

# LECTIO DIVINA

## JEREMIAH 1-25

With Lectio Divina we sit with a single small passage at a time from Scripture and read it multiple times to deepen our trust in Jesus. Each moment has its own page, and you go through it three times.

First time through, with a pen/pencil mark what stands out or want to pay attention to.

Second time through, with a bright crayon color over what you've marked and seal what you want to take with you.

Third time through, with a water based marker, color over the page and what you've sealed with a crayon.

What you've marked with a pen and sealed with a bright crayon should remain even when you color over it with marker, and you can use the marker or markers to illuminate the rest of the page.

## THE CALL OF JEREMIAH

The words of Jeremiah, the son of Hilkiah, one of the priests who were in Anathoth in the land of Benjamin, to whom the word of the Lord came in the days of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah, in the thirteenth year of his reign. It came also in the days of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah, and until the end of the eleventh year of Zedekiah, the son of Josiah, king of Judah, until the captivity of Jerusalem in the fifth month.

Now the word of the Lord came to me, saying,

“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations.”

Then I said, “Ah, Lord God! Behold, I do not know how to speak, for I am only a youth.” But the Lord said to me,

“Do not say, ‘I am only a youth’; for to all to whom I send you, you shall go, and whatever I command you,

you shall speak. Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you, declares the Lord.”

Then the Lord put out his hand and touched my mouth. And the Lord said to me,

“Behold, I have put my words in your mouth. See, I have set you this day over nations and over kingdoms, to pluck up and to break down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant.”

And the word of the Lord came to me, saying, “Jeremiah, what do you see?” And I said, “I see an almond branch.” Then the Lord said to me, “You have seen well, for I am watching over my word to perform it.”

The word of the Lord came to me a second time, saying, “What do you see?” And I said, “I see a boiling pot, facing away from the north.” Then the Lord said to me, “Out of the north disaster shall be let loose upon all the inhabitants of the land. For behold, I am calling all the tribes of the kingdoms of the north, declares the Lord, and they shall come, and every one shall set his throne at

the entrance of the gates of Jerusalem, against all its walls all around and against all the cities of Judah. And I will declare my judgments against them, for all their evil in forsaking me. They have made offerings to other gods and worshiped the works of their own hands. But you, dress yourself for work; arise, and say to them everything that I command you. Do not be dismayed by them, lest I dismay you before them. And I, behold, I make you this day a fortified city, an iron pillar, and bronze walls, against the whole land, against the kings of Judah, its officials, its priests, and the people of the land. They will fight against you, but they shall not prevail against you, for I am with you, declares the Lord, to deliver you.”

## ISRAEL FORSAKES THE LORD

The word of the Lord came to me, saying, “Go and proclaim in the hearing of Jerusalem, Thus says the Lord,

“I remember the devotion of your youth, your love as a bride, how you followed me in the wilderness, in a land not sown. Israel was holy to the Lord, the firstfruits of his harvest. All who ate of it incurred guilt; disaster came upon them, declares the Lord.”

Hear the word of the Lord, O house of Jacob, and all the clans of the house of Israel. Thus says the Lord:

“What wrong did your fathers find in me that they went far from me, and went after worthlessness, and became worthless? They did not say, ‘Where is the Lord who brought us up from the land of Egypt, who led us in the wilderness, in a land of deserts and pits, in a land of drought and deep darkness, in a land that none passes through, where no man dwells?’ And I brought you into a plentiful land to enjoy its fruits and its good things. But when you came in, you defiled my

land and made my heritage an abomination. The priests did not say, 'Where is the Lord?' Those who handle the law did not know me; the shepherds transgressed against me; the prophets prophesied by Baal and went after things that do not profit. "Therefore I still contend with you, declares the Lord, and with your children's children I will contend. For cross to the coasts of Cyprus and see, or send to Kedar and examine with care; see if there has been such a thing. Has a nation changed its gods, even though they are no gods? But my people have changed their glory for that which does not profit. Be appalled, O heavens, at this; be shocked, be utterly desolate, declares the Lord, for my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns that can hold no water. "Is Israel a slave? Is he a homeborn servant? Why then has he become a prey? The lions have roared against him; they have roared loudly. They have made his land a waste; his cities are in ruins, without inhabitant. Moreover, the men of Memphis and Tahpanhes have shaved the crown of your head. Have

you not brought this upon yourself by forsaking the Lord your God, when he led you in the way? And now what do you gain by going to Egypt to drink the waters of the Nile? Or what do you gain by going to Assyria to drink the waters of the Euphrates? Your evil will chastise you, and your apostasy will reprove you. Know and see that it is evil and bitter for you to forsake the Lord your God; the fear of me is not in you, declares the Lord God of hosts. “For long ago I broke your yoke and burst your bonds; but you said, ‘I will not serve.’

Yes, on every high hill and under every green tree you bowed down like a whore. Yet I planted you a choice vine, wholly of pure seed.

How then have you turned degenerate and become a wild vine?

Though you wash yourself with lye and use much soap, the stain of your guilt is still before me, declares the Lord God. How can you say, ‘I am not unclean, I have not gone after the Baals’? Look at your way in the valley; know what you have done—

a restless young camel running here and there, a wild donkey used to the wilderness, in her heat sniffing the



wind! Who can restrain her lust? None who seek her  
need weary themselves; in her month they will find  
her.

Keep your feet from going unshod and your throat  
from thirst.

But you said, 'It is hopeless, for I have loved  
foreigners, and after them I will go.' 'As a thief is  
shamed when caught, so the house of Israel shall be  
shamed: they, their kings, their officials, their priests,  
and their prophets, who say to a tree, 'You are my  
father,' and to a stone, 'You gave me birth.' For they  
have turned their back to me,  
and not their face. But in the time of their trouble  
they say,  
'Arise and save us!' But where are your gods that you  
made for yourself?  
Let them arise, if they can save you,  
in your time of trouble;  
for as many as your cities  
are your gods, O Judah.  
'Why do you contend with me?

You have all transgressed against me,  
declares the Lord.

In vain have I struck your children;  
they took no correction;  
your own sword devoured your prophets  
like a ravaging lion.

And you, O generation, behold the word of the Lord.  
Have I been a wilderness to Israel,  
or a land of thick darkness?

Why then do my people say, 'We are free,  
we will come no more to you'?

Can a virgin forget her ornaments,  
or a bride her attire?

Yet my people have forgotten me  
days without number.

"How well you direct your course  
to seek love!

So that even to wicked women  
you have taught your ways.

Also on your skirts is found  
the lifeblood of the guiltless poor;  
you did not find them breaking in.

Yet in spite of all these things  
you say, 'I am innocent;  
surely his anger has turned from me.'  
Behold, I will bring you to judgment  
for saying, 'I have not sinned.'  
How much you go about,  
changing your way!  
You shall be put to shame by Egypt  
as you were put to shame by Assyria.  
From it too you will come away  
with your hands on your head,  
for the Lord has rejected those in whom you trust,  
and you will not prosper by them.  
"I a man divorces his wife  
and she goes from him  
and becomes another man's wife,  
will he return to her?  
Would not that land be greatly polluted?  
You have played the whore with many lovers;  
and would you return to me?  
declares the Lord.  
Lift up your eyes to the bare heights, and see!

Where have you not been ravished?  
By the waysides you have sat awaiting lovers  
like an Arab in the wilderness.  
You have polluted the land  
with your vile whoredom.  
Therefore the showers have been withheld,  
and the spring rain has not come;  
yet you have the forehead of a whore;  
you refuse to be ashamed.  
Have you not just now called to me,  
‘My father, you are the friend of my youth—  
will he be angry forever,  
will he be indignant to the end?’  
Behold, you have spoken,  
but you have done all the evil that you could.”

## FAITHLESS ISRAEL CALLED TO REPENTANCE

The Lord said to me in the days of King Josiah: “Have you seen what she did, that faithless one, Israel, how she went up on every high hill and under every green tree, and there played the whore? And I thought, ‘After she has done all this she will return to me,’ but she did not return, and her treacherous sister Judah saw it. She saw that for all the adulteries of that faithless one, Israel, I had sent her away with a decree of divorce. Yet her treacherous sister Judah did not fear, but she too went and played the whore. Because she took her whoredom lightly, she polluted the land, committing adultery with stone and tree. Yet for all this her treacherous sister Judah did not return to me with her whole heart, but in pretense, declares the Lord.”

And the Lord said to me, “Faithless Israel has shown herself more righteous than treacherous Judah. Go, and proclaim these words toward the north, and say,

“Return, faithless Israel,  
declares the Lord.  
I will not look on you in anger,  
for I am merciful,  
declares the Lord;  
I will not be angry forever.  
Only acknowledge your guilt,  
that you rebelled against the Lord your God  
and scattered your favors among foreigners under  
every green tree,  
and that you have not obeyed my voice,  
declares the Lord.  
Return, O faithless children,  
declares the Lord;  
for I am your master;  
I will take you, one from a city and two from a family,  
and I will bring you to Zion.”

‘And I will give you shepherds after my own heart, who  
will feed you with knowledge and understanding. And  
when you have multiplied and been fruitful in the land,  
in those days, declares the Lord, they shall no more say,

“The ark of the covenant of the Lord.” It shall not come to mind or be remembered or missed; it shall not be made again. At that time Jerusalem shall be called the throne of the Lord, and all nations shall gather to it, to the presence of the Lord in Jerusalem, and they shall no more stubbornly follow their own evil heart. In those days the house of Judah shall join the house of Israel, and together they shall come from the land of the north to the land that I gave your fathers for a heritage.

“I said,

How I would set you among my sons,  
and give you a pleasant land,

a heritage most beautiful of all nations.

And I thought you would call me, My Father,  
and would not turn from following me.

Surely, as a treacherous wife leaves her husband,

so have you been treacherous to me, O house of  
Israel,

declares the Lord.”

A voice on the bare heights is heard,

the weeping and pleading of Israel's sons  
because they have perverted their way;  
they have forgotten the Lord their God.  
“Return, O faithless sons;  
I will heal your faithlessness.”  
“Behold, we come to you,  
for you are the Lord our God.  
Truly the hills are a delusion,  
the orgies on the mountains.  
Truly in the Lord our God  
is the salvation of Israel.

“But from our youth the shameful thing has devoured  
all for which our fathers labored, their flocks and their  
herds, their sons and their daughters. Let us lie down in  
our shame, and let our dishonor cover us. For we have  
sinned against the Lord our God, we and our fathers,  
from our youth even to this day, and we have not  
obeyed the voice of the Lord our God.”

4 “If you return, O Israel,  
declares the Lord,  
to me you should return.



If you remove your detestable things from my presence,  
and do not waver,  
and if you swear, ‘As the Lord lives,’  
in truth, in justice, and in righteousness,  
then nations shall bless themselves in him,  
and in him shall they glory.”

For thus says the Lord to the men of Judah and Jerusalem:

“Break up your fallow ground,  
and sow not among thorns.

Circumcise yourselves to the Lord;  
remove the foreskin of your hearts,  
O men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem;  
lest my wrath go forth like fire,  
and burn with none to quench it,  
because of the evil of your deeds.”

## DISASTER FROM THE NORTH

5 Declare in Judah, and proclaim in Jerusalem, and say,

“Blow the trumpet through the land;

cry aloud and say,

‘Assemble, and let us go

into the fortified cities!’

Raise a standard toward Zion,

flee for safety, stay not,

for I bring disaster from the north,

and great destruction.

A lion has gone up from his thicket,

a destroyer of nations has set out;

he has gone out from his place

to make your land a waste;

your cities will be ruins

without inhabitant.

For this put on sackcloth,

lament and wail,

for the fierce anger of the Lord

has not turned back from us.”

“In that day, declares the Lord, courage shall fail both king and officials. The priests shall be appalled and the prophets astounded.”

Then I said, “Ah, Lord God, surely you have utterly deceived this people and Jerusalem, saying, ‘It shall be well with you,’ whereas the sword has reached their very life.”

At that time it will be said to this people and to Jerusalem, “A hot wind from the bare heights in the desert toward the daughter of my people, not to winnow or cleanse, a wind too full for this comes for me. Now it is I who speak in judgment upon them.”

Behold, he comes up like clouds;  
his chariots like the whirlwind;  
his horses are swifter than eagles—  
woe to us, for we are ruined!  
O Jerusalem, wash your heart from evil,  
that you may be saved.  
How long shall your wicked thoughts  
lodge within you?

For a voice declares from Dan  
and proclaims trouble from Mount Ephraim.  
Warn the nations that he is coming;  
announce to Jerusalem,  
“Besiegers come from a distant land;  
they shout against the cities of Judah.  
Like keepers of a field are they against her all around,  
because she has rebelled against me,  
declares the Lord.  
Your ways and your deeds  
have brought this upon you.  
This is your doom, and it is bitter;  
it has reached your very heart.

## ANGUISH OVER JUDAH'S DESOLATION

My anguish, my anguish! I writhe in pain!

Oh the walls of my heart!

My heart is beating wildly;

I cannot keep silent,

for I hear the sound of the trumpet,

the alarm of war.

Crash follows hard on crash;

the whole land is laid waste.

Suddenly my tents are laid waste,

my curtains in a moment.

How long must I see the standard

and hear the sound of the trumpet?

“For my people are foolish;

they know me not;

they are stupid children;

they have no understanding.

They are ‘wise’—in doing evil!

But how to do good they know not.”

I looked on the earth, and behold, it was without form  
and void;

and to the heavens, and they had no light.

I looked on the mountains, and behold, they were quaking,

and all the hills moved to and fro.

I looked, and behold, there was no man,

and all the birds of the air had fled.

I looked, and behold, the fruitful land was a desert,

and all its cities were laid in ruins

before the Lord, before his fierce anger.

For thus says the Lord, “The whole land shall be a desolation; yet I will not make a full end.

“For this the earth shall mourn,

and the heavens above be dark;

for I have spoken; I have purposed;

I have not relented, nor will I turn back.”

At the noise of horseman and archer

every city takes to flight;

they enter thickets; they climb among rocks;

all the cities are forsaken,

and no man dwells in them.

And you, O desolate one,

what do you mean that you dress in scarlet,

that you adorn yourself with ornaments of gold,

that you enlarge your eyes with paint?  
In vain you beautify yourself.  
Your lovers despise you;  
they seek your life.  
For I heard a cry as of a woman in labor,  
anguish as of one giving birth to her first child,  
the cry of the daughter of Zion gasping for breath,  
stretching out her hands,  
“Woe is me! I am fainting before murderers.”

## JERUSALEM REFUSED TO REPENT

Run to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem,  
look and take note!

Search her squares to see  
if you can find a man,  
one who does justice  
and seeks truth,  
that I may pardon her.

Though they say, “As the LORD lives,”  
yet they swear falsely.

O LORD, do not your eyes look for truth?  
You have struck them down,  
but they felt no anguish;  
you have consumed them,  
but they refused to take correction.

They have made their faces harder than rock;  
they have refused to repent.

Then I said, “These are only the poor;  
they have no sense;  
for they do not know the way of the LORD,



the justice of their God.  
I will go to the great  
and will speak to them,  
for they know the way of the LORD,  
the justice of their God.”  
But they all alike had broken the yoke;  
they had burst the bonds.

Therefore a lion from the forest shall strike them  
down;  
a wolf from the desert shall devastate them.  
A leopard is watching their cities;  
everyone who goes out of them shall be torn in  
pieces,  
because their transgressions are many,  
their apostasies are great.

“How can I pardon you?  
Your children have forsaken me  
and have sworn by those who are no gods.  
When I fed them to the full,  
they committed adultery

and trooped to the houses of whores.  
They were well-fed, lusty stallions,  
each neighing for his neighbor's wife.  
Shall I not punish them for these things?  
declares the LORD;  
and shall I not avenge myself  
on a nation such as this?

“Go up through her vine rows and destroy,  
but make not a full end;  
strip away her branches,  
for they are not the LORD's.  
For the house of Israel and the house of Judah  
have been utterly treacherous to me,  
declares the LORD.  
They have spoken falsely of the LORD  
and have said, ‘He will do nothing;  
no disaster will come upon us,  
nor shall we see sword or famine.  
The prophets will become wind;  
the word is not in them.  
Thus shall it be done to them!’”

## THE LORD PROCLAIMS JUDGMENT

Therefore thus says the LORD, the God of hosts:

“Because you have spoken this word,  
behold, I am making my words in your mouth a fire,  
and this people wood, and the fire shall consume  
them.

Behold, I am bringing against you  
a nation from afar, O house of Israel,  
declares the LORD.

It is an enduring nation;  
it is an ancient nation,  
a nation whose language you do not know,  
nor can you understand what they say.

Their quiver is like an open tomb;  
they are all mighty warriors.

They shall eat up your harvest and your food;  
they shall eat up your sons and your daughters;  
they shall eat up your flocks and your herds;  
they shall eat up your vines and your fig trees;  
your fortified cities in which you trust  
they shall beat down with the sword.”

“But even in those days, declares the LORD, I will not make a full end of you. And when your people say, ‘Why has the LORD our God done all these things to us?’ you shall say to them, ‘As you have forsaken me and served foreign gods in your land, so you shall serve foreigners in a land that is not yours.’”

Declare this in the house of Jacob;  
proclaim it in Judah:

“Hear this, O foolish and senseless people,  
who have eyes, but see not,  
who have ears, but hear not.

Do you not fear me? declares the LORD.

Do you not tremble before me?

I placed the sand as the boundary for the sea,  
a perpetual barrier that it cannot pass;  
though the waves toss, they cannot prevail;  
though they roar, they cannot pass over it.

But this people has a stubborn and rebellious heart;  
they have turned aside and gone away.

They do not say in their hearts,

‘Let us fear the LORD our God,  
who gives the rain in its season,  
the autumn rain and the spring rain,  
and keeps for us  
the weeks appointed for the harvest.’  
Your iniquities have turned these away,  
and your sins have kept good from you.  
For wicked men are found among my people;  
they lurk like fowlers lying in wait.  
They set a trap;  
they catch men.  
Like a cage full of birds,  
their houses are full of deceit;  
therefore they have become great and rich;  
they have grown fat and sleek.  
They know no bounds in deeds of evil;  
they judge not with justice  
the cause of the fatherless, to make it prosper,  
and they do not defend the rights of the needy.  
Shall I not punish them for these things?  
declares the LORD,  
and shall I not avenge myself

on a nation such as this?”

An appalling and horrible thing  
has happened in the land:  
the prophets prophesy falsely,  
and the priests rule at their direction;  
my people love to have it so,  
but what will you do when the end comes?

## IMPENDING DISASTER FOR JERUSALEM

6 Flee for safety, O people of Benjamin,  
from the midst of Jerusalem!

Blow the trumpet in Tekoa,  
and raise a signal on Beth-haccherem,  
for disaster looms out of the north,  
and great destruction.

The lovely and delicately bred I will destroy,  
the daughter of Zion.

Shepherds with their flocks shall come against her;  
they shall pitch their tents around her;  
they shall pasture, each in his place.

“Prepare war against her;  
arise, and let us attack at noon!

Woe to us, for the day declines,  
for the shadows of evening lengthen!

Arise, and let us attack by night  
and destroy her palaces!”

For thus says the LORD of hosts:

“Cut down her trees;

cast up a siege mound against Jerusalem.  
This is the city that must be punished;  
there is nothing but oppression within her.  
As a well keeps its water fresh,  
so she keeps fresh her evil;  
violence and destruction are heard within her;  
sickness and wounds are ever before me.  
Be warned, O Jerusalem,  
lest I turn from you in disgust,  
lest I make you a desolation,  
an uninhabited land.”

Thus says the LORD of hosts:  
“They shall glean thoroughly as a vine  
the remnant of Israel;  
like a grape gatherer pass your hand again  
over its branches.”  
To whom shall I speak and give warning,  
that they may hear?  
Behold, their ears are uncircumcised,  
they cannot listen;



behold, the word of the LORD is to them an object of scorn;

they take no pleasure in it.

Therefore I am full of the wrath of the LORD;

I am weary of holding it in.

“Pour it out upon the children in the street,

and upon the gatherings of young men, also;

both husband and wife shall be taken,

the elderly and the very aged.

Their houses shall be turned over to others,

their fields and wives together,

for I will stretch out my hand

against the inhabitants of the land,”

declares the LORD.

“For from the least to the greatest of them,

everyone is greedy for unjust gain;

and from prophet to priest,

everyone deals falsely.

They have healed the wound of my people lightly,

saying, ‘Peace, peace,’

when there is no peace.

Were they ashamed when they committed  
abomination?

No, they were not at all ashamed;  
they did not know how to blush.

Therefore they shall fall among those who fall;  
at the time that I punish them, they shall be  
overthrown,”  
says the LORD.

Thus says the LORD:

“Stand by the roads, and look,  
and ask for the ancient paths,  
where the good way is; and walk in it,  
and find rest for your souls.

But they said, ‘We will not walk in it.’

I set watchmen over you, saying,

‘Pay attention to the sound of the trumpet!’

But they said, ‘We will not pay attention.’

Therefore hear, O nations,

and know, O congregation, what will happen to  
them.

Hear, O earth; behold, I am bringing disaster upon  
this people,

the fruit of their devices,

because they have not paid attention to my words;

and as for my law, they have rejected it.

What use to me is frankincense that comes from  
Sheba,

or sweet cane from a distant land?

Your burnt offerings are not acceptable,

nor your sacrifices pleasing to me.

Therefore thus says the LORD:

‘Behold, I will lay before this people

stumbling blocks against which they shall stumble;  
fathers and sons together,

neighbor and friend shall perish.’”

Thus says the LORD:

“Behold, a people is coming from the north country,  
a great nation is stirring from the farthest parts of  
the earth.

They lay hold on bow and javelin;

they are cruel and have no mercy;

the sound of them is like the roaring sea;  
they ride on horses,  
set in array as a man for battle,  
against you, O daughter of Zion!”  
We have heard the report of it;  
our hands fall helpless;  
anguish has taken hold of us,  
pain as of a woman in labor.  
Go not out into the field,  
nor walk on the road,  
for the enemy has a sword;  
terror is on every side.  
O daughter of my people, put on sackcloth,  
and roll in ashes;  
make mourning as for an only son,  
most bitter lamentation,  
for suddenly the destroyer  
will come upon us.

“I have made you a tester of metals among my people,  
that you may know and test their ways.  
They are all stubbornly rebellious,

going about with slanders;  
they are bronze and iron;  
all of them act corruptly.  
The bellows blow fiercely;  
the lead is consumed by the fire;  
in vain the refining goes on,  
for the wicked are not removed.  
Rejected silver they are called,  
for the LORD has rejected them.”

## EVIL IN THE LAND

The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD: “Stand in the gate of the LORD’s house, and proclaim there this word, and say, Hear the word of the LORD, all you men of Judah who enter these gates to worship the LORD. Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Amend your ways and your deeds, and I will let you dwell in this place. Do not trust in these deceptive words: ‘This is the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD.’”

“For if you truly amend your ways and your deeds, if you truly execute justice one with another, if you do not oppress the sojourner, the fatherless, or the widow, or shed innocent blood in this place, and if you do not go after other gods to your own harm, then I will let you dwell in this place, in the land that I gave of old to your fathers forever.

“Behold, you trust in deceptive words to no avail. Will you steal, murder, commit adultery, swear falsely, make offerings to Baal, and go after other gods that you have not known, and then come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say, ‘We are delivered!’—only to go on doing all these abominations? Has this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your eyes? Behold, I myself have seen it, declares the LORD. Go now to my place that was in Shiloh, where I made my name dwell at first, and see what I did to it because of the evil of my people Israel. And now, because you have done all these things, declares the LORD, and when I spoke to you persistently you did not listen, and when I called you, you did not answer, therefore I will do to the house that is called by my name, and in which you trust, and to the place that I gave to you and to your fathers, as I did to Shiloh. And I will cast you out of my sight, as I cast out all your kinsmen, all the offspring of Ephraim.

“As for you, do not pray for this people, or lift up a cry or prayer for them, and do not intercede with me, for I

will not hear you. Do you not see what they are doing in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem? The children gather wood, the fathers kindle fire, and the women knead dough, to make cakes for the queen of heaven. And they pour out drink offerings to other gods, to provoke me to anger. Is it I whom they provoke? declares the LORD. Is it not themselves, to their own shame? Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, my anger and my wrath will be poured out on this place, upon man and beast, upon the trees of the field and the fruit of the ground; it will burn and not be quenched.”

Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: “Add your burnt offerings to your sacrifices, and eat the flesh. For in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, I did not speak to your fathers or command them concerning burnt offerings and sacrifices. But this command I gave them: ‘Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and you shall be my people. And walk in all the way that I command you, that it may be well with you.’ But they did not obey or incline their ear, but



walked in their own counsels and the stubbornness of their evil hearts, and went backward and not forward. From the day that your fathers came out of the land of Egypt to this day, I have persistently sent all my servants the prophets to them, day after day. Yet they did not listen to me or incline their ear, but stiffened their neck. They did worse than their fathers.

“So you shall speak all these words to them, but they will not listen to you. You shall call to them, but they will not answer you. And you shall say to them, ‘This is the nation that did not obey the voice of the LORD their God, and did not accept discipline; truth has perished; it is cut off from their lips.

“‘Cut off your hair and cast it away;  
raise a lamentation on the bare heights,  
for the LORD has rejected and forsaken  
the generation of his wrath.’

## THE VALLEY OF SLAUGHTER

“For the sons of Judah have done evil in my sight, declares the LORD. They have set their detestable things in the house that is called by my name, to defile it. And they have built the high places of Topheth, which is in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire, which I did not command, nor did it come into my mind. Therefore, behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when it will no more be called Topheth, or the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, but the Valley of Slaughter; for they will bury in Topheth, because there is no room elsewhere. And the dead bodies of this people will be food for the birds of the air, and for the beasts of the earth, and none will frighten them away. And I will silence in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, for the land shall become a waste.

8 “At that time, declares the LORD, the bones of the kings of Judah, the bones of its officials, the bones of the priests, the bones of the prophets, and the bones of the inhabitants of Jerusalem shall be brought out of their tombs. And they shall be spread before the sun and the moon and all the host of heaven, which they have loved and served, which they have gone after, and which they have sought and worshiped. And they shall not be gathered or buried. They shall be as dung on the surface of the ground. Death shall be preferred to life by all the remnant that remains of this evil family in all the places where I have driven them, declares the LORD of hosts.

## SIN AND TREACHERY

“You shall say to them, Thus says the LORD:  
When men fall, do they not rise again?  
If one turns away, does he not return?  
Why then has this people turned away  
in perpetual backsliding?  
They hold fast to deceit;  
they refuse to return.  
I have paid attention and listened,  
but they have not spoken rightly;  
no man relents of his evil,  
saying, ‘What have I done?’  
Everyone turns to his own course,  
like a horse plunging headlong into battle.  
Even the stork in the heavens  
knows her times,  
and the turtledove, swallow, and crane  
keep the time of their coming,  
but my people know not  
the rules of the LORD.

“How can you say, ‘We are wise,  
and the law of the LORD is with us’?  
But behold, the lying pen of the scribes  
has made it into a lie.

The wise men shall be put to shame;  
they shall be dismayed and taken;  
behold, they have rejected the word of the LORD,  
so what wisdom is in them?

Therefore I will give their wives to others  
and their fields to conquerors,  
because from the least to the greatest  
everyone is greedy for unjust gain;  
from prophet to priest,  
everyone deals falsely.

They have healed the wound of my people lightly,  
saying, ‘Peace, peace,’  
when there is no peace.

Were they ashamed when they committed  
abomination?

No, they were not at all ashamed;  
they did not know how to blush.  
Therefore they shall fall among the fallen;

when I punish them, they shall be overthrown,  
says the LORD.

When I would gather them, declares the LORD,  
there are no grapes on the vine,  
nor figs on the fig tree;  
even the leaves are withered,  
and what I gave them has passed away from them.”

Why do we sit still?

Gather together; let us go into the fortified cities  
and perish there,  
for the LORD our God has doomed us to perish  
and has given us poisoned water to drink,  
because we have sinned against the LORD.

We looked for peace, but no good came;  
for a time of healing, but behold, terror.

“The snorting of their horses is heard from Dan;  
at the sound of the neighing of their stallions  
the whole land quakes.

They come and devour the land and all that fills it,  
the city and those who dwell in it.

For behold, I am sending among you serpents,  
adders that cannot be charmed,  
and they shall bite you,”  
declares the LORD.

## JEREMIAH GRIEVES FOR HIS PEOPLE

My joy is gone; grief is upon me;  
my heart is sick within me.

Behold, the cry of the daughter of my people  
from the length and breadth of the land:

“Is the LORD not in Zion?

Is her King not in her?”

“Why have they provoked me to anger with their  
carved images

and with their foreign idols?”

“The harvest is past, the summer is ended,  
and we are not saved.”

For the wound of the daughter of my people is my  
heart wounded;

I mourn, and dismay has taken hold on me.

Is there no balm in Gilead?

Is there no physician there?

Why then has the health of the daughter of my people  
not been restored?

9 Oh that my head were waters,



and my eyes a fountain of tears,  
that I might weep day and night  
for the slain of the daughter of my people!  
Oh that I had in the desert  
a travelers' lodging place,  
that I might leave my people  
and go away from them!  
For they are all adulterers,  
a company of treacherous men.  
They bend their tongue like a bow;  
falsehood and not truth has grown strong in the  
land;  
for they proceed from evil to evil,  
and they do not know me, declares the LORD.  
Let everyone beware of his neighbor,  
and put no trust in any brother,  
for every brother is a deceiver,  
and every neighbor goes about as a slanderer.  
Everyone deceives his neighbor,  
and no one speaks the truth;  
they have taught their tongue to speak lies;  
they weary themselves committing iniquity.

Heaping oppression upon oppression, and deceit upon deceit,

they refuse to know me, declares the LORD.

Therefore thus says the LORD of hosts:

“Behold, I will refine them and test them,

for what else can I do, because of my people?

Their tongue is a deadly arrow;

it speaks deceitfully;

with his mouth each speaks peace to his neighbor,

but in his heart he plans an ambush for him.

Shall I not punish them for these things? declares the LORD,

and shall I not avenge myself

on a nation such as this?

“I will take up weeping and wailing for the mountains,

and a lamentation for the pastures of the wilderness,

because they are laid waste so that no one passes through,

and the lowing of cattle is not heard;

both the birds of the air and the beasts

have fled and are gone.  
I will make Jerusalem a heap of ruins,  
a lair of jackals,  
and I will make the cities of Judah a desolation,  
without inhabitant.”

Who is the man so wise that he can understand this? To whom has the mouth of the LORD spoken, that he may declare it? Why is the land ruined and laid waste like a wilderness, so that no one passes through? And the LORD says: “Because they have forsaken my law that I set before them, and have not obeyed my voice or walked in accord with it, but have stubbornly followed their own hearts and have gone after the Baals, as their fathers taught them. Therefore thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Behold, I will feed this people with bitter food, and give them poisonous water to drink. I will scatter them among the nations whom neither they nor their fathers have known, and I will send the sword after them, until I have consumed them.”

Thus says the LORD of hosts:

“Consider, and call for the mourning women to come;

send for the skillful women to come;  
let them make haste and raise a wailing over us,  
that our eyes may run down with tears  
and our eyelids flow with water.

For a sound of wailing is heard from Zion:

‘How we are ruined!

We are utterly shamed,  
because we have left the land,  
because they have cast down our dwellings.’”

Hear, O women, the word of the LORD,

and let your ear receive the word of his mouth;  
teach to your daughters a lament,  
and each to her neighbor a dirge.

For death has come up into our windows;

it has entered our palaces,  
cutting off the children from the streets  
and the young men from the squares.

Speak: “Thus declares the LORD,

‘The dead bodies of men shall fall  
like dung upon the open field,  
like sheaves after the reaper,  
and none shall gather them.’”

Thus says the LORD: “Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, let not the mighty man boast in his might, let not the rich man boast in his riches, but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the LORD who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, declares the LORD.”

“Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will punish all those who are circumcised merely in the flesh—Egypt, Judah, Edom, the sons of Ammon, Moab, and all who dwell in the desert who cut the corners of their hair, for all these nations are uncircumcised, and all the house of Israel are uncircumcised in heart.”

## IDOLS AND THE LIVING GOD

10 Hear the word that the LORD speaks to you, O house of Israel. Thus says the LORD:

“Learn not the way of the nations,  
nor be dismayed at the signs of the heavens  
because the nations are dismayed at them,  
for the customs of the peoples are vanity.

A tree from the forest is cut down  
and worked with an axe by the hands of a  
craftsman.

They decorate it with silver and gold;  
they fasten it with hammer and nails  
so that it cannot move.

Their idols are like scarecrows in a cucumber field,  
and they cannot speak;  
they have to be carried,  
for they cannot walk.

Do not be afraid of them,  
for they cannot do evil,  
neither is it in them to do good.”

There is none like you, O LORD;  
you are great, and your name is great in might.  
Who would not fear you, O King of the nations?

For this is your due;  
for among all the wise ones of the nations  
and in all their kingdoms  
there is none like you.

They are both stupid and foolish;  
the instruction of idols is but wood!  
Beaten silver is brought from Tarshish,  
and gold from Uphaz.

They are the work of the craftsman and of the hands  
of the goldsmith;  
their clothing is violet and purple;  
they are all the work of skilled men.

But the LORD is the true God;  
he is the living God and the everlasting King.  
At his wrath the earth quakes,  
and the nations cannot endure his indignation.

Thus shall you say to them: “The gods who did not make the heavens and the earth shall perish from the earth and from under the heavens.”

It is he who made the earth by his power,  
who established the world by his wisdom,  
and by his understanding stretched out the heavens.

When he utters his voice, there is a tumult of waters  
in the heavens,

and he makes the mist rise from the ends of the  
earth.

He makes lightning for the rain,  
and he brings forth the wind from his storehouses.

Every man is stupid and without knowledge;  
every goldsmith is put to shame by his idols,  
for his images are false,  
and there is no breath in them.

They are worthless, a work of delusion;  
at the time of their punishment they shall perish.

Not like these is he who is the portion of Jacob,  
for he is the one who formed all things,  
and Israel is the tribe of his inheritance;  
the LORD of hosts is his name.



Gather up your bundle from the ground,  
O you who dwell under siege!  
For thus says the LORD:  
“Behold, I am slinging out the inhabitants of the land  
at this time,  
and I will bring distress on them,  
that they may feel it.”

Woe is me because of my hurt!  
My wound is grievous.  
But I said, “Truly this is an affliction,  
and I must bear it.”  
My tent is destroyed,  
and all my cords are broken;  
my children have gone from me,  
and they are not;  
there is no one to spread my tent again  
and to set up my curtains.  
For the shepherds are stupid  
and do not inquire of the LORD;  
therefore they have not prospered,

and all their flock is scattered.

A voice, a rumor! Behold, it comes!—  
a great commotion out of the north country  
to make the cities of Judah a desolation,  
a lair of jackals.

I know, O LORD, that the way of man is not in  
himself,  
that it is not in man who walks to direct his steps.  
Correct me, O LORD, but in justice;  
not in your anger, lest you bring me to nothing.  
Pour out your wrath on the nations that know you not,  
and on the peoples that call not on your name,  
for they have devoured Jacob;  
they have devoured him and consumed him,  
and have laid waste his habitation.

## THE BROKEN COVENANT

11 The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord: “Hear the words of this covenant, and speak to the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. You shall say to them, Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: Cursed be the man who does not hear the words of this covenant that I commanded your fathers when I brought them out of the land of Egypt, from the iron furnace, saying, Listen to my voice, and do all that I command you. So shall you be my people, and I will be your God, that I may confirm the oath that I swore to your fathers, to give them a land flowing with milk and honey, as at this day.” Then I answered, “So be it, Lord.”

And the Lord said to me, “Proclaim all these words in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem: Hear the words of this covenant and do them. For I solemnly warned your fathers when I brought them up out of the land of Egypt, warning them persistently, even to this day, saying, Obey my voice. Yet they did not obey or incline their ear, but everyone walked in the

stubbornness of his evil heart. Therefore I brought upon them all the words of this covenant, which I commanded them to do, but they did not.”

Again the Lord said to me, “A conspiracy exists among the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. They have turned back to the iniquities of their forefathers, who refused to hear my words. They have gone after other gods to serve them. The house of Israel and the house of Judah have broken my covenant that I made with their fathers. Therefore, thus says the Lord, Behold, I am bringing disaster upon them that they cannot escape. Though they cry to me, I will not listen to them. Then the cities of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem will go and cry to the gods to whom they make offerings, but they cannot save them in the time of their trouble. For your gods have become as many as your cities, O Judah, and as many as the streets of Jerusalem are the altars you have set up to shame, altars to make offerings to Baal.

“Therefore do not pray for this people, or lift up a cry or prayer on their behalf, for I will not listen when they

call to me in the time of their trouble. What right has my beloved in my house, when she has done many vile deeds? Can even sacrificial flesh avert your doom? Can you then exult? The Lord once called you ‘a green olive tree, beautiful with good fruit.’ But with the roar of a great tempest he will set fire to it, and its branches will be consumed. The Lord of hosts, who planted you, has decreed disaster against you, because of the evil that the house of Israel and the house of Judah have done, provoking me to anger by making offerings to Baal.”

The Lord made it known to me and I knew;  
then you showed me their deeds.

But I was like a gentle lamb  
led to the slaughter.

I did not know it was against me  
they devised schemes, saying,

“Let us destroy the tree with its fruit,  
let us cut him off from the land of the living,  
that his name be remembered no more.”

But, O Lord of hosts, who judges righteously,  
who tests the heart and the mind,  
let me see your vengeance upon them,

for to you have I committed my cause.

Therefore thus says the Lord concerning the men of Anathoth, who seek your life, and say, “Do not prophesy in the name of the Lord, or you will die by our hand”— therefore thus says the Lord of hosts: “Behold, I will punish them. The young men shall die by the sword, their sons and their daughters shall die by famine, and none of them shall be left. For I will bring disaster upon the men of Anathoth, the year of their punishment.”

## JEREMIAH'S COMPLAINT

12 Righteous are you, O Lord,  
when I complain to you;  
yet I would plead my case before you.  
Why does the way of the wicked prosper?  
Why do all who are treacherous thrive?  
You plant them, and they take root;  
they grow and produce fruit;  
you are near in their mouth  
and far from their heart.  
But you, O Lord, know me;  
you see me, and test my heart toward you.  
Pull them out like sheep for the slaughter,  
and set them apart for the day of slaughter.  
How long will the land mourn  
and the grass of every field wither?  
For the evil of those who dwell in it  
the beasts and the birds are swept away,  
because they said, "He will not see our latter end."

## THE LORD ANSWERS JEREMIAH

“If you have raced with men on foot, and they have wearied you,

how will you compete with horses?

And if in a safe land you are so trusting,

what will you do in the thicket of the Jordan?

For even your brothers and the house of your father,

even they have dealt treacherously with you;

they are in full cry after you;

do not believe them,

though they speak friendly words to you.”

“I have forsaken my house;

I have abandoned my heritage;

I have given the beloved of my soul

into the hands of her enemies.

My heritage has become to me

like a lion in the forest;

she has lifted up her voice against me;

therefore I hate her.

Is my heritage to me like a hyena's lair?

Are the birds of prey against her all around?



Go, assemble all the wild beasts;  
bring them to devour.  
Many shepherds have destroyed my vineyard;  
they have trampled down my portion;  
they have made my pleasant portion  
a desolate wilderness.  
They have made it a desolation;  
desolate, it mourns to me.  
The whole land is made desolate,  
but no man lays it to heart.  
Upon all the bare heights in the desert  
destroyers have come,  
for the sword of the Lord devours  
from one end of the land to the other;  
no flesh has peace.  
They have sown wheat and have reaped thorns;  
they have tired themselves out but profit nothing.  
They shall be ashamed of their harvests  
because of the fierce anger of the Lord.”

Thus says the Lord concerning all my evil neighbors  
who touch the heritage that I have given my people

Israel to inherit: “Behold, I will pluck them up from their land, and I will pluck up the house of Judah from among them. And after I have plucked them up, I will again have compassion on them, and I will bring them again each to his heritage and each to his land. And it shall come to pass, if they will diligently learn the ways of my people, to swear by my name, ‘As the Lord lives,’ even as they taught my people to swear by Baal, then they shall be built up in the midst of my people. But if any nation will not listen, then I will utterly pluck it up and destroy it, declares the Lord.”

## THE RUINED LOINCLOTH

13 Thus says the Lord to me, “Go and buy a linen loincloth and put it around your waist, and do not dip it in water.” So I bought a loincloth according to the word of the Lord, and put it around my waist. And the word of the Lord came to me a second time, “Take the loincloth that you have bought, which is around your waist, and arise, go to the Euphrates and hide it there in a cleft of the rock.” So I went and hid it by the Euphrates, as the Lord commanded me. And after many days the Lord said to me, “Arise, go to the Euphrates, and take from there the loincloth that I commanded you to hide there.” Then I went to the Euphrates, and dug, and I took the loincloth from the place where I had hidden it. And behold, the loincloth was spoiled; it was good for nothing.

Then the word of the Lord came to me: “Thus says the Lord: Even so will I spoil the pride of Judah and the great pride of Jerusalem. This evil people, who refuse to hear my words, who stubbornly follow their own heart and have gone after other gods to serve them and

worship them, shall be like this loincloth, which is good for nothing. For as the loincloth clings to the waist of a man, so I made the whole house of Israel and the whole house of Judah cling to me, declares the Lord, that they might be for me a people, a name, a praise, and a glory, but they would not listen.

## THE JARS FILLED WITH WINE

You shall speak to them this word: ‘Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, “Every jar shall be filled with wine.”’ And they will say to you, ‘Do we not indeed know that every jar will be filled with wine?’ Then you shall say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord: Behold, I will fill with drunkenness all the inhabitants of this land: the kings who sit on David’s throne, the priests, the prophets, and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And I will dash them one against another, fathers and sons together, declares the Lord. I will not pity or spare or have compassion, that I should not destroy them.’”

## EXILE THREATENED

Hear and give ear; be not proud,

for the Lord has spoken.

Give glory to the Lord your God

before he brings darkness,

before your feet stumble

on the twilight mountains,

and while you look for light

he turns it into gloom

and makes it deep darkness.

But if you will not listen,

my soul will weep in secret for your pride;

my eyes will weep bitterly and run down with tears,

because the Lord's flock has been taken captive.

Say to the king and the queen mother:

“Take a lowly seat,

for your beautiful crown

has come down from your head.”

The cities of the Negeb are shut up,

with none to open them;

all Judah is taken into exile,

wholly taken into exile.

“Lift up your eyes and see  
those who come from the north.  
Where is the flock that was given you,  
your beautiful flock?  
What will you say when they set as head over you  
those whom you yourself have taught to be friends  
to you?  
Will not pangs take hold of you  
like those of a woman in labor?  
And if you say in your heart,  
‘Why have these things come upon me?’  
it is for the greatness of your iniquity  
that your skirts are lifted up  
and you suffer violence.  
Can the Ethiopian change his skin  
or the leopard his spots?  
Then also you can do good  
who are accustomed to do evil.  
I will scatter you like chaff  
driven by the wind from the desert.  
This is your lot,

the portion I have measured out to you, declares the  
Lord,  
because you have forgotten me  
and trusted in lies.  
I myself will lift up your skirts over your face,  
and your shame will be seen.  
I have seen your abominations,  
your adulteries and neighings, your lewd whorings,  
on the hills in the field.  
Woe to you, O Jerusalem!  
How long will it be before you are made clean?"



## FAMINE, SWORD, AND PESTILENCE

14 The word of the Lord that came to Jeremiah concerning the drought:

“Judah mourns,

and her gates languish;

her people lament on the ground,

and the cry of Jerusalem goes up.

Her nobles send their servants for water;

they come to the cisterns;

they find no water;

they return with their vessels empty;

they are ashamed and confounded

and cover their heads.

Because of the ground that is dismayed,

since there is no rain on the land,

the farmers are ashamed;

they cover their heads.

Even the doe in the field forsakes her newborn fawn

because there is no grass.

The wild donkeys stand on the bare heights;

they pant for air like jackals;

their eyes fail

because there is no vegetation.  
“Though our iniquities testify against us,  
act, O Lord, for your name's sake;  
for our backslidings are many;  
we have sinned against you.  
O you hope of Israel,  
its savior in time of trouble,  
why should you be like a stranger in the land,  
like a traveler who turns aside to tarry for a night?  
Why should you be like a man confused,  
like a mighty warrior who cannot save?  
Yet you, O Lord, are in the midst of us,  
and we are called by your name;  
do not leave us.”

Thus says the Lord concerning this people:

“They have loved to wander thus;  
they have not restrained their feet;  
therefore the Lord does not accept them;  
now he will remember their iniquity  
and punish their sins.”

The Lord said to me: “Do not pray for the welfare of this people. Though they fast, I will not hear their cry,

and though they offer burnt offering and grain offering, I will not accept them. But I will consume them by the sword, by famine, and by pestilence.”

## LYING PROPHETS

Then I said: “Ah, Lord God, behold, the prophets say to them, ‘You shall not see the sword, nor shall you have famine, but I will give you assured peace in this place.’”

And the Lord said to me: “The prophets are prophesying lies in my name. I did not send them, nor did I command them or speak to them. They are prophesying to you a lying vision, worthless divination, and the deceit of their own minds. Therefore thus says the Lord concerning the prophets who prophesy in my name although I did not send them, and who say, ‘Sword and famine shall not come upon this land’: By sword and famine those prophets shall be consumed. And the people to whom they prophesy shall be cast out in the streets of Jerusalem, victims of famine and sword, with none to bury them—they, their wives, their sons, and their daughters. For I will pour out their evil upon them.

“You shall say to them this word:

‘Let my eyes run down with tears night and day,

and let them not cease,  
for the virgin daughter of my people is shattered with a  
great wound,  
with a very grievous blow.  
If I go out into the field,  
behold, those pierced by the sword!  
And if I enter the city,  
behold, the diseases of famine!  
For both prophet and priest ply their trade through  
the land  
and have no knowledge.”  
Have you utterly rejected Judah?  
Does your soul loathe Zion?  
Why have you struck us down  
so that there is no healing for us?  
We looked for peace, but no good came;  
for a time of healing, but behold, terror.  
We acknowledge our wickedness, O Lord,  
and the iniquity of our fathers,  
for we have sinned against you.  
Do not spurn us, for your name's sake;  
do not dishonor your glorious throne;

remember and do not break your covenant with us.  
Are there any among the false gods of the nations that  
can bring rain?

Or can the heavens give showers?  
Are you not he, O Lord our God?

We set our hope on you,  
for you do all these things.

## THE LORD WILL NOT RELENT

15 Then the Lord said to me, “Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet my heart would not turn toward this people. Send them out of my sight, and let them go! And when they ask you, ‘Where shall we go?’ you shall say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord:

“Those who are for pestilence, to pestilence,  
and those who are for the sword, to the sword;  
those who are for famine, to famine,  
and those who are for captivity, to captivity.’

I will appoint over them four kinds of destroyers, declares the Lord: the sword to kill, the dogs to tear, and the birds of the air and the beasts of the earth to devour and destroy. And I will make them a horror to all the kingdoms of the earth because of what Manasseh the son of Hezekiah, king of Judah, did in Jerusalem.

“Who will have pity on you, O Jerusalem,  
or who will grieve for you?

Who will turn aside  
to ask about your welfare?  
You have rejected me, declares the Lord;  
you keep going backward,  
so I have stretched out my hand against you and  
destroyed you—  
I am weary of relenting.  
I have winnowed them with a winnowing fork  
in the gates of the land;  
I have bereaved them; I have destroyed my people;  
they did not turn from their ways.  
I have made their widows more in number  
than the sand of the seas;  
I have brought against the mothers of young men  
a destroyer at noonday;  
I have made anguish and terror  
fall upon them suddenly.  
She who bore seven has grown feeble;  
she has fainted away;  
her sun went down while it was yet day;  
she has been shamed and disgraced.  
And the rest of them I will give to the sword



before their enemies,  
declares the Lord.”

## JEREMIAH'S COMPLAINT

Woe is me, my mother, that you bore me, a man of strife and contention to the whole land! I have not lent, nor have I borrowed, yet all of them curse me. The Lord said, "Have I not set you free for their good? Have I not pleaded for you before the enemy in the time of trouble and in the time of distress? Can one break iron, iron from the north, and bronze?"

"Your wealth and your treasures I will give as spoil, without price, for all your sins, throughout all your territory. I will make you serve your enemies in a land that you do not know, for in my anger a fire is kindled that shall burn forever."

O Lord, you know;  
remember me and visit me,  
and take vengeance for me on my persecutors.  
In your forbearance take me not away;  
know that for your sake I bear reproach.  
Your words were found, and I ate them,

and your words became to me a joy  
and the delight of my heart,  
for I am called by your name,  
O Lord, God of hosts.  
I did not sit in the company of revelers,  
nor did I rejoice;  
I sat alone, because your hand was upon me,  
for you had filled me with indignation.  
Why is my pain unceasing,  
my wound incurable,  
refusing to be healed?  
Will you be to me like a deceitful brook,  
like waters that fail?  
Therefore thus says the Lord:  
“If you return, I will restore you,  
and you shall stand before me.  
If you utter what is precious, and not what is  
worthless,  
you shall be as my mouth.  
They shall turn to you,  
but you shall not turn to them.  
And I will make you to this people

a fortified wall of bronze;  
they will fight against you,  
but they shall not prevail over you,  
for I am with you  
to save you and deliver you,  
declares the Lord.  
I will deliver you out of the hand of the wicked,  
and redeem you from the grasp of the ruthless.”

## FAMINE, SWORD, AND DEATH

16 The word of the Lord came to me: “You shall not take a wife, nor shall you have sons or daughters in this place. For thus says the Lord concerning the sons and daughters who are born in this place, and concerning the mothers who bore them and the fathers who fathered them in this land: They shall die of deadly diseases. They shall not be lamented, nor shall they be buried. They shall be as dung on the surface of the ground. They shall perish by the sword and by famine, and their dead bodies shall be food for the birds of the air and for the beasts of the earth.

“For thus says the Lord: Do not enter the house of mourning, or go to lament or grieve for them, for I have taken away my peace from this people, my steadfast love and mercy, declares the Lord. Both great and small shall die in this land. They shall not be buried, and no one shall lament for them or cut himself or make himself bald for them. No one shall break bread for the mourner, to comfort him for the dead, nor shall anyone give him the cup of consolation to drink for his father

or his mother. You shall not go into the house of feasting to sit with them, to eat and drink. For thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Behold, I will silence in this place, before your eyes and in your days, the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride.

“And when you tell this people all these words, and they say to you, ‘Why has the Lord pronounced all this great evil against us? What is our iniquity? What is the sin that we have committed against the Lord our God?’ then you shall say to them: ‘Because your fathers have forsaken me, declares the Lord, and have gone after other gods and have served and worshiped them, and have forsaken me and have not kept my law, and because you have done worse than your fathers, for behold, every one of you follows his stubborn, evil will, refusing to listen to me. Therefore I will hurl you out of this land into a land that neither you nor your fathers have known, and there you shall serve other gods day and night, for I will show you no favor.’

## THE LORD WILL RESTORE ISRAEL

“Therefore, behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when it shall no longer be said, ‘As the Lord lives who brought up the people of Israel out of the land of Egypt,’ but ‘As the Lord lives who brought up the people of Israel out of the north country and out of all the countries where he had driven them.’ For I will bring them back to their own land that I gave to their fathers.

“Behold, I am sending for many fishers, declares the Lord, and they shall catch them. And afterward I will send for many hunters, and they shall hunt them from every mountain and every hill, and out of the clefts of the rocks. For my eyes are on all their ways. They are not hidden from me, nor is their iniquity concealed from my eyes. But first I will doubly repay their iniquity and their sin, because they have polluted my land with the carcasses of their detestable idols, and have filled my inheritance with their abominations.”

O Lord, my strength and my stronghold,  
my refuge in the day of trouble,

to you shall the nations come

from the ends of the earth and say:

“Our fathers have inherited nothing but lies,  
worthless things in which there is no profit.

Can man make for himself gods?

Such are not gods!”

“Therefore, behold, I will make them know, this once  
I will make them know my power and my might, and  
they shall know that my name is the Lord.”



## THE SIN OF JUDAH

17 “The sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron; with a point of diamond it is engraved on the tablet of their heart, and on the horns of their altars, while their children remember their altars and their Asherim, beside every green tree and on the high hills, on the mountains in the open country. Your wealth and all your treasures I will give for spoil as the price of your high places for sin throughout all your territory. You shall loosen your hand from your heritage that I gave to you, and I will make you serve your enemies in a land that you do not know, for in my anger a fire is kindled that shall burn forever.”

Thus says the Lord:

“Cursed is the man who trusts in man  
and makes flesh his strength,  
whose heart turns away from the Lord.

He is like a shrub in the desert,  
and shall not see any good come.

He shall dwell in the parched places of the wilderness,  
in an uninhabited salt land.

“Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord,  
whose trust is the Lord.

He is like a tree planted by water,  
that sends out its roots by the stream,  
and does not fear when heat comes,  
for its leaves remain green,  
and is not anxious in the year of drought,  
for it does not cease to bear fruit.”

The heart is deceitful above all things,  
and desperately sick;  
who can understand it?

“I the Lord search the heart  
and test the mind,  
to give every man according to his ways,  
according to the fruit of his deeds.”

Like the partridge that gathers a brood that she did not  
hatch,

so is he who gets riches but not by justice;  
in the midst of his days they will leave him,  
and at his end he will be a fool.

A glorious throne set on high from the beginning  
is the place of our sanctuary.

O Lord, the hope of Israel,  
all who forsake you shall be put to shame;  
those who turn away from you shall be written in the  
earth,  
for they have forsaken the Lord, the fountain of  
living water.

## JEREMIAH PRAYS FOR DELIVERANCE

Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed;  
save me, and I shall be saved,  
for you are my praise.

Behold, they say to me,  
“Where is the word of the Lord?  
Let it come!”

I have not run away from being your shepherd,  
nor have I desired the day of sickness.

You know what came out of my lips;  
it was before your face.

Be not a terror to me;  
you are my refuge in the day of disaster.

Let those be put to shame who persecute me,  
but let me not be put to shame;

let them be dismayed,  
but let me not be dismayed;

bring upon them the day of disaster;  
destroy them with double destruction!

## KEEP THE SABBATH HOLY

Thus said the Lord to me: “Go and stand in the People’s Gate, by which the kings of Judah enter and by which they go out, and in all the gates of Jerusalem, and say: ‘Hear the word of the Lord, you kings of Judah, and all Judah, and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, who enter by these gates. Thus says the Lord: Take care for the sake of your lives, and do not bear a burden on the Sabbath day or bring it in by the gates of Jerusalem. And do not carry a burden out of your houses on the Sabbath or do any work, but keep the Sabbath day holy, as I commanded your fathers. Yet they did not listen or incline their ear, but stiffened their neck, that they might not hear and receive instruction.

“But if you listen to me, declares the Lord, and bring in no burden by the gates of this city on the Sabbath day, but keep the Sabbath day holy and do no work on it, then there shall enter by the gates of this city kings and princes who sit on the throne of David, riding in chariots and on horses, they and their officials, the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And this city shall be inhabited forever. 26 And people shall come from the cities of Judah and the places around Jerusalem, from the land of Benjamin, from the Shephelah, from the hill country, and from the Negeb, bringing burnt offerings and sacrifices, grain offerings and frankincense, and bringing thank offerings to the house of the Lord. But if you do not listen to me, to keep the Sabbath day holy, and not to bear a burden and enter by the gates of Jerusalem on the Sabbath day, then I will kindle a fire in its gates, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem and shall not be quenched.”

## THE POTTER AND THE CLARY

18 The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord: “Arise, and go down to the potter’s house, and there I will let you hear my words.” So I went down to the potter’s house, and there he was working at his wheel. And the vessel he was making of clay was spoiled in the potter’s hand, and he reworked it into another vessel, as it seemed good to the potter to do.

Then the word of the Lord came to me: “O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter has done? declares the Lord. Behold, like the clay in the potter’s hand, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel. If at any time I declare concerning a nation or a kingdom, that I will pluck up and break down and destroy it, and if that nation, concerning which I have spoken, turns from its evil, I will relent of the disaster that I intended to do to it. And if at any time I declare concerning a nation or a kingdom that I will build and plant it, and if it does evil in my sight, not listening to my voice, then I will relent of the good that I had intended to do to it. Now, therefore, say to the men of Judah and the

inhabitants of Jerusalem: ‘Thus says the Lord, Behold, I am shaping disaster against you and devising a plan against you. Return, every one from his evil way, and amend your ways and your deeds.’

“But they say, ‘That is in vain! We will follow our own plans, and will every one act according to the stubbornness of his evil heart.’

“Therefore thus says the Lord:

Ask among the nations,

Who has heard the like of this?

The virgin Israel

has done a very horrible thing.

Does the snow of Lebanon leave  
the crags of Sirion?

Do the mountain waters run dry,  
the cold flowing streams?

But my people have forgotten me;  
they make offerings to false gods;  
they made them stumble in their ways,  
in the ancient roads,  
and to walk into side roads,



not the highway,  
making their land a horror,  
a thing to be hissed at forever.  
Everyone who passes by it is horrified  
and shakes his head.  
Like the east wind I will scatter them  
before the enemy.  
I will show them my back, not my face,  
in the day of their calamity.”

Then they said, “Come, let us make plots against  
Jeremiah, for the law shall not perish from the priest,  
nor counsel from the wise, nor the word from the  
prophet. Come, let us strike him with the tongue, and  
let us not pay attention to any of his words.”

Hear me, O Lord,  
and listen to the voice of my adversaries.  
Should good be repaid with evil?  
Yet they have dug a pit for my life.  
Remember how I stood before you  
to speak good for them,

to turn away your wrath from them.  
Therefore deliver up their children to famine;  
give them over to the power of the sword;  
let their wives become childless and widowed.  
May their men meet death by pestilence,  
their youths be struck down by the sword in battle.  
May a cry be heard from their houses,  
when you bring the plunderer suddenly upon them!  
For they have dug a pit to take me  
and laid snares for my feet.  
Yet you, O Lord, know  
all their plotting to kill me.  
Forgive not their iniquity,  
nor blot out their sin from your sight.  
Let them be overthrown before you;  
deal with them in the time of your anger.

## THE BROKEN FLASK

19 Thus says the Lord, “Go, buy a potter’s earthenware flask, and take some of the elders of the people and some of the elders of the priests, and go out to the Valley of the Son of Hinnom at the entry of the Potsherd Gate, and proclaim there the words that I tell you. You shall say, ‘Hear the word of the Lord, O kings of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem. Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Behold, I am bringing such disaster upon this place that the ears of everyone who hears of it will tingle. Because the people have forsaken me and have profaned this place by making offerings in it to other gods whom neither they nor their fathers nor the kings of Judah have known; and because they have filled this place with the blood of innocents, and have built the high places of Baal to burn their sons in the fire as burnt offerings to Baal, which I did not command or decree, nor did it come into my mind—therefore, behold, days are coming, declares the Lord, when this place shall no more be called Topheth, or the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, but the Valley of Slaughter. And in this place I will make void the plans

of Judah and Jerusalem, and will cause their people to fall by the sword before their enemies, and by the hand of those who seek their life. I will give their dead bodies for food to the birds of the air and to the beasts of the earth. And I will make this city a horror, a thing to be hissed at. Everyone who passes by it will be horrified and will hiss because of all its wounds. And I will make them eat the flesh of their sons and their daughters, and everyone shall eat the flesh of his neighbor in the siege and in the distress, with which their enemies and those who seek their life afflict them.’

“Then you shall break the flask in the sight of the men who go with you, and shall say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord of hosts: So will I break this people and this city, as one breaks a potter’s vessel, so that it can never be mended. Men shall bury in Topheth because there will be no place else to bury. Thus will I do to this place, declares the Lord, and to its inhabitants, making this city like Topheth. The houses of Jerusalem and the houses of the kings of Judah—all the houses on whose roofs offerings have been offered to all the host of

heaven, and drink offerings have been poured out to other gods—shall be defiled like the place of Topheth.””

Then Jeremiah came from Topheth, where the Lord had sent him to prophesy, and he stood in the court of the Lord's house and said to all the people: “Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, behold, I am bringing upon this city and upon all its towns all the disaster that I have pronounced against it, because they have stiffened their neck, refusing to hear my words.”

## JEREMIAH PERSECUTED BY PASHHURR

20 Now Pashhur the priest, the son of Immer, who was chief officer in the house of the Lord, heard Jeremiah prophesying these things. Then Pashhur beat Jeremiah the prophet, and put him in the stocks that were in the upper Benjamin Gate of the house of the Lord. The next day, when Pashhur released Jeremiah from the stocks, Jeremiah said to him, “The Lord does not call your name Pashhur, but Terror on Every Side. For thus says the Lord: Behold, I will make you a terror to yourself and to all your friends. They shall fall by the sword of their enemies while you look on. And I will give all Judah into the hand of the king of Babylon. He shall carry them captive to Babylon, and shall strike them down with the sword. Moreover, I will give all the wealth of the city, all its gains, all its prized belongings, and all the treasures of the kings of Judah into the hand of their enemies, who shall plunder them and seize them and carry them to Babylon. And you, Pashhur, and all who dwell in your house, shall go into captivity.

To Babylon you shall go, and there you shall die, and there you shall be buried, you and all your friends, to whom you have prophesied falsely.”

O Lord, you have deceived me,  
and I was deceived;

you are stronger than I,  
and you have prevailed.

I have become a laughingstock all the day;  
everyone mocks me.

For whenever I speak, I cry out,

I shout, “Violence and destruction!”

For the word of the Lord has become for me  
a reproach and derision all day long.

If I say, “I will not mention him,  
or speak any more in his name,”

there is in my heart as it were a burning fire  
shut up in my bones,

and I am weary with holding it in,  
and I cannot.

For I hear many whispering.

Terror is on every side!

“Denounce him! Let us denounce him!”

say all my close friends,  
watching for my fall.

“Perhaps he will be deceived;  
then we can overcome him  
and take our revenge on him.”

But the Lord is with me as a dread warrior;  
therefore my persecutors will stumble;  
they will not overcome me.

They will be greatly shamed,  
for they will not succeed.

Their eternal dishonor  
will never be forgotten.

O Lord of hosts, who tests the righteous,  
who sees the heart and the mind, [a]  
let me see your vengeance upon them,  
for to you have I committed my cause.

Sing to the Lord;  
praise the Lord!

For he has delivered the life of the needy  
from the hand of evildoers.

Cursed be the day  
on which I was born!



The day when my mother bore me,  
let it not be blessed!  
Cursed be the man who brought the news to my  
father,  
“A son is born to you,”  
making him very glad.  
Let that man be like the cities  
that the Lord overthrew without pity;  
let him hear a cry in the morning  
and an alarm at noon,  
because he did not kill me in the womb;  
so my mother would have been my grave,  
and her womb forever great.  
Why did I come out from the womb  
to see toil and sorrow,  
and spend my days in shame?

## JERUSALEM WILL FALL TO NEBUCHADNEZZAR

21 This is the word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord, when King Zedekiah sent to him Pashhur the son of Malchiah and Zephaniah the priest, the son of Maaseiah, saying, “Inquire of the Lord for us, for Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon is making war against us. Perhaps the Lord will deal with us according to all his wonderful deeds and will make him withdraw from us.”

Then Jeremiah said to them: “Thus you shall say to Zedekiah, ‘Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: Behold, I will turn back the weapons of war that are in your hands and with which you are fighting against the king of Babylon and against the Chaldeans who are besieging you outside the walls. And I will bring them together into the midst of this city. I myself will fight against you with outstretched hand and strong arm, in anger and in fury and in great wrath. And I will strike down the inhabitants of this city, both man and beast. They shall die of a great pestilence. Afterward, declares

the Lord, I will give Zedekiah king of Judah and his servants and the people in this city who survive the pestilence, sword, and famine into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and into the hand of their enemies, into the hand of those who seek their lives. He shall strike them down with the edge of the sword. He shall not pity them or spare them or have compassion.’

“And to this people you shall say: ‘Thus says the Lord: Behold, I set before you the way of life and the way of death. He who stays in this city shall die by the sword, by famine, and by pestilence, but he who goes out and surrenders to the Chaldeans who are besieging you shall live and shall have his life as a prize of war. For I have set my face against this city for harm and not for good, declares the Lord: it shall be given into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall burn it with fire.’

## MESSAGE TO THE HOUSE OF DAVID

“And to the house of the king of Judah say, ‘Hear the word of the Lord,

O house of David! Thus says the Lord:

“Execute justice in the morning,  
and deliver from the hand of the oppressor  
him who has been robbed,  
lest my wrath go forth like fire,  
and burn with none to quench it,  
because of your evil deeds.”

“Behold, I am against you, O inhabitant of the valley,  
O rock of the plain,  
declares the Lord;

you who say, ‘Who shall come down against us,  
or who shall enter our habitations?’

I will punish you according to the fruit of your deeds,  
declares the Lord;

I will kindle a fire in her forest,  
and it shall devour all that is around her.”

22 Thus says the Lord: “Go down to the house of the king of Judah and speak there this word, and say, ‘Hear the word of the Lord, O king of Judah, who sits on the throne of David, you, and your servants, and your people who enter these gates. Thus says the Lord: Do justice and righteousness, and deliver from the hand of the oppressor him who has been robbed. And do no wrong or violence to the resident alien, the fatherless, and the widow, nor shed innocent blood in this place. For if you will indeed obey this word, then there shall enter the gates of this house kings who sit on the throne of David, riding in chariots and on horses, they and their servants and their people. But if you will not obey these words, I swear by myself, declares the Lord, that this house shall become a desolation. For thus says the Lord concerning the house of the king of Judah:

“You are like Gilead to me,  
like the summit of Lebanon,  
yet surely I will make you a desert,  
an uninhabited city.

I will prepare destroyers against you,  
each with his weapons,

and they shall cut down your choicest cedars  
and cast them into the fire.

“And many nations will pass by this city, and every man will say to his neighbor, “Why has the Lord dealt thus with this great city?” And they will answer, “Because they have forsaken the covenant of the Lord their God and worshiped other gods and served them.””

Weep not for him who is dead,  
nor grieve for him,  
but weep bitterly for him who goes away,  
for he shall return no more  
to see his native land.

## THE RIGHTEOUS BRANCH

“Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture!” declares the LORD. Therefore thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, concerning the shepherds who care for my people: “You have scattered my flock and have driven them away, and you have not attended to them. Behold, I will attend to you for your evil deeds, declares the LORD. Then I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all the countries where I have driven them, and I will bring them back to their fold, and they shall be fruitful and multiply. I will set shepherds over them who will care for them, and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall any be missing, declares the LORD.

“Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In his days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely. And this is the name by which he will be called: ‘The LORD is our righteousness.’

“Therefore, behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when they shall no longer say, ‘As the LORD lives who brought up the people of Israel out of the land of Egypt,’ but ‘As the LORD lives who brought up and led the offspring of the house of Israel out of the north country and out of all the countries where he had driven them.’ Then they shall dwell in their own land.”



## LYING PROPHETS

Concerning the prophets:

My heart is broken within me;  
all my bones shake;  
I am like a drunken man,  
like a man overcome by wine,  
because of the LORD  
and because of his holy words.

For the land is full of adulterers;  
because of the curse the land mourns,  
and the pastures of the wilderness are dried up.  
Their course is evil,  
and their might is not right.

“Both prophet and priest are ungodly;  
even in my house I have found their evil,  
declares the LORD.

Therefore their way shall be to them  
like slippery paths in the darkness,  
into which they shall be driven and fall,

for I will bring disaster upon them  
in the year of their punishment,  
declares the LORD.

In the prophets of Samaria  
I saw an unsavory thing:  
they prophesied by Baal  
and led my people Israel astray.

But in the prophets of Jerusalem  
I have seen a horrible thing:  
they commit adultery and walk in lies;  
they strengthen the hands of evildoers,  
so that no one turns from his evil;  
all of them have become like Sodom to me,  
and its inhabitants like Gomorrah.”

Therefore thus says the LORD of hosts concerning the  
prophets:

“Behold, I will feed them with bitter food  
and give them poisoned water to drink,  
for from the prophets of Jerusalem  
ungodliness has gone out into all the land.”

Thus says the LORD of hosts: “Do not listen to the words of the prophets who prophesy to you, filling you with vain hopes. They speak visions of their own minds, not from the mouth of the LORD. They say continually to those who despise the word of the LORD, ‘It shall be well with you’; and to everyone who stubbornly follows his own heart, they say, ‘No disaster shall come upon you.’”

For who among them has stood in the council of the LORD

to see and to hear his word,  
or who has paid attention to his word and listened?

Behold, the storm of the LORD!

Wrath has gone forth,  
a whirling tempest;  
it will burst upon the head of the wicked.

The anger of the LORD will not turn back  
until he has executed and accomplished  
the intents of his heart.

In the latter days you will understand it clearly.

“I did not send the prophets,  
yet they ran;  
I did not speak to them,  
yet they prophesied.

But if they had stood in my council,  
then they would have proclaimed my words to my  
people,  
and they would have turned them from their evil way,  
and from the evil of their deeds.

“Am I a God at hand, declares the LORD, and not a  
God far away? Can a man hide himself in secret places  
so that I cannot see him? declares the LORD. Do I not  
fill heaven and earth? declares the LORD. I have heard  
what the prophets have said who prophesy lies in my  
name, saying, ‘I have dreamed, I have dreamed!’ How  
long shall there be lies in the heart of the prophets who  
prophesy lies, and who prophesy the deceit of their  
own heart, who think to make my people forget my  
name by their dreams that they tell one another, even  
as their fathers forgot my name for Baal? Let the  
prophet who has a dream tell the dream, but let him

who has my word speak my word faithfully. What has straw in common with wheat? declares the LORD. Is not my word like fire, declares the LORD, and like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces? Therefore, behold, I am against the prophets, declares the LORD, who steal my words from one another. Behold, I am against the prophets, declares the LORD, who use their tongues and declare, 'declares the LORD.' Behold, I am against those who prophesy lying dreams, declares the LORD, and who tell them and lead my people astray by their lies and their recklessness, when I did not send them or charge them. So they do not profit this people at all, declares the LORD.

“When one of this people, or a prophet or a priest asks you, ‘What is the burden of the LORD?’ you shall say to them, ‘You are the burden, and I will cast you off, declares the LORD.’ And as for the prophet, priest, or one of the people who says, ‘The burden of the LORD,’ I will punish that man and his household. Thus shall you say, every one to his neighbor and every one to his brother, ‘What has the LORD answered?’ or ‘What has the LORD spoken?’ But ‘the burden of the LORD’ you

shall mention no more, for the burden is every man's own word, and you pervert the words of the living God, the LORD of hosts, our God. Thus you shall say to the prophet, 'What has the LORD answered you?' or 'What has the LORD spoken?' But if you say, 'The burden of the LORD,' thus says the LORD, 'Because you have said these words, "The burden of the LORD," when I sent to you, saying, "You shall not say, "The burden of the LORD,"" therefore, behold, I will surely lift you up and cast you away from my presence, you and the city that I gave to you and your fathers. And I will bring upon you everlasting reproach and perpetual shame, which shall not be forgotten.'"

## THE GOOD FIGS AND THE BAD FIGS

After Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had taken into exile from Jerusalem Jeconiah the son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, together with the officials of Judah, the craftsmen, and the metal workers, and had brought them to Babylon, the LORD showed me this vision: behold, two baskets of figs placed before the temple of the LORD. One basket had very good figs, like first-ripe figs, but the other basket had very bad figs, so bad that they could not be eaten. And the LORD said to me, “What do you see, Jeremiah?” I said, “Figs, the good figs very good, and the bad figs very bad, so bad that they cannot be eaten.”

Then the word of the LORD came to me: “Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: Like these good figs, so I will regard as good the exiles from Judah, whom I have sent away from this place to the land of the Chaldeans. I will set my eyes on them for good, and I will bring them back to this land. I will build them up, and not tear them down; I will plant them, and not pluck them up. I will give them a heart to know that I am the LORD, and

they shall be my people and I will be their God, for they shall return to me with their whole heart.

“But thus says the LORD: Like the bad figs that are so bad they cannot be eaten, so will I treat Zedekiah the king of Judah, his officials, the remnant of Jerusalem who remain in this land, and those who dwell in the land of Egypt. I will make them a horror to all the kingdoms of the earth, to be a reproach, a byword, a taunt, and a curse in all the places where I shall drive them. And I will send sword, famine, and pestilence upon them, until they shall be utterly destroyed from the land that I gave to them and their fathers.”



## SEVENTY YEARS OF CAPTIVITY

The word that came to Jeremiah concerning all the people of Judah, in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah (that was the first year of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon), which Jeremiah the prophet spoke to all the people of Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem: “For twenty-three years, from the thirteenth year of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah, to this day, the word of the LORD has come to me, and I have spoken persistently to you, but you have not listened. You have neither listened nor inclined your ears to hear, although the LORD persistently sent to you all his servants the prophets, saying, ‘Turn now, every one of you, from his evil way and evil deeds, and dwell upon the land that the LORD has given to you and your fathers from of old and forever. Do not go after other gods to serve and worship them, or provoke me to anger with the work of your hands. Then I will do you no harm.’ Yet you have not listened to me, declares the LORD, that you might provoke me to anger with the work of your hands to your own harm.

“Therefore thus says the LORD of hosts: Because you have not obeyed my words, behold, I will send for all the tribes of the north, declares the LORD, and for Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, my servant, and I will bring them against this land and its inhabitants, and against all these surrounding nations. I will devote them to destruction, and make them a horror, a hissing, and an everlasting desolation. Moreover, I will banish from them the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the grinding of the millstones and the light of the lamp. This whole land shall become a ruin and a waste, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years. Then after seventy years are completed, I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation, the land of the Chaldeans, for their iniquity, declares the LORD, making the land an everlasting waste. I will bring upon that land all the words that I have uttered against it, everything written in this book, which Jeremiah prophesied against all the nations. For many nations and great kings shall make slaves even of them, and I will

recompense them according to their deeds and the work of their hands.”

## THE CUP OF THE LORD'S WRATH

Thus the LORD, the God of Israel, said to me: "Take from my hand this cup of the wine of wrath, and make all the nations to whom I send you drink it. They shall drink and stagger and be crazed because of the sword that I am sending among them."

So I took the cup from the LORD's hand, and made all the nations to whom the LORD sent me drink it: Jerusalem and the cities of Judah, its kings and officials, to make them a desolation and a waste, a hissing and a curse, as at this day; Pharaoh king of Egypt, his servants, his officials, all his people, and all the mixed tribes among them; all the kings of the land of Uz and all the kings of the land of the Philistines (Ashkelon, Gaza, Ekron, and the remnant of Ashdod); Edom, Moab, and the sons of Ammon; all the kings of Tyre, all the kings of Sidon, and the kings of the coastland across the sea; Dedan, Tema, Buz, and all who cut the corners of their hair; all the kings of Arabia and all the kings of the mixed tribes who dwell in the desert; all the kings of Zimri, all the kings of Elam, and all the kings of Media;

all the kings of the north, far and near, one after another, and all the kingdoms of the world that are on the face of the earth. And after them the king of Babylon shall drink.

“Then you shall say to them, ‘Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Drink, be drunk and vomit, fall and rise no more, because of the sword that I am sending among you.’

“And if they refuse to accept the cup from your hand to drink, then you shall say to them, ‘Thus says the LORD of hosts: You must drink! For behold, I begin to work disaster at the city that is called by my name, and shall you go unpunished? You shall not go unpunished, for I am summoning a sword against all the inhabitants of the earth, declares the LORD of hosts.’

“You, therefore, shall prophesy against them all these words, and say to them:

““The LORD will roar from on high,  
and from his holy habitation utter his voice;  
he will roar mightily against his fold,

and shout, like those who tread grapes,  
against all the inhabitants of the earth.

The clamor will resound to the ends of the earth,  
for the LORD has an indictment against the nations;  
he is entering into judgment with all flesh,  
and the wicked he will put to the sword,  
declares the LORD.’

“Thus says the LORD of hosts:  
Behold, disaster is going forth  
from nation to nation,  
and a great tempest is stirring  
from the farthest parts of the earth!

“And those pierced by the LORD on that day shall extend  
from one end of the earth to the other. They shall not  
be lamented, or gathered, or buried; they shall be dung  
on the surface of the ground.

“Wail, you shepherds, and cry out,  
and roll in ashes, you lords of the flock,  
for the days of your slaughter and dispersion have

come,

and you shall fall like a choice vessel.

No refuge will remain for the shepherds,  
nor escape for the lords of the flock.

A voice—the cry of the shepherds,  
and the wail of the lords of the flock!  
For the LORD is laying waste their pasture,  
and the peaceful folds are devastated  
because of the fierce anger of the LORD.

Like a lion he has left his lair,  
for their land has become a waste  
because of the sword of the oppressor,  
and because of his fierce anger.”

