discipline of exile she had remained as she always was.

³ **tn** *Heb* “Therefore, behold the days are coming, oracle of Yahweh, when I will send against him decanters [those who pour from one vessel to another] and they will decant him [pour him out] and they will empty his vessels and break their jars in pieces.” The verse continues the metaphor from the preceding verse where Moab/the people of Moab are like wine left undisturbed in a jar, i.e., in their native land. In this verse the picture is that of the decanter emptying the wine from the vessels and then breaking the jars. The wine represents the people and the vessels the cities and towns where the people lived. The verse speaks of the exile of the people and the devastation of the land. The metaphor has been interpreted so it conveys meaning to the average reader.

⁴ **tn** *Heb* “Oracle of the LORD.”

⁵ **tn** *Heb* “Moab will be ashamed because of Chemosh as the house of Israel was ashamed because of Bethel, their [source of] confidence.” The “shame” is, of course, the disappointment, disillusionment because of the lack of help from these gods in which they trusted (for this nuance of the verb see BDB 101 s.v. בִּישׁ Qal.2 and compare usage in Jer 2:13; Isa 20:5). Because of the parallelism, some see the reference to Bethel to be a reference to a West Semitic god worshiped by the people of Israel (see J. P. Hyatt, “Bethel [Deity],” *IDB* 1:390 for the arguments). However, there is no evidence in the OT that such a god was worshiped in Israel, and there is legitimate evidence that northern Israel placed its confidence in the calf god that Jeroboam set up in Bethel (cf. 1 Kgs 12:28-32; Hos 10:5; 8:5-6; Amos 7:10-17).

map For location see Map4-G4; Map5-C1; Map6-E3; Map7-D1; Map8-G3.

⁶ **tn** *Heb* “will go down to the slaughter.”

⁷ **tn** *Heb* “Yahweh of armies.” For an explanation of the translation and meaning of this title see the study note on 2:19.

⁸ **tn** *Heb* “Oracle of the King whose name is Yahweh of armies.” The first person form has again been adopted because the LORD is the speaker throughout this oracle/ these oracles (cf. v. 1).

⁹ **tn** For the use of the word “name” (שֵׁם, *shem*) to “fame” or “repute” see BDB 1028 s.v. שֵׁם 2.b and compare the usage in Ezek 16:14; 2 Chr 26:15.

sn This refers to both the nearby nations and those who lived further away who had heard of Moab’s power and might only by repute.

¹⁰ **tn** *Heb* “How is the strong staff broken, the beautiful rod.” “How” introduces a lament which is here rendered by “Alas.” The staff and rod refer to the support that Moab gave to others not to the fact that she ruled over others which was never the case. According to BDB 739 s.v. עֵץ 1 the “strong staff” is figurative of political power.

¹¹ **tn** *Heb* “sit in thirst.” The abstract “thirst” is put for the concrete, i.e., thirsty or parched ground (cf. Deut 8:19; Isa 35:7; Ps 107:33) for the concrete. There is no need to emend to “filth” (יִצְהָר [‘*iso’ah*] for יִצְהָר [‘*tsama*’]) as is sometimes suggested.

¹² **tn** *Heb* “inhabitant of Daughter Dibon.” “Daughter” is used here as often in Jeremiah for the personification of a city, a country, or its inhabitants. The word “inhabitant” is to be understood as a collective as also in v. 19.

sn *Dibon* was an important fortified city located on the “King’s Highway,” the main north-south road in Transjordan. It was the site at which the Moabite Stone was found in 1868 and was one of the cities mentioned on it. It was four miles north of the Arnon River and thirteen miles east of the Dead Sea. It was one of the main cities on the northern plateau and had been conquered from Sihon and allotted to the tribe of Reuben (Josh 13:17).

¹³ **sn** *Aroer* is probably the Aroer that was located a few miles south and west of Dibon on the edge of the Arnon River. It had earlier been the southern border of Sihon, king of Heshbon, and had been allotted to the tribe of Reuben (Josh 13:16). However, this whole territory had earlier been taken over by the Arameans (2 Kgs 10:33), later by the Assyrians, and at this time was in the hands of the Moabites.

Question the man who is fleeing and the woman who is escaping.
Ask them, ‘What has happened?’
48:20 They will answer, ‘Moab is disgraced, for it has fallen!
Wail and cry out in mourning!
Announce along the Arnon River that Moab has been destroyed.’

48:21 “Judgment will come on the cities on the high plain.¹ on Holon, Jahzah, and Mephaath,
48:22 on Dibon, Nebo, and Beth Diblathaim,
48:23 on Kiriathaim, Beth Gamul, and Beth Meon,
48:24 on Keriath and Bozrah. It will come on all the towns of Moab, both far and near. **48:25** Moab’s might will be crushed. Its power will be broken.² I, the LORD, affirm it!³

48:26 “Moab has vaunted itself against me. So make him drunk with the wine of my wrath⁴ until he splashes⁵ around in his own vomit, until others treat him as a laughingstock.
48:27 For did not you people of Moab laugh at the people of Israel? Did you think that they were nothing but thieves,⁶ that you shook your head in contempt⁷ every time you talked about them?⁸
48:28 Leave your towns, you inhabitants of Moab.
Go and live in the cliffs.
Be like a dove that makes its nest

high on the sides of a ravine.⁹
48:29 I have heard how proud the people of Moab are,
I know how haughty they are.
I have heard how arrogant, proud, and haughty they are,
what a high opinion they have of themselves.¹⁰
48:30 I, the LORD, affirm that¹¹ I know how arrogant they are.
But their pride is ill-founded.
Their boastings will prove to be false.¹²
48:31 So I will weep with sorrow for Moab.
I will cry out in sadness for all of Moab.
I will moan¹³ for the people of Kir Heres.
48:32 I will weep for the grapevines of Sibmah
just like the town of Jazer weeps over them.¹⁴

⁹ **tn** Heb “in the sides of the mouth of a pit/chasm.” The translation follows the suggestion of J. Bright, *Jeremiah* (AB), 321. The point of the simile is inaccessibility.

¹⁰ **tn** Heb “We have heard of the pride of Moab – [he is] exceedingly proud – of his haughtiness, and his pride, and his haughtiness, and the loftiness of his heart.” These words are essentially all synonyms, three of them coming from the same Hebrew root (תָּאָה, *ga’ah*) and one of the words being used twice (תָּאָה). Since the first person singular is used in the next verse, the present translation considers the “we” of this verse to refer to the plural of majesty or the plural referring to the divine council in such passages as Gen 1:26; 3:22; 11:7; Isa 6:8 and has translated in the singular to avoid possible confusion of who the “we” are. Most understand the reference to be to Jeremiah and his fellow Judeans.

¹¹ **tn** Heb “Oracle of the Lord.”

¹² **tn** The meaning of this verse is somewhat uncertain: Heb “I know, oracle of the LORD, / his arrogance and [that it is?] not true; // his boastings accomplish that which is not true.” Several of the modern English versions and commentaries redivide the verse and read something like, “I know his insolence...his boastings are false; his deeds are false (NRSV, REB).” However, the word translated “deeds” in the last line is a verb in the third person plural and can only have as its logical grammatical subject the word “boastings.” The adjective כֵּן (*ken*) + the negative לוֹ (*lo’*) is evidently repeated here and applied to two different subjects “arrogance” and “boasting” to emphasize that Moab’s arrogant boasts will prove “untrue” (Cf. HALOT 459 s.v. II כֵּן 2.c for the meaning “untrue” for both this passage and the parallel one in Isa 16:6). There is some difference of opinion about the identification of the “I” in this verse. Most commentators see it as referring to the prophet. However, F. B. Huey (*Jeremiah, Lamentations* [NAC], 395) is probably correct in seeing it as referring to the LORD. He points to the fact that the “I” in vv. 33, 35, 38 can only refer to God. The “I know” in v. 30 also clearly has the LORD as its subject. There are other cases in the book of Jeremiah where the LORD expresses his lament over the fate of a people (cf. 14:1-6, 17-18).

¹³ **tc** The translation is based on the emendation of the Hebrew third masculine singular (יִהְיֶה, *yehggeh*) to the first singular (יִהְיֶה, *ehggeh*). This emendation is assumed by almost all of the modern English versions and commentaries even though the textual evidence for it is weak (only one Hebrew ms and the Eastern Qere according to BHS).

¹⁴ **tc** Or “I will weep for the grapevines of Sibmah more than I will weep over the town of Jazer.” The translation here assumes that there has been a graphic confusion of נ (mem) with כ (kaf) or ב (bet). The parallel passage in Isa 16:9 has the preposition כ and the Greek version presupposes a comparative idea “as with.” Many of the modern English versions render the passage with the comparative כֵּן (*min*) as in the alternate translation, but it is unclear what the force of the com-

¹ **sn** See the study note on Jer 48:8 for reference to this tableland or high plain that lay between the Arnon and Hesbon.

² **tn** Heb “The horn of Moab will be cut off. His arm will be broken.” “Horn” and “arm” are both symbols of strength (see BDB 902 s.v. קַרְנֵי 2 [and compare usage in Lam 2:3] and BDB 284 s.v. זְרֹעֵי 2 [and compare usage in 1 Sam 2:31]). The figures have been interpreted for the sake of clarity.

³ **tn** Heb “Oracle of the Lord.”

⁴ **tn** Heb “Make him drunk because he has magnified himself against the Lord.” The first person has again been adopted for consistency within a speech of the LORD. Almost all of the commentaries relate the figure of drunkenness to the figure of drinking the cup of God’s wrath spelled out in Jer 25 where reference is made at one point to the nations drinking, staggering, vomiting, and falling (25:27 and see G. L. Keown, P. J. Scalise, T. G. Smothers, *Jeremiah* 26-52 [WBC], 316, for a full list of references to this figure including this passage and 49:12-13; 51:6-10, 39, 57).

⁵ **tn** The meaning of this word is uncertain. It is usually used of clapping the hands or the thigh in helpless anger or disgust. Hence J. Bright (*Jeremiah* [AB], 321) paraphrases “shall vomit helplessly.” HALOT 722 s.v. II בִּקַּח relates this to an Aramaic word and see a homonym meaning “vomit” or “spew out.” The translation is that of BDB 706 s.v. בִּקַּח Qal.3, “splash (fall with a splash),” from the same root that refers to slapping or clapping the thigh.

⁶ **tn** Heb “were they caught among thieves?”

⁷ **tn** Heb “that you shook yourself.” But see the same verb in 18:16 in the active voice with the object “head” in a very similar context of contempt or derision.

⁸ **tc** The reading here presupposes the emendation of דְּבַרְיָךְ (*d^vvarekha*, “your words”) to דְּבַרְיָךְ (*dabberkha*, “your speaking”), suggested by BHS (cf. fn c) on the basis of one of the Greek versions (Symmachus). For the idiom cf. BDB 191 s.v. דִּבְרֵי 2.c.a.

Their branches once spread as far as the Dead Sea.¹
 They reached as far as the town of Jazer.²
 The destroyer will ravage
 her fig, date,³ and grape crops.
48:33 Joy and gladness will disappear
 from the fruitful land of Moab.⁴
 I will stop the flow of wine from the
 winepresses.
 No one will stomp on the grapes there
 and shout for joy.⁵
 The shouts there will be shouts of sol-
 diers,
 not the shouts of those making wine.⁶
48:34 Cries of anguish raised from Hesh-
 bon and Elealeh
 will be sounded as far as Jahaz.⁷

parison would be here. The verse is actually in the second person, an apostrophe or direct address to the grapevine(s) of Sibmah. However, the translation has retained the third person throughout because such sudden shifts in person are uncommon in contemporary English literature and retaining the third person is smoother. The Hebrew text reads: "From/ With the weeping of Jazer I will weep for you, vine of Sibmah. Your tendrils crossed over the sea. They reached unto the sea of Jazer. Upon your summer fruit and your vintage [grape harvest] the destroyer has fallen."

¹ **tn** *Heb* "crossed over to the Sea."

² **tn** Or "reached the sea of Jazer." The Sea is generally taken to be a reference to the Dead Sea. The translation presupposes that the word "sea" is to be omitted before "Jazer." The word is missing from two Hebrew mss, from the parallel passage in Isa 16:8, and from the Greek version. It may have arisen from a mistaken copying of the same word in the preceding line.

^{sn} Though there is some doubt about the precise location of these places, *Sibmah* is generally considered to have been located slightly north and west of Heshbon and *Jazer* further north toward the border of Ammon not far from the city of Amman. Most commentators see the reference here (and in the parallel in Isa 16:8) to the spread of viticulture westward and northward from the vineyards of Sibmah. G. L. Keown, P. J. Scalise, and T. G. Smothers *Jeremiah* 26-52 [WBC], 318-19), however, see the reference rather to the spread of trade in wine westward beyond the coast of the Mediterranean and eastward into the desert.

³ **tn** *Heb* "her summer fruit." See the translator's note on 40:10 for the rendering here. According to BDB 657 s.v. בָּנֵי; Qal.4.a, the verb means to "fall upon" or "attack" but in the context it is probably metonymical for attack and destroy.

⁴ **tn** *Heb* "from the garden land, even from the land of Moab." Comparison with the parallel passage in Isa 16:10 and the translation of the Greek text here (which has only "the land of Moab") suggest that the second phrase is appositional to the first.

⁵ **tn** *Heb* "no one will tread [the grapes] with shout of joy."

⁶ **tn** *Heb* "shouts will not be shouts." The text has been expanded contextually to explain that the shouts of those treading grapes in winepresses will come to an end (v. 33a-d) and be replaced by the shouts of the soldiers who trample down the vineyards (v. 32e-f). Compare 25:30 and 51:41 for the idea.

⁷ **tn** The meaning of this verse is very uncertain. The ambiguity of the syntax and the apparent elliptical nature of this text makes the meaning of this verse uncertain. The Hebrew text reads: "From the cry of Heshbon unto Elealeh unto Jahaz they utter their voice from Zoar unto Horonaim Eglath Shelishiyah." The translation and interpretation here are based on interpreting the elliptical syntax here by the parallel passage in Isaiah 15:4-6 where cries of anguish rise from Heshbon and Elealeh which are heard all the way to Jahaz. The people flee southward arriving at Zoar and Eglath Shelishiyah where they voice the news of the destruction in the

They will be sounded from Zoar as far as
 Horonaim and Eglath Shelishiyah.
 For even the waters of Nimrim will be
 dried up.

48:35 I will put an end in Moab
 to those who make offerings at her places
 of worship.⁸

I will put an end to those who sacrifice to
 other gods.

I, the LORD, affirm it!⁹

48:36 So my heart moans for Moab
 like a flute playing a funeral song.
 Yes, like a flute playing a funeral song,
 my heart moans for the people of Kir
 Heres.

For the wealth they have gained will per-
 ish.

48:37 For all of them will shave their
 heads in mourning.

They will all cut off their beards to show
 their sorrow.

They will all make gashes in their hands.
 They will all put on sackcloth.¹⁰

48:38 On all the housetops in Moab
 and in all its public squares
 there will be nothing but mourning.

For I will break Moab like an unwanted
 jar.

I, the LORD, affirm it!¹¹

north. Hence, the present translation interprets the phrase "from the cry of Heshbon unto Elealeh" to be parallel to "Heshbon and Elealeh cry out" and take the preposition "from" with the verb "they utter their voice," i.e., with the cry of Heshbon and Elealeh. The impersonal "they raise their voice" is then treated as a passive and made the subject of the whole verse. There is some debate about the identification of the waters of Nimrim. They may refer to the waters of the Wadi Nimrim which enters the Jordan about eight miles north of the Dead Sea or those of the Wadi en-Numeirah which flows into the southern tip of the Dead Sea from about ten miles south. Most commentators take the reference to be the latter because of association with Zoar. However, if the passage is talking about the destruction in the north which is reported in the south by the fleeing refugees, the reference is probably to the Wadi Nimrim in the north.

^{sn} *Elealeh* was about two miles (3.3 km) north of Heshbon. *Jahaz* was about twenty miles (33 km) south of it. These three cities were in the north and *Zoar*, *Horonaim*, and *Eglath Shelishiyah* were apparently in the south. The verse is speaking about the news of destruction in the north spreading to the south. Comparison should be made with the parallel passage in Isa 15:4-6.

⁸ **tn** *Heb* "high place[s]." For the meaning and significance of this term see the study note on 7:31.

⁹ **tn** *Heb* "Oracle of the LORD."

¹⁰ **tn** *Heb* "upon every loin [there is] sackcloth." The word "all" is restored here before "loin" with a number of Hebrew mss and a number of versions. The words "in mourning" and "to show their sorrow" are not in the text. They have been supplied in the translation to give the average reader some idea of the significance of these acts.

^{sn} The actions referred to here were all acts that were used to mourn the dead (cf. Isa 15:2-3).

¹¹ **tn** *Heb* "Oracle of the LORD."

48:39 Oh, how shattered Moab will be!
Oh, how her people will wail!
Oh, how she will turn away¹ in shame!
Moab will become an object of ridicule,
a terrifying sight to all the nations that
surround her.”

48:40 For the LORD says,
“Look! Like an eagle with outspread
wings

a nation will swoop down on Moab.²

48:41 Her towns³ will be captured.

Her fortresses will be taken.

At that time the soldiers of Moab will be
frightened

like a woman in labor.⁴

48:42 Moab will be destroyed and no longer
be a nation,⁵

because she has vaunted herself against
the LORD.

48:43 Terror, pits, and traps⁶ are in store
for the people who live in Moab.⁷

I, the LORD, affirm it!⁸

48:44 Anyone who flees at the sound of
terror

will fall into a pit.

Anyone who climbs out of the pit
will be caught in a trap.⁹

For the time is coming

when I will punish the people of Moab.¹⁰

I, the LORD, affirm it!¹¹

48:45 In the shadows of the walls of Hesh-
hbon

those trying to escape will stand helpless.

For a fire will burst forth from Heshbon.

Flames will shoot out from the former
territory of Sihon.

They will burn the foreheads of the peo-
ple of Moab,

the skulls of those war-loving people.¹²

¹ **tn** *Heb* “turn her back.”

² **tn** *Heb* “Behold! Like an eagle he will swoop and will spread his wings against Moab.” The sentence has been reordered in English to give a better logical flow and the unidentified “he” has been identified as “a nation.” The nation is, of course, Babylon, but it is nowhere identified so the referent has been left ambiguous.

sn Conquering nations are often identified with a swiftly flying eagle swooping down on its victims (cf. Deut 28:49). In this case the eagle is to be identified with the nation (or king) of Babylon (cf. Ezek 17:3, 12 where reference is to the removal of Jehoiachin (Jeconiah) and his replacement with Zedekiah).

³ **tn** Parallelism argues that the word קְרִיּוֹת (qiryot) be understood as the otherwise unattested feminine plural of the noun קְרִיָּה (qiryah, “city”) rather than the place name Kerioth mentioned in v. 24 (cf. HALOT 1065 s.v. קְרִיָּה). Both this noun and the parallel term “fortresses” are plural but are found with feminine singular verbs, being treated either as collectives or distributive plurals (cf. GKC 462-63 §145.c or 464 §145.f).

⁴ **tn** *Heb* “The heart of the soldiers of Moab will be like the heart of a woman in labor.”

⁵ **tn** *Heb* “Moab will be destroyed from [being] a people.”

⁶ **sn** There is an extended use of assonance here and in the parallel passage in Isa 24:17. The Hebrew text reads פַּחַד וּפְחָד וּפְחָד (pakhad vafakhat vafakh). The assonance is intended to underscore the extensive trouble that is in store for them.

⁷ **tn** *Heb* “are upon you, inhabitant of Moab.” This is another example of the rapid switch in person or direct address (apostrophe) in the midst of a third person description or prediction which the present translation typically keeps in the third person for smoother English style.

⁸ **tn** *Heb* “Oracle of the LORD.”

⁹ **sn** Jer 48:43-44a are in the main the same as Isa 24:17-18 which shows that the judgment was somewhat proverbial. For a very similar kind of argumentation see Amos 5:19; judgment is unavoidable.

¹⁰ **tn** *Heb* “For I will bring upon her, even upon Moab, the year of her punishment.”

¹¹ **tn** *Heb* “Oracle of the LORD.”

¹² **tn** Or “of those noisy boasters.” Or “They will burn up the frontiers of Moab. They will burn up the mountain heights of those war-loving people.” The meaning of this verse is not entirely certain because of the highly figurative nature of the last two lines. The Hebrew text has been translated somewhat literally here. The Hebrew text reads: “In the shadow of Heshbon those fleeing stand without strength. For a fire goes forth from Heshbon, a flame from the midst of Sihon. And it devours the forehead of Moab and the skull of the sons of noise.” The meaning of the first part is fairly clear because v. 2 has already spoken of the conquest of Heshbon and a plot formed there to conquer the rest of the nation. The fire going forth from Heshbon would hence refer here to the conflagrations of war spreading from Heshbon to the rest of the country. The reference to the “midst of Sihon” is to be understood metonymically as a reference for the ruler to what he once ruled (cf. E. W. Bullinger, *Figures of Speech*, 583). The last two lines must refer to more than the fugitives who stopped at Heshbon for protection because it refers to the forehead of Moab (a personification of the whole land or nation). It is unclear, however, why reference is made to the foreheads and skulls of the Moabites, other than the fact that this verse seems to be a readaptation or reuse of Num 24:17 where the verb used with them is “smite” which fits nicely in the sense of martial destruction. Translated rather literally, it appears here to refer to the destruction by the fires of war of the Moabites, the part (forehead and skulls) put for the whole. TEV sees a reference here to the “frontiers” and “mountain heights” of Moab and this would work nicely for “foreheads” which is elsewhere used of the corner or border of a land in Neh 9:22. The word “crown” or “skull” might be a picturesque metaphor for the mountain heights of a land, but the word is never used elsewhere in such a figurative way. TEV (and CEV) which follows it might be correct here but there is no way to validate it. The meaning “war-loving people” for the phrase “sons of noise” is based on the suggestion of BDB 981 s.v. שָׁמָיִם 1 which relates the phrase to the dominant use for שָׁמָיִם (sha'on) and is adopted also by TEV, CEV, and C. von Orelli, *Jeremiah*, 341. REB “braggarts” and NIV “noisy boasters” seem to base the nuance on the usage of שָׁמָיִם (sha'on) in Jer 46:17 where Pharaoh is referred to as an empty noise and the reference to Moab's arrogance and boasting in 48:29.

sn This verse and the next are an apparent adaptation and reuse of a victory song in Num 21:28-29 and a prophecy in Num 24:17. That explains the reference to Sihon who was the Amorite king who captured Heshbon and proceeded from there to capture most of northern Moab (the area between Heshbon and the Arnon) which has been referred to earlier in this prophecy. This prophecy appears to speak of the destruction of Moab beginning from the same place under the picture of a destructive fire which burns up all the people. The fire is a reference to the conflagrations of war in which the enemy captures the cities and sets them on fire and burns all the people in them. What Sihon once did (Num 21:28-29) and what Balaam prophesied would happen to Moab in the future (by David? Num 24:17) are being reapplied to a new situation.

48:46 Moab, you are doomed!¹
 You people who worship Chemosh will
 be destroyed.
 Your sons will be taken away captive.
 Your daughters will be carried away into
 exile.²
48:47 Yet in days to come
 I will reverse Moab's ill fortune,³
 says the LORD.⁴
 The judgment against Moab ends here.

Judgment Against Ammon

49:1 The LORD spoke about the Ammonites.⁵
 "Do you think there are not any people of
 the nation of Israel remaining?
 Do you think there are not any of them
 remaining to reinherit their land?
 Is that why you people who worship the
 god Milcom⁶
 have taken possession of the territory of
 Gad and live in his cities?⁷

¹ **tn** Heb "Woe to you, Moab." For the usage of this expression see 4:13, 31; 13:17 and the translator's note on 4:13 and 10:19.

² **tn** Heb "Your sons will be taken away into captivity, your daughters into exile."

³ **tn** See 29:14; 30:3 and the translator's note on 29:14 for the idiom used here.

⁴ **tn** Heb "Oracle of the LORD."

⁵ **sn** *Ammonites*. Ammon was a small kingdom to the north and east of Moab which was in constant conflict with the Transjordanian tribes of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh over territorial rights to the lands north and south of the Jabbok River. Ammon mainly centered on the city of Rabbah which is modern Amman. According to Judg 11:13 the Ammonites claimed the land between the Jabbok and the Arnon but this was land taken from them by Sihon and Og and land that the Israelites captured from the latter two kings. The Ammonites attempted to expand into the territory of Israel in the Transjordan in the time of Jephthah (Judg 10-11) and the time of Saul (1 Sam 11). Apparently when Tiglath Pileser carried away the Israelite tribes in Transjordan in 733 b.c., the Ammonites took over possession of their cities (Jer 49:1). Like Moab they appear to have been loyal to Nebuchadnezzar in the early part of his reign, forming part of the contingent that he sent to harass Judah when Jehoiakim rebelled in 598 b.c. (2 Kgs 24:2). But along with Moab and Edom they sent representatives to plot rebellion against Nebuchadnezzar in 594 b.c. (Jer 27:3). The Ammonites were evidently in rebellion against him in 588 b.c. when he had to decide whether to attack Rabbah or Jerusalem first (Ezek 21:18-23 [21:23-28 HT]). They appear to have remained in rebellion after the destruction of Jerusalem because their king Baalis was behind the plot to assassinate Gedaliah and offered refuge to Ishmael after he did it (Jer 40:13; 41:15). According to the Jewish historian Josephus they were conquered in 582 b.c. by Nebuchadnezzar.

⁶ **tc** The reading here and in v. 3 follows the reading of the Greek, Syriac, and Latin versions and 1 Kgs 11:5, 33; 2 Kgs 23:13. The Hebrew reads "Malcom" both here, in v. 3, and Zeph 1:5. This god is to be identified with the god known elsewhere as Molech (cf. 1 Kgs 11:7).

⁷ **tn** Heb "Does not Israel have any sons? Does not he have any heir [or "heirs" as a collective]? Why [then] has Malcom taken possession of Gad and [why] do his [Malcom's] people live in his [Gad's] land?" A literal translation here will not produce any meaning without major commentary. Hence the meaning that is generally agreed on is reflected in an admittedly paraphrastic translation. The reference is to the fact that the Ammonites had taken possession of the cities that had been deserted when the Assyrians carried off the Transjordanian tribes in 733 b.c. assuming that the Israelites

49:2 Because you did that,
 I, the LORD, affirm that⁸ a time is coming
 when I will make Rabbah, the capital city
 of Ammon,
 hear the sound of the battle cry.
 It will become a mound covered with
 ruins.⁹
 Its villages will be burned to the ground.¹⁰
 Then Israel will take back its land
 from those who took their land from
 them.
 I, the Lord, affirm it!¹¹
49:3 Wail, you people in Heshbon, be-
 cause Ai in Ammon is destroyed.
 Cry out in anguish, you people in the vil-
 lages surrounding¹² Rabbah.
 Put on sackcloth and cry out in mourning.
 Run about covered with gashes.¹³

would not return in sufficient numbers to regain control of it. The thought underlying the expression "Why has Milcom taken possession..." reflects the idea, common in the OT and the ancient Near East, that the god of a people drove out the previous inhabitants, gave their land to his worshippers to possess, and took up residence with them there (cf., e.g., Deut 1:21; Judg 11:24 and line 33-34 of the Moabite stone: "Chemosh said to me, 'Go down, fight against Hauronen.' And I went down [and I fought against the town and took it], and Chemosh dwelt here in my time." [ANET 321]).

⁸ **tn** Heb "oracle of the LORD."

⁹ **tn** Heb "a desolate tel." For the explanation of what a "tel" is see the study note on 30:18.

¹⁰ **tn** Heb "Its daughters will be burned with fire." For the use of the word "daughters" to refer to the villages surrounding a larger city see BDB 123 s.v. בנות 4 and compare the usage in Judg 1:27.

¹¹ **tn** Heb "says the LORD." The first person is used to maintain the first person address throughout.

¹² **tn** Or "you women of Rabbah"; Heb "daughters of Rabbah." It is difficult to tell whether the word "daughters" is used here in the same sense that it has in v. 2 (see the translator's note there) or in the literal sense of "daughters." The former has been preferred because the cities themselves (e.g., Heshbon) are called to wail in the earlier part of the verse and the term "daughters" has been used in the previous verse of the surrounding villages.

¹³ **tc** Or "Run back and forth inside the walls of your towns." Or "slash yourselves with gashes." The meaning of this line is uncertain. The Hebrew text reads "run back and forth among the walls." The word "run back and forth" is generally taken as a Hitpolel of a verb that means to "go about" in the Qal and to "go back and forth" in the Polel (cf. BDB 1002 s.v. יָזַבּוּ). The noun that follows in the Hebrew means "wall, hedge" and is quite commonly modified by the noun צֹאֵן *tsō'n*, "sheep" referring to sheepfolds (cf., e.g., Num 32:36; 1 Sam 24:3). But the phrase "run back and forth among the sheepfolds" yields little meaning here. In Ps 89:40 (89:41 HT) the word "wall" is used in parallelism with fortified cities and refers to the walls of the city. That is the sense that is assumed in one of the alternate translations with the words "of your towns" being supplied in the translation for clarification. However, that figure is a little odd in a context which speaks of mourning rites. Hence, some emend the word "walls" (גְּדֵרוֹת, *g'derot*) to "gashes" (גְּדֵדוֹת, *g'dudot*), a word that has occurred in a similar context in Jer 48:37. That would involve only the common confusion of ר and ד. That is the reading adopted here and fits the context nicely. NRSV appears to go one step further and read the verb as a Hitpolel from a root that is otherwise used only as a noun to mean "whip" or "scourge." NRSV reads "slash yourselves with whips" which also makes excellent sense in the context but is not supported by any parallel use of the verb.

For your god Milcom will go into exile along with his priests and officials.⁴

49:4 Why do you brag about your great power?

Your power is ebbing away,² you rebellious people of Ammon,³

who trust in your riches and say, ‘Who would dare to attack us?’

49:5 I will bring terror on you from every side,”

says the Lord God who rules over all.⁴

“You will be scattered in every direction.⁵ No one will gather the fugitives back together.

49:6 Yet in days to come

I will reverse Ammon’s ill fortune.”⁶
says the Lord.⁷

Judgment Against Edom

49:7 The Lord who rules over all⁸ spoke about Edom.⁹

¹ **sn** Compare Jer 48:7 and the study note there.

² **tn** Or “Why do you brag about your valleys, about the fruitfulness of your valleys.” The meaning of the first two lines of this verse are uncertain primarily due to the ambiguity of the expression זָבַח עֲמֹנִי (*zav imqekh*). The form זָבַח is either a Qal perfect or Qal participle of a verb meaning flow. It is common in the expression “a land flowing with milk and honey” and is also common to refer to the seminal discharge or discharge of blood which makes a man or woman unclean. BDB 264 s.v. זָבַח. Qal.2 sees it as an abbreviation of the idea of “flowing with milk and honey” and sees it as referring to the fertility of Ammon’s valley. However, there are no other examples of such an ellipsis. Several of the modern English versions and commentaries have taken the word עֲמֹנִי (*emeq*) not as a reference to a valley but to the homonym cited in the note on 47:5 and see the reference here to the flowing away of Ammon’s strength. That interpretation is followed here. Instead of explaining the plural ending on עֲמֹנִים (*amaqim*) as being an enclitic ם (*mem*) as others who follow this interpretation (e.g., J. Bright, *Jeremiah* [AB], 325), the present translation understands the plural as a plural of amplification (cf. GKC 397-98 §124.e and compare the noun “might” in Isa 40:26).

³ **tn** *Heb* “apostate daughter.” This same term is applied to Israel in Jer 31:22 but seems inappropriate here to Ammon because she had never been loyal to the Lord and could not hence be called “apostate.” However, if it is used of the fact that she rebelled against the Lord’s servant, Nebuchadnezzar, it might be appropriate (cf. Jer 27:6, 8). Hence the term “rebellious” is used in the translation to represent it. The word “daughter” is again a personification of the land (cf. BDB 123 s.v. בַּת 3) and is here translated “people of Ammon” to make it easier for the modern reader to identify the referent.

⁴ **tn** *Heb* “The Lord Yahweh of armies.” For an explanation of the rendering here and of the significance of this title see the study note on 2:19.

⁵ **tn** *Heb* “You will be scattered each man [straight] before him.”

⁶ **tn** See Jer 29:14; 30:3 and the translator’s note on 29:14 for the idiom used here.

⁷ **tn** *Heb* “Oracle of the Lord.”

⁸ **tn** *Heb* “Yahweh of armies.” See the study note on 2:19 for this title.

⁹ **sn** *Edom* was a kingdom to the south and east of Judah. Its borders varied over time but basically Edom lay in the hundred mile strip between the Gulf of Aqaba on the south and the Zered River on the north. It straddled the Arabah leading down from the Dead Sea to the Gulf of Aqaba, having as its northern neighbors both Judah and Moab. A long history of hostility existed between Israel and Edom, making Edom one of the favorite objects of the prophets’ oracles of judgment

“Is wisdom no longer to be found in Teman?”¹⁰

Can Edom’s counselors not give her any good advice?¹¹

Has all of their wisdom turned bad?¹²

49:8 Turn and flee! Take up refuge in remote places,¹³

you people who live in Dedan.¹⁴

For I will bring disaster on the descendants of Esau.

I have decided it is time for me to punish them.¹⁵

49:9 If grape pickers came to pick your grapes, would they not leave a few grapes behind?¹⁶

If robbers came at night,

would they not pillage only what they needed?¹⁷

(cf., e.g., Isa 21:11-12; 34:5-15; 63:1-6; Amos 1:11-12; Ezek 25:12-14; 35:1-15; Obad 1-16). Not much is known about Edom at this time other than the fact that they participated in the discussions regarding rebellion against Nebuchadnezzar in 594 b.c. According to Obadiah 10-16 they not only gloated over Judah’s downfall in 586 b.c. but participated in its plunder and killed some of those who were fleeing the country.

¹⁰ **sn** *Teman* was the name of one of Esau’s descendants, the name of an Edomite clan and the name of the district where they lived (Gen 36:11, 15, 34). Like the name Bozrah, it is used poetically for all of Edom (Jer 49:20; Ezek 25:13).

¹¹ **tn** *Heb* “Has counsel perished from men of understanding?”

¹² **tn** The meaning of this last word is based on the definition given in KBL 668 s.v. נִפַּח Nif and HALOT 726 s.v. נִפַּח Nif, which give the nuance “to be [or become] corrupt” rather than that of BDB 710 s.v. נִפַּח Niph who give the nuance “let loose (i.e., to be dismissed; to be gone)” from a verb that is elsewhere used of the overhanging of a curtains or a cliff.

¹³ **tn** *Heb* “make deep to dwell.” The meaning of this phrase is debated. Some take it as a reference for the Dedanites who were not native to Edom to go down from the heights of Edom and go back home (so G. L. Keown, P. J. Scalise, T. G. Smothers, *Jeremiah* 26-52 [WBC], 330). The majority of commentaries, however, take it as a reference to the Dedanites disassociating themselves from the Edomites and finding remote hiding places to live in (so J. A. Thompson, *Jeremiah* [NICOT], 718). For the options see W. L. Holladay, *Jeremiah* (Hermeneia), 2:375.

¹⁴ **sn** *Dedan*. The Dedanites were an Arabian tribe who lived to the southeast of Edom. They are warned here to disassociate themselves from Edom because Edom is about to suffer disaster.

¹⁵ **tn** *Heb* “For I will bring the disaster of Esau upon him, the time when I will punish him.” Esau was the progenitor of the tribes and nation of Edom (cf. Gen 36:1, 8, 9, 19).

¹⁶ **tn** The translation of this verse is generally based on the parallels in Obad 5. There the second line has a ה interrogative in front of it. The question can still be assumed because questions can be asked in Hebrew without a formal marker (cf. GKC 473 §150.a and BDB 519 s.v. הָ 1.a[e] and compare usage in 2 Kgs 5:26).

¹⁷ **tn** The tense and nuance of the verb translated “pillage” are both different than the verb in Obad 5. There the verb is the imperfect of גָּנַב (*ganav*, “to steal”). Here the verb is the perfect of a verb which means to “ruin” or “spoil.” The English versions and commentaries, however, almost all render the verb here in much the same way as in Obad 5. The nuance must mean they only “ruin, destroy” (by stealing) only as much as they need (*Heb* “their sufficiency”), and the verb is used as metonymical substitute, effect for cause. The perfect must be some kind of a future perfect; “would they not have destroyed only...” The negative question is carried over by ellipsis from the preceding lines.

49:10 But I will strip everything away
from Esau's descendants.
I will uncover their hiding places so they
cannot hide.
Their children, relatives, and neighbors
will all be destroyed.
Not one of them will be left!
49:11 Leave your orphans behind and I
will keep them alive.
Your widows too can depend on me."¹

49:12 For the LORD says, "If even those who
did not deserve to drink from the cup of my
wrath must drink from it, do you think you will
go unpunished? You will not go unpunished, but
must certainly drink from the cup of my wrath."²
49:13 For I solemnly swear,"³ says the LORD, "that
Bozrah⁴ will become a pile of ruins. It will become
an object of horror and ridicule, an example to be
used in curses.⁵ All the towns around it will lie in
ruins forever."

49:14 I said,⁶ "I have heard a message
from the LORD.
A messenger has been sent among the
nations to say,

'Gather your armies and march out
against her!
Prepare to do battle with her!'"⁷
49:15 The LORD says to Edom,⁸
"I will certainly make you small among
nations.
I will make you despised by all human-
kind.
49:16 The terror you inspire in others⁹
and the arrogance of your heart have de-
ceived you.
You may make your home in the clefts of
the rocks;
you may occupy the highest places in the
hills.¹⁰
But even if you made your home where
the eagles nest,
I would bring you down from there,"
says the LORD.
49:17 "Edom will become an object of
horror.
All who pass by it will be filled with hor-
ror;
they will hiss out their scorn
because of all the disasters that have hap-
pened to it."¹¹

¹ **tn** Or "Their children and relatives will all be destroyed. And none of their neighbors will say, 'Leave your orphans with me and I'll keep them alive. Your widows can trust in me.'" This latter interpretation is based on a reading in a couple of the Greek versions (Symmachus and Lucian) and is accepted by a number of the modern commentaries, (J. Bright, J. A. Thompson, W. L. Holladay, and G. L. Keown, P. J. Scalise, T. G. Smothers). However, the majority of modern English versions do not follow it and lacking any other Hebrew or versional evidence it is probable that this is an interpretation to explain the mitigation of what appears as a prophecy of utter annihilation. There have been other cases in Jeremiah where a universal affirmation (either positive or negative) has been modified in the verses that follow. The verb in the second line תִּבְחַתְּךָ (tivakhu) is highly unusual; it is a second masculine plural form with a feminine plural subject. The form is explained in GKC 127-28 §47.k and 160-61 §60.a. n. 1 as a pausal substitution for the normal form תִּבְחַתְּךָ (tivakhnah) and a similar form in Ezek 37:7 cited as a parallel.

² **tn** The words "of my wrath" after "cup" in the first line and "from the cup of my wrath" in the last line are not in the text but are implicit in the metaphor. They have been supplied in the translation for clarity.

sn The reference here is to the cup of God's wrath which is connected with the punishment of war at the hands of the Babylonians referred to already in Jer 25:15-29. Those who do not deserve to drink are the innocent victims of war who get swept away with the guilty. Edom was certainly not one of the innocent victims as is clear from this judgment speech and those referred to in the study note on 49:7.

³ **tn** Heb "I swear by myself." See 22:5 and the study note there.

⁴ **sn** Bozrah appears to have been the chief city in Edom, its capital city (see its parallelism with Edom in Isa 34:6; 63:1; Jer 49:22). The reference to "its towns" (translated here "all the towns around it") could then be a reference to all the towns in Edom. It was located about twenty-five miles southeast of the southern end of the Dead Sea apparently in the district of Teman (see the parallelism in Amos 1:12).

⁵ **tn** See the study note on 24:9 for the rendering of this term.

⁶ **tn** The words "I said" are not in the text but it is generally agreed that the words that follow are Jeremiah's. These words are supplied in the translation to make clear that the speaker has shifted from the LORD to Jeremiah.

⁷ **tn** Heb "Rise up for battle." The idea "against her" is implicit from the context and has been supplied in the translation for clarity.

⁸ **tn** The words "The LORD says to Edom" are not in the text. They have been supplied in the translation to mark the shift from the address of the messenger summoning the nations to prepare to do battle against Edom. The LORD is clearly the speaker (see the end of v. 16) and Edom is clearly the addressee. Such sudden shifts are common in Hebrew poetry, particularly Hebrew prophecy, but are extremely disruptive to a modern reader trying to follow the argument of a passage. TEV adds "The LORD said" and then retains third person throughout. CEV puts all of vv. 14-16 in the second person and uses indirect discourse in v. 15.

⁹ **tn** The meaning of this Hebrew word (תִּפְלֵטֶת, *tifletset*) is uncertain because it occurs only here. However, it is related to a verb root that refers to the shaking of the pillars (of the earth) in Job 9:6 and a noun (תִּפְלֵטֶת, *mifletset*) that refers to "horror" or "shuddering" used in Job 21:6; Isa 21:4; Ezek 7:18; Ps 55:6. This is the nuance that is accepted by BDB, KBL, HAL and a majority of the modern English versions. The suffix is an objective genitive. The fact that the following verb is masculine singular suggests that the text here הִשִּׁיחַ אֶתְּךָ (*hishi' atakh*) is in error for הִשִּׁיחַ אֶתְּךָ (*hishi' atakh*); so G. L. Keown, P. J. Scalise, T. G. Smothers, *Jeremiah 26-52* [WBC], 327, n. 16.a).

¹⁰ **tn** The Hebrew text of the first four lines reads: "Your terror [= the terror you inspire] has deceived you, [and] the arrogance of your heart, you who dwell in the clefts of the rock, who occupy the heights of the hill." The sentence is broken up and restructured to better conform with English style.

¹¹ **sn** This verse is very similar to Jer 19:8 where the same judgment is pronounced on Jerusalem. For the meaning of some of the terms here ("hiss out their scorn" and "all the disasters that have happened to it") see the notes on that verse.

49:18 Edom will be destroyed like Sodom and Gomorrah and the towns that were around them. No one will live there. No human being will settle in it," says the LORD.

49:19 "A lion coming up from the thick undergrowth along the Jordan¹ scatters the sheep in the pastureland around it.²

So too I will chase the Edomites off their land.³

Then I will appoint over it whomever I choose.⁴

For there is no one like me, and there is no one who can call me to account.⁵

There is no⁶ ruler⁷ who can stand up against me.

49:20 So listen to what I, the LORD, have planned against Edom, what I intend to do to⁸ the people who live in Teman.⁹

Their little ones will be dragged off.

I will completely destroy their land because of what they have done.¹⁰

¹ **tn** See the study note on Jer 12:5 for the rendering of this term.

² **tn** "The pasture-ground on the everflowing river" according to KBL 42 s.v. אֶרְיָהוּ 1. The "everflowing river" refers to the Jordan.

³ **tn** *Heb* "Behold, like a lion comes up from the thicket of the Jordan into the pastureland of overflowing water so [reading בֶּן־כֶּן (*ken*) for בִּי (*ki*); or "indeed" (reading בִּי as an asseverative particle with J. A. Thompson, *Jeremiah* [NICOT], 719, n. 6)] I will suddenly chase him [Edom] from upon it [the land]." The sentence has been restructured to better conform with contemporary English style and the significance of the simile drawn from the comparison has been spelled out for the sake of clarity. The form אֶרְיָהוּ (*argi'ah*) is functioning here as an adverbial modifier in a verbal hendiadys (cf. GKC 386 §120.8).

⁴ **tn** For the use of the interrogative בִּי (*mi*) in the sense of "whoever" and functioning like an adjective see BDB 567 s.v. בִּי g and compare the usage in Prov 9:4, 16.

⁵ **tn** For the meaning of this verb in the sense of "arraign" or "call before the bar of justice" compare Job 9:19 and see BDB 417 s.v. יָנִיד Hiph.

⁶ **tn** The interrogative בִּי (*mi*) is rendered "there is no one" in each of the last three occurrences in this verse because it is used in a rhetorical question that expects the answer "no one" or "none" and is according to BDB 566 s.v. בִּי f(c) equivalent to a rhetorical negative.

⁷ **tn** The word "shepherd" (רֹעֵה, *ro'eh*) has been used often in the book of Jeremiah to refer metaphorically to the ruler or leader (cf. BDB 945 s.v. רֹעֵה Qal.1.d(2) and compare usage, e.g., in Jer 2:8; 23:1).

⁸ **tn** *Heb* "Therefore listen to the plan of the LORD which he has planned against Edom, and the purposes which he has purposed against..." The first person has again been adopted in the translation to avoid the shift from the first person address in v. 19 to the third person in v. 20, a shift that is common in Hebrew poetry, particularly Hebrew prophecy, but which is not common in contemporary English literature.

⁹ **sn** *Teman* here appears to be a poetic equivalent for Edom, a common figure of speech in Hebrew poetry where the part is put for the whole. "The people of Teman" is thus equivalent to all the people of Edom.

¹⁰ **tn** *Heb* "They will surely drag them off, namely the young ones of the flock. He will devastate their habitation [or their sheepfold] on account of them." The figure of the lion among the flock of sheep appears to be carried on here where the

49:21 The people of the earth will quake when they hear of their downfall.¹¹ Their cries of anguish will be heard all the way to the Gulf of Aqaba.¹²

49:22 Look! Like an eagle with outspread wings,

a nation will soar up and swoop down on Bozrah.

At that time the soldiers of Edom will be as fearful as a woman in labor."¹³

Judgment Against Damascus

49:23 The LORD spoke¹⁴ about Damascus.¹⁵

"The people of Hamath and Arpad¹⁶ will be dismayed

people are referred to as a flock and their homeland is referred to as a sheepfold. It is hard, however, to carry the figure over here into the translation, so the figures have been interpreted instead. Both of these last two sentences are introduced by a formula that indicates a strong affirmative oath (i.e., they are introduced by לֹא אֵין *'im lo'*; cf. BDB 50 s.v. אֵין 1.b(2)). The subject of the verb "they will drag them off" is the indefinite third plural which may be taken as a passive in English (cf. GKC 460 §144.g). The subject of the last line is the LORD which has been rendered in the first person for stylistic reasons (see the translator's note on the beginning of the verse).

¹¹ **tn** *Heb* "The earth will quake when at the sound of their downfall." However, as in many other places "earth" stands here metonymically for the inhabitants or people of the earth (see E. W. Bullinger, *Figures of Speech*, 578-79, and compare usage in 2 Sam 15:23; Ps 66:4).

¹² **tn** *Heb* "the Red Sea," of which the Gulf of Aqaba formed the northeastern arm. The land of Edom once reached this far according to 1 Kgs 9:26.

¹³ **sn** Compare Jer 48:40-41 for a similar prophecy about Moab. The parallelism here suggests that Bozrah, like Teman in v. 20, is a poetic equivalent for Edom.

¹⁴ **tn** The words "The LORD spoke" and "he said" are not in the text. There is only a title here: "Concerning Damascus." However, something needs to be supplied to show that these are the LORD's words of judgment (cf. v. 26 "oracle of the LORD" and the "I" in v. 27). These words have been supplied in the translation for clarity and consistency with the introduction to the other judgment speeches.

¹⁵ **sn** *Damascus* is a city in Syria, located below the eastern slopes of the Anti-Lebanon Mountains. It was the capital of the Aramean state that was in constant hostility with Israel from the time of David until its destruction by the Assyrians in 732 B.C. At various times it was allied with the Aramean state of Hamath which was further north. Contingents from these Aramean states were involved in harassing Judah and Jerusalem in 598 B.C. when Jehoiakim rebelled (2 Kgs 24:2) but little is heard about them in the rest of the book of Jeremiah or in the history of this period.

¹⁶ **tn** *Heb* "Hamath and Arpad." There is no word for people in the text. The cities are being personified. However, since it is really the people who are involved and it is clearer for the modern reader, the present translation supplies the words "people of" both here and in v. 24. The verbs in vv. 23-25 are all to be interpreted as prophetic perfects, the tense of the Hebrew verb that views an action as though it were as good as done. The verbs are clearly future in vv. 26-27 which begin with a "therefore."

sn *Hamath* was a city on the Orontes River about 110 miles (183 km) north of Damascus. *Arpad* was a city that was 95 miles (158 km) farther north from there. These two cities were in the path of the northern descent of the kings of Assyria and Babylonia and had been conquered earlier under the Assyrian kings (Isa 10:9; 36:19; 37:13). The apparent reference here is to their terror and loss of courage when they

because they have heard bad news.
Their courage will melt away because of
worry.

Their hearts will not be able to rest.¹

49:24 The people of Damascus will lose
heart and turn to flee.

Panic will grip them.

Pain and anguish will seize them

like a woman in labor.

49:25 How deserted will that once-famous
city² be,

that city that was once filled with³ joy!⁴

49:26 For her young men will fall in her
city squares.

All her soldiers will be destroyed at that
time.”

says the LORD who rules over all.⁵

49:27 “I will set fire to the walls of Da-
mascus;

it will burn up the palaces of Ben
Hadad.”⁶

Judgment Against Kedar and Hazor

49:28 The LORD spoke about Kedar⁷ and the
kingdoms of Hazor⁸ that King Nebuchadnezzar of
Babylon conquered.

“Army of Babylon,⁹ go and attack Kedar.
Lay waste those who live in the eastern
desert.¹⁰

49:29 Their tents and their flocks will be
taken away.

Their tent curtains, equipment, and cam-
els will be carried off.

People will shout¹¹ to them,
“Terror is all around you!”¹²

49:30 The LORD says,¹³ “Flee quickly, you
who live in Hazor.¹⁴

Take up refuge in remote places.¹⁵

For King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon
has laid out plans to attack you.

He has formed his strategy on how to
defeat you.”¹⁶

hear the news that Nebuchadnezzar’s armies are on the
move toward them and Damascus. They would have been in
the path of Nebuchadnezzar as he chased Necho south after
the battle of Carchemish.

¹ **tc** The meaning of this verse is very uncertain. The He-
brew text apparently reads “Hamath and Arpad are dismayed.
They melt away because they have heard bad news. Anxiety
is in the sea; it [the sea] cannot be quiet.” Many commen-
taries and English versions redivide the verse and read “like
the sea” for “in the sea” (כַּיָּם [kayyam] for בַּיָּם [bayyam]) and
read the feminine singular noun דָּאָגָה (*d^e agah*) as though it
were the third masculine plural verb דָּאָגוּ (*da’agu*): “They are
troubled like the sea.” The translation follows the emendation
proposed in *BHS* and accepted by a number of commentaries
(e.g., J. Bright, *Jeremiah* [AB], 333; J. A. Thompson, *Jeremiah*
[NICOT], 723, n. 1). That emendation involves reading נָמְגוּ
לִבָּם (namog libbam *midl^e agah*) instead of נָמְגוּ בַּיָּם
(namogu bayyam *d^e agah*). The translation also involves a double
reading of “heart,” for the sake of English style, once in the
sense of courage (BDB 525 s.v. לֵב 10) because that is the
nuance that best fits “melts” in the English idiom and once in
the more general sense of hearts as the seat of fear, anxiety,
worry. The double translation is a concession to English style.

² **tn** Heb “city of praise.”

³ **tn** Heb “city of joy.”

⁴ **tc** Or “Why has that famous city not been abandoned,
that city I once took delight in?” The translation follows the
majority of modern commentaries in understanding לֹא (*lo’*),
“not” before “abandoned” as a misunderstanding of the em-
phatic ל (*lamed*); so J. A. Thompson, *Jeremiah* [NICOT], 723,
n. 3, and J. Bright, *Jeremiah* [AB], 333, n. c; see also *IBHS*
21.1-12 §11.2.10i and *HALOT* 485-86 s.v. II ל for the phenom-
enon). The particle is missing from the Vulgate. The transla-
tion also follows the versions in omitting the suffix on the word
“joy” that is found in the Hebrew text (see *BHS* note b for a
listing of the versions). This gives a better connection with the
preceding and the following verse than the alternate transla-
tion.

⁵ **tn** Heb “Oracle of Yahweh of armies.” For this title for God
see the study note on 2:19.

⁶ **sn** *Ben-Hadad* was a common name borne by a number
of the kings of Damascus, e.g., one during the time of Asa
around 900 b.c. (cf. 1 Kgs 15:18-20), one a little later during
the time of Omri and Ahab around 850 (1 Kgs 20), and one
during the time of Jehoash about 800 (2 Kgs 13:24-25).

⁷ **sn** *Kedar* appears to refer to an Arabic tribe of nomads
descended from Ishmael (Gen 25:13). They are associated
here with the people who live in the eastern desert (Heb “the
children of the east”; בְּנֵי קֵדָר, *b^ene-qedem*). In Isa 21:16 they
are associated with the Temanites and the Dedanites, Arabic
tribes in the north Arabian desert. They were sheep breeders
(Isa 60:7) who lived in tents (Ps 120:5) and unwallled villages
(Isa 42:11). According to Assyrian records they clashed with
Assyria from the time of Shalmaneser in 850 until the time
of Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal in the late seventh century.
According to the Babylonian Chronicles, Nebuchadnezzar de-
feated them in 599 b.c.

⁸ **sn** *Hazor*. Nothing is known about this Hazor other than
what is said here in vv. 28, 30, 33. They appear to also be
nomadic tent dwellers who had a loose association with the
Kedarites.

⁹ **tn** The words “Army of Babylon” are not in the Hebrew
text but are implicit from the context. They are supplied in the
translation for clarity.

¹⁰ **sn** Heb “the children of the east.” Nothing much is known
about them other than their association with the Midianites
and Amalekites in their attack on Israel in the time of Gideon
(Judg 6:3, 33) and the fact that God would let tribes from the
eastern desert capture Moab and Ammon in the future (Ezek
25:4, 10). Midian and Amalek were considered to be located
in the region in north Arabia east of Ezion Geber. That would
put them in the same general locality as the region of Kedar.
The parallelism here suggests that they are the same as the
people of Kedar. The words here are apparently addressed to
the armies of Nebuchadnezzar.

¹¹ **tn** Or “Let their tents...be taken....Let their tent...be car-
ried.... Let people shout....”

¹² **sn** This expression is a favorite theme in the book of Jer-
emiah. It describes the terrors of war awaiting the people of
Judah and Jerusalem (6:25), the Egyptians at Carchemish
(46:5), and here the Kedarites.

¹³ **tn** Heb “Oracle of the LORD.”

¹⁴ **map** For location see Map1-D2; Map2-D3; Map3-A2;
Map4-C1.

¹⁵ **tn** Heb “Make deep to dwell.” See Jer 49:8 and the trans-
lator’s note there. The use of this same phrase here argues
against the alternative there of going down from a height and
going back home.

¹⁶ **tn** Heb “has counseled a counsel against you, has
planned a plan against you.”

49:31 The LORD says,¹ “Army of Babylon,² go and attack a nation that lives in peace and security. They have no gates or walls to protect them.³

They live all alone.

49:32 Their camels will be taken as plunder. Their vast herds will be taken as spoil. I will scatter to the four winds those desert peoples who cut their hair short at the temples.⁴

I will bring disaster against them from every direction,⁵ says the LORD.⁵

49:33 “Hazor will become a permanent wasteland,

a place where only jackals live.⁶

No one will live there.

No human being will settle in it.”⁷

Judgment Against Elam

49:34 Early in the reign⁸ of King Zedekiah of Judah, the LORD spoke to the prophet Jeremiah about Elam.⁹

49:35 The LORD who rules over all said, “I will kill all the archers of Elam, who are the chief source of her military might.¹⁰

49:36 I will cause enemies to blow through Elam from every direction

like the winds blowing in from the four quarters of heaven.

I will scatter the people of Elam to the four winds.

There will not be any nation where the refugees of Elam will not go.¹¹

49:37 I will make the people of Elam terrified of their enemies, who are seeking to kill them.

I will vent my fierce anger and bring disaster upon them,”¹² says the LORD.¹³

“I will send armies chasing after them¹⁴ until I have completely destroyed them.

49:38 I will establish my sovereignty over Elam.¹⁵

I will destroy their king and their leaders,”¹⁶ says the LORD.¹⁷

49:39 “Yet in days to come

I will reverse Elam’s ill fortune.”¹⁸ says the LORD.¹⁹

Judgment Against Babylon

50:1 The LORD spoke concerning Babylon and the land of Babylonia²⁰ through the prophet Jeremiah.²¹

50:2 “Announce²² the news among the nations! Proclaim it!

Signal for people to pay attention!²³

¹ **tn** Heb “Oracle of the LORD.”

² **tn** The words “Army of Babylon” are not in the text but are implicit from the context. They are supplied in the translation for clarity.

³ **tn** Heb “no gates and no bar,” i.e., “that lives securely without gates or bars.” The phrase is used by the figure of species for genus (synecdoche) to refer to the fact that they have no defenses, i.e., no walls, gates, or bars on the gates. The figure has been interpreted in the translation for the benefit of the average reader.

⁴ **tn** See the translator’s note at Jer 9:26 and compare the usage in 9:26 and 25:23.

⁵ **tn** Heb “Oracle of the LORD.”

⁶ **sn** Compare Jer 9:11.

⁷ **sn** Compare Jer 49:18 and 50:40 where the same thing is said about Edom and Babylon.

⁸ **tn** Or “In the beginning of the reign.” For a discussion of the usage of the terms here see the translator’s note on 28:1. If this refers to the accession year the dating would be 598/97 b.c.

⁹ **tn** Heb “That which came [as] the word of the LORD to Jeremiah the prophet about the Elam.” See the translator’s note on 14:1 for the construction here and compare also 46:1; 47:1; 50:1.

sn Elam was a country on the eastern side of the Tigris River in what is now southwestern Iran. Its capital city was Susa. It was destroyed in 640 b.c. by Ashurbanipal after a long period of conflict with the Assyrian kings. It appears from Babylonian records to have regained its independence shortly thereafter, perhaps as early as 625 b.c., and was involved in the fall of Assyria in 612 b.c. If the date refers to the first year of Zedekiah’s rule (597 b.c.), this prophecy appears to be later than the previous ones (cf. the study notes on 46:2 and 47:1).

¹⁰ **tn** Heb “I will break the bow of Elam, the chief source of their might.” The phrase does not mean that God will break literal bows or that he will destroy their weapons (synecdoche of species for genus) or their military power (so Hos 1:5). Because of the parallelism, the “bow” here stands for the archers who wield the bow, and were the strongest force (or chief contingent) in their military.

¹¹ **tn** Or more simply, “I will bring enemies against Elam from every direction. / And I will scatter the people of Elam to the four winds. // There won’t be any nation / where the refugees of Elam will not go.” Or more literally, “I will bring the four winds against Elam / from the four quarters of heaven. / I will scatter....” However, the winds are not to be understood literally here. God isn’t going to “blow the Elamites” out of Elam with natural forces. The winds must figuratively represent enemy forces that God will use to drive them out. Translating literally would be misleading at this point.

¹² **tn** Heb “I will bring disaster upon them, even my fierce anger.”

¹³ **tn** Heb “Oracle of the LORD.”

¹⁴ **tn** Heb “I will send the sword after them.”

¹⁵ **tn** Or “I will sit in judgment over Elam”; Heb “I will set up my throne in Elam.” Commentators are divided over whether this refers to a king sitting in judgment over his captured enemies or whether it refers to formally establishing his rule over the country. Those who argue for the former idea point to the supposed parallels in 1:15 (which the present translation understands not to refer to this but to setting up siege) and 43:8-13. The parallelism in the verse here, however, argues that it refers to the LORD taking over the reins of government by destroying their former leaders.

¹⁶ **tn** Heb “I will destroy king and leaders from there.”

¹⁷ **tn** Heb “Oracle of the LORD.”

¹⁸ **tn** See Jer 29:14; 30:3 and the translator’s note on 29:14 for the idiom used here.

sn See a similar note on the reversal of Moab’s fortunes in Jer 48:47 and compare also 46:26 for a future restoration of Egypt.

¹⁹ **tn** Heb “Oracle of the LORD.”

²⁰ **tn** Heb “the land of the Chaldeans.” See the study note on 21:4 for explanation.

²¹ **tn** Heb “The word which the LORD spoke concerning Babylon, concerning the land of the Chaldeans by the hand of Jeremiah the prophet.”

²² **tn** The verbs are masculine plural. Jeremiah is calling on other unnamed messengers to spread the news.

²³ **tn** Heb “Raise a signal flag.”

Declare the news! Do not hide it! Say:
 ‘Babylon will be captured.
 Bel¹ will be put to shame.
 Marduk will be dismayed.
 Babylon’s idols will be put to shame.
 Her disgusting images² will be dismayed.³
50:3 For a nation from the north⁴ will at-
 tack Babylon.
 It will lay her land waste.
 People and animals will flee out of it.
 No one will inhabit it.’

50:4 “When that time comes,” says the
 LORD,⁵
 “the people of Israel and Judah will re-
 turn to the land together.
 They will come back with tears of repen-
 tance
 as they seek the LORD their God.⁶
50:5 They will ask the way to Zion;
 they will turn their faces toward it.
 They will come⁷ and bind themselves to
 the LORD

¹ **sn** *Bel* was originally the name or title applied to the Su-
 merian storm god. During the height of Babylon’s power it be-
 came a title that was applied to Marduk who was Babylon’s
 chief deity. As a title it means “Lord.” Here it is a poetical par-
 allel reference to Marduk mentioned in the next line.

² **tn** The Hebrew word used here (גִּלְלִים, *gillulim*) is always
 used as a disdainful reference to idols. It is generally thought to
 have originally referred to “dung pellets” (cf. KBL 183 s.v.
 גִּלְלִים). It is only one of several terms used in this way, such
 as “worthless things” (אֲלִילִים, *’alilim*), “vanities,” or “empty
 winds” (הַבָּלִים, *havalim*).

³ **tn** The verbs here are all in the tense that views the ac-
 tions as though they were already done (the Hebrew prophetic
 perfect). The verbs in the next verse are a mixture of prophetic
 perfects and imperfects which announce future actions.

sn This refers to the fact that the idols that the Babylonians
 worshiped will not be able to protect them, but will instead be
 carried off into exile with the Babylonians themselves (cf. Isa
 46:1-2).

⁴ **sn** A nation from the north refers to Medo-Persia which at
 the time of the conquest of Babylon in 539 b.c. had conquered
 all the nations to the north, the northwest, and the northeast
 of Babylon forming a vast empire to the north and east of
 Babylon. Contingents of these many nations were included in
 her army and reference is made to them in 50:9 and 51:27-
 28. There is also some irony involved here because the “en-
 emy from the north” referred to so often in Jeremiah (cf. 1:14;
 4:6; 6:1) has been identified with Babylon (cf. 25:9). Here in a
 kind of talionic justice Judah’s nemesis from the north will be
 attacked and devastated by an enemy from the north.

⁵ **tn** *Heb* “oracle of the LORD.”

⁶ **tn** *Heb* “and the children of Israel will come, they and the
 children of Judah together. They shall go, weeping as they go,
 and they will seek the LORD their God.” The concept of “seek-
 ing” the LORD often has to do with seeking the LORD in worship
 (by sacrifice [Hos 5:6; 2 Chr 11:16]; prayer [Zech 8:21, 22; 2
 Sam 12:16; Isa 65:1; 2 Chr 15:4]). In Hos 7:10 it is in parallel
 with returning to the LORD. In Ps 69:6 it is in parallel with hop-
 ing in or trusting in the LORD. Perhaps the most helpful paral-
 lels here, however, are Hos 3:5 (in comparison with Jer 30:9)
 and 2 Chr 15:15 where it is in the context of a covenant com-
 mitment to be loyal to the LORD which is similar to the context
 here (see the next verse). The translation is admittedly para-
 phrastic but “seeking the LORD” does not mean here looking
 for God as though he were merely a person to be found.

⁷ **tc** The translation here assumes that the Hebrew בָּאוּ
 (*bo’u*; a Qal imperative masculine plural) should be read בָּאוּ
 (*ba’u*; a Qal perfect third plural). This reading is presupposed
 by the Greek version of Aquila, the Latin version, and the Tar-

in a lasting covenant that will never be
 forgotten.⁸

50:6 “My people have been lost sheep.
 Their shepherds⁹ have allowed them to
 go astray.
 They have wandered around in the moun-
 tains.
 They have roamed from one mountain
 and hill to another.¹⁰
 They have forgotten their resting place.
50:7 All who encountered them devoured
 them.
 Their enemies who did this said, ‘We are
 not liable for punishment!
 For those people have sinned against the
 LORD, their true pasture.¹¹
 They have sinned against the LORD in
 whom their ancestors¹² trusted.’¹³

50:8 “People of Judah,¹⁴ get out of Baby-
 lon quickly!
 Leave the land of Babylonia!¹⁵
 Be the first to depart!¹⁶
 Be like the male goats that lead the herd.
50:9 For I will rouse into action and bring
 against Babylon

gum (see *BHS* note a, which mistakenly assumes that the
 form must be imperfect).

⁸ **sn** See Jer 32:40 and the study note there for the nature
 of this lasting agreement.

⁹ **sn** The *shepherds* are the priests, prophets, and leaders
 who have led Israel into idolatry (2:8).

¹⁰ **sn** The allusion here, if it is not merely a part of the meta-
 phor of the wandering sheep, is to the worship of the false
 gods on the high hills (2:20, 3:2).

¹¹ **tn** This same Hebrew phrase “the habitation of righteous-
 ness” is found in Jer 31:23 in relation to Jerusalem in the
 future as “the place where righteousness dwells.” Here, how-
 ever, it refers to the same entity as “their resting place” in v. 6
 and means “true pasture.” For the meaning of “pasture” for
 the word נָחַל (*naveh*) see 2 Sam 7:8 and especially Isa 65:10
 where it is parallel with “resting place” for the flocks. For
 the meaning of “true” נָדֵק (*sedeq*) see BDB 841 s.v. נָדֵק 1.
 For the interpretation adopted here see G. L. Keown, P. J. Scalise,
 T. G. Smothers, *Jeremiah* 26-52 (WBC), 365. The same basic
 interpretation is reflected in NRSV, NJPS, and God’s Word.

¹² **tn** *Heb* “fathers.”

¹³ **sn** These two verses appear to be a poetical summary of
 the argument of Jer 2 where the nation is accused of aban-
 doning its loyalty to God and worshiping idols. Whereas those
 who tried to devour Israel were liable for punishment when
 Israel was loyal to God (2:3), the enemies of Israel who de-
 stroyed them (i.e., the Babylonians [but also the Assyrians],
 50:17) argue that they are not liable for punishment because
 the Israelites have sinned against the LORD and thus deserve
 their fate.

¹⁴ **tn** The words “People of Judah” are not in the Hebrew
 text but are implicit from the context. They have been sup-
 plied in the translation to clarify the subject of the address.

¹⁵ **tn** *Heb* “the land of the Chaldeans.” See the study note
 on 21:4 for explanation.

¹⁶ **tn** The words “Be the first to leave” are not in the text but
 spell out the significance of the simile that follows. They have
 been supplied in the translation for clarity.

a host of mighty nations¹ from the land of the north.
 They will set up their battle lines against her.
 They will come from the north and capture her.²
 Their arrows will be like a skilled soldier³ who does not return from the battle empty-handed.⁴
50:10 Babylonia⁵ will be plundered. Those who plunder it will take all they want,”
 says the LORD.⁶
50:11 “People of Babylonia,⁷ you plundered my people.⁸
 That made you happy and glad.
 You frolic about like calves in a pasture.⁹
 Your joyous sounds are like the neighs of a stallion.¹⁰
50:12 But Babylonia will be put to great shame.
 The land where you were born¹¹ will be disgraced.
 Indeed,¹² Babylonia will become the least

important of all nations.
 It will become a dry and barren desert.
50:13 After I vent my wrath on it Babylon will be uninhabited.¹³
 It will be totally desolate.
 All who pass by will be filled with horror and will hiss out their scorn because of all the disasters that have happened to it.¹⁴
50:14 “Take up your battle positions all around Babylon,
 all you soldiers who are armed with bows.¹⁵
 Shoot¹⁶ all your arrows at her! Do not hold any back!¹⁷
 For she has sinned against the LORD.
50:15 Shout the battle cry from all around the city.
 She will throw up her hands in surrender.¹⁸
 Her towers¹⁹ will fall.
 Her walls will be torn down.
 Because I, the LORD, am wreaking revenge,²⁰
 take out your vengeance on her!
 Do to her as she has done!

¹ sn Some of these are named in Jer 51:27-28.
² tn Heb “She will be captured from there (i.e., from the north).”

³ tc Read Heb בַּמְּשִׁיל (moskil) with a number of Hebrew mss and some of the versions in place of מַשְׂכִּיל (mashkil, “one who kills children”) with the majority of Hebrew mss and some of the versions. See BHS note d for the details.

⁴ tn Or more freely, “Their arrows will be as successful at hitting their mark // as a skilled soldier always returns from battle with plunder.”

sn I.e., none of the arrows misses its mark.

⁵ tn Heb “The land of the Chaldeans.” See the study note on 21:4 for explanation.

⁶ tn Heb “Oracle of the LORD.”

⁷ tn The words “People of Babylonia” are not in the text but they are implicit in the reference in the next verse to “your mother” which refers to the city and the land as the mother of its people. These words have been supplied in the translation to identify the referent of “you” and have been added for clarity.

⁸ tn Or “my land.” The word can refer to either the land (Jer 2:7, 16:8) or the nation/people (Jer 12:7, 8, 9).

⁹ tc Reading כִּעֵגֶל דֹּשֶׁה (ke’egle deshe) or כִּעֵגֶל בָּשָׂא (ke’egel baddeshe) as presupposed by the Greek and Latin versions (cf. BHS note d-d) in place of the reading in the Hebrew text כִּבְנֵי עֵגֶל (ke’eglah dashah, “like a heifer treading out the grain”) which does not fit the verb (בִּישָׂה [push] = “spring about” [BDB 807 s.v. I בִּישָׂה] or “paw the ground” [KBL 756 s.v. בִּישָׂה]) and compare Mal 3:20 for usage). This variant reading is also accepted by J. Bright, J. A. Thompson, F. B. Huey, and G. L. Keown, P. J. Scalise, T. G. Smothers.

¹⁰ tn Heb “Though you rejoice, though you exult, you who have plundered my heritage, though you frolic like calves in a pasture and neigh like stallions, your mother...” The particle כִּי (ki) introduces a concessive protasis according to BDB 473 s.v. כִּי 2.c(a). Many interpret the particle as introducing the grounds for the next verse, i.e., “because...” The translation here will reflect the concessive by beginning the next verse with “But.” The long protasis has been broken up and restructured to better conform with contemporary English style.

¹¹ tn Heb “Your mother will be utterly shamed, the one who gave you birth...” The word “mother” and the parallel term “the one who gave you birth” are used metaphorically for the land of Babylonia. For the figure compare the usage in Isa 50:1 (Judah) and Hos 2:2, 2 (2:4, 7 HT) and see BDB 52 s.v. מֵא 2 and 408 s.v. יָדָה Qal.2.c.

¹² tn Heb “Behold.” For the use of this particle see the trans-

lator’s note on 1:6.

¹³ tn Heb “From [or Because of] the wrath of the LORD it will be uninhabited.” The causal connection is spelled out more clearly and actively and the first person has been used because the speaker is the LORD. The referent “it” has been spelled out clearly from the later occurrence in the verse, “all who pass by Babylon.”

¹⁴ sn Compare Jer 49:17 and the study note there and see also the study notes on 18:16 and 19:8.

¹⁵ tn Heb “all you who draw the bow.”

¹⁶ tc The verb here should probably be read as a Qal imperative יָרֵה (yarah) from יָרָה (yarah) with a few Hebrew mss rather than a Qal imperative יָדָה (yadah) with the majority of Hebrew mss. The verb יָדָה (yadah) does not otherwise occur in the Qal and only elsewhere in the Piel with a meaning “cast” (cf. KBL 363 s.v. יָדָה). The verb יָרָה (yarah) is common in both the Qal and the Hiphil with the meaning of shooting arrows (cf. BDB 435 s.v. יָרָה Qal.3 and Hiph.2). The confusion between יָדָה (dalel) and יָרָה (resh) is very common.

¹⁷ tn Heb “Shoot at her! Don’t save any arrows!”

¹⁸ tn Heb “She has given her hand.” For the idiom here involving submission/surrender see BDB 680 s.v. נָתַן Qal.1.z and compare the usage in 1 Chr 29:24; 2 Chr 30:8. For a different interpretation, however, see the rather complete discussion in G. L. Keown, P. J. Scalise, and T. G. Smothers (Jeremiah 26-52 [WBC], 366) who see this as a reference to making a covenant. The verb in this line and the next two lines are all Hebrew perfects and most translators and commentaries see them as past. God’s Word, however, treats them as prophetic perfects and translates them as future. This is more likely in the light of the imperatives both before and after.

¹⁹ tn The meaning of this word is uncertain. The definition here follows that of HALOT 91 s.v. מִצְדָּה, which defines it on the basis of an Akkadian word and treats it as a loanword.

²⁰ tn Heb “Because it is the LORD’s vengeance.” The first person has again been used because the LORD is the speaker and the nominal expression has been turned into a verbal one more in keeping with contemporary English style.

50:16 Kill all the farmers who sow the seed in the land of Babylon. Kill all those who wield the sickle at harvest time.¹ Let all the foreigners return to their own people. Let them hurry back to their own lands to escape destruction by that enemy army.²

50:17 “The people of Israel are like scattered sheep which lions have chased away. First the king of Assyria devoured them.³ Now last of all King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon has gnawed their bones.⁴

50:18 So I, the LORD God of Israel who rules over all, say:⁵ ‘I will punish the king of Babylon and his land

just as I punished the king of Assyria.

50:19 But I will restore the flock of Israel to their own pasture.

They will graze on Mount Carmel and the land of Bashan.

They will eat until they are full⁶ on the hills of Ephraim and the land of Gilead.⁷

50:20 When that time comes, no guilt will be found in Israel. No sin will be found in Judah.⁸ For I will forgive those of them I have allowed to survive.⁹ I, the LORD, affirm it!”¹⁰

50:21 The LORD says,¹¹ “Attack¹² the land of Merathaim and the people who live in Pekod!¹³ Pursue, kill, and completely destroy them!”¹⁴

and in the Transjordan, lands that were lost to the Assyrians in the period 738-722 b.c. All of these places were known for their fertility, for their woods and their pastures. The hills (hill country) of Ephraim formed the center of Northern Israel. Mount Carmel lies on the seacoast of the Mediterranean north and west of the hill country of Ephraim. Gilead formed the central part of Transjordan and was used to refer at times to the territory between the Yarmuk and Jabbok Rivers, at times to the territory between the Yarmuk and the Arnon Rivers, and at times for all of Israel in the Transjordan. Bashan refers to the territory north of Gilead.

⁸ **tn** *Heb* “In those days and at that time, oracle of the LORD, the iniquity [or guilt] of Israel will be sought but there will be none and the sins of Judah but they will not be found.” The passive construction “will be sought” raises the question of who is doing the seeking which is not really the main point. The translation has avoided this question by simply referring to the result which is the main point.

⁹ **sn** Compare Jer 31:34 and 33:8.

¹⁰ **tn** *Heb* “Oracle of the LORD.” In this case it is necessary to place this in the first person because this is already in a quote whose speaker is identified as the LORD (v. 18).

¹¹ **tn** *Heb* “Oracle of the LORD.”

¹² **sn** The commands in this verse and in vv. 26-27 are directed to the armies from the north who are referred to in v. 3 as “a nation from the north” and in v. 9 as a “host of mighty nations from the land of the north.” The addressee in this section shifts from one referent to another.

¹³ **sn** *Merathaim...Pekod*. It is generally agreed that the names of these two regions were chosen for their potential for wordplay. Merathaim probably refers to a region in southern Babylon near where the Tigris and Euphrates come together before they empty into the Persian Gulf. It was known for its briny waters. In Hebrew the word would mean “double rebellion” and would stand as an epithet for the land of Babylon as a whole. Pekod refers to an Aramean people who lived on the eastern bank of the lower Tigris River. They are mentioned often in Assyrian texts and are mentioned in Ezek 23:23 as allies of Babylon. In Hebrew the word would mean “punishment.” As an epithet for the land of Babylon it would refer to the fact that Babylon was to be punished for her double rebellion against the LORD.

¹⁴ **tn** *Heb* “Smite down and completely destroy after them.” The word translated “kill” or “smite down” is a word of uncertain meaning and derivation. BDB 352 s.v. III חָרַב relates it to an Aramaic word meaning “attack, smite down.” KBL 329-30 s.v. II חָרַב sees it as a denominative from the word חָרַב (*kharev*, “sword”), a derivation which many modern commentaries accept and reflect in a translation “put to the sword.” KBL, however, gives “to smite down; to slaughter” which is roughly the equivalent of the meaning assigned to it in BDB. The word only occurs here and in v. 27 in the Qal and in 2 Kgs 3:23 in the Niphal where it means something like “attacked one another, fought with one another.” Many commentators question the validity of the word “after them” (אַחֲרֵיהֶם, *akharehem*) which occurs at the end of the line after “completely destroy.” The Targum reads “the last of them” (אַחֲרֵיהֶם, *akharitum*) which is graphically very close and accepted by some commentators. The present translation has chosen to represent “after them” by a paraphrase at the beginning “pursue them.”

¹⁵ **sn** For the concept underlying the words translated here “completely destroy” see the study note on Jer 25:9.

¹ **tn** *Heb* “Cut off the sower from Babylon, and the one who wields the sickle at harvest time.” For the meaning “kill” for the root “cut off” see BDB 503 s.v. כָּרַת Qal.1.b and compare usage in Jer 11:19. The verb is common in this nuance in the Hiphil, cf. BDB 504 s.v. כָּרַת Hiph, 2.b.

² **tn** *Heb* “Because of [or out of fear of] the sword of the oppressor, let each of them turn toward his [own] people and each of them flee to his [own] country.” Compare a similar expression in 46:16 where the reference was to the flight of the mercenaries. Here it refers most likely to foreigners who are counseled to leave Babylon before they are caught up in the destruction. Many of the commentaries and English versions render the verbs as futures but they are more likely third person commands (jussives). Compare the clear commands in v. 8 followed by essentially the same motivation. The “sword of the oppressor,” of course, refers to death at the hands of soldiers wielding all kinds of weapons, chief of which has been a reference to the bow (v. 14).

³ **sn** *The king of Assyria devoured them*. This refers to the devastation wrought on northern Israel by the kings of Assyria beginning in 738 b.c. when Tiglath Pileser took Galilee and the Transjordanian territories and ending with the destruction and exile of the people of Samaria by Sargon in 722 b.c.

⁴ **tn** The verb used here only occurs this one time in the Hebrew Bible. It is a denominative from the Hebrew word for “bones” (עֵצֶם, *’etsem*). BDB 1126 s.v. עֵצֶם, denom Pi, define it as “break his bones.” HALOT 822 s.v. II עֵצֶם Pi defines it as “gnaw on his bones.”

sn If the prophecies which are referred to in Jer 51:59-64 refer to all that is contained in Jer 50–51 (as some believe), this would have referred to the disasters of 605 b.c. and 598 b.c. and all the harassment that Israel experienced from Babylon up until the fourth year of Zedekiah (594 b.c.). If on the other hand, the prophecy related there refers to something less than this final form, the destruction of 587/6 b.c. could be referred to as well.

⁵ **tn** *Heb* “Therefore thus says Yahweh of armies, the God of Israel.” The first person is again adopted because the LORD is speaking. For this title, “Yahweh of armies,” compare 7:3 and the study note on 2:19.

⁶ **tn** *Heb* “their soul [or hunger/appetite] will be satisfied.”

⁷ **tn** The metaphor of Israel as a flock of sheep (v. 17) is continued here. The places named were all in Northern Israel

Do just as I have commanded you!¹

50:22 The noise of battle can be heard in the land of Babylonia.²

There is the sound of great destruction.

50:23 Babylon hammered the whole world to pieces.

But see how that ‘hammer’ has been broken and shattered!³

See what an object of horror

Babylon has become among the nations!

50:24 I set a trap for you, Babylon; you were caught before you knew it. You fought against me.

So you were found and captured.⁴

50:25 I have opened up the place where my weapons are stored.⁵

I have brought out the weapons for carrying out my wrath.⁶

For I, the Lord GOD who rules over all,⁷ have work to carry out in the land of Babylonia.⁸

50:26 Come from far away and attack Babylonia!⁹

Open up the places where she stores her grain!

Pile her up in ruins!¹⁰ Destroy her completely!¹¹

Do not leave anyone alive!¹²

50:27 Kill all her soldiers!¹³

Let them be slaughtered!¹⁴

They are doomed,¹⁵ for their day of reckoning¹⁶ has come, the time for them to be punished.”

50:28 Listen! Fugitives and refugees are coming from the land of Babylonia.

They are coming to Zion to declare there how the LORD our God is getting revenge,

¹ **tn** Heb “Do according to all I have commanded you.”

² **tn** The words “of Babylonia” are not in the text but are implicit from the context. They have been supplied in the translation to clarify the referent.

sn The verbs in vv. 22-25 are all descriptive of the present, but all of this is really to take place in the future. Hebrew poetry has a way of rendering future actions as though they were already accomplished. The poetry of this section makes it difficult, however, to render the verbs as future, as has been done regularly in the present translation.

³ **tn** Heb “How broken and shattered is the hammer of all the earth!” The “hammer” is a metaphor for Babylon who was God’s war club to shatter the nations and destroy kingdoms just like Assyria is represented in Isa 10:5 as a rod and a war club. Some readers, however, might not pick up on the metaphor or identify the referent, so the translation has incorporated an identification of the metaphor and the referent within it. “See how” and “See what” are an attempt to capture the nuance of the Hebrew particle אֵךְ (*’ekh*) which here expresses an exclamation of satisfaction in a taunt song (cf. BDB 32 s.v. אֵךְ 2 and compare usage in Isa 14:4, 12; Jer 50:23).

⁴ **tn** Heb “You were found [or found out] and captured because you fought against the LORD.” The same causal connection is maintained by the order of the translation but it puts more emphasis on the cause and connects it also more closely with the first half of the verse. The first person is used because the LORD is speaking of himself first in the first person “I set” and then in the third. The first person has been maintained throughout. Though it would be awkward, perhaps one could retain the reference to the LORD by translating, “I, the LORD.”

⁵ **tn** Or “I have opened up my armory.”

⁶ **tn** Heb “The LORD has opened up his armory and has brought out the weapons of his wrath.” The problem of the LORD referring to himself in the third person (or of the prophet speaking on his behalf) is again raised here and is again resolved by using the first person throughout. The construction “weapons of my wrath” would not convey any meaning to many readers so the significance has been spelled out in the translation.

sn The weapons are the nations which God is bringing from the north against them. Reference has already been made in the study notes that Assyria is the “rod” or “war club” by which God vents his anger against Israel (Isa 10:5-6) and Babylon a hammer or war club with which he shatters the nations (Jer 50:23; 51:20). Now God will use other nations as weapons to execute his wrath against Babylon. For a similar idea see Isa 13:2-5 where reference is made to marshaling the nations against Babylon. Some of the nations that the LORD will marshal against Babylon are named in Jer 51:27-28.

⁷ **tn** Heb “the Lord Yahweh of armies.” For an explanation of this rendering and the significance of this title see the study note on 2:19.

⁸ **tn** The words “of Babylonia” are not in the text but are implicit from the context. They have been supplied in the translation to clarify the referent.

sn The verbs in vv. 22-25 are all descriptive of the present but, all of this is really to take place in the future. Hebrew poetry has a way of rendering future actions as though they were already accomplished. The poetry of this section makes it difficult, however, to render the verbs as future as the present translation has regularly done.

⁹ **tn** Heb “Come against her from the end.” There is a great deal of debate about the meaning of “from the end” (מִקְצֵהוּ, *miqqets*). Some follow the suggestion of F. Giesebrecht in BDB 892 s.v. קָצֵה 3 and emend the text to מִקְצֵהָ (*miqqatseh*) on the basis of the presumed parallel in Jer 51:31 which is interpreted as “on all sides,” i.e., “from every quarter/side.” However, the phrase does not mean that in Jer 51:31 but is used as it is elsewhere of “from one end to another,” i.e., in its entirety (so Gen 19:4). The only real parallel here is the use of the noun קֵץ (*qets*) with a suffix in Isa 37:24 referring to the remotest part, hence something like from the end (of the earth), i.e., from a far away place. The referent “her” has been clarified here to refer to Babylonia in case someone might not see the connection between v. 25d and v. 26.

¹⁰ **tn** Heb “Pile her up like heaps.” Many commentators understand the comparison to be to heaps of grain (compare usage of אֵרֵמָה (*aremah*) in Hag 2:16; Neh 13:15; Ruth 3:7). However, BDB 790 s.v. גְּרִיבָה is more likely correct that this refers to heaps of ruins (compare the usage in Neh 4:2 [3:34 HT]).

¹¹ **sn** Compare Jer 50:21 and see the study note on 25:9.

¹² **tn** Heb “Do not let there be to her a remnant.” According to BDB 984 s.v. שְׁאִרִית this refers to the last remnant of people, i.e., there won’t be any survivors. Compare the usage in Jer 11:23.

¹³ **tn** Heb “Kill all her young bulls.” Commentators are almost universally agreed that the reference to “young bulls” is figurative here for the princes and warriors (cf. BDB 831 s.v. בָּר 2.f, which compares Isa 34:7 and Ezek 39:18). This is virtually certain because of the reference to the time coming for them to be punished; this would scarcely fit literal bulls. For the verb rendered “kill” here see the translator’s note on v. 21.

¹⁴ **tn** Heb “Let them go down to the slaughter.”

¹⁵ **tn** Or “How terrible it will be for them”; Heb “Woe to them.” See the study note on 22:13 and compare the usage in 23:1; 48:1.

¹⁶ **tn** The words “of reckoning” are not in the text but are implicit from the context. They are supplied in the translation for clarity.

getting revenge for what they have done to his temple.¹

50:29 “Call for archers² to come against Babylon!

Summon against her all who draw the bow!

Set up camp all around the city!

Do not allow anyone to escape!

Pay her back for what she has done.

Do to her what she has done to others.

For she has proudly defied me,³ the Holy One of Israel.⁴

50:30 So her young men will fall in her city squares.

All her soldiers will be destroyed at that time.”

says the LORD.⁵

50:31 “Listen! I am opposed to you, you proud city,”⁶

says the Lord God who rules over all.⁷

¹ **tn** Heb “Hark! Fugitives and refugees from the land of Babylon to declare in Zion the vengeance of the LORD our God, vengeance for his temple.” For the meaning “Hark!” for the noun קָוִל (*qol*) see BDB 877 s.v. קָוִל 1.f and compare the usage in Jer 10:22. The syntax is elliptical because there is no main verb. The present translation has supplied the verb “come” as many other English versions have done. The translation also expands the genitival expression “vengeance for his temple” to explain what all the commentaries agree is involved.

² **sn** This verse appears to be a parenthetical exclamation of the prophet in the midst of his report of what the LORD said through him. He throws himself into the future and sees the fall of Babylon and hears the people reporting in Zion how God has destroyed Babylon to get revenge for the Babylonians destroying his temple. Jeremiah prophesied from 627 b.c. (see the study note on 1:2) until sometime after 586 b.c. after Jerusalem fell and he was taken to Egypt. The fall of Babylon occurred in 538 b.c. some fifty years later. However, Jeremiah had prophesied as early as the first year of Nebuchadnezzar’s reign (605 b.c.; Jer 25:1) that many nations and great kings would come and subject Babylon, the instrument of God’s wrath – his sword against the nations – to bondage (Jer 25:12-14).

³ **tn** For this word see BDB 914 s.v. III רָב and compare usage in Prov 26:10 and Job 16:12 and compare the usage of the verb in Gen 49:23. Based on this evidence, it is not necessary to emend the form to רָבִים (*rovim*) as many commentators contend.

⁴ **tn** Heb “for she has acted insolently against the LORD.” Once again there is the problem of the LORD speaking about himself in the third person (or the prophet dropping his identification with the LORD). As in several other places the present translation, along with several other modern English versions (TEV, CEV, NIV), has substituted the first person to maintain consistency with the context.

⁵ **tn** The *Holy One of Israel* is a common title for the LORD in the book of Isaiah. It is applied to the LORD only here and in 51:5 in the book of Jeremiah. It is a figure where an attribute of a person is put as a title of a person (compare “your majesty” for a king). It pictures the LORD as the sovereign king who rules over his covenant people and exercises moral authority over them.

⁶ **tn** Heb “Oracle of the LORD.”

⁷ **tn** Heb “Behold, I am against you, proud one.” The word “city” is not in the text but it is generally agreed that the word is being used as a personification of the city which had “proudly defied” the LORD (v. 29). The word “city” is supplied in the translation for clarity.

⁸ **tn** Heb “oracle of the Lord Yahweh of armies.” For the rendering of this title and an explanation of its significance see the study note on 2:19.

“Indeed,⁸ your day of reckoning⁹ has come,

the time when I will punish you.¹⁰

50:32 You will stumble and fall, you proud city;

no one will help you get up.

I will set fire to your towns;

it will burn up everything that surrounds you.”¹¹

50:33 The LORD who rules over all¹² says, “The people of Israel are oppressed.

So too are the people of Judah.¹³

All those who took them captive are

holding them prisoners.

They refuse to set them free.

50:34 But the one who will rescue them¹⁴ is strong.

He is known as the LORD who rules over all.¹⁵

He will strongly¹⁶ champion their cause.

As a result¹⁷ he will bring peace and rest to the earth,

but trouble and turmoil¹⁸ to the people who

⁸ **tn** The particle כִּי (*ki*) is probably asseverative here (so J. A. Thompson, *Jeremiah* [NICOT], 739, n. 13, and cf. BDB 472 s.v. כִּי 1.e for other examples). This has been a common use of this particle in the book of Jeremiah.

⁹ **tn** The words “of reckoning” are not in the text but are implicit from the context. They are supplied in the translation for clarity.

¹⁰ **sn** Compare v. 27.

¹¹ **tn** Heb “And the proud one will fall and there will be no one to help him up. I will start a fire in his towns and it will consume all that surround him.” The personification continues but now the stance is indirect (third person) rather than direct (second person). It is easier for the modern reader who is not accustomed to such sudden shifts if the second person is maintained. The personification of the city (or nation) as masculine is a little unusual; normally cities and nations are personified as feminine, as daughters or mothers.

¹² **tn** Heb “Yahweh of armies.” For an explanation of this title see the study note on 2:19.

¹³ **tn** Heb “Oppressed are the people of Israel and the people of Judah together,” i.e., both the people of Israel and Judah are oppressed. However, neither of these renderings is very poetic. The translation seeks to achieve the same meaning with better poetic expression.

¹⁴ **sn** Heb “their redeemer.” The Hebrew term “redeemer” referred in Israelite family law to the nearest male relative who was responsible for securing the freedom of a relative who had been sold into slavery. For further discussion of this term as well as its metaphorical use to refer to God as the one who frees Israel from bondage in Egypt and from exile in Assyria and Babylonia see the study note on 31:11.

¹⁵ **tn** Heb “Yahweh of armies is his name.” For the rendering of this title see the study note on 2:19.

¹⁶ **tn** Or “he will certainly champion.” The infinitive absolute before the finite verb here is probably functioning to intensify the verb rather than to express the certainty of the action (cf. GKC 333 §112.n and compare usage in Gen 43:3 and 1 Sam 20:6 listed there).

¹⁷ **tn** This appears to be another case where the particle לְמַעַן (*lema’an*) introduces a result rather than giving the purpose or goal. See the translator’s note on 25:7 for a listing of other examples in the book of Jeremiah and also the translator’s note on 27:10.

¹⁸ **tn** Heb “he will bring rest to the earth and will cause unrest to.” The terms “rest” and “unrest” have been doubly translated to give more of the idea underlying these two concepts.

inhabit Babylonia.¹

50:35 “Destructive forces will come against the Babylonians,”² says the LORD.³

“They will come against the people who inhabit Babylonia, against her leaders and her men of wisdom.

50:36 Destructive forces will come against her false prophets;⁴ they will be shown to be fools!⁵ Destructive forces will come against her soldiers;

they will be filled with terror!⁶
50:37 Destructive forces will come against her horses and her⁷ chariots.

Destructive forces will come against all the foreign troops within her;⁸

they will be as frightened as women!⁹
Destructive forces will come against her treasures;

they will be taken away as plunder!

50:38 A drought will come upon her land; her rivers and canals will be dried up.¹⁰ All of this will happen because her land is filled with idols.¹¹

¹ **tn** This translation again reflects the problem often encountered in these prophecies where the LORD appears to be speaking but refers to himself in the third person. It would be possible to translate here using the first person as CEV and NIV do. However, to sustain that over the whole verse results in a considerably greater degree of paraphrase. The verse could be rendered “But I am strong and I will rescue them. I am the LORD who rules over all. I will champion their cause. And I will bring peace and rest to...”

² **tn** *Heb* “the Chaldeans.” For explanation of the rendering see the study note on 21:4. There is no verb in this clause. Therefore it is difficult to determine whether this should be understood as a command or as a prediction. The presence of *vav* (ו) consecutive perfects after a similar construction in vv. 36b, d, 37c, 38a and the imperfects after “therefore” (לָכֵן, *lakhen*) all suggest the predictive or future nuance. However, the *vav* consecutive perfect could be used to carry on the nuance of command (cf. GKC 333 §112.g) but not in the sense of purpose as NRSV, NJPS render them.

³ **tn** *Heb* “A sword against the Chaldeans.” The “sword” here is metaphorical for destructive forces in the persons of the armies of the north (vv. 3, 9) which the LORD is marshaling against Babylon and which he has addressed by way of command several times (e.g., vv. 14, 21, 26-27, 29). Compare 46:14 and the study note there.

⁴ **tn** *Heb* “Oracle of the LORD.”

⁵ **tn** The meaning and the derivation of the word translated “false prophets” is uncertain. The same word appears in conjunction with the word for “diviners” in Isa 44:25 and probably also in Hos 11:6 in conjunction with the sword consuming them “because of their counsel.” BDB 95 s.v. III בָּרִי ב sees this as a substitution of “empty talk” for “empty talkers” (the figure of metonymy) and refer to them as false prophets. KBL 108 s.v. II בָּרִי emends the form in both places to read בָּרִימ (barim) in place of בָּרִים (baddim) and defines the word on the basis of Akkadian to mean “soothsayer” (KBL 146 s.v. V בָּרִ). HALOT 105 s.v. V בָּרִ retains the pointing, derives it from an Amorite word found in the Mari letters, and defines it as “oracle priest.” However, G. L. Keown, P. J. Scalise, and T. G. Smothers (*Jeremiah* 26-52 [WBC], 368) call this identification into question because the word only occurs in one letter from Mari and its meaning is uncertain there. It is hazardous to emend the text in two places, perhaps even three, in light of no textual evidence in any of the passages and to define the word on the basis of an uncertain parallel. Hence the present translation opts here for the derivation and extended definition given in BDB.

⁶ **tn** This translation follows the suggestion of BDB 383 s.v. I בָּיָאָהָ Niph.2. Compare the usage in Isa 19:13 and Jer 5:4.

⁶ **tn** The verb here (חָתַת, *khataat*) could also be rendered “be destroyed” (cf. BDB 369 s.v. חָתַת Qal.1 and compare the usage in Jer 48:20, 39). However, the parallelism with “shown to be fools” argues for the more dominant usage of “be dismayed” or “be filled with terror.” The verb is found in parallelism with both בּוֹשָׁה (*bosh*, “be ashamed, dismayed”) and יָרָא (*yare*, “be afraid”) and can refer to either emotion. Here it is more likely that they are filled with terror because of the approaching armies.

⁷ **tn** Hebrew has “his” in both cases here whereas the rest of the possessive pronouns throughout vv. 35-37 are “her.” There is no explanation for this switch unless the third masculine singular refers as a distributive singular to the soldiers mentioned in the preceding verse (cf. GKC 464 §145.f.). This is probably the case here, but to refer to “their horses and their chariots” in the midst of all the “her...” might create more confusion than what it is worth to be that pedantic.

⁸ **tn** Or “in the country,” or “in her armies”; *Heb* “in her midst.”

⁹ **tn** *Heb* “A sword against his horses and his chariots and against all the mixed company [or mixed multitude] in her midst and they will become like women.” The sentence had to be split up because it is too long and the continuation of the second half with its consequential statement would not fit together with the first half very well. Hence the subject and verb have been repeated. The Hebrew word translated “foreign troops” (עָרֵב, *erev*) is the same word that is used in 25:20 to refer to the foreign peoples living in Egypt and in Exod 12:38 for the foreign people that accompanied Israel out of Egypt. Here the word is translated contextually to refer to foreign mercenaries, an identification that most of the commentaries and many of the modern English versions accept (see, e.g., J. Bright, *Jeremiah* [AB], 355; NRSV; NIV). The significance of the simile “they will become like women” has been spelled out for the sake of clarity.

¹⁰ **tc** *Heb* “a drought against her waters and they will dry up.” Several of the commentaries and modern English versions accept the emendation proposed by BHS and read here “sword” [חֶרֶב] [khorev] in place of חֶרֶב [khorev], the change of only one vowel) in keeping with the rest of the context. According to BHS this reading is supported by the Lucianic and Hexaplaric recensions of the LXX (the Greek version) and the Syriac version. In this case the drying up of the waters (of the canals) is attributed to neglect brought about by war conditions. However, it is just as likely that these versions are influenced by the repetition of the word “sword” as the Hebrew and the other versions are influenced by the concept of “drying up” of the waters to read “drought.” Hence the present translation, along with the majority of modern English versions, retains the Hebrew “drought.”

¹¹ **tn** *Heb* “for it is a land of idols.” The “for,” however, goes back to the whole context not just to the preceding prediction (cf. BDB 473-74 s.v. בָּיָאָהָ 1.c and compare usage in Isa 21:6 listed there).

Her people act like madmen because of¹
those idols they fear.²

50:39 Therefore desert creatures and jackals
will live there.

Ostriches³ will dwell in it too.⁴

But no people will ever live there again.
No one will dwell there for all time to
come.⁵

50:40 I will destroy Babylonia just like I
did

Sodom and Gomorrah and the neighbor-
ing towns.

No one will live there.⁶

No human being will settle in it,”
says the LORD.⁷

50:41 “Look! An army is about to come
from the north.

A mighty nation and many kings⁸ are stir-
ring into action

in faraway parts of the earth.

50:42 Its soldiers are armed with bows and
spears.

They are cruel and show no mercy.

They sound like the roaring sea
as they ride forth on their horses.

Lined up in formation like men going
into battle,

they are coming against you, fair Baby-
lon!⁹

50:43 The king of Babylon will become
paralyzed with fear¹⁰

when he hears news of their coming.¹¹

Anguish will grip him,
agony like that of a woman giving birth
to a baby.¹²

50:44 “A lion coming up from the thick
undergrowth along the Jordan

scatters the sheep in the pastureland
around it.

So too I will chase the Babylonians off of
their land.

Then I will appoint over it whomever I
choose.

For there is no one like me.

There is no one who can call me to ac-
count.

There is no ruler that can stand up against
me.

50:45 So listen to what I, the LORD, have
planned against Babylon,

what I intend to do to the people who
inhabit the land of Babylonia.¹³

Their little ones will be dragged off.

I will completely destroy their land be-
cause of what they have done.

¹ **tc** Or “Her people boast in.” This translation is based on the reading of the majority of Hebrew MSS which read יְהַלְלוּ (*yitholalu*; cf. usage in Jer 46:9 and see also 25:16; 51:7). Two Hebrew MSS and the versions read יְהַלְלוּ (*yithallalu*; cf. usage in Jer 4:2; 9:23, 24 and Ps 97:7 where a parallel expression is found with “idols”). The reading is again basically the difference in one Hebrew vowel. All of the modern commentaries consulted and all the modern English versions except NEB, REB follow the Hebrew text here rather than the versions.

² **tn** Heb “by the terrors.” However, as HALOT 40 s.v. אִיָּהוּ indicates these are “images that cause terror” (a substitution of the effect for the cause). The translation of this line follows the interpretation of the majority of modern English versions and all the commentaries consulted. NIV, NCV, and God’s Word reflect a different syntax, understanding the subject to be the idols just mentioned rather than “her people” which is supplied here for the sake of clarity (the Hebrew text merely says “they.”) Following that lead, one could render “but those idols will go mad with terror.” This makes excellent sense in the context which often refers to effects (v. 36b, d, 37c, 38b) of the war that is coming. However, that interpretation does not fit as well with the following “therefore/so,” which basically introduces a judgment or consequence after an accusation of sin.

³ **tn** The identification of this bird has been called into question by G. R. Driver, “Birds in the Old Testament,” *PEQ* 87 (1955): 137-38. He refers to this bird as an owl. That identification, however, is not reflected in any of the lexicons including the most recent, which still gives “ostrich” (HALOT 402 s.v. עֲוֵיָה) as does W. S. McCullough, “Ostrich,” *IDB* 3:611. REB, NIV, NCV, and God’s Word all identify this bird as “owl/desert owl.”

⁴ **tn** Heb “Therefore desert creatures will live with jackals and ostriches will live in it.”

⁵ **tn** Heb “It will never again be inhabited nor dwell in unto generation and generation.” For the meaning of this last phrase compare the usage in Ps 100:5 and Isaiah 13:20. Since the first half of the verse has spoken of animals living there, it is necessary to add “people” and turn the passive verbs into active ones.

⁶ **tn** Heb “Like [when] God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah and the neighboring towns,” oracle of the LORD, “no man will live there.” The LORD is speaking so the first person has been substituted for “God.” The sentence has again been broken up to better conform with contemporary English style.

⁸ **sn** Compare Jer 49:18 where the same prophecy is applied to Edom.

⁷ **tn** Heb “Oracle of the LORD.”

⁸ **sn** A mighty nation and many kings is an allusion to the Medo-Persian empire and the vassal kings who provided forces for the Medo-Persian armies.

⁹ **tn** Heb “daughter Babylon.” The word “daughter” is a personification of the city of Babylon and its inhabitants.

¹⁰ **tn** Heb “his hands will drop/hang limp.” For the meaning of this idiom see the translator’s note on 6:24.

¹¹ **tn** Heb “The king of Babylon hears report of them and his hands hang limp.” The verbs are translated as future because the passage is prophetic and the verbs may be interpreted as prophetic perfects (the action viewed as if it were as good as done). In the parallel passage in 6:24 the verbs could be understood as present perfects because the passage could be viewed as in the present. Here it is future.

¹² **sn** Compare Jer 6:22-24 where almost the same exact words as 50:41-43 are applied to the people of Judah. The repetition of prophecies here and in the following verses emphasizes the talionic nature of God’s punishment of Babylon; as they have done to others, so it will be done to them (cf. 25:14; 50:15).

¹³ **tn** The words “of Babylonia” are not in the text but are implicit from the context. They have been supplied in the translation to clarify the referent.

sn The verbs in vv. 22-25 are all descriptive of the present, but all of this is really to take place in the future. Hebrew poetry has a way of rendering future actions as though they were already accomplished. The poetry of this section makes it difficult, however, to render the verbs as future as the present translation has regularly done.

50:46 The people of the earth will quake when they hear Babylon has been captured. Her cries of anguish will be heard by the other nations.”¹

51:1 The LORD says, “I will cause a destructive wind² to blow against³ Babylon and the people who inhabit Babylonia.⁴

51:2 I will send people to winnow Babylonia like a wind blowing away chaff.⁵

¹ **tn** *Heb* “among the nations.” With the exception of this phrase, the different verb in v. 46a, the absence of a suffix on the word for “land” in v. 45d, the third plural suffix instead of the third singular suffix on the verb for “chase...off of,” this passage is identical with 49:19-21 with the replacement of Babylon or the land of the Chaldeans for Edom. For the translation notes explaining the details of the translation here see the translator’s notes on 49:19-21.

sn This passage is virtually identical with Jer 49:19-21 with the replacement of Babylon, land of Babylonia for Edom. As God used Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians to destroy Edom, so he would use Cyrus and the Medes and Persians and their allies to destroy Babylon (cf. 25:13, 14). As Nebuchadnezzar was God’s servant to whom all would be subject (25:9; 27:6), so Cyrus is called in Isaiah “his anointed one,” i.e., his chosen king whom he will use to shatter other nations and set Israel free (Isa 45:1-4).

² **sn** The *destructive wind* is a figurative reference to the “foreign people” who will “winnow” Babylon and drive out all the people (v. 2). This figure has already been used in 4:11-12 and in 49:36. See the study note on 4:11-12 and the translator’s notes on 22:22 and 49:36.

³ **tn** Or “I will arouse the spirit of hostility of a destroying nation”; *Heb* “I will stir up against Babylon...a destroying wind [or the spirit of a destroyer].” The word *רוּחַ* (*ruakh*) can refer to either a wind (BDB 924 s.v. רוּחַ 2.a) or a spirit (BDB 925 s.v. רוּחַ 2.g). It can be construed as either a noun followed by an adjectival participle (so, “a destroying wind”) or a noun followed by another noun in the “of” relationship (a construct or genitival relationship; so, “spirit of a destroyer”). The same noun with this same verb is translated “stir up the spirit of” in 1 Chr 5:26; 2 Chr 21:16; 36:22; Hag 1:14; and most importantly in Jer 51:11 where it refers to the king of the Medes. However, the majority of the exegetical tradition (all the commentaries consulted and all the English versions except NASB and NIV) opt for the “destructive wind” primarily because of the figure of winnowing that is found in the next verse. The translation follows the main line exegetical tradition here for that same reason.

⁴ **sn** *Heb* “the people who live in Leb-qamai.” “Leb-qamai” is a code name for “Chaldeans” formed on the principle of substituting the last letter of the alphabet for the first, the next to the last for the second, and so on. This same principle is used in referring to Babylon in 25:26 and 51:41 as “Sheshach.” See the study note on 25:26 where further details are given. There is no consensus on why the code name is used because the terms Babylon and Chaldeans (= Babylonians) have appeared regularly in this prophecy or collection of prophecies.

⁵ **tn** Or “I will send foreign people against Babylonia.” The translation follows the reading of the Greek recensions of Aquila and Symmachus and the Latin version (the Vulgate). That reading is accepted by the majority of modern commentaries and several of the modern versions (e.g., NRSV, REB, NAB, and God’s Word). It fits better with the verb that follows it than the reading of the Hebrew text and the rest of the versions. The difference in the two readings is again only the difference in vocalization, the Hebrew text reading זָרִים (*zarim*) and the versions cited reading זֹרִים (*zorim*). If the Hebrew text is followed, there is a wordplay between the two words, “foreigners” and “winnow.” The words “like a wind blowing away chaff” have been supplied in the translation to clarify for the

They will winnow her and strip her land bare.⁶

This will happen when⁷ they come against her from every direction, when it is time to destroy her.⁸

51:3 Do not give her archers time to string their bows

or to put on their coats of armor.⁹

Do not spare any of her young men.

Completely destroy¹⁰ her whole army.

reader what “winnow” means.

sn Winnowing involved throwing a mixture of grain and chaff (or straw) into the air and letting the wind blow away the lighter chaff, leaving the grain to fall on the ground. Since God considered all the Babylonians chaff, they would all be “blown away.”

⁶ **tn** Or “They will strip her land bare like a wind blowing away chaff.” The alternate translation would be necessary if one were to adopt the alternate reading of the first line (the reading of the Hebrew text). The explanation of “winnow” would then be necessary in the second line. The verb translated “strip...bare” means literally “to empty out” (see BDB 132 s.v. פִּלַּל *Polel*). It has been used in 19:7 in the Qal of “making void” Judah’s plans in a wordplay on the word for “bottle.” See the study note on 19:7 for further details.

⁷ **tn** This assumes that the particle כִּי (*ki*) is temporal (cf. BDB 473 s.v. כִּי 2.a). This is the interpretation adopted also by NRSV and G. L. Keown, P. J. Scalise, T. G. Smothers, *Jeremiah* 26-52 (WBC), 349. J. Bright (*Jeremiah* [AB], 345) and J. A. Thompson (*Jeremiah* [NICOT], 747, n. 3) interpret it as asseverative or emphatic, “Truly, indeed.” Many of the modern English versions merely ignore it. Reading it as temporal makes it unnecessary to emend the following verb as Bright and Thompson do (from *יָחַד* [*yayu*] to *יָחַד* [*yihyu*]).

⁸ **tn** *Heb* “in the day of disaster.”

⁹ **tc** The text and consequent meaning of these first two lines are uncertain. Literally the Masoretic reads “against let him string let him string the one who strings his bow and against let him raise himself up in his coat of armor.” This makes absolutely no sense and the ancient versions and Hebrew mss did not agree in reading this same text. Many Hebrew mss and all the versions as well as the Masoretes themselves (the text is left unpointed with a marginal note not to read it) delete the second “let him string.” The LXX (or Greek version) left out the words “against” at the beginning of the first two lines. It reads “Let the archer bend his bow and let the one who has armor put it on.” The Lucianic recension of the LXX and some Targum mss supplied the missing object “it” and thus read “Let the archer ready his bow against it and let him array himself against it in his coat of mail.” This makes good sense but does not answer the question of why the Hebrew text left off the suffix on the preposition twice in a row. Many Hebrew mss and the Syriac, Targum, and Vulgate (the Latin version) change the pointing of “against” (כַּיִן [ʿal]) to “not” (אֵין [ʾal]) and thus read “Let the archer not string the bow and let him not array himself in his armor.” However, many commentators feel that this does not fit the context because it would apparently be addressed to the Babylonians, not the enemy, which would create a sudden shift in addressee with the second half of the verse. However, if it is understood in the sense taken here it refers to the enemy not allowing the Babylonian archers to get ready for the battle, i.e., a surprise attack. This sense is suggested as an alternative in J. Bright, *Jeremiah* (AB), 346, n. u-u, and J. A. Thompson, *Jeremiah* (NICOT), 747, n. 5, and is the interpretation adopted in TEV and probably also in NIV.

¹⁰ **sn** For the concept underlying this word see the study note on “utterly destroy” in Jer 25:9 and compare the usage in 50:21, 26.

51:4 Let them fall¹ slain in the land of
Babylonia,²
mortally wounded in the streets of her
cities.³

51:5 “For Israel and Judah will not be
forsaken⁴
by their God, the LORD who rules over
all.⁵

For the land of Babylonia is⁶ full of guilt
against the Holy One of Israel.⁷

51:6 Get out of Babylonia quickly, you
foreign people.⁸

Flee to save your lives.

Do not let yourselves be killed because of
her sins.

For it is time for the LORD to wreak his
revenge.

He will pay Babylonia⁹ back for what she
has done.¹⁰

51:7 Babylonia had been a gold cup in the
LORD’s hand.

She had made the whole world drunk.

The nations had drunk from the wine of
her wrath.¹¹

So they have all gone mad.¹²

51:8 But suddenly Babylonia will fall and
be destroyed.¹³

Cry out in mourning over it!

Get medicine for her wounds!

Perhaps she can be healed!

51:9 Foreigners living there will say,¹⁴

“We tried to heal her, but she could not be
healed.

Let’s leave Babylonia¹⁵ and each go back
to his own country.

For judgment on her will be vast in its
proportions.

It will be like it is piled up to heaven,
stacked up into the clouds.¹⁶

51:10 The exiles from Judah will say,¹⁷

¹ **tn** The majority of English versions and the commentaries understand the *vav* (h) consecutive + perfect as a future here “They will fall.” However, it makes better sense in the light of the commands in the previous verse to understand this as an indirect third person command (= a jussive; see GKC 333 §112.q, r) as REB and NJPS do.

² **tn** *Heb* “the land of the Chaldeans.” See the study note on 21:4 for explanation.

³ **tn** The words “cities” is not in the text. The text merely says “in her streets” but the antecedent is “land” and must then refer to the streets of the cities in the land.

⁴ **tn** *Heb* “widowed” (cf. BDB 48 s.v. אָלֵף, an adjective occurring only here but related to the common word for “widow”). It is commonly translated as has been done here.

⁵ **tn** The verses from v. 5 to v. 19 all speak of the LORD in the third person. The prophet who is the spokesman for the LORD (50:1) thus is speaking. However, the message is still from God because this was all what he spoke “through the prophet Jeremiah.”

⁶ **tn** *Heb* “Yahweh of armies.” For an explanation of this rendering see the study note on 2:19.

⁷ **tn** Or “all, though their land was...” The majority of the modern English versions understand the land here to refer to the land of Israel and Judah (the text reads “their land” and Israel and Judah are the nearest antecedents). In this case the particle כִּי (*ki*) is concessive (cf. BDB 473 s.v. כִּי 2.c[b]). Many of the modern commentaries understand the referent to be the land of the Chaldeans/Babylonians. However, most of them feel that the line is connected as a causal statement to 51:2-4 and see the line as either textually or logically out of place. However, it need not be viewed as logically out of place. It is parallel to the preceding and gives a second reason why they are to be destroyed. It also forms an excellent transition to the next lines where the exiles and other foreigners are urged to flee and not get caught up in the destruction which is coming “because of her sin.” It might be helpful to note that both the adjective “widowed” and the suffix on “their God” are masculine singular, looking at Israel and Judah as one entity. The “their” then goes back not to Israel and Judah of the preceding lines but to the “them” in v. 4. This makes for a better connection with the following and understands the particle כִּי in its dominant usage not an extremely rare one (see the comment in BDB 473 s.v. כִּי 2.c[b]). This interpretation is also reflected in RSV.

⁸ **tn** See the note on the phrase “the Holy One of Israel” in 50:29.

⁹ **tn** The words “you foreign people” are not in the text and many think the referent is the exiles of Judah. While this is clearly the case in v. 45 the referent seems broader here where the context speaks of every man going to his own country (v. 9).

¹⁰ **tn** *Heb* “her.”

¹¹ **tn** *Heb* “paying to her a recompense [i.e., a payment in

kind].”

¹² **tn** The words “of her wrath” are not in the Hebrew text but are supplied in the translation to help those readers who are not familiar with the figure of the “cup of the LORD’s wrath.”

¹³ **tn** The figure of the cup of the LORD’s wrath invoked in Jer 25:15-29 is invoked again here and Babylon is identified as the agent through which the wrath of the LORD is visited on the other nations. See the study note on 25:15 for explanation and further references.

¹⁴ **tn** *Heb* “upon the grounds of such conditions the nations have gone mad.”

¹⁵ **tn** The verbs in this verse and the following are all in the Hebrew perfect tense, a tense that often refers to a past action or a past action with present results. However, as the translator’s notes have indicated, the prophets use this tense to view the actions as if they were as good as done (the Hebrew prophetic perfect). The stance here is ideal, viewed as already accomplished.

¹⁶ **tn** The words “Foreigners living there will say” are not in the text but are implicit from the third line. These words are generally assumed by the commentaries and are explicitly added in TEV and NCV which are attempting to clarify the text for the average reader.

¹⁷ **tn** *Heb* “Leave/abandon her.” However, it is smoother in the English translation to make this verb equivalent to the hortative that follows.

¹⁸ **tn** This is an admittedly very paraphrastic translation that tries to make the figurative nuance of the Hebrew original understandable for the average reader. The Hebrew text reads: “For her judgment [or punishment] (cf. BDB 1078 s.v. מִשְׁפָּט 1.f) = ‘execution of judgment’ touches the heavens, and is lifted up as far as the clouds.” The figure of hyperbole or exaggeration is being used here to indicate the vastness of Babylon’s punishment which is the reason to escape (vv. 6, 9c). For this figure see Deut 1:28 in comparison with Num 13:28 and see also Deut 9:1. In both of the passages in Deut it refers to an exaggeration about the height of the walls of fortified cities. The figure also may be a play on Gen 11:4 where the nations gather in Babylon to build a tower that reaches to the skies. The present translation has interpreted the perfects here as prophetic because it has not happened yet or they would not be encouraging one another to leave and escape. For the idea here compare 50:16.

¹⁹ **tn** The words “The exiles from Judah will say” are not in the text but are implicit from the words that follow. They are supplied in the translation to clearly identify for the reader the referent of “us.”

‘The LORD has brought about a great deliverance for us!’¹
Come on, let’s go and proclaim in Zion
what the LORD our God has done!’

51:11 “Sharpen² your arrows!
Fill your quivers!³
The LORD will arouse a spirit of hostility
in⁴ the kings of Media.⁵
For he intends to destroy Babylonia.
For that is how the LORD will get his
revenge –
how he will get his revenge for the Babylonians’
destruction of his temple.⁶

¹ **tn** There is some difference of opinion as to the best way to render the Hebrew expression here. Literally it means “brought forth our righteousnesses.” BDB 842 s.v. צִדְקָה 7.b interprets this of the “righteous acts” of the people of Judah and compares the usage in Isa 64:6; Ezek 3:20; 18:24; 33:13. However, Judah’s acts of righteousness (or more simply, their righteousness) was scarcely revealed in their deliverance. Most of the English versions and commentaries refer to “vindication” i.e., that the LORD has exonerated or proven Israel’s claims to be true. However, that would require more explanation than the idea of “deliverance” which is a perfectly legitimate usage of the term (cf. BDB 842 s.v. צִדְקָה 6.a and compare the usage in Isa 46:13; 51:6, 8; 56:1). The present translation interprets the plural form here as a plural of intensity or amplification (GKC 397-98 §124.e) and the suffix as a genitive of advantage (IBHS 147 §9.5.2e). This interpretation is also reflected in REB and God’s Word.

² **sn** The imperatives here and in v. 12 are directed to the soldiers in the armies of the kings from the north (here identified as the kings of Media [see also 50:3, 9; 51:27-28]). They have often been addressed in this prophecy as though they were a present force (see 50:14-16; 50:21 [and the study note there]; 50:26, 29; 51:3) though the passage as a whole is prophetic of the future. This gives some idea of the ideal stance that the prophets adopted when they spoke of the future as though already past (the use of the Hebrew prophetic perfect which has been referred to often in the translator’s notes).

³ **tn** The meaning of this word is debated. The most thorough discussion of this word including etymology and usage in the OT and Qumran is in HALOT 1409-10 s.v. צִיָּבָה, where the rendering “quiver” is accepted for all the uses of this word in the OT. For a more readily accessible discussion for English readers see W. L. Holladay, *Jeremiah* (Hermeneia), 2:422-23. The meaning “quiver” fits better with the verb “fill” than the meaning “shield” which is adopted in BDB 1020 s.v. צִיָּבָה. “Quiver” is the meaning adopted also in NRSV, REB, NAB, and NJPS.

⁴ **tn** *Heb* “The LORD has stirred up the spirit of...” The verb is rendered here as a prophetic perfect. The rendering “arouse a spirit of hostility” is an attempt to render some meaning to the phrase and not simply ignore the word “spirit” as many of the modern English versions do. For a fuller discussion including cross references see the translator’s note on v. 1.

⁵ **sn** *Media* was a country in what is now northwestern Iran. At the time this prophecy was probably written they were the dominating force in the northern region, the most likely enemy to Babylon. By the time Babylon fell in 538 b.c. the Medes had been conquered and incorporated in the Persian empire by Cyrus. However, several times in the Bible this entity is known under the combined entity of Media and Persia (Esth 1:3, 4, 18, 19; 10:2; Dan 5:28; 6:8, 12, 15; 8:20). Dan 5:31 credits the capture of Babylon to Darius the Mede, which may have been another name for Cyrus or the name by which Daniel refers to a Median general named Gobryas.

⁶ **tn** *Heb* “For it is the vengeance of the LORD, vengeance for his temple.” As in the parallel passage in 50:28, the genitive construction has been expanded in the translation to clarify for the English reader what the commentaries in general agree is involved.

51:12 Give the signal to attack Babylon’s
wall!⁷
Bring more guards!⁸
Post them all around the city!⁹
Put men in ambush!¹⁰
For the LORD will do what he has
planned.
He will do what he said he would do to
the people of Babylon.¹¹

51:13 “You who live along the rivers of
Babylon,¹²
the time of your end has come.
You who are rich in plundered treasure,
it is time for your lives to be cut off.¹³

51:14 The LORD who rules over all¹⁴ has
solemnly sworn,¹⁵

‘I will fill your land with enemy soldiers.
They will swarm over it like locusts.¹⁶
They will raise up shouts of victory over
it.’

sn Verse 11c-f appears to be a parenthetical or editorial comment by Jeremiah to give some background for the attack which is summoned in vv. 11-12.

⁷ **tn** *Heb* “Raise a banner against the walls of Babylon.”

⁸ **tn** *Heb* “Strengthen the watch.”

⁹ **tn** *Heb* “Station the guards.”

¹⁰ **tn** *Heb* “Prepare ambushes.”

sn The commands are here addressed to the kings of the Medes to fully blockade the city by posting watchmen and setting men in ambush to prevent people from escaping from the city (cf. 2 Kgs 25:4).

¹¹ **tn** *Heb* “For the LORD has both planned and done what he said concerning the people living in Babylon,” i.e., “he has carried out what he planned.” Here is an obvious case where the perfects are to be interpreted as prophetic; the commands imply that the attack is still future.

¹² **sn** *Babylon* was situated on the Euphrates River and was surrounded by canals (also called “rivers”).

¹³ **tn** *Heb* “You who live upon [or beside] many waters, rich in treasures, your end has come, the cubit of your cutting off.” The sentence has been restructured and paraphrased to provide clarity for the average reader. The meaning of the last phrase is debated. For a discussion of the two options see W. L. Holladay, *Jeremiah* (Hermeneia), 2:423. Most modern commentaries and English versions see an allusion to the figure in Isa 38:12 where the reference is to the end of life compared to a tapestry which is suddenly cut off from the loom. Hence, NRSV renders the last line as “the thread of your life is cut” and TEV renders “its thread of life is cut.” That idea is accepted also in HALOT 141 s.v. בִּצְוֹת Qal.1.

¹⁴ **tn** *Heb* “Yahweh of armies.” For an explanation of this rendering see the study note on 2:19.

¹⁵ **tn** *Heb* “has sworn by himself.” See the study note on 22:5 for background.

¹⁶ **tn** *Heb* “I will fill you with men like locusts.” The “you” refers to Babylon (Babylon is both the city and the land it ruled, Babylonia) which has been alluded to in the preceding verses under descriptive titles. The words “your land” have been used because of the way the preceding verse has been rendered, alluding to people rather than to the land or city. The allusion of “men” is, of course, to enemy soldiers and they are here compared to locusts both for their quantity and their destructiveness (see Joel 1:4). For the use of the particles כִּי וְכִי (ki ‘im) to introduce an oath see BDB 475 s.v. כִּי וְכִי 2.c and compare usage in 2 Kgs 5:20; one would normally expect אֲנִי וְאַתָּה (cf. BDB 50 s.v. אֲנִי 1.b[2]).

51:15 He is the one who⁴ by his power made the earth.
 He is the one who by his wisdom fixed the world in place,
 by his understanding he spread out the heavens.
 51:16 When his voice thunders, the waters in the heavens roar.
 He makes the clouds rise from the far-off horizons.
 He makes the lightning flash out in the midst of the rain.
 He unleashes the wind from the places where he stores it.
 51:17 All idolaters will prove to be stupid and ignorant.
 Every goldsmith will be disgraced by the idol he made.
 For the image he forges is merely a sham. There is no breath in any of those idols.
 51:18 They are worthless, objects to be ridiculed.
 When the time comes to punish them, they will be destroyed.
 51:19 The LORD, who is the portion of the descendants of Jacob, is not like them. For he is the one who created everything, including the people of Israel whom he claims as his own.²
 He is known as the LORD who rules over all.³

51:20 “Babylon,⁴ you are my war club,⁵ my weapon for battle.
 I used you to smash nations.⁶
 I used you to destroy kingdoms.
 51:21 I used you to smash horses and their riders.⁷
 I used you to smash chariots and their drivers.
 51:22 I used you to smash men and women.
 I used you to smash old men and young men.
 I used you to smash young men and young women.
 51:23 I used you to smash shepherds and their flocks.
 I used you to smash farmers and their teams of oxen.
 I used you to smash governors and leaders.”⁸
 51:24 “But I will repay Babylon and all who live in Babylonia

¹ **tn** The participle here is intended to be connected with “LORD who rules over all” in the preceding verse. The passage is functioning to underline the LORD’s power to carry out what he has sworn in contrast to the impotence of their idols who will be put to shame and be dismayed (50:2).

² **tn** *Heb* “For he is the former of all [things] and the tribe of his inheritance.” This is the major exception to the verbatim repetition of 10:12-16 in 51:15-19. The word “Israel” appears before “the tribe of his inheritance” in 10:16. It is also found in a number of Hebrew mss, in the Lucianic recension of the LXX (the Greek version), the Aramaic Targums, and the Latin Vulgate. Most English versions and many commentaries assume it here. However, it is easier to explain why the word is added in a few of the versions and some Hebrew than to explain why it was left out. It is probable that the word is not original here because the addressees are different and the function of this hymnic piece is slightly different (see the study note on the next line for details). Here it makes good sense to understand that the LORD is being called the creator of the special tribe of people he claims as his own property (see the study note on the first line of 10:16).

³ **sn** With the major exception discussed in the translator’s note on the preceding line vv. 15-19 are a verbatim repetition of 10:12-16 with a few minor variations in spelling. There the passage was at the end of a section in which the LORD was addressing the Judeans and trying to convince them that the worship of idols was vain – the idols were impotent but he is all powerful. Here the passage follows a solemn oath by the LORD who rules over all and is apparently directed to the Babylonians, emphasizing the power of the LORD to carry out his oath.

⁴ **tn** Or “Media.” The referent is not identified in the text; the text merely says “you are my war club.” Commentators in general identify the referent as Babylon because Babylon has been referred to as a hammer in 50:23 and Babylon is referred to in v. 25 as a “destroying mountain” (compare v. 20d). However, S. R. Driver, *Jeremiah*, 317, n. c maintains that v. 24 speaks against this. It does seem a little inconsistent to render the *vav* consecutive perfect at the beginning of v. 24 as future while rendering those in vv. 20b-23 as customary past. However, change in person from second masculine singular (vv. 20b-23) to the second masculine plural in “before your very eyes” and its position at the end of the verse after “which they did in Zion” argue that a change in address occurs there. Driver has to ignore the change in person and take “before your eyes” with the verb “repay” at the beginning to maintain the kind of consistency he seeks. The *vav* (ו) consecutive imperfect can be used for either the customary past (GKC 335-36 §112. *dd* with cross reference back to GKC 331-32 §112.e) or the future (GKC 334 §112.x). Hence the present translation has followed the majority of commentaries (and English versions like TEV, NCV, CEV, NIV) in understanding the referent as Babylon and v. 24 being a transition to vv. 25-26 (cf., e.g., J. Bright, *Jeremiah* [AB], 356-57, and J. A. Thompson, *Jeremiah* [NICOT], 756-57). If the referent is understood as Media then the verbs in vv. 20-23 should all be translated as futures. See also the translator’s note on v. 24.

⁵ **tn** This Hebrew word (מַפְּטִים, *mappets*) only occurs here in the Hebrew Bible, but its meaning is assured from the use of the verbs that follow which are from the same root (מַפֵּא, *na-fats*) and there is a cognate noun מַפְּטָא (mappats) that occurs in Ezek 9:2 in the sense of weapon of “smashing.”

⁶ **tn** *Heb* “I smash nations with you.” This same structure is repeated throughout the series in vv. 20c-23.

⁷ **tn** *Heb* “horse and its rider.” However, the terms are meant as generic or collective singulars (cf. GKC 395 §123. b) and are thus translated by the plural. The same thing is true of all the terms in vv. 21-23b. The terms in v. 20c-d, 23c are plural.

⁸ **tn** These two words are Akkadian loan words into Hebrew which often occur in this pairing (cf. Ezek 23:6, 12, 23; Jer 51:23, 28, 57). BDB 688 s.v. שָׂגָן (*sagan*) gives “prefect, ruler” as the basic definition for the second term but neither works very well in a modern translation because “prefect” would be unknown to most readers and “ruler” would suggest someone along the lines of a king, which these officials were not. The present translation has chosen “leaders” by default, assuming there is no other term that would be any more appropriate in light of the defects noted in “prefect” and “ruler.”

for all the wicked things they did in Zion right before the eyes of you Judeans,”¹ says the LORD.²

51:25 The LORD says,³ “Beware! I am opposed to you, Babylon!⁴ You are like a destructive mountain that destroys all the earth. I will unleash my power against you;⁵ I will roll you off the cliffs and make you like a burned-out mountain.⁶ **51:26** No one will use any of your stones as a cornerstone. No one will use any of them in the foundation of his house. For you will lie desolate forever,”⁷

says the LORD.⁸ **51:27** “Raise up battle flags throughout the lands. Sound the trumpets calling the nations to do battle. Prepare the nations to do battle against Babylonia.⁹ Call for these kingdoms to attack her: Ararat, Minni, and Ashkenaz.¹⁰ Appoint a commander to lead the attack.¹¹ Send horses¹² against her like a swarm of locusts.¹³

¹ **tn** Or “Media, you are my war club...I will use you to smash...leaders. So before your very eyes I will repay...for all the wicked things they did in Zion.” For explanation see the translator’s note on v. 20. The position of the phrase “before your eyes” at the end of the verse after “which they did in Zion” and the change in person from second masculine singular in vv. 20b-23 (“I used you to smite”) to second masculine plural in “before your eyes” argue that a change in referent/addressee occurs in this verse. To maintain that the referent in vv. 20-23 is Media/Cyrus requires that this position and change in person be ignored; “before your eyes” then is attached to “I will repay.” The present translation follows J. A. Thompson (*Jeremiah* [NICOT], 757) and F. B. Huey (*Jeremiah*, *Lamentations* [NAC], 423) in seeing the referent as the Judeans who had witnessed the destruction of Zion/Jerusalem. The word “Judean” has been supplied for the sake of identifying the referent for the modern reader.

² **tn** *Heb* “Oracle of the Lord.”

³ **tn** *Heb* “Oracle of the Lord.”

⁴ **tn** The word “Babylon” is not in the text but is universally understood as the referent. It is supplied in the translation here to clarify the referent for the sake of the average reader.

⁵ **tn** *Heb* “I will reach out my hand against you.” See the translator’s note on 6:12 for explanation.

⁶ **tn** *Heb* “I am against you, oh destroying mountain that destroys all the earth. I will reach out my hand against you and roll you down from the cliffs and make you a mountain of burning.” The interpretation adopted here follows the lines suggested by S. R. Driver, *Jeremiah*, 318, n. c and reflected also in BDB 977 s.v. *בָּרָחַ*. Babylon is addressed as a destructive mountain because it is being compared to a volcano. The LORD, however, will make it a “burned-out mountain,” i.e., an extinct volcano which is barren and desolate. This interpretation seems to this translator to fit the details of the text more consistently than alternative ones which separate the concept of “destroying/destructive” from “mountain” and explain the figure of the mountain to refer to the dominating political position of Babylon and the reference to a “mountain of burning” to be a “burned [or burned over] mountain.” The use of similes in place of metaphors makes it easier for the modern reader to understand the figures and also more easily incorporates the dissonant figure of “rolling you down from the cliffs” which involves the figure of personification.

sn The figure here involves comparing Babylon to a destructive volcano which the LORD makes burned-out, i.e., he will destroy her power to destroy. The figure of personification is also involved because the LORD is said to roll her off the cliffs; that would not be applicable to a mountain.

⁷ **tn** This is a fairly literal translation of the original which reads “No one will take from you a stone for a cornerstone nor a stone for foundations.” There is no unanimity of opinion in the commentaries, many feeling that the figure of the burned mountain continues and others feeling that the figure here shifts to a burned city whose stones are so burned that they are useless to be used in building. The latter is the interpretation adopted here (see, e.g., F. B. Huey, *Jeremiah*, *Lamentations* [NAC], 423; W. L. Holladay, *Jeremiah* [Hermeneia],

2:426; NCV).

sn The figure here shifts to that of a burned-up city whose stones cannot be used for building. Babylon will become a permanent heap of ruins.

⁸ **tn** *Heb* “Oracle of the Lord.”

⁹ **tn** *Heb* “Raise up a standard on the earth. Blow a ram’s horn among the nations. Consecrate nations against her.” According to BDB 651 s.v. *נָּ* 1, the raising of a standard was a signal of a war – a summons to assemble and attack (see usage in Isa 5:26; 13:2; Jer 51:12). The “blowing of the ram’s horn” was also a signal to rally behind a leader and join in an attack (see Judg 3:27; 6:34). For the meaning of “consecrate nations against her” see the study note on 6:4. The usage of this phrase goes back to the concept of holy war where soldiers had to be consecrated for battle by the offering of a sacrifice. The phrase has probably lost its ritual usage in later times and become idiomatic for making necessary preparations for war.

¹⁰ **sn** *Ararat*, *Minni*, and *Ashkenaz* are three kingdoms who were located in the Lake Van, Lake Urmia region which are now parts of eastern Turkey and northwestern Iran. They were kingdoms which had been conquered and made vassal states by the Medes in the early sixth century. The Medes were the dominant country in this region from around 590 b.c. until they were conquered and incorporated into the Persian empire by Cyrus in 550 b.c.

¹¹ **tn** The translation of this line is uncertain because it includes a word which only occurs here and in Nah 3:17 where it is found in parallelism with a word that is only used once and whose meaning in turn is uncertain. It is probably related to the Akkadian word *tupsharru* which refers to a scribe (*Heb* “a tablet writer”). The exact function of this official is disputed. KBL 356 s.v. *בַּבְּרָ* relates it to a “recruiting officer,” a sense which is reflected in NAB. The majority of modern English versions render “commander” or “marshal” following the suggestion of BDB 381 s.v. *בַּבְּרָ*. G. L. Keown, P. J. Scalise, T. G. Smothers (*Jeremiah* 26-52 [WBC], 351) translate “recruiter (scribe)” but explain the function on p. 371 as that of recording the plunder captured in war. The rendering here follows that of TEV and God’s Word and is the nuance suggested by the majority of modern English versions who rendered “appoint a marshal/commander against it.”

¹² **sn** This is probably a poetic or shorthand way of referring to the cavalry and chariotry where horse is put for “rider” and “driver.”

¹³ **tn** *Heb* “Bring up horses like bristly locusts.” The meaning of the Hebrew word “bristly” (*סָמָר*, *samar*) is uncertain because the word only occurs here. It is generally related to a verb meaning “to bristle” which occurs in Job 4:15 and Ps 119:120. Exactly what is meant by “bristly” in connection with “locust” is uncertain, though most relate it to a stage of the locust in which its wings are still encased in a rough, horny casing. J. A. Thompson (*Jeremiah* [NICOT], 759) adds that this is when the locust is very destructive. However, no other commentary mentions this. Therefore the present translation omits the word because it is of uncertain meaning and significance. For a fuller discussion of the way the word has been rendered see W. L. Holladay, *Jeremiah* (Hermeneia), 2:427.

51:28 Prepare the nations to do battle against her.¹
 Prepare the kings of the Medes.
 Prepare their governors and all their leaders.²
 Prepare all the countries they rule to do battle against her.³
 51:29 The earth will tremble and writhe in agony.⁴
 For the LORD will carry out his plan.
 He plans to make the land of Babylonia⁵ a wasteland where no one lives.⁶
 51:30 The soldiers of Babylonia will stop fighting.
 They will remain in their fortified cities.
 They will lose their strength to do battle.⁷
 They will be as frightened as women.⁸
 The houses in her cities will be set on fire.

¹ **tn** See the first translator's note on 51:27 and compare also 6:4 and the study note there.

² **tn** See the translator's note at 51:23 for the rendering of the terms here.

³ **tc** The Hebrew text has a confusing switch of possessive pronouns in this verse: "Consecrate the nations against her, the kings of the Medes, her governors and prefects, and all the land of his dominion." This has led to a number of different resolutions. The LXX (the Greek version) renders the word "kings" as singular and levels all the pronouns to "his," paraphrasing the final clause and combining it with "king of the Medes" to read "and of all the earth." The Latin Vulgate levels them all to the third masculine plural, and this is followed by the present translation as well as a number of other modern English versions (NASB, NIV, NRSV, TEV, NCV). The ASV and NJPS understand the feminine to refer to Media, i.e., "her governors and all her prefects" and understand the masculine in the last line to be a distributive singular referring back to the lands each of the governors and prefects ruled over. This is probably correct but since governors and prefects refer to officials appointed over provinces and vassal states it amounts to much the same interpretation that the Latin Vulgate, the present translation, and other modern English versions have given.

⁴ **sn** The figure here is common in the poetic tradition of the LORD going forth to do battle against his foes and the earth's reaction to it is compared to a person trembling with fear and writhing in agony, agony like that of a woman in labor (cf. Judg 5:4; Nah 1:2-5; Hab 3:1-15 [especially v. 6]).

⁵ **tn** *Heb* "For the plans of the LORD have been carried out to make the land of Babylon..." The passive has been turned into an active and the sentence broken up to better conform with contemporary English style. For the meaning of the verb קָוַם (*qum*) in the sense used here see BDB 878 s.v. קָוַם 7.g and compare the usage in Prov 19:21 and Isa 46:10.

⁶ **tn** The verbs in this verse and v. 30 are all in the past tense in Hebrew, in the tense that views the action as already as good as done (the Hebrew prophetic perfect). The verb in v. 31a, however, is imperfect, viewing the action as future; the perfects that follow are all dependent on that future. Verse 33 looks forward to a time when Babylon will be harvested and trampled like grain on the threshing floor and the imperatives imply a time in the future. Hence the present translation has rendered all the verbs in vv. 29-30 as future.

⁷ **tn** *Heb* "Their strength is dry." This is a figurative nuance of the word "dry" which BDB 677 s.v. יָבֵשׁ Qal.1 explain as meaning "fails." The idea of "strength to do battle" is implicit from the context and is supplied in the translation here for clarity.

⁸ **tn** *Heb* "They have become women." The metaphor has been turned into a simile and the significance of the comparison drawn out for the sake of clarity. See 50:37 for the same figure.

The gates of her cities will be broken down.⁹

51:31 One runner after another will come to the king of Babylon.
 One messenger after another will come bringing news.¹⁰
 They will bring news to the king of Babylon
 that his whole city has been captured.¹¹
 51:32 They will report that the reed marshes have been captured,
 the reed marshes have been burned,
 the soldiers are terrified.¹²
 51:33 For the LORD God of Israel who rules over all says,
 'Fair Babylon¹³ will be like a threshing floor
 which has been trampled flat for harvest.
 The time for her to be cut down and harvested
 will come very soon.'¹⁴

⁹ **tn** *Heb* "Her dwelling places have been set on fire. Her bars [i.e., the bars on the gates of her cities] have been broken." The present translation has substituted the word "gates" for "bars" because the intent of the figure is to show that the bars of the gates have been broken giving access to the city. "Gates" makes it easier for the modern reader to understand the figure.

¹⁰ **tn** *Heb* "Runner will run to meet runner and..." The intent is to portray a relay of runners carrying the news that follows on in vv. 31d-33 to the king of Babylon. The present translation attempts to spell out the significance.

¹¹ **tn** *Heb* "Runner will run to meet runner and messenger to meet messenger to report to the king of Babylon that his city has been taken in [its] entirety." There is general agreement among the commentaries that the first two lines refer to messengers converging on the king of Babylon from every direction bringing news the sum total of which is reported in the lines that follow. For the meaning of the last phrase see BDB 892 s.v. קָוַם 3 and compare the usage in Gen 19:4 and Isa 56:11. The sentence has been broken down and restructured to better conform with contemporary English style.

¹² **tn** The words "They will report that" have been supplied in the translation to show the linkage between this verse and the previous one. This is still a part of the report of the messengers. The meaning of the word translated "reed marshes" has seemed inappropriate to some commentators because it elsewhere refers to "pools." However, all the commentaries consulted agree that the word here refers to the reedy marshes that surrounded Babylon. (For a fuller discussion regarding the meaning of this word and attempts to connect it with a word meaning "fortress" see W. L. Holladay, *Jeremiah* [Hermeneia], 2:427.)

sn Babylon was a city covering over a thousand acres. The city itself was surrounded by two walls, the inner one 21 feet (6.3 m) thick and the outer 11 feet (3.3 m) thick. To provide further security, walls were built to the south and east of the city and irrigation ditches and canals north and east of the city were flooded to prevent direct access to the city. The reference to "fords" here is to the river crossings of the Euphrates River which ran right through the city and the crossings at the ditches and canals. The reference to the "reed marshes" refers to the low lying areas around the city where reeds grew. The burning of the reed marshes would deprive any fugitives of places to hide and flush out any who had already escaped.

¹³ **sn** *Heb* "Daughter Babylon." See the study note at 50:42 for explanation.

¹⁴ **tn** *Heb* "Daughter Babylon will be [or is; there is no verb and the tense has to be supplied from the context] like a threshing floor at the time one tramples it. Yet a little while and the time of the harvest will come for her." It is generally agreed that there are two figures here: one of leveling the

51:34 “King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon devoured me and drove my people out. Like a monster from the deep he swallowed me. He filled his belly with my riches. He made me an empty dish. He completely cleaned me out.”¹

51:35 The person who lives in Zion says, “May Babylon pay for the violence done to me and to my relatives.”

threshing floor and stamping it into a smooth, hard surface and the other of the harvest where the grain is cut, taken to the threshing floor, and threshed by trampling the sheaves of grain to loosen the grain from the straw, and finally winnowed by throwing the mixture into the air (cf., e.g., J. A. Thompson, *Jeremiah* [NICOT], 760). The translation has sought to convey those ideas as clearly as possible without digressing too far from the literal.

sn There are two figures involved here: one of the threshing floor being leveled and stamped down hard and smooth and the other of the harvest. At harvest time the stalks of grain were cut down, gathered in sheaves, taken to the harvest floor where the grain was loosened from the husk by driving oxen and threshing sleds over them. The grain was then separated from the mixture of grain, straw and husks by repeatedly throwing it in the air and letting the wind blow away the lighter husks and ground-up straw. The figure of harvest is often used of judgment in the OT. See, e.g., Joel 3:13 (4:13 Hebrew text) and Hos 6:11 and compare also Mic 4:12-13 and Jer 51:2 where different steps in this process are also used figuratively in connection with judgment. Babylon will be leveled to the ground and its people cut down in judgment.

1 tn This verse is extremely difficult to translate because of the shifting imagery, the confusion over the meaning of one of the verbs, and the apparent inconsistency of the pronominal suffixes here with those in the following verse which everyone agrees is connected with it. The pronominal suffixes are first common plural but the versions all read them as first common singular which the Masoretes also do in the *Qere*. That reading has been followed here for consistency with the next verse which identifies the speaker as the person living in Zion and the personified city of Jerusalem. The Hebrew text reads: “Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon devoured me [cf. 50:7, 17] and threw me into confusion. He set me down an empty dish. He swallowed me like a monster from the deep [cf. BDB 1072 s.v. תָּיִן 3 and compare usage in Isa 27:1; Ezek 29:3; 32:2]. He filled his belly with my dainties. He rinsed me out [cf. BDB s.v. רָוַח Hiph.2 and compare the usage in Isa 4:4].” The verb “throw into confusion” has proved troublesome because its normal meaning does not seem appropriate. Hence various proposals have been made to understand it in a different sense. The present translation has followed W. L. Holladay (*Jeremiah* [Hermeneia], 2:428) in understanding the verb to mean “disperse” or “route” (see NAB). The last line has seemed out of place and has often been emended to read “he has spewed me out” (so NIV, NRSV, a reading that presupposes הִדְּיְחָנִי [*hiddikhani*] for הִדְּיְחָנִי [*hedikhani*]). The reading of the MT is not inappropriate if it is combined with the imagery of an empty jar and hence is retained here (see F. B. Huey, *Jeremiah, Lamentations* [NAC], 425, n. 59; H. Freedman, *Jeremiah* [SoBB], 344; NJPS). The lines have been combined to keep the imagery together.

sn The speaker in this verse and the next is the personified city of Jerusalem. She laments her fate at the hands of the king of Babylon and calls down a curse on Babylon and the people who live in Babylonia. Here Nebuchadnezzar is depicted as a monster of the deep who has devoured Jerusalem, swallowed her down, and filled its belly with her riches, leaving her an empty dish, which has been rinsed clean.

Jerusalem says, “May those living in Babylonia pay for the bloodshed of my people.”²

51:36 Therefore the LORD says, “I will stand up for your cause. I will pay the Babylonians back for what they have done to you.³

I will dry up their sea.

I will make their springs run dry.⁴

51:37 Babylon will become a heap of ruins.

Jackals will make their home there.⁵

It will become an object of horror and of hissing scorn,

a place where no one lives.⁶

51:38 The Babylonians are all like lions roaring for prey.

They are like lion cubs growling for something to eat.⁷

51:39 When their appetites are all stirred up,⁸

I will set out a banquet for them.

I will make them drunk

so that they will pass out,⁹

2 tn Heb “The violence done to me and to my flesh be upon Babylon,” says the one living in Zion. “My blood be upon those living in Chaldea,” says Jerusalem.” For the usage of the genitive here in the phrase “violence done to me and my relatives” see GKC 414 §128.a (a construct governing two objects) and *IBHS* 303 §16.4d (an objective genitive). For the nuance of “pay” in the sense of retribution see BDB 756 s.v. נָתַן 7.a(b) and compare the usage in Judg 9:24. For the use of שָׂאָר (*she'er*) in the sense of “relatives” see BDB 985 s.v. שָׂאָר 2 and compare NJPS. For the use of “blood” in this idiom see BDB 197 s.v. דָּם 2.k and compare the usage in 2 Sam 4:11; Ezek 3:18, 20. The lines have been reversed for better English style.

3 tn Heb “I will avenge your vengeance [= I will take vengeance for you; the phrase involves a verb and a cognate accusative].” The meaning of the phrase has been spelled out in more readily understandable terms.

4 tn Heb “I will dry up her [Babylon’s] sea and make her fountain dry.” “Their” has been substituted for “her” because “Babylonians” has been inserted in the previous clause and is easier to understand than the personification of Babylon = “her.”

sn The reference to *their sea* is not clear. Most interpreters understand it to be a figurative reference to the rivers and canals surrounding Babylon. But some feel it refers to the reservoir that the wife of Nebuchadnezzar, Queen Nictoris, had made.

5 tn Heb “a heap of ruins, a haunt for jackals.” Compare 9:11.

6 tn Heb “without an inhabitant.”

7 tn Heb “They [the Babylonians] all roar like lions. They growl like the cubs of lions.” For the usage of יָחַדָּו (*yakhdav*) meaning “all” see Isa 10:8; 18:6; 41:20. The translation strives to convey in clear terms what is the generally accepted meaning of the simile (cf., e.g., J. Bright, *Jeremiah* [AB], 358, and J. A. Thompson, *Jeremiah* [NICOT], 762).

8 tn Heb “When they are hot.”

9 tc The translation follows the suggestion of KBL 707 s.v. נָתַן and a number of modern commentaries (e.g., Bright, J. A. Thompson, and W. L. Holladay) in reading יַעֲלֵפוּ (*ye’ull’fu*) for יָעֲלוּ (*ya’alozu*) in the sense of “swoon away” or “grow faint” (see KBL 710 s.v. נָתַן Pual). That appears to be the verb that the LXX (the Greek version) was reading when they translated καρῶθισιν (*karōthōsin*, “they will be stupefied”). For parallel usage KBL cites Isa 51:20. This fits the context much better than “they will exult” in the Hebrew text.

they will fall asleep forever,
they will never wake up,¹

says the LORD.²

51:40 “I will lead them off to be slaughtered
like lambs, rams, and male goats.”³

51:41 “See how Babylon⁴ has been captured!
See how the pride of the whole earth has
been taken!

See what an object of horror
Babylon has become among the nations!⁵

51:42 The sea has swept over Babylon.

She has been covered by a multitude⁶ of
its waves.⁷

51:43 The towns of Babylonia have become
heaps of ruins.

She has become a dry and barren desert.
No one lives in those towns any more.

No one even passes through them.⁸

¹ **sn** The central figure here is the figure of the cup of the LORD's wrath (cf. 25:15-29, especially v. 26). Here the Babylonians have been made to drink so deeply of it that they fall into a drunken sleep from which they will never wake up (i.e., they die, death being compared to sleep [cf. Ps 13:3 (13:4 HT); 76:5 (76:6 HT); 90:5]). Compare the usage in Jer 51:57 for this same figure.

² **tn** Heb “Oracle of the LORD.”

³ **tn** Heb “I will bring them down like lambs to be slaughtered, like rams and he goats.”

sn This statement is highly ironic in light of the fact that the Babylonians were compared to lions and lion cubs (v. 38). Here they are like lambs, rams, and male goats which are to be lead off to be slaughtered.

⁴ **sn** Heb “Sheshach.” For an explanation of the usage of this name for Babylon see the study note on Jer 25:26 and that on 51:1 for a similar phenomenon. Babylon is here called “the pride of the whole earth” because it was renowned for its size, its fortifications, and its beautiful buildings.

⁵ **tn** Heb “How Sheshach has been captured, the pride of the whole earth has been seized! How Babylon has become an object of horror among the nations!” For the usage of “How” here see the translator's note on 50:23.

sn This is part of a taunt song (see Isa 14:4) and assumes prophetically that the city has already been captured. The verbs in vv. 41-43a are all in the Hebrew tense that the prophets often use to look at the future as “a done deal” (the so-called prophetic perfect). In v. 44 which is still a part of this picture the verbs are in the future. The Hebrew tense has been retained here and in v. 42-43 but it should be remembered that the standpoint is prophetic and future.

⁶ **tn** For the meaning “multitude” here rather than “tumult” see BDB 242 s.v. רַבְּבוּתָא, where reference is made that this refers to a great throng of people under the figure of an overwhelming mass of waves. The word is used of a multitude of soldiers, or a vast army in 1 Sam 14:16; 1 Kgs 20:13, 18 (cf. BDB 242 s.v. רַבְּבוּתָא for further references).

⁷ **tn** Heb “The sea has risen up over Babylon. She has been covered by the multitude of its waves.”

sn This is a poetic and figurative reference to the enemies of Babylon, the foe from the north (see 50:3, 9, 51:27-28), which has attacked Babylon in wave after wave. This same figure is used in Isa 17:12. In Isa 8:7-8 the king of Assyria (and his troops) are compared to the Euphrates which rises up and floods over the whole land of Israel and Judah. This same figure, but with application to Babylon, is assumed in Jer 47:2-3. In Jer 46:7-8 the same figure is employed in a taunt of Egypt which had boasted that it would cover the earth like the flooding of the Nile.

⁸ **tn** Heb “Its towns have become a desolation, [it has become] a dry land and a desert, a land which no man passes

51:44 I will punish the god Bel in Babylon.
I will make him spit out what he has
swallowed.

The nations will not come streaming to
him any longer.

Indeed, the walls of Babylon will fall.”⁹

51:45 “Get out of Babylon, my people!

Flee to save your lives

from the fierce anger of the LORD!¹⁰

51:46 Do not lose your courage or become
afraid

because of the reports that are heard in
the land.

For a report will come in one year.

Another report will follow it in the next.

There will be violence in the land
with ruler fighting against ruler.”

51:47 “So the time will certainly come¹¹
when I will punish the idols of Babylon.
Her whole land will be put to shame.

through them [referring to “her towns”] and no son of man [= human being] passes through them.” Here the present translation has followed the suggestion of *BHS* and a number of the modern commentaries in deleting the second occurrence of the word “land,” in which case the words that follow are not a relative clause but independent statements. A number of modern English versions appear to ignore the third feminine plural suffixes which refer back to the cities and refer the statements that follow to the land.

⁹ **tn** Heb “And I will punish Bel in Babylon...And the nations will not come streaming to him anymore. Yea, the walls of Babylon have fallen.” The verbs in the first two lines are *vav* consecutive perfects and the verb in the third line is an imperfect all looking at the future. That indicates that the perfect that follows and the perfects that precede are all prophetic perfects. The translation adopted seemed to be the best way to make the transition from the pasts which were adopted in conjunction with the taunting use of עָכָה (*'ekh*) in v. 41 to the futures in v. 44. For the usage of גַּם (*gam*) to indicate a climax, “yea” or “indeed” see BDB 169 s.v. גַּם 3. It seemed to be impossible to render the meaning of v. 44 in any comprehensible way, even in a paraphrase.

sn In the ancient Near East the victory of a nation over another nation was attributed to its gods. The reference is a poetic way of referring to the fact that God will be victorious over Babylon and its chief god, Bel/Marduk (see the study note on 50:2 for explanation). The reference to the disgorging of what Bel had swallowed is to captured people and plundered loot that had been taken to Babylon under the auspices of the victory of Bel over the foreign god (cf. Dan 5:2-4). The plundered treasures and captive people will be set free and nations will no longer need to pay homage to him because Babylon will be destroyed.

¹⁰ **tn** Heb “Go out from her [Babylon's] midst, my people. Save each man his life from the fierce anger of the LORD.” The verb has been paraphrased to prevent gender specific terms.

sn Compare Jer 50:8-10; 51:6 where the significance of saving oneself from the fierce anger of the LORD is clarified.

¹¹ **tn** Heb “That being so, look, days are approaching.” לָבוֹא (*lakhen*) often introduces the effect of an action. That may be the case here, the turmoil outlined in v. 46 serving as the catalyst for the culminating divine judgment described in v. 47. Another possibility is that לָבוֹא here has an asseverative force (“certainly”), as in Isa 26:14 and perhaps Jer 5:2 (see the note there). In this case the word almost has the force of “for, since,” because it presents a cause for an accompanying effect. See Judg 8:7 and the discussion of Isa 26:14 in BDB 486-87 s.v. לָבוֹא 3.d.

All her mortally wounded will collapse in her midst.¹

51:48 Then heaven and earth and all that is in them will sing for joy over Babylon. For destroyers from the north will attack it,” says the LORD.²

51:49 “Babylon must fall³ because of the Israelites she has killed,⁴ just as the earth’s mortally wounded fell because of Babylon.⁵

51:50 You who have escaped the sword,⁶ go, do not delay.⁷ Remember the LORD in a faraway land. Think about Jerusalem.⁸

51:51 ‘We⁹ are ashamed because we have been insulted.¹⁰ Our faces show our disgrace.¹¹

For foreigners have invaded the holy rooms¹² in the LORD’s temple.’

51:52 Yes, but the time will certainly come,”¹³ says the LORD,¹⁴ “when I will punish her idols. Throughout her land the mortally wounded will groan.

51:53 Even if Babylon climbs high into the sky¹⁵ and fortifies her elevated stronghold,¹⁶ I will send destroyers against her,”¹⁷ says the LORD.¹⁸

51:54 Cries of anguish will come from Babylon, the sound of great destruction from the land of the Babylonians.

51:55 For the LORD is ready to destroy Babylon, and put an end to her loud noise. Their waves¹⁹ will roar like turbulent²⁰ waters.

They will make a deafening noise.²¹ **51:56** For a destroyer is attacking Babylon.²²

Her warriors will be captured; their bows will be broken.²³ For the LORD is a God who punishes;²⁴ he pays back in full.²⁵

51:57 “I will make her officials and wise men drunk, along with her governors, leaders,²⁶ and warriors.

They will fall asleep forever and never wake up,”²⁷ says the King whose name is the LORD who rules over all.²⁸

51:58 This is what the LORD who rules over all²⁹ says, “Babylon’s thick wall³⁰ will be completely demolished.³¹

Her high gates will be set on fire. The peoples strive for what does not satisfy.³²

The nations grow weary trying to get what will be destroyed.”³³

¹ **tn** Or “all her slain will fall in her midst.” In other words, her people will be overtaken by judgment and be unable to escape. The dead will lie in heaps in the very heart of the city and land.

² **tn** *Heb* “Oracle of the LORD.”

³ **tn** The infinitive construct is used here to indicate what is about to take place. See *IBHS* 610 §36.2.3g.

⁴ **tn** *Heb* “the slain of Israel.” The words “because of” are supplied in the translation for clarification. The preceding context makes it clear that Babylon will be judged for its atrocities against Israel (see especially 50:33-34; 51:10, 24, 35).

⁵ **tn** The juxtaposition of גַּם...גַּם (*gam...gam*), often “both...and,” here indicates correspondence. See *BDB* 169 s.v. גַּם 4. Appropriately Babylon will fall slain just as her victims, including God’s covenant people, did.

⁶ **sn** God’s exiled people are told to leave doomed Babylon (see v. 45).

⁷ **tn** *Heb* “don’t stand.”

⁸ **tn** *Heb* “let Jerusalem go up upon your heart.” The “heart” is often viewed as the seat of one’s mental faculties and thought life.

map For location see Map5-B1; Map6-F3; Map7-E2; Map8-F2; Map10-B3; JP1-F4; JP2-F4; JP3-F4; JP4-F4.

⁹ **sn** The exiles lament the way they have been humiliated.

¹⁰ **tn** *Heb* “we have heard an insult.”

¹¹ **tn** *Heb* “disgrace covers our face.”

¹² **tn** Or “holy places, sanctuaries.”

¹³ **tn** *Heb* “that being so, look, days are approaching.” Here לַכְּהֵן (*lakhen*) introduces the Lord’s response to the people’s lament (v. 51). It has the force of “yes, but” or “that may be true.” See *Judg* 11:8 and *BDB* 486-87 s.v. לַכְּהֵן 3.d.

¹⁴ **tn** *Heb* “Oracle of the LORD.”

¹⁵ **tn** Or “ascends [into] heaven.” Note the use of the phrase in *Deut* 30:12; 2 *Kgs* 2:11; and *Amos* 9:2.

¹⁶ **tn** *Heb* “and even if she fortifies her strong elevated place.”

¹⁷ **tn** *Heb* “from me destroyers will go against her.”

¹⁸ **tn** *Heb* “Oracle of the LORD.”

¹⁹ **tn** The antecedent of the third masculine plural pronominal suffix is not entirely clear. It probably refers back to the “destroyers” mentioned in v. 53 as the agents of God’s judgment on Babylon.

²⁰ **tn** Or “mighty waters.”

²¹ **tn** *Heb* “and the noise of their sound will be given.”

²² **tn** *Heb* “for a destroyer is coming against her, against Babylon.”

²³ **tn** The Piel form (which would be intransitive here, see *GKC* 142 §52.k) should probably be emended to Qal.

²⁴ **tn** Or “God of retribution.”

²⁵ **tn** The infinitive absolute emphasizes the following finite verb. Another option is to translate, “he certainly pays one back.” The translation assumes that the imperfect verbal form here describes the LORD’s characteristic actions. Another option is to take it as referring specifically to his judgment on Babylon, in which case one should translate, “he will pay (Babylon) back in full.”

²⁶ **sn** For discussion of the terms “governors” and “leaders” see the note at *Jer* 51:23.

²⁷ **sn** See the note at *Jer* 51:39.

²⁸ **tn** For the title “Yahweh of armies” see the study note on *Jer* 2:19.

²⁹ **sn** See the note at *Jer* 2:19.

³⁰ **tn** The text has the plural “walls,” but many Hebrew mss read the singular “wall,” which is also supported by the ancient Greek version. The modifying adjective “thick” is singular as well.

³¹ **tn** The infinitive absolute emphasizes the following finite verb. Another option is to translate, “will certainly be demolished.”

³² **tn** *Heb* “for what is empty.”

³³ **tn** *Heb* “and the nations for fire, and they grow weary.”

51:59 This is the order Jeremiah the prophet gave to Seraiah son of Neriah, son of Mahseiah, when he went to King Zedekiah of Judah in Babylon during the fourth year of his reign.¹ (Seraiah was a quartermaster.)² **51:60** Jeremiah recorded³ on one scroll all the judgments⁴ that would come upon Babylon – all these prophecies⁵ written about Babylon. **51:61** Then Jeremiah said to Seraiah, “When you arrive in Babylon, make sure⁶ you read aloud all these prophecies.⁷ **51:62** Then say, ‘O LORD, you have announced that you will destroy this place so that no people or animals live in it any longer. Certainly it will lie desolate forever!’ **51:63** When you finish reading this scroll aloud, tie a stone to it and throw it into the middle of the Euphrates River.⁸ **51:64** Then say, ‘In the same way Babylon will sink and never rise again because of the judgments⁹ I am ready to bring upon her; they will grow faint.’”

The prophecies of Jeremiah end here.¹⁰

The Fall of Jerusalem

52:1¹¹ Zedekiah was twenty-one years old when he became king, and he ruled in Jerusalem¹² for eleven years. His mother’s name was Hamutal¹³ daughter of Jeremiah, from Libnah. **52:2** He did what displeased the LORD¹⁴ just as Jehoiakim had done.

52:3 What follows is a record of what happened to Jerusalem and Judah because of the LORD’s anger when he drove them out of his sight.¹⁵ Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon. **52:4** King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon came against Jerusalem with his whole army and set up camp outside it.¹⁶ They built siege ramps all around it. He arrived on the tenth day of the tenth month in the ninth year that Zedekiah ruled

over Judah.¹⁷ **52:5** The city remained under siege until Zedekiah’s eleventh year. **52:6** By the ninth day of the fourth month¹⁸ the famine in the city was so severe the residents¹⁹ had no food. **52:7** They broke through the city walls, and all the soldiers tried to escape. They left the city during the night. They went through the gate between the two walls that is near the king’s garden.²⁰ (The Babylonians had the city surrounded.) Then they headed for the Jordan Valley.²¹ **52:8** But the Babylonian army chased after the king. They caught up with Zedekiah in the plains of Jericho,²² and his entire army deserted him. **52:9** They captured him and brought him up to the king of Babylon at Riblah²³ in the territory of Hamath and he passed sentence on him there. **52:10** The king of Babylon had Zedekiah’s sons put to death while Zedekiah was forced to watch. He also had all the nobles of Judah put to death there at Riblah. **52:11** He had Zedekiah’s eyes put out and had him bound in chains.²⁴ Then the king of Babylon had him led off to Babylon and he was imprisoned there until the day he died.

52:12 On the tenth²⁵ day of the fifth month,²⁶ in the nineteenth year of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, Nebuzaradan, the captain of the royal guard²⁷ who served²⁸ the king of Babylon, arrived in Jerusalem. **52:13** He burned down the LORD’s temple, the royal palace, and all the houses in Jerusalem, including every large

¹⁷ sn This would have been January 15, 588 b.c. The reckoning is based on the calendar that begins the year in the spring (Nisan = March/April).

¹⁸ sn According to modern reckoning that would have been July 18, 586 b.c. The siege thus lasted almost a full eighteen months.

¹⁹ tn Heb “the people of the land.”

²⁰ sn The king’s garden is mentioned again in Neh 3:15 in conjunction with the pool of Siloam and the stairs that go down from the City of David. This would have been in the southern part of the city near the Tyropean Valley which agrees with the reference to the “two walls” which were probably the walls on the eastern and western hills.

²¹ sn Heb “toward the Arabah.” The Arabah was the rift valley north and south of the Dead Sea. Here the intention was undoubtedly to escape across the Jordan to Moab or Ammon. It appears from 40:14; 41:15 that the Ammonites were known to harbor fugitives from the Babylonians.

²² map For location see Map5-B2; Map6-E1; Map7-E1; Map8-E3; Map10-A2; Map11-A1.

²³ sn Riblah was a strategic town on the Orontes River in Syria. It was at a crossing of the major roads between Egypt and Mesopotamia. Pharaoh Necho had earlier received Jehohaz there and put him in chains (2 Kgs 23:33) prior to taking him captive to Egypt. Nebuchadnezzar had set up his base camp for conducting his campaigns against the Palestinian states there and was now sitting in judgment on prisoners brought to him.

²⁴ tn Heb “fetters of bronze.” The more generic “chains” is used in the translation because “fetters” is a word unfamiliar to most modern readers.

²⁵ tn The parallel account in 2 Kgs 25:8 has “seventh.”

²⁶ sn The tenth day of the month would have been August 17, 586 b.c. in modern reckoning.

²⁷ tn For the meaning of this phrase see BDB 371 s.v. נָקַד 2 and compare the usage in Gen 39:1.

²⁸ tn Heb “stood before.”

¹ sn This would be 582 b.c.

² tn Heb “an officer of rest.”

³ tn Or “wrote.”

⁴ tn Or “disaster”; or “calamity.”

⁵ tn Heb “words” (or “things”).

⁶ tn Heb “see [that].”

⁷ tn Heb “words” (or “things”).

⁸ tn The word “River” is not in the Hebrew text, but has been supplied for clarity.

⁹ tn Or “disaster”; or “calamity.”

¹⁰ sn The final chapter of the book of Jeremiah does not mention Jeremiah or record any of his prophecies.

¹¹ sn This final chapter does not mention Jeremiah, but its description of the downfall of Jerusalem and exile of the people validates the prophet’s ministry.

¹² map For location see Map5-B1; Map6-F3; Map7-E2; Map8-F2; Map10-B3; JP1-F4; JP2-F4; JP3-F4; JP4-F4.

¹³ tn Some textual witnesses support the *Kethib* (consonantal text) in reading “Hamital.”

¹⁴ tn Heb “what was evil in the eyes of the LORD.”

¹⁵ tn Heb “Surely (or ‘for’) because of the anger of the LORD this happened in Jerusalem and Judah until he drove them out from upon his face.” For the phrase “drive out of his sight,” see 7:15.

¹⁶ tn Or “against it.”

house. **52:14** The whole Babylonian army that came with the captain of the royal guard tore down the walls that surrounded Jerusalem. **52:15** Nebuzaradan, the captain of the royal guard, took into exile some of the poor,¹ the rest of the people who remained in the city, those who had deserted to him, and the rest of the craftsmen. **52:16** But he² left behind some of the poor³ and gave them fields and vineyards.

52:17 The Babylonians broke the two bronze pillars in the temple of the LORD, as well as the movable stands and the large bronze basin called the “The Sea.”⁴ They took all the bronze to Babylon. **52:18** They also took the pots, shovels,⁵ trimming shears,⁶ basins, pans, and all the bronze utensils used by the priests.⁷ **52:19** The captain of the royal guard took the gold and silver bowls, censers,⁸ basins, pots, lampstands, pans, and vessels.⁹ **52:20** The bronze of the items that King Solomon made for the LORD’s temple (including the two pillars, the large bronze basin called “The Sea,” the twelve bronze bulls under “The Sea,” and the movable stands¹⁰) was too heavy to be weighed. **52:21** Each of the pillars was about 27 feet¹¹ high, about 18 feet¹² in circumference, three inches¹³ thick, and hollow. **52:22** The bronze top of one pillar was about seven and one-half feet¹⁴ high and had bronze latticework and pomegranate-shaped ornaments all around it. The second pillar with its pomegranate-shaped ornaments was like it. **52:23** There were ninety-six pomegranate-shaped ornaments on the sides; in all there were one hundred pomegranate-shaped ornaments over the latticework that went around it.

52:24 The captain of the royal guard took Seraiah the chief priest, Zephaniah the priest who

was second in rank, and the three doorkeepers.¹⁵ **52:25** From the city he took an official who was in charge of the soldiers, seven of the king’s advisers who were discovered in the city, an official army secretary who drafted citizens¹⁶ for military service, and sixty citizens who were discovered in the middle of the city. **52:26** Nebuzaradan, the captain of the royal guard, took them and brought them to the king of Babylon at Riblah. **52:27** The king of Babylon ordered them to be executed¹⁷ at Riblah in the territory of Hamath.

So Judah was taken into exile away from its land. **52:28** Here is the official record of the number of people¹⁸ Nebuchadnezzar carried into exile: In the seventh year,¹⁹ 3,023 Jews; **52:29** in Nebuchadnezzar’s eighteenth year,²⁰ 832 people from Jerusalem; **52:30** in Nebuchadnezzar’s twenty-third year,²¹ Nebuzaradan, the captain of the royal guard, carried into exile 745 Judeans. In all 4,600 people went into exile.

Jehoiachin in Exile

52:31 In the thirty-seventh year of the exile of King Jehoiachin of Judah, on the twenty-fifth²² day of the twelfth month,²³ Evil-Merodach, in the first year of his reign, pardoned²⁴ King Jehoiachin of Judah and released him from prison. **52:32** He spoke kindly to him and gave him a more prestigious position than²⁵ the other kings who were with him in Babylon. **52:33** Jehoiachin²⁶ took off his prison clothes and ate daily in the king’s presence for the rest of his life. **52:34** He was given daily provisions by the king of Babylon for the rest of his life until the day he died.

¹ *tn* Heb “poor of the people.”

² *tn* Heb “Nebuzaradan, the captain of the royal guard.” However, the subject is clear from the preceding and modern English style would normally avoid repeating the proper name and title.

³ *tn* Heb “poor of the land.”

⁴ *sn* For discussion of the items listed here, see the study notes at Jer 27:19.

⁵ *sn* These *shovels* were used to clean the altar.

⁶ *sn* These *trimming shears* were used to trim the wicks of the lamps.

⁷ *tn* Heb “with which they served (or “fulfilled their duty”).”

⁸ *sn* The *censers* held the embers used for the incense offerings.

⁹ *sn* These *vessels* were used for drink offerings.

¹⁰ *tc* The translation follows the LXX (Greek version), which reflects the description in 1 Kgs 7:25-26. The Hebrew text reads, “the twelve bronze bulls under the movable stands.” הַיָּמִים (*hayyam*, “The Sea”) has been accidentally omitted by homoioarcton; note that the following form, הַמְּבִנֹת (*hammekhonot*, “the movable stands”), also begins with the article.

¹¹ *tn* Heb “eighteen cubits.” A “cubit” was a unit of measure, approximately equivalent to a foot and a half.

¹² *tn* Heb “twelve cubits.” A “cubit” was a unit of measure, approximately equivalent to a foot and a half.

¹³ *tn* Heb “four fingers.”

¹⁴ *tn* Heb “five cubits.” A “cubit” was a unit of measure, approximately equivalent to a foot and a half.

¹⁵ *sn* See the note at Jer 35:4.

¹⁶ *tn* Heb “men, from the people of the land” (also later in this verse).

¹⁷ *tn* Heb “struck them down and killed them.”

¹⁸ *tn* Heb “these are the people.”

¹⁹ *sn* This would be 597 b.c.

²⁰ *sn* This would be 586 b.c.

²¹ *sn* This would be 581 b.c.

²² *sn* The parallel account in 2 Kgs 25:28 has “twenty-seventh.”

²³ *sn* The twenty-fifth day would be March 20, 561 b.c. in modern reckoning.

²⁴ *tn* Heb “lifted up the head of.”

²⁵ *tn* Heb “made his throne above the throne of.”

²⁶ *tn* The subject is unstated in the Hebrew text, but Jehoiachin is clearly the subject of the following verb.