

**This book is the account of
Jeremiah foretelling about God
punishing the Israeli people
because they rejected him and
would not repent. We call this
book
Jeremiah**

Introduction

¹ *I, Jeremiah, the son of Hilkiah, am writing these messages. I am a priest, from Anathoth town in the area where the tribe of Benjamin lives.* ² *Yahweh started to give me these messages when Josiah had been ruling Judah for almost 13 years.* ³ *Yahweh continued to give me more messages when Josiah's son Jehoiakim was the king, and he continued to do that until Zedekiah had been the king of Judah for almost eleven years. It was in August of that year that the people of Jerusalem were ◀exiled/taken as prisoners▶ to Babylonia.*

Yahweh chose Jeremiah to be his prophet

⁴ *One day Yahweh gave me this message:*
⁵ *"I knew you before I finished forming you in your mother's womb. Before you were born, I ◀set you apart/chose you▶ and I appointed you to be my prophet whose messages would be for all nations."*

⁶ I replied, “O, Yahweh my God, I am *not qualified to speak for you*, because I am very young!”

⁷ Yahweh replied, “Do not say that, because you must go to everyone to whom I will send you, and you must tell them everything that I tell you to say. ⁸ And you must not be afraid of the people *to whom you will speak*, because I will protect you *from being harmed by them*. *This will surely happen because I, Yahweh, have said it!*”

⁹ Then *it was as though* Yahweh touched my mouth and said, “Listen to me! I am ◀putting my message into your mouth/telling you what you must speak▶. ¹⁰ Today I am appointing you to warn nations and kingdoms. You will tell them that I will completely destroy and get rid of [DOU] some of them and that I will establish [MET] others and cause them to be strong.”

¹¹ Then Yahweh said to me, “Jeremiah, what do you see?”

I replied, “I see a branch from an almond tree.”

¹² Yahweh said, “That is correct. And *because the word for ‘almond’ resembles the word for ‘watching’*, it means that I am watching *what will happen*, and I will make certain that what I have said to you *about destroying nations* will happen.”

¹³ Then Yahweh spoke to me again and said, “What do you see *now*?”

I replied, “I see a pot full of boiling *water* [MTY]. It is tipping *toward me* from the north.”

¹⁴ Yahweh replied, “*Yes! It means that from the north great trouble/destruction will spread*”

[MET] over this land, *like boiling water* [MET] pouring *from a pot*.

¹⁵ Listen to what I say:

I am summoning *the armies of* kingdoms that will come from the north *of Judah* to Jerusalem.

Their kings will set up their thrones at the gates of this city *to indicate that they are now the kings of Judah*.

Their armies will attack *and break down* the walls of this city, and *they will do the same thing to* all the *other* towns in Judah.

¹⁶ I will punish [MTY] my people because of all the evil things that they have done;

they have abandoned me and they worship gods/ idols.

They worship idols that they have made with their own hands!

¹⁷ So, get up and put on your clothes *to get ready for action!* Then go to the people of Judah and tell them everything that I tell you to say. Do not be afraid of them, because *if you are afraid of them*, I will cause you to be truly terrified in front of them! ¹⁸ But listen! I will cause you to be *strong, like* [MET] a city that has strong walls around it. You will be *as strong as* [MET] an iron pillar or a bronze wall. None of the kings or officials or priests will be able to defeat you.

¹⁹ They will oppose you, but they will not be able to defeat you, because I will be with you and will protect you. *That will surely happen because I, Yahweh, have said it!*"

2

The Israelis sinned in spite of God's care for them

¹ Yahweh gave me another message
² *to proclaim to everyone in Jerusalem. He said that I should tell them this [MET]:*
 "I, Yahweh, remember that you very much wanted to please me *long ago.*

You tried to please me like a bride tries to please her husband;

You loved me,
 and you followed me through the desert [DOU].

³ *At that time you Israelis ◀were set apart/ belonged only▶ to me;*
you belonged to me like the first part of the harvests belong to me [MET].

I promised to punish all those who harmed you, my people,
 and truly I did send disasters on them.
That happened because I, Yahweh, said that it would happen."

⁴ So, you *descendants of* [MTY] Jacob, all you people of [MTY] Israel,

⁵ listen to what Yahweh says:
 "◀What sin did I commit [RHQ] that caused your ancestors to turn far away from me?/ Though your ancestors found no fault in me, they turned far away from me.▶

They worshiped worthless idols,
 and they themselves became worthless.

6 They did not say, 'Yahweh brought us *safely* out of Egypt,
and he led us through a desert
where there were a lot of pits;
he led us where there was no water and where
it was very dangerous,
through a land where no one lives, and no
one even travels.
◀So where is Yahweh now?/So he should be
helping us now!▶ [RHQ]'

7 And when I brought you into a very fertile land,
in order that you could enjoy *all* the fruit and
other good things that you would harvest,
you caused the land that I promised to give to
you to be unfit for me
and to become disgusting/detestable to me.

8 *Your* priests also did not say,
'◀Where is Yahweh now?/Yahweh should be
helping us now!▶' [RHQ]
Those who teach/explain my laws do not *want to*
know me,
and *your* leaders have rebelled against me.
Your prophets gave you messages from *their* god
Baal,
and they worship worthless idols."

Yahweh accused the Israeli people

9 "So, I will accuse you in court.
In future years, I will say what your children
and your grandchildren have done that is
wrong.
*That will happen because I, Yahweh, have said
that it will happen.*

- 10 If you go *west* to the island of Cyprus,
or if you go *east* to Kedar *land*,
and if you ask people in those places,
they will tell you that no people *from
their countries* have ever done the wicked
things that you people have done!
- 11 The people of no other nation have ever [RHQ]
abandoned their gods that they thought
were glorious
and started to worship gods that are not
really gods,
but you people have abandoned me, your glori-
ous God,
and are worshiping gods that are useless.
- 12 *It is as though everything in the sky is surprised
and dismayed/appalled about what you
have done;*
*it is as though they tremble because they are
very horrified.*
- 13 *You, my people, have done two evil things:*
You have rejected me, the one who is *like* [MET] a
fountain *where you can obtain* fresh water,
and you *are worshiping gods that are like*
[MET] pits in the ground
that are cracked and which are not able to
hold any water.
- 14 You Israeli people, you were certainly not
[RHQ] slaves when you were born;
you were captured *by your enemies*.
- 15 *Your enemies* [MET] roared *like* lions,
and they destroyed your land.
Now your towns have been burned,

- and no one lives in them.
- 16 Soldiers from Memphis and Tahpenes, *cities in Egypt*, have *defeated you* and shaved your heads *to show that you are their slaves*.
- 17 But it is [RHQ] because you abandoned *me*, Yahweh, that these disasters have happened to you.
- 18 So ◀why are you trying to make an alliance with [MET] the rulers of Egypt?/it certainly will not help you to make an alliance with the rulers of Egypt▶ [RHQ].
Why are you trying to make an alliance with [MET] the rulers of Assyria who live near the *Euphrates* River?
- 19 *It is because you have been very wicked that I [PRS] will punish you.*
It is because you have turned away from me that I [PRS] will condemn you.
When I do that, you will realize that painful and evil [DOU] things will happen to you because you have forsaken *me*, Yahweh, your God,
and you no *longer* revere me.
That will certainly happen because I, Yahweh, the Commander of the armies of angels in heaven, have said it.
- 20 Long ago, you stopped obeying *me* [MET], and you would not allow *me* to lead you [MET]; you refused to worship *me*.
Instead, you worship idols that are under trees on the top of every hill,

and your young women have sex with [EUP]
men at those places.

²¹ *It is as though* [MET] you were a grapevine that
I planted

when it was a cutting from a very good vine.
So now it is disgusting that [RHQ] you have
become *like* a rotten worthless vine.

²² Your guilt from your sins is like [MET] very
bad stains on a cloth,
and you cannot get rid of those stains even
by using very strong soap.

This is true because I, Yahweh, have said it.

²³ You say that you have not sinned.

You say 'We have not become unacceptable to
God;
we have not worshiped Baal.'

But think about *the disgusting things that you
do very eagerly* in Hinnom Valley outside
Jerusalem.

You are like desperate female camels, run-
ning here and there *to find male camels to
have sex with.*

²⁴ You are *like* wild female donkeys in the desert.
They sniff the air to find where the male
donkeys are,
and no one can [RHQ] restrain them.

The male donkeys that want them do not become
tired searching for them,
because at mating time they find them *easily.*

²⁵ You constantly run here and there *to find
idols to worship,* with the result that your
sandals are worn out,
and your throats have become dry.

I told you to stop doing that,
 but you said, 'We cannot stop, because we
 love foreign gods,
 and we must worship them.' "

²⁶ *Yahweh says this:*

"A robber is disgraced when he is caught.
 And all of you, including your kings and
 priests and prophets, are similarly dis-
 graced.

²⁷ You say to *a piece of wood that is carved to
 become a sacred idol*, 'You are our father!'
 And you say to a stone *that you have set up*,
 'You are our mother!'

You have rejected [IDM] me,
 but when you experience troubles,
 you cry out to me to rescue you.

²⁸ Why do you not [RHQ] cry out to the gods that
 you made?

You have as many gods as you have cities *and
 towns* in Judah.

So why do you not plead with them to rescue
 you
 when you experience disasters?

²⁹ You complain that it was wrong for me *not to
 have rescued you*,
 but you have all rebelled against me.

³⁰ I punished some of you,
 but you did not learn anything from my
 doing that.

You have killed many of the prophets that I *sent
 to you*,

like [SIM] fierce lions kill *other animals*.

³¹ You people of Israel, pay attention to what I say.

I have certainly [RHQ] never *abandoned you* in a desert;

I have never *left you* in a land full of darkness.

So, why do you, my people, say 'We are free from God's control;

we will not return to *worship* God any more'?

³² A young woman would certainly never [RHQ] forget *to wear* her jewelry,

and a bride would never [RHQ] forget to wear her wedding dress,

but you my people have forgotten me for many years.

³³ You know how to easily find *gods from other countries* whom you can love.

You can find them as easily as a prostitute *can find men to sleep with*.

³⁴ Although you have on your clothes the blood of poor people whom you have murdered,

people who ◀were innocent/had not done things that are wrong▶,

³⁵ you say 'We have not done anything that is wrong;

so surely *Yahweh* is not angry with us.'

But I will punish [MTY] you *severely* for saying 'We have not sinned.'

³⁶ Previously you requested *the army of Assyria* to help you,

but they were not able to help you.
 Now you have requested *the army of Egypt* to help you,
 but they will not be able to help you, either.
 37 They will capture you, and you will be *their prisoners* [MTY],
 led to Egypt, *very ashamed* with your hands on your heads.
 That will happen because I, Yahweh, have rejected those *nations* that you are relying on,
 and they will not be able to help you at all."

3

1 "*Moses wrote that* if a man divorces his wife and then she marries another man,
 her first husband certainly must not [RHQ] take her back again *to be his wife*,
 because that would certainly [RHQ] cause the whole nation to become unacceptable to me.
 But you have more *idols than* prostitutes have men whom they have slept with!
 So, *why should I accept you if* you return to me?" [RHQ] says Yahweh.
 2 "Look up at the barren hilltops.
 On every hilltop there are [RHQ] *idols that you have worshiped*.
It is as though they are all lovers with whom you have had sex.
It is as though you have sat along the roadsides like an Arab, waiting *to attack and steal things from* those who pass by.

Because of worshiping idols and all the other wicked things that you have done, you have caused the *entire* land to become unacceptable to me.

³ That is why I have not sent you any rain at the times of the year when you needed it.

But you are like prostitutes [MET] who are not at all ashamed *for what they have done*.

⁴ Now each of you says to me, 'You are my father! You have loved me ever since I was young!

⁵ So surely you will not [RHQ] be angry with me forever!

But you will not quit sinning!"

Israel's idolatry

⁶ *One day* when Josiah was the king of Judah, Yahweh said to me, "Have you seen what the people of Israel have done? They have turned away from me, like a woman who has abandoned her husband and sleeps with other men. They have gone up on every hilltop and under every big tree and worshiped idols there [MET].

⁷ I thought that they would return to me, so I said to them, 'Come back to me!' But they refused. So I sent them away *to other countries, like a man writes a note saying that he is divorcing his wife and then sends his wife away because she has committed adultery* [MET]. ⁸ The people of Judah saw what I did to them. But they are just like the people of Israel. They are not afraid *of what I will do to them*. They also *have turned away from me and are worshiping idols like women who*

abandon their husbands and go to other men [MET]. ⁹ They thought that worshiping idols did not matter to me, so they have made the *entire* land unacceptable to me by worshiping idols of wood and stone. ¹⁰ The people of Judah have pretended to return to me, but they have not really done that. *This is true because I, Yahweh, have said it.*"

¹¹ Then Yahweh said to me, "The people of Israel have turned away from me, but what the people of Judah have done is worse. ¹² So go and tell this to the people of Israel:

'Yahweh says this to you Israeli people who have turned away from him:

I am merciful.

I will not continue to be angry with you forever.

So return to me.

¹³ But you must admit/say that you are guilty, and that you have rebelled against me, Yahweh, your God,

that you have worshiped idols under big trees everywhere,

and you have not obeyed me.

You have turned away from me.

¹⁴ But you belong to me.

So I will take you, one from *each* city and two from *each* clan,

and bring you *back* to Jerusalem

from the countries to which you were exiled.

¹⁵ *If you do that,* I will appoint for you leaders with whom I am pleased,

leaders who will guide you *well* because they will know and understand *what pleases me*.

16 And when you become very numerous [DOU] in your land, you will not need to talk about the Sacred Chest that contained the Ten Commandments.

You will not think about it, and you will not want to make a new one.

17 At that time people will say, "Jerusalem is *the place where* Yahweh's throne is."

People from all nations will come there to worship me.

And they will no longer stubbornly do the evil things that they desire.

18 At that time you people [MTY] of Israel and the people of Judah will return from *being* ◀exiled/forced to live▶ in lands to the northeast.

You will return to the land that I gave to your ancestors to belong to them *forever*.

19 You people of Israel, I wanted to accept you to be my children.

I wanted to give you *this* delightful land.

It is a land more desirable/pleasant than the land of any other nation!

I wanted you to call me 'father',

and I wanted you to never turn away from me.

20 But you have abandoned me like wives who have abandoned their husbands.' "

That is what Yahweh said, and *I told it* to the people of Israel.

21 People will hear a noise on the barren hilltops.
It will be the noise made by people weeping
and pleading *for God to be merciful to them.*

They will be admitting/saying that they have
forgotten Yahweh their God,
and that they turned away from behaving as
God wanted them to.

22 Yahweh will say to them, “You Israeli people,
come back to me!
*If you do that, I will cause you to never turn
away from me again.”*

*The people will reply, “We are returning to you,
because you are Yahweh, our God.*

23 We did not get any help from *the idols that we
worshiped on the hilltops;*
we did not get any help from making all that
noise up there.

24 From the time when we were young, the
shameful *god Baal* has taken away *from
us* everything that our ancestors worked
hard to acquire.

He has taken away their flocks *of sheep*
and herds *of cattle*, their sons and their
daughters.

25 So, now we should lie down feeling very
ashamed [DOU],
because we and our ancestors have sinned
against Yahweh our God,
and we have never obeyed him.”

4

What Yahweh says about returning to him

¹ Yahweh says, “You Israeli *people*, come back to me!

If you get rid of those detestable idols
and do not turn away from me *again*,

² and if you declare, ‘Just as surely as Yahweh lives, what he says is true,’

and if you *start to* always say what is true
and act justly/fairly and righteously,

then the *people in the other nations of the world*
will request that I bless them *as I have*
blessed you,

and they will *all come and honor/praise me.*”

³ This is what Yahweh says to the people of Jerusalem and *the other cities in Judah*:

“Prepare yourselves to receive my messages

like farmers plow up hard ground in order
that they can plant seed in it.

Just as farmers do not *waste good seed* by sowing
seeds among thorny plants,

I do not want to waste my time telling you
messages that you are not ready to receive.

⁴ Purify your inner beings and your minds for me.

If you do not do that, my being angry with you [MTY]

because of *all* the sins that you have committed

will be like a fire that will be impossible to
extinguish.”

Disaster from the north

⁵ “Declare this [DOU] to *all the people* in Jerusalem and *the rest of* Judea; blow the trumpets everywhere in the land to *warn the people*.

Tell them that they should flee to the cities that have high walls around them.

⁶ Shout to the people of Jerusalem, ‘Run away *now!* Do not delay, because I am about to cause you to experience a terrible disaster [DOU] that will come from the north.

⁷ *An army* that has destroyed *many* nations will attack you *like* [MET] a lion that comes out of its den to *attack other animals*.

The soldiers of that army have taken down their tents and they are ready to march toward your land.

They will destroy your cities and leave them without any people still living in them.’

⁸ So, put on sackcloth/rough clothes and weep and beat your chests *to show that you are very sorry for what you have done,* because Yahweh is still very angry with us.

⁹ Yahweh said that at the time *he punishes you,* the King of Judah and *all his* officials will be very afraid.

The priests and the prophets will be terrified.

¹⁰ Then I replied, “Yahweh *my* God, you completely deceived the people by telling them that

there would be peace in Jerusalem, but now *our enemies* [PRS] are ready to slaughter us with their swords!"

11 When that happens, *Yahweh* will say to the people of Jerusalem,

"A huge army will come to attack you.

They will not be like a gentle breeze that separates wheat from chaff.

They will be like a very hot wind that blows in from the desert [MET].

12 *They will be like* [MET] a strong blast that I will send.

Now I am declaring that I will punish/destroy you."

13 *Our enemies* are about to rush down on us; their chariots are like [SIM] whirlwinds.

Their horses are faster than eagles.

It will be terrible for us!

14 *You people of Jerusalem* [APO], purify your hearts/inner beings,

in order that *Yahweh* will rescue you.

How long will you continue to think about *doing* evil things?

15 From Dan *city in the far north* to the hills of Ephraim *a few miles/kilometers north of Jerusalem* messengers are proclaiming that disasters are coming.

16 Tell this to the *people in other nations*

but also announce it in Jerusalem:

Yahweh says, "An army is coming to Jerusalem from far away;

they will shout *a battle-cry* against the cities in Judah.

17 They will set up tents around Jerusalem like people set up temporary shelters [SIM] around a field *at harvest time*.

That will happen because the people of Judah have rebelled against me.

18 You will be punished very severely; it will *be as though a sword* has stabbed your inner beings.

But you are causing those things to happen to you because of the evil things that you have done.”

19 I am extremely anguished/sad; the pain in my inner being is very severe. My heart beats wildly.

But I cannot remain silent because I have heard *our enemies* blowing their trumpets to announce that the battle *against Judah will start immediately*.

20 Disasters will occur one after another until the whole land is ruined. Suddenly *all* our tents will be destroyed; *even* the curtains *inside the tents* will be ripped apart.

21 How long will this battle continue? How long will I continue to see the enemy battle flags and hear the sound of their trumpets being blown?

22 *Yahweh says, "My people are very foolish!
They do not have a relationship with me.
They are like [MET] stupid children
who do not understand anything.
They very cleverly do what is wrong,
but they do not know how to do what is
good."*

Jeremiah's vision of the coming disaster

23 *God gave me a vision in which I saw
that the earth was barren and without form.
I looked at the sky,
and there was no light there.*

24 *I looked at the mountains and hills,
and they shook and moved from side to side.*

25 *I looked and saw that there were no more
people,
and all the birds had flown away.*

26 *I looked and saw that the fields that previously
were fertile had become a desert.
The cities were all ruined;
they had all been destroyed by Yahweh
because he was extremely angry.*

The coming destruction of Jerusalem/Judah

27 *This is what Yahweh is saying:
"The entire land of Judah will be ruined,
but I will not destroy it completely.*

28 *I will do to my people what I said that I would
do,
and I will not change my mind.
So when that happens, it will be as though the
earth will mourn*

and the sky will become very dark.”

²⁹ *When the people hear the sound of the enemy army marching, they will be terrified as they flee from their cities.*

Some of them will find places to hide in the bushes,
and others will run toward the mountains/
hills *to escape being killed by their enemies.*

All the cities *in Judah* will be abandoned;
not one person will remain in them.

³⁰ So you who will surely be destroyed,
why are you doing the things that you are doing now?

Why are you wearing beautiful clothes and jewelry?

Why are you putting paint around your eyes?

Doing those things will not help you,
because the people *in other countries that you think love you actually despise you,*
and they will try to kill you.

³¹ *It is as though I already hear the people in Jerusalem crying very loudly, like [SIM] a woman cries when she is giving birth to her first child;*

she gasps for breath and pleads for someone to help her.

It is as though Jerusalem is crying, "Something terrible is happening to me! They are about to murder me!"

5

No one in Judah is honest

¹ *Yahweh said to the people of Jerusalem, "Go up and down every street.*

Search in the marketplaces to find people who do what is fair/right, who try to be faithful to me.

If you find even one person like that,

I will forgive the people of Jerusalem and not destroy their city.

² *But when people there say, 'I solemnly declare that as surely as Yahweh lives, I will do what he says,' they are lying."*

³ *Yahweh, you are certainly [RHQ] searching for people who tell the truth.*

You struck/punished your people, but they did not pay any attention.

You crushed them, but they ignored what you were telling them to do.

They were extremely stubborn [IDM] and refused to return to you.

⁴ *I thought, "We cannot expect these people to act righteously, because they are poor; they do not have any sense.*

They do not know the way Yahweh wants them to conduct their lives;

they do not know what God requires them to do.

⁵ So, I will go and talk to their leaders,
because they *surely* know how God wants
them to conduct their lives.”

But they also have stopped obeying Yahweh
[MET],
and they will not allow him to lead them.

⁶ Because of that, lions will come out of the
forests and kill them;
wolves from the desert will attack them;
leopards that lurk/wait outside their cities
will maul anyone who walks outside the
cities.

Those things will happen because the people have
sinned very much against God
and have turned away from him very fre-
quently.

⁷ Yahweh says, “I cannot [RHQ] forgive these
people;
even their children have abandoned me.

When they solemnly declare something, they ask
their gods *to show that what they say is
true.*

I gave my people everything that they needed,
but they often went to *the shrines of their
idols* and committed adultery there.

⁸ *Just like* [MET] well-fed male horses neigh,
wanting sex with female horses,
each of the men desires to have sex with his
neighbor’s wife.

9 ◀Should I not punish them for this [RHQ]?/I will certainly get revenge on this nation for this!▶
 I will certainly get revenge [RHQ] on this nation whose people behave like that!

10 *I will say to your enemies, 'The people of Judah and Israel are like a vineyard.*

Go along the rows in their vineyards
 and get rid of *most of* the people,
 but do not kill all of them.

These people do not belong to me,
so get rid of them,

like a gardener [MET] lops/cuts off branches
 from a vine.

11 The people of Israel and Judah have turned
 away from me completely.'

12 They have lied about me and said,
 'He will not punish us!

He will not cause us to experience disasters!
 We will not experience wars or famines!

13 What *God's* prophets say is nothing but hot air!
 They do not have messages *from God!*

We would like *the disasters that they predict*
 to happen to them!' "

14 So, this is what Yahweh, the Commander of
 the armies of angels in heaven, has said to me:

"Because my people are saying those things,
 I will give you a message to tell them [MTY]
 that will be *like* [MET] a fire,
 and *these people will be like* [MET] wood that
 the fire will burn up.

15 Listen to this, you people of Israel:
I will bring *the army of* a distant nation to attack you.

It is a very powerful nation that has existed for a long time.

They speak a language that you do not know and which you will not be able to understand.

16 Their soldiers are all very strong,
and the arrows from their quivers [MET] will
◀send many Israeli men to their graves/
cause many Israeli people to die▶.

17 They will eat the food that you have harvested from your fields,
and eat your bread.

They will kill your sons and daughters,
and they will kill your flocks *of sheep* and herds *of cattle*.

They will eat your grapes and your figs.

They will *also* destroy your cities that have high walls around them
and kill the people with their swords.

18 But even when those things happen, I will not get rid of all of you.

19 And when the survivors ask, 'Why is Yahweh our God doing this to us?'
you will tell them, 'You rejected him and worshiped foreign gods in your *own* land,
so *now* you will become slaves of foreigners in a land that is not your land.' "

20 *Yahweh said to me*, "Proclaim this to the people of Israel and Judah:

- 21 Listen to this, you people who are foolish and who do not have any sense:
You have eyes, but *it is as though* you cannot see;
you have ears, but *it is as though* you cannot hear.
- 22 Why do you not revere me [RHQ]?
You should [RHQ] tremble when you are in my presence!
- I, Yahweh, am the one who put a barrier along the shores
so that the waters of the ocean cannot cross it *and flood the land*.
The waves roll and roar, but they cannot go past that barrier.
- 23 But you people *are not like the waves that obey me*.
You people are very stubborn and rebellious.
You have constantly turned away from me.
- 24 You do not say to yourselves,
'We should revere Yahweh our God,
the one who sends us rain at the times when we need it,
the one who causes the grain to become ripe at the harvest season.'
- 25 It is because of the wrong things that you have done, that those good things have not happened;
it is because of the sins that you have committed that you have been prevented from receiving those blessings.
- 26 Among my people are wicked people who hide along the roads to ambush/attack people

like [SIM] men who hunt birds ◀put out nets/
set traps▶ to catch them.

27 Like *a hunter has a cage full of birds that he
has captured,*

their homes are full of things that they have
gotten by deceiving others.

So now they are *very* rich and powerful.

28 They are big and fat,

and there is no limit to the evil things that
they have done.

They do not try to defend orphans in the
courtrooms,

and they do not help poor people to get what
they have a right to receive.

29 So I will certainly [RHQ] punish them for doing
those things.

I will certainly [RHQ] ◀get revenge on their
nation/do to their nation what they de-
serve▶.

30 Very appalling/horrible and terrible [DOU]
things are happening in this country:

31 Prophets speak *only* lies

and priests rule by their own authority,

and you people like that!

But when you *start to* experience disasters,
what will you do [RHQ]?"

6

Jeremiah warned the people of Jerusalem

1 "You people in Jerusalem who are from *the tribe
of Benjamin,*
flee from this city!

Blow the trumpets in Tekoa *city south of Jerusalem!*

Send up a *smoke* signal in Beth-Haccherem town *to warn the people of the coming danger!*

A powerful army will come from the north,
and they will cause great destruction.

² Jerusalem is *like* a beautiful pasture *full of sheep,*

but it will soon be destroyed.

³ *Enemy kings, not shepherds* [MET], will come *with their armies* and set up their tents around the city,

and each *king will choose a part of the city for his soldiers to destroy like* [MET] *shepherds divide their pastures for their flocks of sheep.*

⁴ *The kings will tell their troops,*

“Get ready for the battle.

We should attack them before noontime.

But *if we arrive there late in the afternoon*
when the shadows are becoming long,

⁵ *we will attack them at night*
and tear down their fortresses.”

Yahweh predicts what will happen to Jerusalem

⁶ Yahweh, the Commander of the armies of angels in heaven, says this:

“I will command those soldiers to cut down the trees outside Jerusalem

and to build dirt ramps up to the top of the city walls

in order that they can enter the city.

This city must be punished
because everyone there continually op-
presses others.

⁷ *It is as though* the wicked things that the people
do
pour out of the city like [SIM] water flows
out of a spring.

*The noise from people doing violent and destruc-
tive actions is heard everywhere.*

I continually see *people who are suffering
and wounded.*

⁸ Listen to what I am warning you, *you people of
[APO] Jerusalem,*
because if you do not listen, I will reject you
and cause your land to become desolate,
a land where no one lives.”

⁹ Yahweh, the Commander of the armies of
angels in heaven, also says this:

“I will tell your enemies to cause your
country to become as desolate [SIM] as a
vineyard from which all the grapes have
been completely stripped from the vines.

*Their soldiers will seize the possessions of those
who remain in Israel after the others have
been exiled*

like [SIM] farmers go to the vines again
to pick any grapes *that were ◀left/not
picked▶.*”

¹⁰ *Then I said, “If I speak to the Israeli people to
warn them,*

◀who will listen to me?/No one will listen to me.▶ [RHQ]

It is as though their ears are closed,
and as a result they cannot hear *what I say*.

They scorn Yahweh's messages;
 they do not want to listen to them at all.

11 So *now* I am extremely angry, like Yahweh is angry,
 and I cannot restrain it any longer."

So Yahweh said *to me*,

"Tell everyone that you are very angry with them.

Tell the children in the streets and the young men who gather together.

Tell the men and their wives;
 tell the very old people [DOU], also.

12 *Tell the men that* I will give their houses to *their enemies*,

and I will give their property/fields and their wives to them, also,

when I punish [IDM] the people who live in this land.

13 Everyone is trying to get money by tricking others,

from the most *important people* to the least *important people*;

even the prophets and the priests are trying to deceive *people to get money*.

14 *They act as though the sins of my people are like* [MET] small wounds that they do not need to put bandages on.

They continually *greet people* by saying 'I hope things are going well with you,'

when things are not going well.

- 15 They should be [RHQ] ashamed about the disgusting things that they do, but they are not ashamed at all.

They do not *even* know how to ◀blush/show on their faces that they are ashamed▶.

So, they also will be among those who will be killed.

They will be destroyed when I punish them.”

- 16 This is *also* what Yahweh said *to the Israeli people*:

“Stand at the crossroads and look *at the people who pass by*.

Ask them what was the good behavior *that their ancestors had* long ago.

And when they tell you, behave that way.

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

But you replied, ‘We do not want to do that!’

- 17 I sent *my prophets who were like* [MET] watchmen.

They said, ‘Listen carefully when we blow the trumpets *to warn you that your enemies are approaching*,’

but you said, ‘*No*, we do not want to listen.’

- 18 Therefore, you people in the other nations, listen to this:

Pay attention to what is going to happen to the *Israeli people*.

- 19 Listen, all of you!

I am going to cause the *Israeli* people to experience disasters.

That is what will happen to them because they have refused to listen to what I told them.

They have refused to obey my laws.

²⁰ *You Israeli people*, when you burn frankincense that came from *far away in* Sheba, and *when you offer to me* sweet-smelling anointing oil that came from far away, I will not [RHQ] be pleased with your sacrifices.

I will not accept the sacrifices that are completely burned on the altar;
I am not pleased with *any of* your sacrifices.

²¹ Therefore, I will put obstacles on the roads on which my people will travel.

Men and their sons and people's neighbors and friends will stumble over those obstacles and fall down;
everyone will die."

²² Yahweh *also* says this:

"You will see a *huge* army marching *towards* you from the north.

An army of a great nation very far away is preparing *to attack* you.

²³ They have bows *and arrows* and spears; they are *very* cruel, and do not act mercifully *to anyone*.

As they ride along on their horses,
the horses' feet sound like the roaring of the ocean *waves*;
they are riding in battle formation
to attack you people of Jerusalem."

- 24 *The people of Jerusalem say,*
“We have heard reports about the enemy;
so we are very frightened, with the result
that we feel weak.
We are very afraid, and worried,
like [SIM] women who are about to give birth
to babies.
- 25 *So one person says to another,*
‘Do not go out into the fields! Do not go on
the roads,
because the enemy *soldiers* have swords *and they
are everywhere;*
they are coming from all directions, and we
are extremely afraid.’ ”
- 26 *So I say,* “My dear people, put on ◀sackcloth/
rough clothes▶ and sit in ashes *to show
that you are sorry for your sins.*
Mourn and cry very much,
like [SIM] *a woman would cry* if her only son
had died,
because your enemies are very near,
and they are going to destroy *everything.*”
- 27 *Then Yahweh said to me,*
“Jeremiah, I have caused you to become *like*
[MET] someone who heats metal very hot
to completely burn the impurities.
You will examine my people’s behavior.
- 28 You will find out that they are very stubborn
rebels,
they are always slandering others.
Their inner beings are as hard as bronze or iron;
they all *continually* deceive others.

²⁹ *A metalworker causes the bellows to blow very hard to make the fire very hot to completely burn up the impurities [MET].*

*But just as a fire does not cause all the waste material to run off,
it is impossible to separate the righteous people from the wicked people, and punish only the wicked people.*

³⁰ *I, Yahweh, have rejected them;
I say that they are like [MET] worthless silver."*

7

Jeremiah spoke at the temple

¹ Yahweh gave me another message. He said to me,

² "Go to the entrance of my temple, and give this message to the people:

You people of Judah who worship here, listen to this message from Yahweh!

³ The Commander of the armies of angels says to you,

'If you stop doing evil things and start doing what is right,

I will allow you to remain living in your land.'

⁴ *But some people are repeatedly saying to you,*

'The temple of Yahweh is here,

so we will be safe;

he will not allow us and the temple to be destroyed.'

But do not pay attention to what they say, because they are deceiving you.

- ⁵ *I will act mercifully to you only if you change your behavior and stop doing evil things, and if you start to act fairly/justly toward others,*
- ⁶ *and if you stop oppressing foreigners who live in your country, and orphans and widows, and if you stop murdering people, and if you stop worshiping ◀foreign gods/idols▶. However, if you continue to do those things, you will be destroyed.*
- ⁷ *If you do what I have told you, I will allow you to stay in this land that I promised to your ancestors that it would belong to them and their descendants forever.*
- ⁸ *People are repeatedly telling you, 'The temple is here, so we are safe', and you are trusting/believing that what they are saying is true, but it is a lie. Those people are deceiving you, and what they say is worthless.*
- ⁹ *You think that [RHQ] you can steal things, murder people, commit adultery, tell lies in court, and worship Baal and all those other gods that you did not know about previously,*
- ¹⁰ *and then come here and stand in front of this temple, which is my temple, and say 'Nothing bad will happen to us!', while you continue to do all those abominable things.*

11 Do you realize that you are causing this temple, which is my temple, to become like [MET] a den where bandits hide [RHQ]?
Do you not know that I see *all the evil things that you people do there*?

12 *Long ago* I put my Sacred Tent at Shiloh city, to be a place where people would worship me [MTY].
Think about how I *destroyed it* because my people, the Israeli people, did *many* wicked things there.

13 And while you were continually doing those wicked things,
I told you about it many times, but you refused to listen.

I called out to you,
but you refused to answer *me*.

14 Therefore, just like I destroyed Shiloh, I will *now* destroy this temple that was built for people to worship me [MTY],
this temple that you trust in,
that is in this place that I gave to you and your ancestors.

15 And I will expel you from this land and send you *to other countries* far away from me, just like I did to your relatives, the people of Israel."

The warning from Yahweh

16 *Yahweh said to me*, "Jeremiah, do not pray for these people *any longer*.
Do not cry for them or plead for *me to help* them,

because I will not pay any attention to you.

17 Do you see *the wicked things* that they are doing in the streets of Jerusalem and in the *other* towns in Judah?

18 The children gather firewood and their fathers use it to make fires *on the altars to burn sacrifices*.

The women knead/make dough to make cakes to offer to *their goddess Astarte who is called the Queen of Heaven*.

And *on their altars* they pour out offerings of wine to *their other idols*.

All of those things cause me to become extremely angry!

19 But I am not [RHQ] the one whom they are hurting;
they are really [RHQ] hurting themselves *by doing these things for which they should be very ashamed!*"

20 So Yahweh the Lord says this:

"Because I am extremely angry with *what happens at this place*,
I will punish these people severely [MTY];
my being very angry will be *like* [MET] a fire that will not be extinguished,
and I will destroy the people, *their animals, their fruit trees, and their crops.*"

21 Therefore, this is what the Commander of the armies of angels says:

“Take away [IRO] your offerings that you bring to burn completely on your altars and your *other* sacrifices;
don't give them to me; eat them yourselves!

22 When I led your ancestors out of Egypt, it was not offerings to be completely burned on the altar or *other* sacrifices that I wanted from them.

23 What I told them was, ‘Obey me; *if you do that*, I will be your God and you will be my people.

If you do the things that I want you to do, everything will go well for you.’

24 But your ancestors would not pay any attention [DOU] to me. They continued to do *the evil things* that they wanted to do, everything that in their stubborn inner beings they desired to do.

Instead of coming closer to me, they went further away from me.

25 From the day that your ancestors left Egypt until now, I have continued to send my prophets to you.

26 But you, *my people*, have not listened to me or paid attention to what I said; you have been stubborn, and you have done more sinful things than your ancestors did.”

27 *Then Yahweh said to me*, “When you tell all this to my people, they will not listen to you.

When you call to them,
they will not answer.

²⁸ Say to them, 'You people *of Judah* have not obeyed Yahweh, your God;
you have not accepted it when he tried to correct you.

No one among you is truthful;
you do not say anything that is true; *you speak only lies.*'

²⁹ So, *tell them to cut off their hair to show that they are mourning;*
tell them to go up into the hills and sing a sad funeral song,
because I have completely rejected [DOU] this generation *of people* who have made me angry."

The Valley of Slaughter

³⁰ Yahweh says this: "The people of Judah have done many things that I say are evil.

They have set up their disgusting idols in my temple,
causing it to become an unacceptable *place to worship me.*

³¹ They have built altars at Topheth in Ben-Hinnom Valley *outside Jerusalem,*
and they sacrifice their sons and daughters on those altars.

I never commanded them to do that;
I never even thought that anyone would do that.

³² So they should beware!

- There will be a time when that place will no longer be called Topheth or the Hinnom Valley;
instead, it will be called the Valley of Slaughter.
- There will be a huge number of people who will be buried there,
with the result that there will be no space to bury more bodies.
- ³³ The corpses of my people that are *not buried and are* left on the ground will be eaten by vultures and wild animals,
and there will be no one to shoo/chase them away.
- ³⁴ There will be no one singing and laughing any more in the streets of Jerusalem;
there will be no more joyful voices of bridegrooms and brides in Judah,
because the land will be completely destroyed.”

8

- ¹ Yahweh says, “At the time *that your corpses are scattered on the ground,*
your enemies will break open the graves of your kings and *other* officials who lived in Judah,
and the graves of your priests and prophets and other people who lived there.
- ² They will take out their bones *from their graves* and *dishonor them by* scattering them on the ground under the sun and the moon and the stars—

those are the gods which my people loved
and served and worshiped.

No one will gather up their bones and bury them
again;

they will remain scattered on the ground like
dung.

³ And all the people of this wicked nation *who are
still alive and* whom I have exiled to other
countries will say,

‘We would prefer to die than to continue to
stay alive *here in these countries.*’

*That will be true because I, Yahweh, have said
it.*”

The people will not admit their sins

⁴ *Yahweh said to me, “Jeremiah, tell the people
that this is what I, Yahweh, am saying to them:*

*‘When people fall down, they get up again, do
they not [RHQ]?’*

*When people are going along a road and find
out that they are walking on the wrong
road, they go back and find the correct
road, do they not [RHQ]?’*

⁵ *Yes, they do, so why do these people of Judah
continue trusting in those idols that have
deceived them?*

*They continue turning away from me,
even though I have warned them.*

⁶ *I have listened carefully [DOU] to what they say,
but they do not say what they should say.*

Not one of them is sorry for having sinned.

*No one says, “I have done [RHQ] wicked
things.”*

They are sinning and doing what they want to

as fast as [SIM] a horse that is running into a battle.

- ⁷ All the birds *that fly south for the ◀winter/cold season▶* know the time that they need to fly south,
and they all return at the right time the following year.

But my people *are not like those birds!*

They do not know what I, Yahweh, require them to do.

- ⁸ Your men who teach you *the laws that Moses wrote* have been saying false things *about those laws.*

So, why [RHQ] do they *continue* saying, “We are *very wise because* we have the laws of Yahweh”?

- ⁹ Those teachers, who think that [IRO] they are wise, will be ashamed/disgraced and dismayed when they are taken *to other countries by their enemies*

because they sinned by rejecting what I told them.

Truly, they were not [RHQ] very wise to do that!

- ¹⁰ So, I will give their wives to other men;

I will give their fields to *the enemy soldiers* who conquer them.

All the people, including those who are important and those who are not important, deceive *others* in order to obtain their possessions.

Even *my* prophets and my priests do that.

- ¹¹ *They act as though the sins of my people* are not serious,

like [MET] wounds that do not need to be cleaned and bandaged.

They tell the people that everything will go well with them,

but that is not true; things will not go well with them.

¹² They should be [RHQ] ashamed when they do disgusting things [RHQ],

but they do not even know how to show on their faces that they are ashamed *about their sins*.

So, *they will be killed, and* their corpses *also* will lie among the corpses of others who have been slaughtered *by their enemies*.

They will be killed when I punish them.

¹³ I will *allow their enemies to* take away the figs and grapes that the people would have harvested from their fields.

Their fruit trees will all wither.

They will not receive *all* the blessings that I prepared for them.

This will certainly happen because I, Yahweh, have said it. ’ ”

¹⁴ *Then the people will say, “◀Why should we wait here in these small towns?/We should not wait here in these small towns.▶* [RHQ]!

We should go to the cities that have high walls around them,

but even if we do that we will be killed there, because Yahweh our God has decided that we must be destroyed;

it is as though [MET] he has given us a cup of
poison to drink,
because we sinned against him.

15 We hoped/desired that things would go well
for us,
but things have not gone well.

We hoped that bad things would not happen to
us any more,
but only things that terrify us *are happening
to us.*

16 People *far north in Israel* in the city of Dan can
already hear the snorting of the horses of
their enemies *who are preparing to attack
us.*

It is as though the entire land of Judah is
shaking as their army approaches;
they are coming to destroy our land and
everything in it, the people and the cities.”

17 *Yahweh says,* “I will send *those enemy soldiers
to Judah,*
and they will be like [MET] poisonous snakes
among you.

No one will be able to stop them from attacking
you [MET];
they will attack you like snakes do, *and kill
you.”*

Jeremiah mourned for the people

18 I grieve very much *for the people of Judah,* and
my grieving does not end.

I am very sad [IDM].

19 Throughout our land, the people ask,

“Has Yahweh abandoned Jerusalem?

Is *he*, our city’s king, no longer there?”

Yahweh replies, “Why do the people cause me to become very angry by *worshipping* idols and foreign gods?” [RHQ]

²⁰ *The people say*, “The harvest season is finished, the ◀summer/hot season▶ has ended, and we hoped that we would receive blessings from *Yahweh*, but he has not rescued us *from our enemies*.”

²¹ I cry because my people have been crushed. I mourn, and I am completely dismayed.

²² *I ask*, “Surely there is [RHQ] medicinal balm in the Gilead *region*! Surely there are [RHQ] doctors there!” But my people have been badly wounded *in their spirits*, and nothing can heal them.

9

¹ I wish that my head was *like* [MET] a spring of water, and that my eyes were *like* a fountain of tears.

Then I would cry night and day for all of my people who have been killed *by our enemies*.

² I wish that I could leave my people and forget them, and go and live in a shack/shelter in the desert,

because they have not remained faithful [MET]
to Yahweh;
they are a mob of people who deceive others.

Yahweh replied to Jeremiah

³ *Yahweh replied to me,*

“They use their tongues *to tell* [MET] lies
like people shoot *arrows* with bows.
It is because they tell lies that they have become
more powerful in this land,
and they do not know me.

⁴ Do not trust your neighbors and *even* your
brothers!

They all are as deceitful *as Jacob was*.

They slander *each other* and tell lies *about each
other*.

⁵ They deceive their friends
and never tell the truth.

They lie continually and, because of that, they
have become skilled liars;
they do one oppressive thing after another,
and are unable to stop doing it.

⁶ They habitually lie and deceive *each other*,
and no one will admit/say that I am God.

⁷ Therefore *I*, the Commander of the armies of
angels, say this:

Listen carefully to what I say: I will *cause my
people to experience great afflictions,*
like a metalworker puts metal in a hot fire
[MET] to completely burn out the impure
bits.

Because of all *the evil things* that my people have done,
there is absolutely nothing else [RHQ] that I can do.

⁸ What they say [MTY] *injures people like* [MET] poisoned arrows do.

They say to their neighbors, 'I hope things will go well for you,'
while they are planning to kill them.

⁹ Should I not punish them for doing that [RHQ]?
Yes, I should certainly ◀get revenge on/give what they deserve to▶ *the people of a nation that does things like that!*"

¹⁰ So, I will weep and wail for *the people who live in the mountains and in the* ◀pastures/ places where the livestock eat the grass▶, because those areas will be desolate, and no one will live there.

There will be no cattle there to call to each other, and all the birds and wild animals will have fled *to other places*.

¹¹ *Yahweh also says*, "I will cause Jerusalem to become a heap of ruins,
and *only* jackals/wolves will live there.

I will destroy the towns of Judah, with the result that they will be completely deserted;
no one will live there."

¹² *I said*, "Only people who are very wise [RHQ] can understand these things.

Only those who have been taught by Yahweh can [RHQ] explain these things to others.

The wise people are [RHQ] the only ones who can explain why the land will be completely ruined with the result that everyone [RHQ] will be afraid to travel through it.”

¹³ Yahweh replied, “*These things will happen* because my people have rejected my laws which I gave to them;

they have not obeyed me or my instructions.

¹⁴ Instead, they have stubbornly done the things that they wanted to do.

They have worshiped the idols that represent the god Baal,

which is what their ancestors did.

¹⁵ So now listen to what *I*, the Commander of the armies of angels, the God of the Israelis, say:

What I will do will be like [MET] giving these people bitter things to eat and poison to drink:

¹⁶ I will scatter them to many nations which neither they nor their ancestors have known *anything about*;

I will *enable their enemies* to strike them with swords

until I have destroyed them.”

¹⁷ This is also what the Commander of the armies of angels says:

“*Think about what is happening*,

then summon those women who mourn *when someone has died*.

¹⁸ Tell them to come quickly and start to wail,

with the result that tears will stream down
from your(pl) eyes.

19 Listen to *the people of* Jerusalem crying/
lamenting, saying,

‘We have been ruined/destroyed!

We have experienced a terrible disaster!

Now we are very ashamed,

because our houses have been destroyed by
our enemies, and we *are being forced to*
leave our land.’ ”

20 You women, listen to what Yahweh says [MTY].
Pay attention to his words [DOU].

Teach your daughters to wail.

Teach each other how to sing funeral songs,

21 because people will be dying [PRS] in your
houses and in palaces.

There will be no more children playing in
the streets,

there will be no more young men *gathering* in
the city squares/marketplaces.

22 There will be corpses scattered across the
fields like dung;

their dead bodies will lie there like [SIM] grain
that has been cut by reapers/farmers,
and there will be no one *still alive* to bury
them.

23 Yahweh says this:

“Wise men should not boast about their being
wise,
strong men should not boast about their
being strong;

and rich people should not boast about their being rich.

24 Instead, those who want to boast should boast about their knowing me and about understanding that I am Yahweh, that I am kind and just and righteous, that I faithfully love *people*, and that I am delighted with *people who act* that way.

25-26 There will be a time when I will punish all those people of Egypt and of the Moab people-group and of the Edom *people-group* and of the Ammon *people-group*, all those people who live close to desert areas (OR, who cut their hair short to *please their gods*) far from Judah, all those people who have *changed their bodies* by circumcising them [MET] but who have not *changed* their inner beings. I will punish the people of Judah also, because they have not changed their inner beings, *either.*"

10

Worthless idols

1 You people of Israel, listen to what Yahweh says:

2 "Do not act like the people of *other* nations act, and do not be terrified by strange/unusual things that you see in the sky, even though they cause the *people of other* nations to be terrified.

- ³ The customs of the people *of other nations* are worthless.
For example, they cut down a tree in the forest.
 Then a *skilled worker/craftsman cuts a section of it and* uses his chisel to carve an idol from that section.
- ⁴ *Then* people decorate the idol with silver and gold.
Then they fasten it securely with nails in order that it will not topple/fall over.
- ⁵ *Then* the idol *stands there* like [SIM] a scarecrow in a field of cucumbers/melons!
 It cannot speak,
 and people must carry it,
 because it cannot walk.
 Do not be afraid of idols,
 because they cannot harm *anyone*,
 and they cannot do *anything* good to help *anyone*."

Hymn of praise to Yahweh

- ⁶ Yahweh, there is no one like you.
 You [MTY] are great, and you are very powerful.
- ⁷ You are the king of all the nations!
 Everyone should [RHQ] revere you,
 because that is what you deserve.
 Among all the wise people on the earth
 and in all the kingdoms where they live,
 ◀there is no one like you./who can compare with you?▶
- ⁸ Those people who *think that they are* very wise [IRO] are stupid and foolish [DOU].

The idols that they worship are only made
of wood!
Those idols certainly cannot teach them
anything.

9 People hammer into thin sheets silver from
Tarshish and gold from Uphaz,
and then they give those sheets of silver and
gold to skilled workers/craftsmen to cover
the idols.

Then they put on those idols expensive purple
robes
that are made by skilled workers.

10 But Yahweh is the *only* true God;
he is the all-powerful God,
the king *who rules* forever.

When he is angry, *all* the earth shakes/quakes;
and *the people of* the nations cannot endure
what he does when he is angry *with them*.

11 *You Israeli people*, tell this to those people:
“Those idols did not make the sky and the earth,
and they will disappear from the earth.”

12 But *Yahweh* made the earth by his power;
he established it *firmly* by his wisdom
and stretched out the sky by his understand-
ing.

13 When he speaks *loudly*, there is thunder in the
sky;
he causes clouds to form over every part of
the earth.

He sends lightning with the rain
and releases the winds from his storehouses.

- 14 People are senseless and know very little
[HYP];
those who make idols are always disappointed
because their idols do nothing for them.
The images/statues that they make are not real
gods;
they are lifeless.
- 15 Idols are worthless; they deserve to be
ridiculed;
there will be a time when they *all* will be
destroyed.
- 16 But the God whom we Israelis worship is not
like those idols;
he is the one who created everything *that
exists*;
we, the tribe/people of Israel, belong to him;
he is the Commander of the armies of angels.

The coming destruction

- 17 *Yahweh says this to the people of Jerusalem:*
“The army of your enemies surrounds your city,
so gather up your possessions *and prepare to
leave the city.*”
- 18 I will soon throw you out of this land
and cause you to experience great troubles,
with the result that you will have severe pain
(OR, none of you will be left here).”
- 19 *The people replied, “It is as though we have
been badly wounded,
and we are very grieved;
It is as though we have a very serious illness,
and we must endure the pain.*

- 20 *It is as though* our great tent is destroyed;
the ropes *that held it up* have been cut;
our children have gone away from us and will
not return;
there are no people left to rebuild our great
tent.
- 21 Our leaders [MET] no longer have any sense;
they no longer ask Yahweh to ◀guide them/
tell them what to do▶,
so they will no longer prosper,
and all those over whom they rule [MET] will
be scattered.
- 22 Listen! *Our enemies' armies* in the north are
making a very big noise/commotion
as they march toward us.
The towns in Judah will be destroyed,
and they will become a place where jackals/
wolves live."

Jeremiah's prayer

- 23 Yahweh, I know that no person controls what
will happen to him;
no one is able to direct the events that he
will experience.
- 24 So correct/discipline us, but do it gently.
Do not correct/punish us when you are
angry,
because we would die if you did that.
- 25 Punish [MTY] *all* the nations whose people do
not acknowledge/say that you are God;
punish all the nations whose people do not
worship you,
because they are completely destroying [DOU] *us*
people of Israel

and they are causing our land to soon be only a desert.

11

The people of Judah did not keep the agreement with Yahweh

¹ This is *another* message that Yahweh told me: ² “Listen to the agreement that I made with *the ancestors of* the people of Jerusalem and *the other cities in* Judah. Then remind them of *that agreement*. ³ Then tell them that *I, Yahweh, the God whom the Israeli people worship*, said that I will curse everyone who does not obey what was written in that agreement that I made with them.

⁴ It is the same agreement that I made with their ancestors when I brought them out of Egypt. *What happened to them in Egypt was terrible; it was as though they were* living in a hot furnace [MET]. When I brought them out of Egypt, I told them to obey me, and to do everything that I had commanded them to do. *I also told them* that if they obeyed me, they would be my people and I would be their God. ⁵ *Now tell these people that if they obey me*, I will do what I promised to do for their ancestors. I will enable them to continue living in this very fertile [IDM] land in which they now live.”

I replied, “Yahweh, I hope that what you said will happen.”

⁶ Then Yahweh said to me, “Go into the streets of Jerusalem and to the *other cities in* Judah. Proclaim my message to the people. Tell them to listen to the agreement *that I made with their*

ancestors, and to obey it. ⁷ When I brought their ancestors out of Egypt, I solemnly pleaded with them many times to obey me, and I am still pleading with them now. ⁸ But they did not obey me or *even* pay any attention to me. Everyone continued to be stubborn and to do the evil things that they wanted to do. I commanded them to do what was written in the agreement, but they refused. So I punished them in all the ways that I promised that I would.”

⁹ Then Yahweh said to me, “The people of Jerusalem and *the other cities in Judah* are rebelling against me. ¹⁰ Their ancestors refused to do what I told them to do, and *now* these people have returned to committing the sins that their ancestors committed. They are worshiping other gods. The people of Israel disobeyed the agreement that I made with their ancestors, and *now* the people of Judah have done the same thing. ¹¹ So now I, Yahweh, am warning them that I will cause them to experience disasters, and they will not escape them. And when they cry out for me *to help them*, I will not pay attention. ¹² When that happens, the people in Jerusalem and *other cities in Judah* will *offer sacrifices and* burn incense to their gods and ask for their help, but those gods will not be able to save them when those disasters come to them. ¹³ There are more gods in Judah than there are towns in Judah, and the people of Jerusalem have erected as many altars to burn incense *to those gods* as there are streets in Jerusalem.

¹⁴ Jeremiah, do not pray for these people, and

do not plead with me to rescue them. If you plead with me, I will not pay attention; and if they cry out to me for help when they are in distress, I will not listen to them.”

¹⁵ Then Yahweh said,

“The people *of Judah* whom I love certainly no longer have [RHQ] a right to come to my temple,

because they continually do many evil things.

They think that continually making sacrifices of meat to me certainly will [RHQ] protect them from disasters,

with the result that they will be able to rejoice.

¹⁶ I previously said that they were like an olive tree full of green leaves

with a lot of good olives on it,

but *now I will send their enemies to attack* them furiously;

it is as though I will break off their branches, and *their city* will be destroyed by fire.

¹⁷ *It is as though* the people of Judah and Israel were a beautiful olive tree that I, the Commander of the armies of angels, planted,

but *now*, by burning incense to *their god* Baal, they have caused me to become *very* angry.

So *now* I have decided to destroy them.”

Jeremiah's enemies planned to kill him

¹⁸ Yahweh revealed to me that *my enemies* were planning to kill me. ¹⁹ *Before he did that*, I was like a lamb that was being led away to

be slaughtered; I did not know what they were planning to do. I did not know that they were saying, "Let's get rid of this tree and its fruit," so *I did not know* that they intended to kill me, in order that no one would remember me [MTY].

²⁰ *Then I prayed*, "Commander of the armies of angels, you judge people justly/fairly, and you examine everything that we are thinking [DOU].

Allow me to watch you getting revenge on the people *who want to kill me*, because I trust that you will do for me what is right."

²¹ It was the men of *my own town*, Anathoth, who wanted to kill me, and they told me that they would kill me if I did not stop prophesying what Yahweh told me to say. ²² So the Commander of the armies of angels said *about them*, "I will punish them. Their young men will be killed in wars, and their children will die because they have no food. ²³ I have set a time when I will bring disasters to the people of Anathoth, and when that happens, none of them will remain alive."

12

Jeremiah complained to Yahweh

¹ Yahweh, whenever I tell you that I am unhappy *about what is happening to me*, you *always* act justly/fairly. So now allow me to ask about one more thing *that I do not understand*:

Why are wicked people *often* very prosperous?

Why do things go very well for dishonest/wicked people?

² You allow them to prosper
like [MET] trees that grow tall and bear *a lot of* fruit.

They *always* say [MTY] good things about you,
but their hearts are *really* far from you.

³ But Yahweh, as for me, you know what is in my
inner being.

You see what I *do* and you are able to know
what I am thinking.

So drag away those *wicked* people,
like *people drag away* sheep that they are
going to butcher.

Set them aside like sheep that are about to be
slaughtered!

⁴ This land is [RHQ] becoming very dry and even
the grass is withering.

The wild animals and the birds have *all* died
because the people are *very* wicked.

All that has happened because the people have
said,

“Yahweh does not know what we are doing
(OR, what will happen to us)!”

Yahweh replied to Jeremiah

⁵ *Then to show me that I needed to be prepared
to endure even greater difficulties, Yahweh said to
me,*

*“It is as though you have become exhausted from
racing against men;*

- so how will you be able to race against horses?
If you *stumble and* fall when you are running on open/bare/smooth ground,
what will happen to you when you are running through the thornbushes near the Jordan River?
- 6 *Already* your brothers and *other members of* your own family oppose you.
They ◀plot against/plan to do evil things to▶ you and they say bad things about you.
So even if they say nice things about you, do not trust them!
- 7 I have abandoned my *Israeli* people,
the people whom I chose to belong to me.
I have allowed their enemies to conquer the Israeli people, whom I love.
- 8 My people have become to me like [SIM] a lion in the forest.
It is as though they roar at me like a lion,
so now I hate them.
- 9 My chosen people have [RHQ] become like speckled hawks
that are surrounded by vultures *waiting to eat their flesh after they are dead.*
- Tell all the wild animals to come
and eat *the flesh of their corpses.*
- 10 Many rulers *from other countries have come with their armies and* devastated/destroyed my people
whom I care for like a farmer takes care of his vineyard.

They have caused my beautiful land to become
a barren desert where no one lives.

11 They have caused it to become completely
empty;

it is as though I hear the land crying sadly/
mournfully.

The whole land is desolate,
and no one ◀worries about/pays any atten-
tion to▶ it.

12 The soldiers *of our enemies* have marched
across all the barren hilltops.

But *I, Yahweh*, am using those armies [MTY]
to punish your land from one end to the
other,

and no one will escape.

13 *It is as though* my people planted wheat,
but now they are harvesting thorns.

They have become very tired *because of much
hard work*,

but they have gained nothing *from all that
work*.

They will be very disappointed because their
harvests *will be very small*,

and that will happen because *I, Yahweh*, am
extremely angry *with them*.”

14 This is *also* what Yahweh said to me: “*I will
punish* the evil nearby nations that have been
trying to take away the land that I gave to my
Israeli people, and I will force them to leave
their own land. But I will throw the people of
Judah out of their land, also. 15 But later I will
act mercifully toward those nations again, and I
will bring them back to their own lands again.

Each *clan* will come back to its own land. ¹⁶ And if the people of the other nations whose armies have invaded Israel learn the religious customs of my people, and if they learn that I am listening when they solemnly promise that they will do something good, like they taught my people to believe that their god Baal was listening when they made solemn promises, I will cause them to become prosperous, and they also will be my people. ¹⁷ But I will expel any nation whose people refuse to obey me, and I will destroy that nation and its people. *That will surely happen because I, Yahweh, have said it.*"

13

Jeremiah's linen waistcloth

¹ One day Yahweh said to me, "Go and buy a linen waistcloth. Put it on, but do not wash it."

² So I bought a very nice waistcloth, which is what Yahweh told me to do, and I put it on.

³ Then later Yahweh gave me another message.

⁴ He said, "Go to the small Perath Stream near Jerusalem and hide your waistcloth in a crevice/hole in the rocks." ⁵ So I went to the stream and did what Yahweh told me to do.

⁶ A long time later, Yahweh said to me, "Go back to that stream and get the waistcloth that I told you to hide there." ⁷ So I went to the Perath Stream and dug out the waistcloth from the crevice/hole in which I had hidden it. But it was ruined, and useless.

⁸ Then Yahweh gave me this message: ⁹ "What happened to your waistcloth shows that I will

destroy the things that *the people of* Jerusalem and *other places in* Judah are very proud of. ¹⁰ Those wicked people refuse to pay attention to what I say. They stubbornly do just what they desire to do; they worship other gods. Therefore, they will become completely useless, like your waistcloth. ¹¹ Just like a waistcloth clings closely/tightly to a man's waist, I wanted the people [MTY] of Israel and Judah to cling closely to me. I wanted them to be my people, people who would praise me and honor me. But they would not pay attention *to me*. "

The warning regarding wine bags

¹² "So, tell this to them: 'Yahweh, the God whom you Israeli *people worship*, says that every leather wineskin should be filled with wine.' And *when you tell that to them*, they will reply, '◀Of course/Certainly▶ we know [RHQ] that all wineskins should be filled with wine!' ¹³ And then you must tell them, 'No, that is not what Yahweh means. What he said means that he will cause this land to be filled with people who are drunk. *That will include all of you*—the king who sits on the throne that King David previously sat on, the priests and the prophets, and even the common people of Jerusalem.' ¹⁴ *He is saying*, 'I will cause you to bash each other. *Even parents will bash their children*. I will not pity you or act mercifully toward you at all; pitying you will not prevent me from getting rid of you.' "

A warning that the people of Judah will be exiled

15 *You people of Judah*, pay very careful attention [DOU].

Do not be proud, because Yahweh has spoken to you.

16 *It is as though* he is ready to bring darkness on you

and to cause you to stumble and fall *as you walk* on the hills when it is becoming dark.

So praise/honor Yahweh your God before that happens.

If you do not do that, you will look for light, but all you will see is darkness and gloom.

17 And if you *still* refuse to heed what he says, *what will happen to you because of your being proud* will cause me to cry when I am alone.

My eyes will be filled with tears because you, Yahweh's people, *whom he takes care of like a shepherd takes care of* [MET] his flock, will *all be captured by your enemies and taken to other countries.*

18 *You people of Judah*, say to the king and to his mother,

“Come down from sitting on your thrones and *humbly* sit in the dust, because *your enemies* will soon snatch from your heads your glorious crowns.”

19 The towns in the southern part of Judah will be surrounded by your enemies, and no one will be able to get through their lines *to rescue the people in those towns.*

You people of Judah will be captured and taken away;
 you will all be ◀exiled/taken to foreign countries▶.

²⁰ *You leaders of Jerusalem*, open your eyes and look:

The enemy armies are ready to march down from the north.

When that happens, what will happen to [RHQ] the *people of Judah who are like a beautiful flock of sheep*, people that he gave to you to take care of?

²¹ What will you say [RHQ] when Yahweh appoints people from other countries to rule over you, people who you *mistakenly* thought were your friends?

You will [RHQ] suffer very much pain, like a woman who is about to give birth to a baby.

²² You will ask yourselves, “Why is this happening to us?”

I will reply that it is because of your many sins.

That is why *soldiers of the invading armies* will lift up the skirts of *your women* and rape them.

²³ A man from Ethiopia certainly cannot [RHQ] change the color of his *black* skin, and a leopard certainly cannot [RHQ] change its spots.

Similarly, you cannot start doing what is good, because you have always done what is evil.

- 24 *Yahweh says*, “I will scatter you like chaff
that is blown away by the wind from the
desert.
- 25 That is what is certainly going to happen to
you;
the things that I have determined will hap-
pen to you,
because you have forgotten me,
and you are trusting in false *gods*.
- 26 *It is as though* I myself will pull your skirts up
over your faces
and cause you to be very ashamed because
everyone will be able to see your sex
organs.
- 27 I have seen that you *act like men who are eager
to commit adultery*;
you are like male horses that whinny when
they desire *to have sex with* a female horse.
I have seen that you worship disgusting idols in
the fields and on the hills.
You people of Jerusalem, terrible things will
happen to you!
How long will it be [RHQ] until you are
acceptable to me *again*?”

14

The terrible drought

- 1 After there had been no rain *in Judah* for a
long time, Yahweh gave me this message:
- 2 *The people in Judah* are very distressed;
people *are sitting* on the ground and mourn-
ing;
in all of Jerusalem people are crying loudly.

- ³ The rich people send their servants to *wells* to get water,
but *all* the wells are dry.
The servants return with empty pitchers;
they cover their heads
*because they are ashamed and humiliated/
disappointed and sad.*
- ⁴ The ground is extremely dry and cracked open
because there has been no rain.
The farmers are very worried,
so they *also* cover their heads.
- ⁵ Even the ◀does/female deer▶ abandon their
newborn babies/fawns
because there is no grass in the fields *for
them to eat.*
- ⁶ The wild donkeys stand on the barren hills,
panting like [SIM] *thirsty* jackals/wolves.
They become blind
because there is no grass *to eat.*
- ⁷ *The people say*, “Yahweh, we have turned away
from you and sinned many times,
and now we know that we are being pun-
ished because of our sins,
but please help us
in order that everyone can see that you are
very great [MTY].
- ⁸ You are the one whom *we* Israelis confidently
expect *to do good things for us*
when we have *many* troubles/difficulties.
So, why do you *not help us?*
You act as though you are a stranger in our
land,

like you are someone who is staying here for only one night.

⁹ Are you also surprised *about the terrible things that are happening to us?*

Why do you act like you are unable to save anyone, even though you are a strong warrior?

Yahweh, you are *here* among us, and *others know that we are your people, so do not abandon us!*"

¹⁰ And this is what Yahweh says to those people:

"You love to wander away *from me*; you run [MTY] from one *idol* to another. Therefore, now I will no *longer* accept you, and I will punish you for your sins."

¹¹ Then Yahweh said to me, "Do not pray for these people *any more*. ¹² When they ◀fast/abstain from food in order to honor me▶, I will not pay any attention. When they bring *to me* their offerings *of animals* to be completely burned *on the altar* and their offerings of grain, I will not accept them. Instead, I will get rid of them by wars, by famines, and by diseases."

¹³ Then I replied to him, "Yahweh *my God, their* prophets are telling the people that they will not experience wars [MTY] or famines. They are telling the people that you will surely allow us to have peace in our land *for many years*."

¹⁴ Yahweh replied to me, "Those prophets say that they are speaking what I tell them to say [MTY], but they are telling lies. I did not send

them, so what they are saying is false. They say that they have received visions from me, and that they are telling things that I have revealed to them, but that is not true. They are saying foolish things that they have only thought of themselves.

¹⁵ So this is what I say about those prophets who are predicting what will happen, saying that I told them those things: They are saying that we Israelis will not die from wars or famines, but I did not send those prophets. And they themselves will die from wars or from famines.

¹⁶ And the people to whom they are predicting these things, they and their wives and their sons and their daughters, will *also die* from wars or from famines. *Their corpses will* be thrown into the streets of Jerusalem, and there will not be anyone to bury them. I will punish them like they deserve to be punished.

¹⁷ So, *Jeremiah*, tell this to them *about yourself*:

‘Day and night my eyes are full of tears.

I cannot stop crying.

I cry for my people,

who are *very precious to me, as if they were*
[MET] my daughters.

I cry for them because they have been
severely wounded;

they have been severely crushed [DOU].

¹⁸ If I go out into the fields,

I see *corpses of* people who have been
slaughtered by our enemies.

If I walk along the streets of the city,

I see *corpses of people who died* from hunger.

The prophets and the priests travel through the land, preaching to people,
 but they do not know *what they are doing*
 (OR, *in a land* that they know nothing about).’ ”

Jeremiah's prayer

¹⁹ Then I prayed this:

“Yahweh, have you completely rejected *the people of Judah*?

Do you really despise *the people of Jerusalem* [MTY]?

Why have you [RHQ] wounded us very badly,
 with the result that we will never be healed?
 We hoped that we would have peace,
 but there was no peace.

We hoped that there would be a time when we
 would be healed,
 but all that we received were things that
 terrified us.

²⁰ Yahweh, we admit/know that we are wicked
 people,
 and that our ancestors *also* did many wicked
 things.

We have *all* sinned against you.

²¹ But Yahweh, in order that we may honor [MTY]
 you,

do not despise/abandon us.

Do not dishonor *the city where* [MTY] your
 glorious throne is.

Please do not forget us,
 and do not ◀break your agreement with us/
 stop doing what you agreed to do for us▶.

22 Those idols that *have been brought from* other nations certainly cannot [RHQ] bring rain *to us*,
 and the sky certainly cannot [RHQ] cause rain to fall.
 Yahweh our God, you are the only one who can do things like that.
 So we will confidently expect you *to help us.*”

15

Yahweh said what would happen to the people of Judah

¹ Then Yahweh said *this* to me: “Even if Moses and Samuel could *come back from their graves and* stand in front of me *and plead with me for these Israeli people*, I would not act mercifully [IDM] toward these people. *I would tell you*, ‘Send them away from me. Cause them to leave me!’ ² And if they ask you, ‘Where shall we go?’, tell them, ‘This is what Yahweh says:

The ones that I say must die, will die:

The ones that I say must die in wars [MTY], will die in wars.

The ones that I say must die from hunger, will die from hunger.

The ones that I say must be captured *and taken to other countries*, will be captured *and taken to other countries.*

³ I will send four things that will get rid of them: I will send *enemy soldiers using* swords to kill them. I will send wild dogs to drag away *their corpses*. I will send vultures to eat *their corpses*. And I will send *other* wild animals to eat what

remains *of their corpses*. ⁴ Because of *the wicked things that* King Manasseh did in Jerusalem, I will cause *people in* all the kingdoms of the earth to be horrified about *what will happen in Judah to* my people.

⁵ You *people of* Jerusalem, no one will [RHQ] feel sorry for you.

No one will [RHQ] weep/cry for you.

No one will [RHQ] ask ◀how you are/if you are well▶.

⁶ You people have abandoned me;
you have continued to walk away *from me* [DOU].

So, I will lift up my fist to smash you;

I will not act mercifully toward you any longer.

⁷ At the gates of your cities, I will *scatter you like a farmer scatters the chaff from his grain by* ◀winnowing it/throwing it up to allow the wind to blow the chaff away▶ [MET].

You, my people, have refused to turn away from your evil behavior.

So, I will get rid of you,

and I will even cause your children to be killed.

⁸ I will cause there to be more widows *in Judah* than *there are grains of* sand on the seashore [HYP].

At noontime, *when people will not be expecting it to happen*, I will cause *an enemy army* to attack you,

an army that will destroy your young men and cause their mothers to weep.

I will cause you to suddenly experience great suffering/pain and become very terrified.

⁹ A woman who has seven children will become faint and ◀gasp for breath/be hardly able to breathe▶;

it will be as though daylight will become darkness for her,

because most of her children will be dead, and she will be disgraced and humiliated [DOU].

And her children who are still alive, I will enable your enemies to kill them.

That will surely happen because I, Yahweh, have said it.' "

Jeremiah's complaint and Yahweh's reply

¹⁰ *I said to my mother, "I am very sad; I wish that you had not given birth to me; everyone in this land opposes me and quarrels with me.*

I am not a person who lends money to people and threatens to sue/harm them if they do not pay me back when they should,

and I am not a person who borrows money from others and then refuses to pay it back, but everyone [HYP] curses me."

¹¹ *But Yahweh replied to me, "Jeremiah, I will take care of you. And at times when your enemies have troubles and disasters, they will come to you and plead for you to help them."*

¹² *Yahweh also told me to say to the people of Judah,*

“Your enemies, who are *as strong as iron or bronze, will attack you from the north;* no one will be able to stop them.

¹³ I will give all the valuable possessions of *the people of Judah* to their enemies, without them paying for it.

Their valuable possessions will be the payment/reward *that I will give them* because of all the sins that you have committed throughout your country.

¹⁴ I will tell your enemies to force you to become their prisoners, and to take you to other lands that you do not *even* know about, and force you to become their slaves.

That will happen because I am extremely angry *with you;* my being angry is *like* [SIM] a fire that will burn forever.”

Another complaint by Jeremiah, and Yahweh's reply

¹⁵ *Then I said,* “Yahweh, you know *what is happening to me.*

Please come and ◀help me/take care of me▶. Punish those who are ◀persecuting me/causing me to suffer▶.

Please do not continue to be patient with them and do not allow me to die now.

It is ◀for your sake/because I serve you▶ that I am suffering.

¹⁶ Yahweh my God, you are the Commander of the armies of angels;

and when you spoke to me,
I was delighted with your message; it caused
me to be joyful,
and I eagerly accepted [MET] what you said
because I belong to you. [IDM, MTY]

17 When the people were carousing together,
I never joined them;
I sat alone, because you [MTY] are the one who
controls what I do.
I was very angry *with those people because
of their sins.*

18 So, ◀why do you *allow* me to continue to
suffer?/I do not understand why you allow
me to continue to suffer.▶ [RHQ]
It seems that [RHQ] my wounds cannot be
healed.
*Sometimes you help me, sometimes you do not
help me.*
It seems that you are as undependable as
a brook that has water in it only during
certain seasons;
you are like a spring that has dried up.”

19 Then Yahweh *replied*,
“If you begin again to *trust in me*,
I will restore you,
in order that you can continue to serve me.
If you proclaim good/valuable messages and not
worthless ones,
you will continue to be the one who speaks
what I tell you to say.
You must cause the people to pay attention to
what **you** say;

you must not pay attention to what **they** say.
²⁰ They will fight against you,
 but I will protect you, like [SIM] people are
 protected from their enemies by a bronze
 wall.
 They will not defeat you,
 because I will be with you,
 and I will protect and rescue [DOU] you.
²¹ *Truly*, I will keep you safe from those wicked
 people,
 I will rescue you when you are seized by
 cruel people.
That will happen because I, Yahweh, have said it."

16

Jeremiah was warned about the coming disaster

¹ Yahweh gave me another message. *He said to me,* ² "Do not get married and have children in this land, ³ because this is what *I, Yahweh,* say about the children who are born in this city, and about their mothers and fathers: ⁴ *Many of* them will die from terrible diseases. And no one will mourn for them. No one will even bury their corpses; the corpses will lie on the ground, *scattered* like manure. *Others* will die in wars or from hunger, and *then* their corpses will become food for vultures and wild animals."

⁵ This is *also* what Yahweh said to me: "Do not go to funerals to mourn or to show *those whose relatives have died* that you feel sorry for them, because I have stopped protecting them, and I have caused that things will not go well

for them. I have stopped faithfully loving them and acting mercifully toward them. ⁶ *Very many people* will die in this land, *including* those who are important and those who are not important. And no one will mourn for them, or *even* bury *their corpses*. No one will cut himself or shave his head *to show that he is very sad*. ⁷ No one will bring food to comfort those who are mourning, not even if it is their father or their mother *who has died*. No one will give them a cup *of wine* to cheer them up.

⁸ And do not go into the houses where people are feasting. Do not eat or drink anything with them. ⁹ *I want you to do this* because this is what I, the Commander of the armies of angels, say: 'While you are still alive and seeing it happen, I will cause there to be no more singing and laughing in this land. There will be no more joyful voices of bridegrooms and brides.'

¹⁰ When you tell these things to the people, they will ask, 'Why has Yahweh declared that these terrible things will happen to us? What have we done *for which we deserve to be punished like this*? What sin have we committed against Yahweh our God?'

¹¹ Then this is what you must tell them *that I am replying to them*: 'It is because your ancestors turned away from me, Yahweh. They worshiped other gods and served them. They abandoned me and did not obey my commands. ¹² But you *who are living now* have done more wicked things than your ancestors did! Each of you stubbornly does the evil things that he desires

and refuses to pay attention to what I say. ¹³ So, I will throw you out of this land, and I will send you to a land that you and your ancestors have never known about. There you will worship other gods day and night. And I will not act mercifully toward you.'

¹⁴ But there will be a time when people *who are solemnly promising to do something* will no longer say, '*I will do this, just as surely as Yahweh lives—the one who brought the Israeli people here from Egypt.*' ¹⁵ Instead, they will say '*I will do this, just as surely as Yahweh lives—the one who brought us Israeli people back to our own land, from the lands to the north and from all the other lands to which he had ◀exiled us/forced us to go▶.*' *They will be able to say that because some day I will bring your descendants back to this land that I gave to your ancestors.*

¹⁶ But now I am summoning *your enemies who will seize the people of Judah like [MET] fishermen catch fish.* I am summoning those who will search for them on every mountain and hill, and in every cave, *like [MET] hunters search for animals to kill.* ¹⁷ I am watching them carefully. I see every sin *that they commit.* They will not *be able to* hide from me [MTY]. ¹⁸ Because of all the wicked things that they have done [DOU], I will punish them twice as much *as I would punish other people.* *I will do that* because they have caused my land to become unacceptable to me because of their *worshiping* lifeless statues of detestable gods, and *also because they* have done many other evil things throughout my land."

Jeremiah prayed again, and Yahweh replied

19 *Then I prayed, saying, "Yahweh, you are the one who strengthens me and protects me [MET];*

you are the one to whom I go when I have troubles.

Some day people from nations all over the world will come to you and say,

'Our ancestors left/gave us only something that was false;

they worshiped idols that are completely worthless [DOU].

20 *No one can [RHQ] make their own gods; the gods that they make are only idols; they are not real gods.' "*

21 *Then Yahweh said, "Now I will show my power to the people of Judah;*

I will show them that I am truly very powerful [DOU].

Then, finally, they will know that I, Yahweh, am the true God."

17

Yahweh's promise to punish Judah

1 *Yahweh said, "It is as though a list of the sins committed by the people of Judah is engraved with an iron chisel, or engraved using the fine point of a very hard stone, on the altars where they worship idols.*

And it is as though this list is engraved on their inner beings!

- ² *Even* their children are happy to go to the altars
to worship their gods, and to the poles that
represent the goddess Asherah at which
their parents worshiped,
shrines that are underneath all the big trees
and on *all* the high hills.
- ³ So, I will allow your enemies to capture Zion,
your holy hill,
and all your wealth and your ◀treasures/
valuable things▶,
and *even* the shrines on all those hills,
because of the sins that you people have
committed throughout your land.
- ⁴ The *wonderful* land that I gave to you will no
longer belong to you.
I will tell your enemies to take you to a land that
you do not know about,
and you will become their slaves.
I will do that because I am extremely angry *with*
you;
my being angry is *like* a fire that will burn
forever.”
- ⁵ This is *also* what Yahweh says:
“I will curse/condemn those who trust in human
beings *to help them*,
those who rely on their own strength
and turn away from me.
- ⁶ They are like *dry* bushes in the desert,
they are people who will not experience any
good things.
Those people will live in the barren desert
in a salty area, where nothing grows.

⁷ But I am pleased with those who trust in *me*,
Yahweh,
and who confidently expect *me to take care
of them*.

⁸ Those people are like [SIM] fruit trees that have
been planted along a riverbank,
trees that have roots that go down into the
wet ground beside the water.

They are trees whose leaves remain green when
it becomes hot,
trees that continue to bear fruit when there
are many months in which there is no rain.

⁹ Human minds are extremely corrupt/deceitful,
and you cannot change that.
It is also completely impossible [RHQ] for
anyone to understand that.

¹⁰ But I, Yahweh, search what is in everyone's
inner being,
and I examine what they are thinking.

I will give all people rewards,
what they deserve for what they have done."

¹¹ *I, Jeremiah, agree, because I know that people
who become rich by doing things that are
unjust
are like birds that hatch eggs that they ◀did
not lay/stole from another nest▶.*

So, when those people have lived only half of the
years *that they expect to live*, their wealth
will disappear.

Then *other people will realize that* those rich people have been foolish.

¹² Yahweh, your temple is *like* a glorious throne that is still on a high hill.

¹³ You are the one whom *we* Israeli people confidently expect *to bless us*, and all those who turn away from you will be disgraced.

Their names will be written *only* in the dust, *and will soon disappear*, because they have abandoned you, *who are like* [MET] a fountain where people obtain fresh water.

¹⁴ Yahweh, *please* heal me, because *if you heal me*, I will truly be healed.
If you rescue me, I will truly be safe, because you are the *only* one whom I praise.

¹⁵ People often ridicule me and say,
“You tell us messages that you say came from Yahweh,
but ◀why have the things that you predicted not happened?/those predictions have not come true!▶” [RHQ]

¹⁶ Yahweh, you *appointed me to take care of your people like a shepherd takes care of his sheep* [MET]; I have not abandoned that work,
and you know that I have not *previously* wanted this time of disaster *to come to people who ridicule me*.

And you know everything that I have said [MTY]
to your people.

¹⁷ Do not cause me to be terrified!

When disasters come/occur, you are the one
 to whom I will go to be safe.

¹⁸ So *now*, cause those who ◀persecute me/
 cause me to suffer▶ to be ashamed and
 dismayed,

but do not *do things to me that will* cause me
 to be ashamed and dismayed.

Cause them to be terrified!

Do to them many things that will completely
 destroy them!

Keeping the Sabbath day holy

¹⁹ This is what Yahweh said to me: “Go to
 the city gates in Jerusalem. *First* go to the gate
 where the kings of Judah go in and out of the city,
 and *then* go to each of the *other* gates. ²⁰ Say
 to the people *at each gate*, ‘You kings of Judah
 and everyone *else* who is living in Jerusalem and
 all *you other people of* Judah who enter these
 gates, listen to this message from Yahweh! ²¹ He
 says, “Listen to this warning carefully! *Stop*
doing work on ◀Sabbath/our rest▶ days! *Stop*
 carrying loads through these gates *on those days!*

²² Do not carry loads out of your houses or do
 any *other* work on Sabbath days! Instead, cause
 Sabbath days to be ◀holy/set apart for me▶. I
 commanded your ancestors to do that, ²³ but they
 did not listen to me or obey me. When I did
 things to correct them, they stubbornly [IDM]
 refused to pay attention to what I said or to
 accept it. ²⁴ But I say that if you obey me, and

if you do not carry loads through these gates *on Sabbath days* or do any other work on Sabbath days, and if you dedicate the Sabbath days to me, ²⁵ kings of Judah [MTY] and *their* officials will *continue to* go in and out of these gates. There will *always* be someone who is a descendant of [MTY] *King David ruling here* [MTY] in Jerusalem. Kings and their officials will go in and out of these gates, riding in chariots and on horses, and there will be people living in this city forever. ²⁶ And people will come *to Jerusalem* bringing offerings to be completely burned *on the altar* and *other* offerings. They will bring to the temple grain offerings and incense and offerings to thank *me*. People will bring those offerings from the towns in Judah and the villages near Jerusalem and from the land *where the tribe* of Benjamin *lives* and from the western foothills and from the desert in the south. ²⁷ But if you do not pay attention to what I say, and if you refuse to dedicate the Sabbath days to me, and if you *continue to* carry loads through these gates into the city on Sabbath days, I will burn these gates completely. The fire will spread to the palaces, and no one will be able to put out that fire." ' ' "

18

The potter and the clay

¹ Yahweh gave another message to me. *He said,*
² "Go to the shop of the man who makes clay pots. I will give you a message there." ³ So I went to that shop, and I saw the man who makes pots.

He was working at the wheel *that he uses to form pots*. ⁴ But when he finished making one jar, it was not as good as he hoped/wanted it to be. So, he took that clay and formed it into another jar, shaping it as he desired.

⁵ Then Yahweh gave me this message:
⁶ “Perhaps the people of Israel *think that* I cannot do to them like this man who makes pots has done [RHQ]. *But what they think is wrong*. I can control what happens to them like this man controls what he does with the clay in his hands.
⁷ There may be a time when I proclaim that I will get rid of a nation or kingdom, *like someone pulls up a plant with its roots*, and smashes it, and destroys it. ⁸ But if *the people of* that nation repent of doing evil things, I will not send to them the disasters that I planned to send. ⁹ And there may be a time when I proclaim that I will establish a nation or kingdom and cause it to be strong [MET]. ¹⁰ But if *the people of* that nation *start to* do evil things and refuse to obey me, then I will not bless them as I said that I would do.

¹¹ Therefore, *Jeremiah, go and warn all* the people in Jerusalem and *in other places* in Judah. Say to them, “This is what Yahweh says: “I am planning to cause you to experience a disaster [DOU]. So, each of you should turn from your evil behavior and start doing what is right, *in order that you will not experience that disaster.*” ’ ’ ’

¹² So I told that message to the people, but they replied, “It is useless for you to tell us that. We

will *continue* to be stubborn and behave as we want to.”

¹³ So, this is what Yahweh says:

“Ask the *people who live in other* nations if they have [RHQ] ever heard of such a thing.

My Israeli people, who *have been pure like* [MET] virgins, have done a terrible thing!

¹⁴ The snow certainly never [RHQ] completely disappears/melts from the rocky slopes of the mountains in Lebanon.

The cold streams that flow down from those distant mountains never [RHQ] cease flowing.

¹⁵ But my people *are not as reliable as those streams*:

They have abandoned me.

They burn incense to *honor/worship* worthless idols.

It is as though they have stumbled as they walked along very old roads that are good roads, and now, instead, they are walking on dirt paths.

¹⁶ Therefore, their land will become desolate, and people who see it will hiss *to ridicule it*.

Everyone who passes by will be appalled; they will shake their heads *to show that they are shocked*.

¹⁷ I will scatter the people when their enemies *attack them*

like dust is scattered by an east wind.

And when they experience all those difficulties/disasters,

I will turn my back on them *and refuse to help them.*”

Jeremiah complained to Yahweh again when the people planned to attack him

¹⁸ Then some of the people said, "Come, let's plan to attack Jeremiah. We have *many* priests who teach us God's laws, and wise men who give us good advice, and prophets who tell us *what will happen*. *We do not need Jeremiah!* So, let's slander him and not pay attention to anything that he says."

¹⁹ *Then I prayed*, "Yahweh, *please* listen to me! And listen to what my enemies are saying about me.

²⁰ I am doing things that are good, so it is disgusting that [RHQ] they are paying me back by doing *evil things to me*.

It is as though they have dug a pit for me *to fall into* and die.

Do not forget that *one time* I stood in front of you and pleaded for you *to help them*, and I tried to prevent you from *punishing them* [MTY], even though you were very angry with them.

²¹ So *now*, allow their children to die from hunger!

Or cause them to be killed by *their enemies'* swords!

Cause their wives to become widows, whose children are all dead!

Cause their *old* men to die in a plague, and cause their young men to be killed in battles!

²² Cause people to scream in their homes when enemy soldiers suddenly come into their houses!

Cause all those things to happen to them because they want to kill me.
It is as though they have dug a pit for me to fall into,
and they have hidden traps along my path.
23 Yahweh, you know all the things that they are planning to do to kill me.
Do not forgive them for their crimes
or blot out *the record of* their sins.
Cause them to be destroyed;
punish them because of your being angry
with them!"

19

Judah will be like a smashed jar

¹ This is another message that Yahweh gave to me: "Go and buy a clay jar from a man who makes them. Then take with you some of the elders of the people and leaders of the priests. ² Go out *of the city* past the Gate of Broken Pots, to the place *overlooking the dump for broken pottery* in the Ben-Hinnom Valley. Then give them a message. ³ Say to them, '*This message is for you kings of Judah and other people of Jerusalem.* Listen to what Yahweh is saying! The Commander of the armies of angels says that he will cause there to be a terrible disaster in *Jerusalem*. Those who hear about it will be stunned/shocked [IDM]. ⁴ *That will happen* because *you Israeli* people have stopped worshipping me, and have caused this place to be a place where *you worship* foreign gods. You burn sacrifices to gods that neither you nor your

ancestors nor *even* the kings of Judah ever heard about. And you have filled this place with the blood of innocent people *whom you have killed*.

⁵ You have built shrines to honor *your god* Baal, and at those shrines you have *killed* your own children and offered them to be sacrifices to Baal. I never commanded you to do that, I never spoke about doing that, I never even thought about anyone doing that. ⁶ So, beware, *because I, Yahweh, say that there will be a time when this garbage dump will no longer be called Topheth or Ben-Hinnom Valley; it will be called Slaughter Valley.*

⁷ In this place I will ruin the plans of *you people who live in Jerusalem and in other places in Judah*. I will allow your enemies who want to kill you to kill *many of you* with their swords. *Then I will allow your corpses to remain on the ground to be food for vultures and wild animals.*

⁸ I will *completely destroy* Jerusalem and cause it to become a heap of ruins that people will despise. All the people who pass by will be appalled, and they will be shocked when they see that the city has been destroyed. ⁹ I will enable your enemies who want to kill you to surround the city for a long time. *Then the food will be all gone, and you people will be extremely hungry, with the result that you people in the city will eat the flesh of your own children and your neighbors' children.'*

¹⁰ *Jeremiah, after you tell that to them, while the people who are with you are watching, smash the jar that you brought.* ¹¹ Then say to them,

'This is what the Commander of the armies of angels says: "Just like this jar has been smashed and cannot be repaired, I will smash this city of Jerusalem and other places in Judah. You will bury some of your corpses here in this dump, until there is no more space to bury any more corpses. ¹² That is what I will do to this city and to you people who live here. I will cause this city to be desecrated, like *King Josiah caused Topheth to be* a place that was unfit for people to worship me there. ¹³ The houses in Jerusalem and the palaces of the kings of Judah will be desecrated like this place will be. All the houses where you burned incense on the rooftops to honor the stars *that you worshiped*, and where you poured out wine *to be an offering* to your gods, will become ◀desecrated/unacceptable places for people to worship me▶." ' ' "

¹⁴ Then I returned from the garbage dump where Yahweh had sent me to tell them that message. Then I stood in the courtyard of Yahweh's temple and said this to all the people *who were there*: ¹⁵ "This is what the Commander of the armies of angels says: 'I will cause there to be a disaster in this city and in the villages around it like I promised, because you people have stubbornly [IDM] refused to pay attention to what I said to you.' "

20

Pashhur arrested Jeremiah

¹ Pashhur, the son of Immer, was a priest who supervised the temple guards. He heard those

things that I had prophesied. ² *So he arrested me.* Then he *commanded guards* to whip me and fasten my feet in ◀stocks/a wooden frame▶ at the Benjamin Gate of Yahweh's temple. ³ The next day, when Pashhur released me, I said to him, "Pashhur, Yahweh is giving you a new name. From now on, your name will be 'Surrounded by Terror', ⁴ because Yahweh says this *to you*: 'I will cause you and your friends to be terrified. You will watch them being killed by your enemies' swords. I will enable the *army of the king of Babylon* to capture the people of Judah. Those soldiers will take some of the people to Babylon, and they will kill others with their swords. ⁵ And I will enable their soldiers to take away *other things in Jerusalem*. They will take to Babylon all the very valuable things that belonged to your kings. ⁶ And *as for you*, Pashhur, they will take you and all your family to Babylon. You and your family and all your friends who have prophesied things that are lies will die there and be buried there.' "

Jeremiah complained to Yahweh again

⁷ *One day I said this to Yahweh:*

"Yahweh, *when you chose me to be a prophet*, you deceived me, and I allowed you to deceive me.

You insisted that I *become a prophet* and you are stronger than I am.

And now everyone [HYP] ridicules me.

They make fun of me all the day.

⁸ When I tell *people your messages*, I shout saying,

'Yahweh is going to cause you to experience violence and destruction!'

So because I tell them those messages from you, they insult me and scoff at me all day long.

⁹ But if I would say, 'I will never mention Yahweh or say anything about him, [MTY]' *it would be as though* your message would burn in my inner being like [SIM] a fire; it would be like a fire in my bones.

Sometimes I try to remain silent and not proclaim your messages,

but I am not able to do that.

¹⁰ I hear many people whispering *about me*, saying *'He is the man who proclaims that there will be things that cause us to be terrified everywhere.*

We must tell *the authorities what he is saying!* We must denounce him!'

Even my best friends are waiting for me to say something that is wrong.

They are saying, 'Perhaps we can cause him to say something wrong,

and if he does, we will be able to discredit him.'

¹¹ But *you*, Yahweh, are helping me like [SIM] a strong warrior,

so *it is as though* you will cause those who persecute me to stumble, and they will not defeat me.

They will be completely disgraced because of being unable to defeat me;

and other people will never forget that they were disgraced.

12 Commander of the armies of angels,
you examine *all* those who are righteous;
you know *all that is in* their inner beings and
what they think.

Allow me to see you getting revenge on those
who want to harm me,
because I trust that you will do for me what
is right.”

13 Sing to Yahweh!
Praise Yahweh!
He rescues *poor and* needy people,
from those [SYN] who are wicked.

14 But I hope/desire that the day that I was born
will be cursed.

I do not want *anyone to* celebrate that day.

15 And *as for* that man who brought to my father
the news,
and caused him to be very happy, by saying
“*You wife* has given birth to a son for you”,
I hope/desire that he *also* will be cursed.

16 Allow him to be destroyed like the cities that
Yahweh destroyed *long ago*,
without acting mercifully *toward them*.

Cause that man to hear the people wailing in the
morning,
and *to hear the enemy soldiers shout their*
battle cries at noon.

17 *I want that to happen to him* because he did
not kill me before I was born.
I wish that I had died in my mother’s womb,
and that my mother’s body would have been
like [MET] my grave.

18 I have continually experienced much trouble
and sorrow,
and I am disgraced now when I am about to
die;
why was it necessary [RHQ] for me to be born?

21

God rejected King Zedekiah's request

¹ Yahweh gave me another message when King Zedekiah *of Judah* sent a man who was also named Pashhur, the son of Malkijah, and a priest named Zephaniah, the son of Maaseiah, *to talk to me. They pleaded with me, saying,* ² *“The army of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon is attacking Judah. Please speak to Yahweh for us. Ask him if he will help us. Perhaps he will force Nebuchadnezzar’s army to leave by performing a miracle for us, like the miracles he performed previously.”*

³ I replied to them, *“Go back to King Zedekiah. Tell him,* ⁴ *“This is what Yahweh, the God whom we Israelis worship, says: “I will cause your weapons to be useless in fighting against the king of Babylon and his army that is outside the walls of Jerusalem, attacking. I will enable them to enter into the center of this city. ⁵ I myself will fight against your army with my very great power, [MTY, DOU] because I am very angry with you. ⁶ I will send a very ◀terrible plague/big sickness▶ on the people of this city, and on their domestic animals, and many of them will die.”* ⁷ And Yahweh says there are many people in this

city who want to kill you. So, he will enable *the army of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon and other people in this city to capture you, King Zedekiah, and your officials, and all the other people who do not die from the plague.* His army will slaughter your soldiers; they will not act mercifully toward you(pl) or pity you at all. [DOU]'

⁸ And tell this to *all* the people: 'Yahweh says that you must decide whether you want to die or to remain alive. ⁹ Everyone who remains in Jerusalem will die. They will be killed in battles or die from being hungry or from diseases. But those who surrender to the army of Babylon that is surrounding your city will remain alive. They will escape dying. ¹⁰ *That will happen* because I, Yahweh, have decided to cause this city to experience disasters, not to experience something good. The army of the king of Babylon will capture this city and will destroy it *completely* by fire.' "

Yahweh will punish Judah's kings

¹¹ *Yahweh also told me to say this to the family of the king of Judah:* "Listen to this message from Yahweh! ¹² This is what he says to you descendants of King David:

'Every day, make fair decisions for the people whom you judge.

Help those who have been robbed.

Rescue/Save them from those [SYN] who
 ◀oppress them/treat them cruelly▶.

If you do not do that,

I will be angry and punish [MTY] you with a fire that will be impossible to extinguish, because of *all* the sins that you have committed.

¹³ I will fight against you people *of Jerusalem*, you who live on top of a rocky hill above the valley.

I will fight against you people who boast, saying, “No one can attack us and break through *our defenses*.”

¹⁴ I will punish you for your wicked deeds like you deserve to be punished;
It will be as though I will light a fire in your forests that will burn up everything around you! ”

22

A message about punishing the evil kings of Judah

¹ This is another message that Yahweh gave to me: “Go down to the palace of the king of Judah and say this to him: ² ‘You are the king of Judah. You are the ruler [MTY], like King David was. You and your officials and your people must listen ³ to what Yahweh says: “Act fairly and justly. Do what is right. Help those who have been robbed. Rescue people from those who oppress them. Stop doing evil things. Do not mistreat those who have come here from other countries, and do not mistreat orphans and widows. Stop murdering here *in Jerusalem* [MTY] those who ◀are innocent/have not done things that are wrong▶. ⁴ If you obey those

commands carefully, there will *always* be some descendant of King David who will be ruling here [MTY] *in Jerusalem*. The king and his officials and other people will ride through the gates of the city in chariots and on horses. ⁵ But if you refuse to pay attention to those commands, I, Yahweh, solemnly declare, with myself [MTY] as a witness, that this palace will become a pile of rubble." ' ' "

⁶ And this is what Yahweh says about the king's palace:

"I like this palace, like I like the forests in the Gilead *region*

and the mountains in Lebanon.

But I will cause this palace to become a desert, a place that no one lives in.

⁷ I will summon enemy troops who will destroy this palace;

each of their soldiers will use his own tools *to wreck the building*.

They will cut into pieces the beautiful big cedar *beams*

and throw them into a fire."

⁸ People from many nations will walk past *the ruins of* this city and say to each other, "Why did Yahweh destroy this city that was *very great*?"

⁹ And *other* people will reply, "*He did it* because his people stopped obeying the agreement that they had made with Yahweh their God. Instead, they worshiped [DOU] other gods."

¹⁰ *Yahweh also says*, "Do not mourn for King *Josiah*;

do not cry because he has died.
 Instead, mourn for *King Jehoahaz, his son,*
because he will be captured and taken to
another country,
 and he will never return to see his own country,
Judah, again."

¹¹ Jehoahaz became king after his father, King Josiah, *died*, but Jehoahaz indeed was captured and taken *to Babylonia*. And this is what Yahweh says about him: "He also will never return *to Judah*. ¹² He will die in that far-away country and will never see his own country again."

A message about King Jehoiakim

¹³ *And Yahweh said to me, "Terrible things will happen to King Jehoahaz's brother, King Jehoiakim.*

He unjustly *forced men to build his palace.*

The rooms on the upper level were built by
men who were forced unjustly to do that
work;

he forced his neighbors to work for nothing;
 he did not pay them anything.

¹⁴ He said, 'I will *force my workers to build a huge*
beautiful palace
 with very large rooms and *many windows.*
 They will cover the walls with *fragrant cedar*
 panels/timber
 and paint them bright red.' "

¹⁵ But it is certainly not [RHQ] having a beautiful cedar palace that causes a king to be great!

Jehoiakim's father, Josiah, also had [RHQ] plenty of things to eat and drink.

But Josiah always did things that are right and just, and that is why God blessed him.

¹⁶ Josiah acted justly/fairly and helped poor and needy people, so things went well for him.

Yahweh says, "That is [RHQ] the way a person should behave who knows me.

¹⁷ But *Jehoiakim*, you [MTY] are greedy and desire only to obtain things by acting dishonestly.

You murder [MTY] innocent people, you oppress poor people, and you treat people cruelly and violently."

¹⁸ Therefore, this is what Yahweh says about Jehoiakim, the son of King Josiah:

"When he dies, people will not mourn for him.

They will not say to each other, 'It is very sad; we are so sorry!'

The people whom he ruled will not mourn for him, saying,

'We are sad that our king is dead; we are so sorry that the wonderful things that happened while he was king are ended.'

¹⁹ *When he dies, people will do to his corpse what they do to a dead donkey; his corpse will be dragged out of Jerusalem and dumped outside the gates!*

20 *You people of Judah, go to the mountains in Lebanon and weep, shout in the mountains of the Bashan region, cry out in the mountains of Moab, because all your friends in those areas have been destroyed.*

21 *When you were prosperous, I warned you, but you replied, 'We will not pay attention to what you say.'*

You have been acting like that since you were young; you have never obeyed me.

22 *So, now I will punish all your leaders; it will be as though they have been blown away by the wind.*

They will be captured by your enemies and taken to another country.

When that happens, you will truly be ashamed and disgraced because of all the wicked things that you have done.

23 *Now, your king enjoys living in the cedar rooms in his palace,*

but soon he will be punished, and then he will groan

like [SIM] a woman who is giving birth to a baby."

God will punish King Jehoiachin

24 *Yahweh says this: "Jehoiachin, son of King Jehoiakim of Judah, as surely as I am alive, I will punish you. Even if you were the ring on my finger that shows that I am the king, I*

would pull you off. ²⁵ You are afraid of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon and his huge army, *because* they are wanting to kill you. I will enable them to capture you. ²⁶ I will expel you and your mother *from this land*, and you will be taken to another country. Neither of you was born there, but you will both die there. ²⁷ You will never return to this land that you will very much desire to return to.”

²⁸ *Someone said*, “Jehoiachin will be [RHQ] like a broken pot that is despised and which no one wants. He and his children will be ◀exiled/forced to go▶ to a foreign land.

²⁹ *I want* the people in this land to listen carefully to this message from Yahweh.”

³⁰ This is what Yahweh says:

“*In the record about the kings of Judah*, write down that *it will be as though* this man *Jehoiachin* had no children, and that he has not been successful during his life, because none of his children/descendants will ever become king to rule over *the people of Judah*.”

23

God will punish the evil leaders

¹ Yahweh declares, “Terrible things will happen to *the leaders* [MET] *of my people*—those who are like shepherds of *the people who are like my sheep*—because they have scattered my people and sent them away, and have not taken care

of them. ² So, this is what *I, Yahweh, the God whom the Israeli people worship*, say to those leaders: 'Instead of taking care of my people and *leading them to places where they are safe, like a shepherd does for his sheep*, you have scattered them. So I will punish you for the evil things that you have done. ³ But later I will gather those who are still alive, from the countries where I have forced them to go. I will bring them back to their own country, where they will have many children, and their number/population will increase. ⁴ *Then* I will appoint *other* leaders for my people, leaders who will take care of them. And my people will never be afraid [DOU] of anything again, and none of them will be *like a lost sheep.*' "

⁵ Yahweh *also* says,

"Some day I will appoint for you a righteous man who will be a descendant of King David. He will be a king who rules wisely.

He will do what is just and right throughout the land.

⁶ At that time, all the Israeli people [DOU] will be saved *from their enemies*, and they will be safe.

And his name will be

'Yahweh, the one who vindicates/defends us.'

⁷ Yahweh *also* says that at that time, people *who are solemnly promising to do something* will no longer say, "*I will do it as surely as Yahweh lives, who rescued the Israeli people from Egypt.*" ⁸ Instead, they will say, "*I will do it*

as surely as Yahweh lives, who brought *us* Israeli people back to our own land, from the land to the northeast and from all the *other* countries to which he had exiled us.” And they will live in their own land *again*.

The false prophets will be punished

⁹ I am very shocked because of the sacred message that Yahweh has spoken about *what will happen to the false prophets*;

it is as though all my bones shake.

I stagger like a man who is drunk
after drinking a lot of wine.

¹⁰ The land is full of *people who commit* adultery;
and *Yahweh* has cursed the land.

Even the pastures in the desert are all dried up,
because the people do what is evil,
and *the false prophets* use their power to do
things that are not just/fair.

¹¹ Yahweh says, “*Yes, even* the priests and the
prophets are ungodly;
they do wicked things even in my temple.

¹² Therefore, *it will be as though* the paths that
they walk on are slippery.

It will be as though they are being chased in
the darkness,
and there they will fall down,

because I will cause them to experience disasters
at the time that I will punish them.

That will surely happen because I, Yahweh,
have said it.”

13 *Previously* I saw that the prophets in Samaria were doing something that was wrong; they were prophesying, saying that Baal *gave them the messages that they were proclaiming,*

and they were deceiving my people.

14 And *now* I have seen the prophets in Jerusalem doing terrible things.

They commit adultery
and habitually tell lies.

They encourage evil people to continue to do evil things,

with the result that the people do not stop sinning.

Those prophets are as wicked as the people in Sodom and Gomorrah were.

15 So, this is what the Commander of the armies of angels says about those *false* prophets:

“I will give those prophets bitter things to eat
and poison to drink,

because it is because of them that this land is filled with *people who do* wicked things.”

16 This is what the Commander of the armies of angels says:

“Do not pay any attention to what those *false* prophets say to you,

because they are just deceiving you.

They tell you about visions that they have thought/created *only* in their own minds,

not about visions that I have given them.

17 They habitually say to those who hate me,
‘Yahweh says that you will have peace.’

And they say to those who stubbornly do what they want to do,
'Nothing bad will happen to you *because of your doing those things.*'

18 But none of them has ever been in a council meeting in heaven in order to listen to a message from me. None of them has paid attention to anything that I, Yahweh, have said.

19 So, listen to this: I will punish them; it will be *like* a great storm; it will come down *like* a whirlwind, swirling around the heads of those wicked people.

20 I will not stop being angry until I completely accomplish all that I have planned. In the future, you will understand *all of this clearly.*"

21 *Yahweh also says,* "I have not appointed those prophets, but they run around telling people their messages.

I did not speak to them, but they *continue to* prophesy.

22 If they had been in my council meetings, they would have been able to speak messages from me, and they would have caused people to turn away from committing evil things."

23 *Yahweh also says,* "Am I a God who is only nearby?

No, I am a God who is far away, also.

²⁴ So, no one can hide in some secret place with the result that I cannot see him.

I am everywhere, in heaven and on the earth!

That is what I, Yahweh, say!

²⁵ I have heard those prophets prophesy lies, saying that they are telling people messages from me. They say, '*Listen to me tell you the dream that God gave me last night! I really had this dream!*' ²⁶ How long will they continue to do this? How long will those lying prophets continue to prophesy things that come only from their own minds? ²⁷ They think that because of the dreams that they tell to each other, people will forget me, like their ancestors forgot about me when they started to worship Baal.

²⁸ Allow those *false* prophets to tell people their dreams, but those who have messages that *really* come from me should proclaim those messages faithfully. I, Yahweh, say *that like* straw and grain are certainly very different, *my messages and the messages from those false prophets are certainly very different.* ²⁹ *It is as though* my messages *burn* like a fire; they *strike people's inner beings* like someone strikes a rock with a hammer and smashes it into pieces.

³⁰ Therefore, I, Yahweh say, 'I oppose all those prophets who steal messages from each other and claim that those messages came from me.'

³¹ I oppose those prophets who speak their own messages but claim that those messages came from me. ³² I oppose those prophets who falsely

say that I told them something in a vision, but they are *only* telling lies that cause my people to sin. I did not send those prophets. I did not even appoint them *to be prophets*. And they have no messages that will benefit my people at all.' *That is what I, Yahweh, declare.*"

Messages from false prophets

³³ *Yahweh said to me*, "If one of those prophets or priests or one of the *other* people asks you, 'What problem has Yahweh told you about *now?*', you must reply, 'You are the problem! And Yahweh says that he will abandon you!'

³⁴ And if any prophet or priest or anyone *else* *falsely* says, '*I have* a prophecy from Yahweh,' I will punish that person and his family. ³⁵ What

you should continually ask each other is, '*When you spoke to Yahweh*, what did he reply? What is he saying *to us?*' ³⁶ But stop saying '*I have* a prophecy/message from Yahweh,' because those who say that are doing it only because they want people to accept their ideas, and by doing that they distort/change the messages that are from our God, the Commander of the armies of angels.

³⁷ This is what you should ask each prophet: 'What did Yahweh reply *when you talked to him?* What is he saying *to us?*' ³⁸ If he replies, '*What I told you* is a prophecy/message from Yahweh,'

you should say to him, 'You have continued to say, "*I received* a prophecy/message from Yahweh" even though I told you to not claim that you have received prophecies/messages from Yahweh.' ³⁹ So I, *Yahweh*, will get rid of you *false*

prophets. I will expel you from my presence. And I will get rid of this city that I gave to you and to your ancestors. ⁴⁰ I will cause people to make fun of you forever. People will never forget that you were disgraced.”

24

Good figs and bad figs

¹ *The army of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon captured Jehoiachin, the king of Judah, and his officials, and all his skilled workers [DOU] and took them to Babylon. After that happened, Yahweh gave me a vision. In the vision I saw two baskets of figs that had been placed in front of the temple. ² One basket was full of good figs, like the kind that ripen first. The other basket was filled with figs that were bad/rotten, with the result that they could not be eaten.*

³ Then Yahweh said to me, “Jeremiah, what do you see?”

I replied, “*I see some figs. Some are very good ones, but some are very bad, with the result that no one would eat them.*”

⁴ Then Yahweh gave me this message: ⁵ “This is what *I, Yahweh, the God whom the Israeli people say that they worship, say: ‘The good figs represent [SIM] the people of Judah whom I exiled to Babylonia. ⁶ I [SYN] will ◀watch over/ take care of▶ them well, and some day I will bring them back here to Judah. I will establish them and cause them to be strong. I will cause them to be prosperous [MET], and I will not exile*

them *again*. ⁷ I will enable them to desire to know [IDM] that I am Yahweh. They will be my people, and I will be their God, because they will return to me sincerely.'

⁸ But *I*, Yahweh, *also* say, 'The bad figs represent [SIM] Zedekiah, the king of Judah, and his officials, and all the *other* people who remain in Jerusalem, and those who have gone to Egypt. I will do to them like people do to rotten figs. ⁹ I will *get rid of them*, with the result that people in every nation on the earth will be horrified, and will hate them because they are evil people. Wherever I scatter them, people will make fun of them, and say that they are disgraced, and ridicule them, and curse them. ¹⁰ And I will cause them to experience wars and famines and diseases, until they have disappeared from this land which I gave to them and to their ancestors.' "

25

A prediction about being exiled for 70 years

¹ After Jehoiakim had been ruling Judah for almost four years, Yahweh gave me this message for all the people of Judah. It was during the year that King Nebuchadnezzar started to rule in Babylon. ² I spoke this message to all the people in Jerusalem and *other places in Judah*: ³ "Yahweh has been giving me messages for 23 years. He started giving me messages when Josiah, the son of Amon, had been ruling Judah for almost 13 years. And I have faithfully told

you those messages, but you have not paid any attention to them.

⁴ Many times Yahweh has sent to you the prophets who served him, but you have not listened to them or paid any attention to what they said. ⁵ Each time their message was this: 'Turn from all your evil behavior [MET], from all the evil things that you have continually been doing. If you do that, you will be able to stay in this land that Yahweh gave to you and to your ancestors, *to belong to you* forever. ⁶ Do not cause Yahweh to become angry by serving and worshiping idols that you have made with your hands. If you do not cause him to be angry, he will not punish/harm you.'

⁷ And Yahweh says, 'But you would not pay attention to the messages that I *gave to those prophets*. You caused me to become extremely angry by *your worshiping idols* that you had made with your own hands. That resulted in my punishing you.

⁸ So *now*, I, the Commander of the armies of angels, say that because you have not paid attention to what I said, ⁹ I will gather all *the armies of the nations* that will come from the northeast. I have appointed King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon to lead them. I have appointed him to do my work for me. I will bring those *armies* to attack this land and nearby countries. I will completely destroy them, and cause them to be places that people are horrified about, and that people will ◀ridicule/act contemptuously toward▶, places that will be ruined forever. ¹⁰ I will cause happy

singing and laughing to cease in your land. There will no longer be brides and bridegrooms talking *joyfully*. There will not be the sound of people grinding *grain* with millstones. There will be no lamps lit *in your houses*. ¹¹ All of this land will become a desert where no one will live. And *the people of Israel* and of the nearby countries will *will be exiled to Babylonia and* ◀work for/be slaves of▶ the kings of Babylon for seventy years.

¹² Then, after *they have been in Babylonia* for seventy years, I will punish the King of Babylonia and his people for the sins that they have committed. I will cause Babylonia to become a wasteland/desert forever. ¹³ I will cause them to experience all the terrible things that Jeremiah has written about—all the punishments that he predicted will happen to all those nations. ¹⁴ The leaders of many nations will cause the people of Babylonia to become their slaves, like the people of Babylonia caused my people to become slaves. I will punish them like they deserve for *having caused my people to suffer.*' ”

The wine that symbolized God's punishment

¹⁵ Then Yahweh, the God *we Israelis worship*, gave me *a vision*. *In the vision he was holding a cup of wine*. He said, “Take from me this cup that is full of *wine that represents punishment* [MTY]. I will cause all *the leaders of the nations* to which I will send you to drink *some of the wine* in this cup. ¹⁶ When they drink *the wine*, they will stagger and act like crazy people, because *they will realize that I will* ◀massacre many of their

people/cause many of their people to be killed► [MTY] with swords.”

¹⁷ So, *in the vision*, I took that cup *full of wine* from Yahweh, and I took it to all the nations to which he sent me, and caused *the leaders of those nations* to drink *some of that wine*. ¹⁸ *I went to Jerusalem and the other towns in Judah, and the king and the other officials drank some of the wine from that cup. And, starting from that day, they all eventually were removed from having authority, and became people whom others* ◀ridiculed/acted contemptuously towards▶, who were despised, and cursed. ¹⁹ *In the vision I went to Egypt and gave some of the wine to the king and his officials and many of his people,* ²⁰ *and to foreigners who were living there. In the vision I also went to Uz land and to Ashkelon, Gaza, Ekron, and Ashdod cities and gave some of the wine to the kings of those places.* ²¹ *Then in the vision I went to the Edom, Moab, and Ammon people-groups,* ²² *and to Tyre and Sidon cities and to areas across the Mediterranean Sea, and gave some of the wine to the kings of those places.* ²³ *In the vision I then went to Dedan, Tema, and Buz cities in Arabia and to other distant places (OR, places where people cut their hair short), and gave some of the wine to leaders in those areas.* ²⁴ *In the vision I also went to other places in Arabia and to the kings of tribes in the desert* ²⁵ *and to the kings of the Zimri, Elam, and Media people-groups,* ²⁶ *and to kings in countries to the north that are near to Israel and to countries that are far from Israel, one after the other— I went to*

all the kingdoms in the world [HYP]. And finally, *in my vision I went to Babylon, and gave some of the wine to the king of Babylon—the wine that symbolized that Yahweh would punish the people of Babylon because he was angry with them* [MTY].

²⁷ Then *in the vision Yahweh said to me, “Tell them that this is what the Commander of the armies of angels, the God whom we Israelis worship, says: ‘Drink from this cup some of the wine that represents the punishment that I will give you. Drink a lot of it and become drunk and vomit. You will fall down and not get up again, because I will cause you to be killed in wars [MTY] that I will send to you.* ²⁸ *If any of those to whom you give this wine [MTY] refuse to drink it, tell them that the Commander of the armies of angels says that they must drink it.* ²⁹ *I am starting to cause the people of my own city to experience disaster. Do you think that you should not be punished [RHQ]? No, you will surely be punished [LIT] because I am causing there to be wars in all the nations on the earth. That will surely happen because I, the Commander of the armies of angels, have said it.’*

³⁰ Now tell them all those things that I have said, and also say this to them:

‘Yahweh will shout to them from his holy dwelling in heaven [MTY]

and it will sound like the roar of a lion.

He will shout like [SIM] people shout when they are treading on grapes to make juice for

wine;

he will shout to everyone on the earth.

31 Even people in very remote places around the earth will hear him shouting, because he will say why he will judge and punish all the nations.

He will cause the wicked people to be slaughtered with swords.

That will surely happen because Yahweh has said it.'

32 Then tell them that this is what the Commander of the armies of angels says:

'Listen to this!

There will be disasters in one nation after another.

I am preparing to punish them like [MET] a great storm that starts in the most distant places on the earth.

33 When that happens, *the corpses of* those whom I have *caused to be* slaughtered will fill the earth from the east to the west.

And no one will mourn for them, and no one will gather their corpses to bury them.

They will be *scattered* on the ground like manure.

34 You *evil* leaders, weep and moan!

You who should take care of my people, *fall down and* roll in the dust/dirt.

It is time for you to be slaughtered;

you will fall down and be shattered like a fragile vase *shatters when it falls to the ground.*

35 You will not find any place to hide,

there will be no place to which you can escape.

- ³⁶ *People will* listen to your leaders crying when *I, Yahweh*, am ruining your nation.
- ³⁷ Your peaceful meadows will become a wasteland/desert because I will be extremely angry.
- ³⁸ I will leave *my dwelling like* [SIM] a lion leaves its den *to attack other animals*, and I will cause your land to become desolate when I, because I am very angry *with you*, cause *your enemies to slaughter you with their swords.*' "

26

Jeremiah escaped being killed

¹ Soon after Jehoiakim became the king of Judah, Yahweh gave *me* this message: ² "This is what *I, Yahweh*, am telling you: Stand in the courtyard *in front* of my temple, and speak to all *the people from* the various towns in Judah who come there to worship me. Tell them everything that I tell you; do not omit anything. ³ *If you do tell them everything*, perhaps they will pay attention, and each one of them will turn away from his evil behavior. Then I will change my mind, and not cause them to experience the disaster that I was planning to cause them to experience because of the evil things that they have done. ⁴⁻⁵ Say to them, 'This is what Yahweh says: I sent to you the prophets who serve me, to tell you what you should do. I sent them to

you many times, but you have not paid attention to what they said. If you will not pay attention to what I say and do not obey the message that I have given to you, and if you do not pay attention to what the prophets say, ⁶ I will destroy this temple like I destroyed Shiloh, *the place where the Sacred Tent was put*. And I will cause Jerusalem to be a place whose name *people in every nation on the earth will say when they curse someone.*' "

⁷ *When I did what Yahweh told me to do*, the priests, the *false* prophets, and many *other* people listened to me as I told them that message outside the temple. ⁸ But as soon as I finished telling them everything that Yahweh had commanded me to say, they all seized me and said, "You must be executed! ⁹ Why [RHQ] are you prophesying that this temple will be *destroyed* like *Shiloh was destroyed*? Why are you saying that this city will be destroyed, and that no one will live here *any more*? (OR, You should not be prophesying) [RHQ]" All the people surrounded me *as I stood in front of* the temple.

¹⁰ When the officials of Judah heard about all this *that was happening*, they rushed from the palace and sat down at the gate of the temple named The New Gate, *to judge my case*.

¹¹ The priests and the *false* prophets told the officials and the other people *who were there*, "This man should be executed, because he has prophesied that this city *will be destroyed*, and you yourselves [MTY] have heard him say that!"

¹² Then I replied to the officials and the other

people, saying, “Yahweh sent me to prophesy all the things that you heard me say about *what will happen* to this temple and this city. ¹³ But if you change your behavior and stop sinning, and *start to* obey Yahweh our God, he will change his mind, and not cause you to experience the disasters that he said that he would send. ¹⁴ As for me, I am not able to free myself from your grasp. *So you can* do to me whatever you want to do. ¹⁵ *But you need to* know that if you kill me, you will be killing a man [SYN] who ◀is innocent/has not done anything wrong▶. And you and everyone else in this city will be guilty, because the truth is that it was Yahweh who sent me to speak every word that you have heard me say.”

¹⁶ Then the officials and the other people said to the priests and the *false* prophets, “This man does not deserve to be executed, because he has spoken to us the message [MTY] that Yahweh gave him!”

¹⁷ Then some of the elders stood up and spoke to all the people who were gathered *there*. ¹⁸ They said, “◀Remember/Think about▶ *what* Micah, *the prophet* from Moresbeth town, prophesied during the years that Hezekiah was the King of Judah. He told the people of Judah this:

“This is what the Commander of the armies of angels says:

Some day Zion Hill will be plowed like fields
are plowed;

Jerusalem will become a heap of ruins.

There will be a large clump/group of trees on top of the hill where the temple is now.'

¹⁹ But did [RHQ] King Hezekiah or anyone else in Judah kill Micah *for saying that*? No! Instead, Hezekiah revered Yahweh, and pleaded that he would ◀act mercifully toward/not destroy▶ them. So, Yahweh changed his mind about causing them to experience the terrible disaster that he said he would send. And now *if we kill Jeremiah*, we are going to cause ourselves to experience a terrible disaster!"

²⁰ *At that time*, Uriah the son of Shemaiah from Kiriath-Jearim city was also prophesying/proclaiming messages [MTY] from Yahweh. He was predicting that the city and the rest of the land would experience the same disasters that I was predicting. ²¹ When King Jehoiakim and his army officers and officials heard what Uriah was saying, the king sent someone to kill Uriah. But Uriah heard about it, and became *very* afraid, and he ◀escaped/ran away▶ to Egypt. ²² Then King Jehoiakim sent Elnathan the son of Acbor along with several other men to Egypt. ²³ They captured Uriah and took him *back to Jerusalem* to King Jehoiakim. The king then *had a soldier* kill Uriah with a sword. Then they buried his corpse in a place where poor people are buried.

²⁴ However, Ahikam the son of Shaphan defended me, and persuaded the officials not to allow [MTY] the mob to murder me.

Jeremiah urged them to surrender to Nebuchadnezzar

¹ Soon after Zedekiah became the King of Judah, Yahweh gave a message to me. ² This is what he said to me: “Make a ◀yoke/set of wooden bars to fasten around the neck of an ox▶, but fasten it around your own neck with leather straps. ³ Then send messages to the kings of Edom, Moab, Ammon, Tyre, and Sidon, by telling those messages to the ambassadors from those countries who have come to Jerusalem to talk to King Zedekiah. ⁴ Tell them to give this message to their kings: This is what the Commander of the armies of angels, the God whom the Israeli *people worship*, says: ⁵ ‘With my very great power [MTY, DOU] I created the earth and the people and the animals that are on the earth. And I can give my power to anyone whom I want to. ⁶ And now I am going to enable King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, who does what I want him to do, to control your countries. I am going to enable him to rule everything, even the wild animals. ⁷ *The people of all the nations will work for him, and later for his son, and later for his grandson, until the time for them to rule is finished. Then the armies of many great kings from many nations will conquer Babylon.*’

⁸ But now I tell you that you must *do what the king of Babylon wants you to do* [MET], *like an ox that has a yoke on its neck must do what its master wants it to do*. I will punish any nation that refuses to do that. I will cause those people

to experience war and famine and diseases, until *the armies of Babylon* have conquered that nation. ⁹ So, do not pay attention to your *false* prophets and fortune-tellers and people who predict what will happen by working magic or by talking with spirits of dead people. Those people say that the king of Babylon will not conquer your country. ¹⁰ Those people are *all* liars. *If you believe what they say*, it will result in your being exiled from your land. I will cause you to be taken from your land, and you will die far away. ¹¹ But the people of any country who do what the King of Babylon wants them to do will remain in their own country and be able to plant their crops [MTY] *as they always have done. That will surely happen because I, Yahweh, have said it.*"

¹² *After I gave that message to those ambassadors*, I gave the same message to King Zedekiah of Judah. *I said to him*, "If you want to remain alive, do what the King of Babylon and his officials want you to do [MET]. ¹³ *It would be foolish for you not to do that, because the result would be that you and your people would die by your enemies' swords or by famine or diseases, which Yahweh will cause any nation to experience that refuses to allow the King of Babylon to rule them.* ¹⁴ Do not pay attention to those prophets who say to you, 'The King of Babylon will not conquer your country.' They are liars. ¹⁵ *This is what Yahweh says: 'I have not appointed those prophets. They are saying*

that I [MTY] gave them messages, but they are lying. So, *if you believe them*, I will expel you from this land. And you and all those prophets will die *in Babylon!*' "

¹⁶ Then I spoke to the priests and the other people, and I said, "This is what Yahweh says: 'Do not believe your prophets who tell you that all the gold items *that were taken* from my temple *by soldiers from Babylon* will soon be returned from Babylon, because what they are prophesying is a lie. ¹⁷ Do not pay attention to what they say. Surrender to the king of Babylon. If you do that, you will remain alive. *If you do not do that* [RHQ], this entire city will be destroyed. ¹⁸ If they are really prophets who speak messages from me, tell them to plead to me, the Commander of the armies of angels, that *the soldiers from Babylon* will not be allowed to take away to Babylon the valuable items that *still* remain in the temple and in the king's palace and in *the other palaces* in Jerusalem. ¹⁹ *I say this* because the *huge* pillars that are *in front of the temple* and the large water tank and the *ten water* carts and all the other items that are used *for offering sacrifices* are *still* in this city. ²⁰ King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon left those things here when he exiled Jehoiachin, the king of Judah, to Babylon, along with all the *other* leaders of Jerusalem and *the leaders of other places* in Judah. ²¹ *I*, the Commander of the armies of angels, the God whom the Israeli *people worship*, say this about all those valuable things that are still outside the temple and in the

palace of the king of Judah and in *other places in Jerusalem*: ²² They will *all* be carried away to Babylon. And they will stay there until I say that they should be brought back to Jerusalem. Then they will be bought back here. *That is what I, Yahweh, say.* ”

28

Jeremiah condemned Hananiah

¹ When Zedekiah had been the King of Judah for more than three years, late in the ◀summer/hot season▶, Azzur’s son Hananiah, a prophet from Gibeon city, spoke to me in the *courtyard of the temple*, while *all* the priests and other people were listening. He said, ² “This is what the Commander of the armies of angels, the God whom *we* Israelis *worship*, says: ‘I will cause the king of Babylon to stop ruling/controlling [MET] *all of you*. ³ ◀Within two years/Before two years have ended▶, I will cause to be brought bring back to this temple all the valuable things that King Nebuchadnezzar’s *soldiers* took from this temple and took to Babylon. ⁴ And I will also cause King Jehoiachin to be brought back here, and all the *other* people who were captured and taken to Babylon. The king of Babylon has *forced you to do what he wants, like someone puts a yoke on the neck of an ox to force it to do what he wants* [MET] it to do. But I will cause that to end. *That will happen because I, Yahweh, have said it.*’ ”

⁵ I replied to Hananiah in front of *all* the priests and other people who were standing outside the

temple. ⁶ I said, “◀Amen/May that happen▶! I desire/hope that what you have predicted will happen. I hope/desire that Yahweh will do everything that you have said! I hope/desire that he will cause *men from Babylon* to bring back from Babylon *all* the valuable things that were in this temple, and all the people who were taken *to Babylon*. ⁷ But now listen to what I say to you while all these people are listening. ⁸ Many years ago, those who were prophets before you and I *became prophets* spoke messages about many nations and great kingdoms. They predicted/prophesied that wars and disasters and plagues/diseases would occur in those nations. ⁹ *So now you or any other prophet who predicts that things will go well for us must show that your message is correct. Only if what you predict actually happens will we know that you were truly appointed by Yahweh.*”

¹⁰ Then Hananiah took the yoke off my neck and broke it. ¹¹ Then he said this to all the people who were there: “This is what Yahweh says: ‘Just like Hananiah has broken this yoke, within two years I will cause King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon to *stop forcing the people to do what he wants, which has been like a heavy yoke on all their necks [MET].*’ ” After Hananiah said that, I left the temple area.

¹² *Soon* after Hananiah had broken the yoke that was around my neck, Yahweh gave this message to me: ¹³ “Go and say this to Hananiah: ‘Yahweh says that you have broken a wooden yoke, but that he will replace it with an iron yoke.

¹⁴ I have forced the people of all these nations to *become slaves of* King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. That is *like* [MET] an iron yoke around their necks. I have put everything, even wild animals, under his control.' "

¹⁵ Then I *went to* Hananiah and said to him, "Hananiah, listen to *this*: Yahweh has not appointed you; instead, *you have told* lies to the people, and they have believed your lies.

¹⁶ Therefore, this is what Yahweh says: 'You will *soon* die. Before the end of this year, you will die, because you have rebelled against Yahweh.' "

¹⁷ Hananiah died two months later.

29

The letter Jeremiah sent to the people of Judah who had been exiled to Babylonia

¹⁻² After King Jehoiachin, his mother, his palace officials, other officials in Judah, and all the various kinds of craftsmen [DOU] had been exiled to Babylon, I wrote a letter to the elders, the priests, the prophets and all the other people who had been taken from Jerusalem to Babylon by *soldiers of* Nebuchadnezzar. ³ *I gave* the letter to Elasah the son of Shaphan, and to Gemariah the son of Hilkiah, when they were about to go to Babylon to be ambassadors from King Zedekiah to King Nebuchadnezzar. This is what I wrote in the letter:

⁴ This is what the Commander of the armies of angels, the God whom *we* Israelis *worship*, says to all you people who were captured

here in Jerusalem and taken *there* to Babylon: ⁵ “Build houses *there*, and plan to stay there *because you will be there for many years*. Plant gardens, and eat the food that is produced in the gardens. ⁶ Get married and have children. Then *when they grow up*, choose wives for your sons, and husbands for your daughters, in order that they *also* may have children. *In that way*, the number of you people will increase, not decrease. ⁷ Also, do things that will cause things to go well *for the other people there* in the city where I sent you. Pray that things will go well for *the people in that city*, because if things go well for them, things will go well for you, *also*.”

⁸ This is what the Commander of the armies of angels, the God whom *we* Israeli people *worship*, says: “There are *false* prophets and fortune-tellers among you. Do not allow them to deceive you. Do not pay attention to *them when they tell you their dreams*, ⁹ because they are telling you lies, saying that [MTY] *I have given them the messages that they are telling you*. But, I have not appointed them.”

¹⁰ This is *also* what Yahweh says: “After you *and your children* have been in Babylon for seventy years, I will help you, and do for you the things that I promised, and I will enable you to return here *to Jerusalem*. ¹¹ I, Yahweh, know what I have planned for you. I am planning to cause things to go well for you, not to cause you to experience disasters. I am planning to give you many things that

you confidently expect to receive in the future.
¹² At that time, when you pray, I will heed you.
¹³ If you earnestly desire for me *to bless you*, you will experience me *blessing you*. ¹⁴ I will make my help available to you [IDM]. I will cause you to no longer be slaves *in Babylon*. I will gather you from all the nations to which I have exiled you, and I will bring you back *here to your own land*, to the place from which you were taken.”

¹⁵ *Some of* you say that Yahweh has appointed prophets for you *there* in Babylon.
¹⁶ But this is what Yahweh says about the king who rules *here* in Jerusalem, and about all the other people who are *still* living here—your relatives who were not taken to Babylon with you. ¹⁷ The Commander of the armies of angels says this: “I will cause them to experience wars and famines and diseases. I will cause them to become like [SIM] bad figs that are very rotten, with the result that no one can eat them. ¹⁸ I will not stop causing them to experience wars and famines and diseases. And I will scatter them all around the world. In every country where I ◀force them to be taken/exile them▶, I will cause them to be people whom *others* curse and be horrified about and make fun of [DOU]. ¹⁹ *That will happen* because they have refused to pay attention to my messages, messages that I gave to the prophets whom I sent to them. And you *who have been exiled to Babylon* have not paid attention to them, *either*.” *That is what*

Yahweh says.

²⁰ *Therefore*, you people who have been ◀exiled/forced to go▶ from Jerusalem to Babylon, listen to this message from Yahweh. ²¹ This is what the Commander of the armies of angels, the God whom *we* Israelis *worship*, says about Ahab the son of Kolaiah, and about Zedekiah, the son of Maaseiah, who are telling lies to you, saying that they are giving messages [MTY] from him: “They will be seized and taken to [MTY] King Nebuchadnezzar, who will cause them to be executed while you are watching.

²² Because of *what will happen* to them, all you people who have been taken from Judah to Babylon will say this when they curse someone: ‘I hope/wish that Yahweh will do to you the same thing that he did to Zedekiah and Ahab, whom the King of Babylon caused to be *killed by being* burned in a fire.’ ²³ They have done terrible things to *my* Israeli people. They have committed adultery with their neighbors’ wives, and they have spoken lies, saying that they were messages [MTY] from me. They have said things that I did not tell them to say, and I, Yahweh, have heard them *say those things*.”

A message for Shemaiah

²⁴ *Yahweh told me* to send this message to Shemaiah, a man from Nehelam *town who was living in Babylon*: ²⁵ This is what the Commander of the armies of angels, the God whom *we* Israelis *worship*, says: “You wrote a letter that no one

told you to write. You sent it to Zephaniah the priest, the son of Maaseiah, and *you sent copies* to the other priests and all the *other* people here in Jerusalem. *This is what* you wrote to him:

²⁶ *Zephaniah*, Yahweh has appointed you to be the priest instead of Jehoiada, to supervise those who work in the temple. Anyone who acts like a crazy man and who claims that he is a prophet, you should put his arms and legs and head into ◀stocks/a wooden frame so that he cannot move▶. ²⁷ So why have you not done anything to stop Jeremiah, the man from Anathoth town, who *pretends that he is a prophet* among you? ²⁸ He sent a letter to us *who are here* in Babylon, saying that *we will be here for a long time*. He said that *therefore* we should build houses and plan to stay here, and plant gardens, and eat the food that is produced in the gardens.”

²⁹ *But when* Zephaniah the priest *received* the letter from you, he *brought it to me and read it to me*. ³⁰ Then Yahweh gave me this message: ³¹ “Send this message to all the people *from Judah* who are there *in Babylon*. Say that this is what Yahweh says about Shemaiah, the man from Nehelam: ‘I did not appoint him, but he has deceived you and caused you to believe the lies that he prophesied. ³² So, I will punish him and his family. He has incited you to rebel against me. Because of that, all of his descendants will soon die. I will do *many* good things for *you*, my people, but he and his descendants will not see those things, *because they will be dead*. That will

surely happen because I, Yahweh, have said it! "

30

Yahweh promised to bring his people back

¹ Yahweh gave me another message. He said,
² "I, Yahweh, the God whom the Israeli people
say they belong to, am telling you that you should
 write down everything that I have said to you.
³ *I want you to know that* some day I will free
 my people, *the people of* Israel and Judah, from
 being slaves *in Babylon*. I will bring them back to
 this land that I gave to their ancestors, and this
 land will belong to them again. *That will surely
 happen because I, Yahweh, have said it.*"

⁴ Yahweh gave *to me* another message concern-
 ing *the people of* Israel and Judah. ⁵ This is what
 he said:

"I hear people screaming because they are terri-
 fied [DOU];
 there is no peace *in the land*.

⁶ But think about this:

Men certainly do not [RHQ] give birth to babies.
 Therefore, why do strong men stand there,
 with their faces very white/pale,
 with their hands pressed against their stomachs,
 like women who are about to give birth to
 babies?

⁷ *Terrible things will soon happen;*
 that will be a terrible day!

There has never been such a time.
 It will be a time when *my* Israeli people will
 experience great trouble,

but *finally* they will be saved *from their sufferings.*"

⁸ The Commander of the armies of angels says this:

"At that time *it will be as though* I will sever/cut the ropes *that are around my people*, and I will free them from being ◀slaves/forced to do what the King of Babylon wants them to do▶ [MET].

People in other countries will no longer be their bosses.

⁹ My people will *again* serve me, Yahweh, their God, and *they will serve a king who is a descendant of King David*; *they will serve the king* whom I will appoint for them.

¹⁰ So, *you people of Israel* who serve me, do not be dismayed/worried *now*, because *some day* I will bring you back from distant places;

I will bring your descendants *back home* from the land to which they were exiled.

Then you Israeli people will *again* live peacefully and safely,

and there will not be any *nation* that will cause you to be terrified.

¹¹ I, Yahweh, say that I will be with you and will rescue you;

I will completely destroy the nations to which I have scattered you.

But I will not completely destroy you.

I will punish you *for your many sins*, but I will punish you *only* as severely as you deserve:

I would be doing wrong if I did not punish you at all.”

¹² Yahweh *also* says this:

“You have *◀suffered very much/endured many disasters▶*;
it is *as though* you have a terrible wound that cannot be cured.

¹³ There is no one to help you,
no one to put a bandage on your wound.
There is no *medicine that will* heal you.

¹⁴ All your allies [MET] have deserted you
and they do not want to help you *any more*.
It is true that I have punished you severely,
like your enemies would wound you,
because you have committed many sins
and you are very guilty.

¹⁵ *Because that is true*, why do you protest about
my punishing you,
as though I had caused a wound that could
not be cured [RHQ]?

It was necessary for me to punish you,
because you had committed many sins
and you were very guilty.

¹⁶ But *some day* all those who *are trying to*
destroy you will be destroyed;
all your enemies will be exiled *to other*
nations.

All those who have stolen things from you
will have their *valuable* possessions stolen,

and all those who attack you will be attacked.

17 *Everyone* says that you are ◀outcasts/people that they no longer associate with▶, and that *you live in Jerusalem*, a city that no one cares about.”

But Yahweh says,

“I will heal your injuries/wounds and cause you to be healthy again.”

18 This is what Yahweh says:

“I will bring the people of Israel back from the lands to which they were taken and enable them to possess their land and their houses again.

When that happens, Jerusalem will be rebuilt on top of its ruins, and the *king’s* palace will be rebuilt to be like it was before.

19 People will *again* sing joyfully to thank *me*, and I will cause there to be more people *in Jerusalem*, not fewer; I will cause them to be honored, not despised.

20 Their children will *prosper* like they did before. I will cause them to be a group of people *who worship me*, and I will punish any *nation* that oppresses them.

21 One of their own people will be their king, and I will invite him to come close to me *to worship me*,

because no one [RHQ] would ◀dare/ have courage▶ to come close to me *if I did not invite him*.

22 You *Israeli people* will be my people,
and I will be your God.”

23 Yahweh will punish [MTY] *your enemies*;
it will be like a great storm;
it will come down *like* a whirlwind, swirling
around the heads of wicked people.

24 He will not stop being angry
until he completely accomplishes *all* that he
has planned.

In the future, you will understand *all* of this
clearly.

31

Israel will be restored

1 Yahweh says that at that time, he will be the
God *who is worshiped by* all the clans in Israel,
and they will be his people.

2 This is what Yahweh says:
“Those *people* who remained alive and were not
killed by *their enemies’* swords
were blessed *by me even* in the desert;
I enabled them to have peace.

3 Long ago *I*, Yahweh, said to *your ancestors*,
the Israeli people,
‘I have loved you and I will continue to love you
forever.
By faithfully loving you, I have brought you
close to myself.’

4 And *now I tell you*, my Israeli people whom I
love [MET], that I will cause you to be a
nation again.

You will *joyfully* dance as you play your tambourines.

⁵ Again you will plant your vineyards on the hills of Samaria,
and you will eat the grapes *that grow there*.

⁶ There will be a time when watchmen will call out from the hills of Samaria [MTY],
'Come, let's go up to Jerusalem
to *worship* Yahweh, our God!' "

⁷ And now Yahweh also says this:
"Sing joyfully about *what I have done* for the people of Israel!

Shout about *your nation*, the greatest nation!
Shout joyfully, praising me and saying,
'Yahweh, rescue your people,
the ones who are still alive!'

⁸ Do that *because* I will bring them back from the northeast,
from the most distant places on the earth.
Among them will be blind people and lame people,
women who are pregnant and women who are ◀having labor pains/about to give birth to babies▶.
They will be a huge group of people!

⁹ They will be crying as they return,
and they will be praying *to me*.
I will guide them along streams of water,
on level paths where they will not stumble.
I will do this because I am *like* a father to the Israeli people;
it is as though Israel is my oldest son."

- 10 Yahweh says, “*You people in the nations of the world, listen to this message from me. Then proclaim it to people who live along the coasts far away.*
- I scattered my people, but I will gather them *again* and will take care of them like [SIM] a shepherd takes care of his sheep.
- 11 I will buy *my* Israeli people back from those who *conquered them because they were more powerful than my people.*
- 12 My people will return *to Jerusalem* and shout joyfully on the slopes of Zion Hill. They will rejoice about the things that I have abundantly given to them—
grain and new wine and *olive* oil and young sheep and cattle.
They themselves will be like a well-watered garden,
and they will no longer be sad.
- 13 The young women will dance joyfully, and *all* the men, young ones and old ones, will join with them.
I will cause them to rejoice instead of mourning;
I will comfort them and cause them to be happy instead of being sad.
- 14 The priests will have plenty of things to eat and drink,
and *all* my people will be filled with the good things that I give them.
That will certainly happen because I, Yahweh, have said it!”

15 Yahweh *also* says this:

“Women were weeping in Ramah *town on the border between Israel and Judah*;
they were mourning and crying very loudly.
The women who were the descendants of Ephraim and Manasseh, the two grandsons of Rachel the wife of Jacob, were weeping about their children,
and no one could comfort them
because their children were *all* dead.

¹⁶ *But now* this is what I, Yahweh, say:

‘Do not cry *any more*,
because I will reward you *for the good things you have done for your children*.

Your children will return from the land where their enemies *have taken them*.

¹⁷ I, Yahweh, am telling you that there are things that you can confidently expect *me to do for you* in the future.

Your children will return to their own land.’

¹⁸ I have heard *the people of Israel* grieving very much *and saying to me*,

‘You punished us severely,
like [SIM] calves are beaten *by their owners to train them for pulling a plow*.

So bring us back *to obey/worship you again*,
because we are ready to return to you,
because you *alone* are Yahweh, our God.

¹⁹ We turned away *from you*,
but we repented;
after you caused us to realize *that we were guilty*.

We beat our chests to show that we were very ashamed [DOU] of the sins that we committed when we were young.'

²⁰ But *I*, Yahweh, say this:

The Israeli people certainly are [RHQ] still my dear children [DOU].

It is often necessary for me to threaten *to punish* them,

but I still love them.

That is why I have not forgotten them, and I will certainly act mercifully toward them.

²¹ *You Israeli people*, set up road signs;

put up posts *along the roads*

to mark the road on which you walked *when you were taken from Jerusalem*.

My precious/beloved Israeli people, come back to your towns here.

²² You people who have been like [MET] daughters who have forsaken their parents, how long will you continue to wander *away from me* [RHQ]?

I, Yahweh, will cause something to happen on the earth that ◀is new/has not happened before▶:

The women of Israel will be protecting their husbands as they travel *back here!*"

²³ This is what the Commander of the armies of angels, the God whom *we* Israeli people *worship*, says: "When I bring them back from the countries to which they have been exiled, all the people from the towns in Judah will again

say, *'I hope that Yahweh will bless this my home, the holy place where righteous people will live!'*
²⁴ *The people of Judah who live in the towns, including the farmers and the shepherds, will all live together peacefully.* ²⁵ *I will enable weary people to rest, and enable people who are very exhausted to become strong again."*

²⁶ *I, Jeremiah, woke up after dreaming all those things, and I looked around. I had slept very delightfully!*

²⁷ *Then Yahweh said to me, "There will be a time when I will greatly increase [MET] the number of people and the number of livestock here in Israel and Judah.* ²⁸ *Previously, I caused their enemies to remove the people from their land and to destroy their land and to cause them to experience many disasters [DOU]. But in the future, I will enable them to build houses and to plant crops here in Israel again. That will surely happen because I, Yahweh, have said it.* ²⁹ *Previously the people often said, 'The parents have eaten sour grapes, but it is the children's teeth that ache.' They meant that it was not fair for them to be punished for their ancestors' sins. But when I bring them back to their land, they will no longer say that.*

³⁰ *But now all people will die because of the sins that they themselves have committed.* ³¹ *I, Yahweh, say this: 'There will be a time when I will make a new agreement with the people of Israel and Judah.* ³² *This new agreement will*

not be like the agreement that I made with their ancestors when I took them by their hands and led them out of Egypt. They broke that agreement, even though I *loved them like* [MET] husbands love their wives.’ ³³ This is what I, Yahweh, say: ‘This is the new agreement that I will make with the people of Israel some day: I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their inner beings. I will be their God, and they will be my people. ³⁴ And it will not be *necessary* for them to teach their neighbors or their relatives and say, “*You need to know Yahweh,*” because everyone, including unimportant people and very important people, will *already* know me. And I will forgive them for having been very wicked, and I will never think again about the sins that they have committed.’ ”

³⁵ Yahweh is the one who causes the sun to give light during the day,

and who causes the moon and the stars to give light during the night.

He stirs up the seas, with the result that waves roar.

His name is the Commander of the armies of angels,

and this is what he says:

³⁶ “I will not reject my Israeli people any more than I will get rid of the laws *that control the universe.*

³⁷ And this is what I say:

‘No one can measure the sky,
and no one can find out what is supporting
the earth.

Similarly, I cannot reject forever the descendants of Jacob because of all the *evil* things that they have done.'

That is certain, because I, Yahweh, have said it!

³⁸ I, Yahweh, also say that there will be a time when *everything in Jerusalem* will be rebuilt for me, from the tower of Hananel *at the northeast corner, west to the gate named the Corner Gate.*

³⁹ *Workers* will stretch a measuring line/string over Gareb Hill all the way *southwest* to Goah.

⁴⁰ And the whole area, including the place where corpses and ashes are thrown in the *Kidron Valley*, and all the fields to the east as far as the Horse Gate, will become set apart for me. And the city of *Jerusalem* will never again be captured or destroyed."

32

Jeremiah bought some land

¹ After Zedekiah had been ruling Judah for almost ten years, Yahweh gave me another message, during the time that Nebuchadnezzar had been ruling *Babylonia* for almost 18 years. ² His army was surrounding Jerusalem, and I was in a prison area in the courtyard where the guards of the king's palace stayed. ³ King Zedekiah had put me there. I continued to prophesy there *about what would happen*. I continued to say, "Yahweh says that he is about to allow *the army of the king of Babylon* to capture this city [DOU]. ⁴ And the soldiers of *Babylonia* will capture King Zedekiah

and ◀take him to/put him in the hands of▶ the king of Babylon. ⁵ Then his *soldiers* will take Zedekiah to Babylon, and he will remain there until I arrange for him to be punished. And if he tries to fight against the soldiers from Babylonia, he will not succeed.”

⁶ *At that time*, Yahweh gave me another message. He said, ⁷ “*Your cousin Hanamel, the son of Shallum your uncle, will come to you. He will say to you, ‘Buy my field at Anathoth, your hometown. Because you are my closest relative, it is written in our laws that you have the right to buy it before I ask if anyone else wants to buy it.’*”

⁸ And just as Yahweh had predicted, my cousin Hanamel came to see me in the courtyard of the palace. He said, “*Please buy my field at Anathoth in the area where the descendants of Benjamin live. It is written in our laws that you have the right to buy it before I ask if anyone else wants to buy it.*” When he said that, I knew that the message that I had received was *truly* from Yahweh.

⁹ So, I bought the field at Anathoth. I paid Hanamel 17 pieces of silver for it. ¹⁰ I signed the paper/papyrus on which it was written that I was buying it, while others were watching/witnessing it. Then I weighed the silver *and gave it to him*. ¹¹ Then I took two copies of the paper/papyrus. One was sealed and the other was not sealed. On both of them was written the price and conditions of the purchase. I took both copies ¹² and I gave them to Baruch, who was the

son of Neraiah and the grandson of Mahseiah. I did this while my cousin Hanamel, the *other* witnesses who had signed the paper/papyrus, and other men of Judah who were there in the courtyard, were watching.

¹³ *Then*, while they were *all* listening, I said to Baruch, ¹⁴ "This is what the Commander of the armies of angels, the God whom *we* Israelis *worship*, says: 'Take both copies of this paper/papyrus and put them in a clay jar, to preserve them for a long time. ¹⁵ *Do that* because this is what *I*, the Commander of the armies of angels, the God whom *you* Israelis *worship*, say: "*Some day people will again own property* in this land, and they will buy and sell houses and vineyards and fields.' "

Jeremiah's query about buying the land

¹⁶ After I had given the papers/papyri to Baruch, I prayed to Yahweh, saying this:

¹⁷ "Yahweh, *you are my* Lord! You made the sky and the earth by your very great power. [MTY, DOU] Nothing is too difficult for you *to do*. ¹⁸ You show thousands of people that you faithfully love them, but you punish people for the sins that their parents have committed. *You are the* great and powerful God, the Commander of the armies of angels.

¹⁹ You make wise plans and you do mighty deeds. You see how all people behave [DOU], and you do to them what they deserve. ²⁰ You performed many miracles [DOU] in Egypt, and you continue *to perform miracles here* in Israel

and everywhere else in the world. *Because of that*, you have ◀become very famous/caused many people to know that you are very great/powerful▶. ²¹ You brought our Israeli ancestors out of Egypt by performing many great miracles [DOU], using your very great power [DOU], causing *our enemies to be terrified*. ²² You gave to us Israeli people this land that you solemnly promised to give to our ancestors, a land that is very fertile [IDM]. ²³ Our ancestors came here and conquered this land and started to live in it, but they refused to obey you or to do what you commanded them to do. Because of that, you have caused us to experience all these disasters.

²⁴ And now, *the army* of Babylonia has built ramps up against our city *walls* in order to attack our city. Because of *our enemies'* swords and because of famines and diseases, they will be able to conquer it *easily*. The things that you said would happen have *now* happened.

²⁵ *And it is evident that* the Babylonian army will soon conquer this city. So now, Yahweh my Lord, *I do not understand* why you told me to buy this field with my silver, while others were watching. *It seems that I have just been wasting my money by doing that!"*

Yahweh's reply about buying the land

²⁶ Then Yahweh gave me this message: ²⁷ "I am Yahweh, the God *who rules* all the people *in the world*. There is absolutely nothing [RHQ] that is too difficult for me *to do*. ²⁸ So, this is what I say:

It is true that I will enable the Babylonian army and King Nebuchadnezzar to capture this city. ²⁹ The soldiers of Babylonia who are *now outside the walls* around the city will enter and burn this city. They will burn down *all* the houses where people caused me to become angry by burning incense on *the tops of* their roofs to *honor* Baal and by pouring out offerings of wine to other gods.

³⁰ The people of Israel and Judah have continually done only evil things from the time that they became a nation. They have caused me to become very angry by all their evil deeds. ³¹ From the time that this city was built until now, the people of this city have done *only* things that caused me to be very angry [DOU]. So *now* I will destroy it. ³² The people of Israel and Judah, *including* their kings, their officials, the priests, the *false* prophets, and all the other people in Jerusalem have committed many sins that have caused me to become angry. ³³ My people have turned away from me and have refused to return to me. Even though I taught them things many times, they would not pay attention to what I taught them, and they would not obey me. ³⁴ They have set up their detestable idols *even* in my own [MTY] temple and ◀defiled it/caused it to become a place that is unacceptable for people to worship me▶. ³⁵ They have built shrines to *honor* Baal in Ben-Hinnom Valley *outside Jerusalem*, and there they sacrifice their sons and daughters to *their god* Molech. I never commanded them

to do such horrible things. I never even thought that anyone might do such a terrible thing. And by doing it they have caused *all the people of Judah to be guilty of having sinned.*"

The promise to restore Judah and Israel

³⁶ "But now *I will say something more* about this city. You *people of Jerusalem* have been saying, '*The army of the King of Babylon will conquer it, either by their swords or because of famines or diseases.*' But this is what *I, Yahweh, the God whom you Israeli people say you belong to*, say: ³⁷ 'I will certainly bring my people back here again, from all the countries to which I will force them to go because I am extremely angry [DOU] with them. I will bring them back to this city and allow them to live here safely. ³⁸ They will be my people, and I will be their God. ³⁹ I will cause them to have one way of thinking [IDM] and behaving, in order that they may revere me, for their good and for the good of their descendants. ⁴⁰ I will make an agreement with them that will last forever: I will never stop doing good things for them, and I will encourage them to revere me and never turn away from me. ⁴¹ I will be happy to do good things for them, and I will surely enable them to return to this land and remain here [MET]; I will do that with all my inner being and all my strength.'

⁴² And this is *also* what *I, Yahweh*, say: 'I have caused them to experience all these disasters. Similarly, *some day* I will do for them all the good things that I have promised. ⁴³ *By buying*

land you, Jeremiah, have predicted that some day people will buy and sell fields in this land about which you people of Jerusalem now say, "The Babylonian soldiers have destroyed it. It is now desolate. It is a land where there are no longer any people or animals." 44 But some day people will again buy and sell fields here. People will sign documents about buying those fields, and other people will witness them doing that. That will happen in the land where the descendants of Benjamin live and here in the villages near Jerusalem, in other towns in Judah, in the hilly areas and in the foothills to the west, and in the southern desert area, too. Some day I will cause them to prosper again. That will surely happen because I, Yahweh, have said it.' "

33

The promise that God will enable the Israeli people to prosper again

¹ While I was still being guarded in the courtyard of the palace, Yahweh gave me this second message: ² "This is what I, the one who made the earth, who formed/shaped it and put it in its place, say to the people of Jerusalem: 'My name is Yahweh. ³ Call out to me, and then I will tell you great and wonderful things that you have not known before.' ⁴ This is what I, Yahweh, the God whom you Israeli people say you belong to, say: 'The men in this city have torn down some of their houses, and even parts of the king's palace, to get materials to strengthen the walls around

the city, in order that *the soldiers of Babylonia will not be able to break through the walls after they climb up* the ramps that they have built against the walls, and *kill the inhabitants with their swords.* ⁵ You are expecting to fight against the army from Babylonia, but *what will happen is that* the houses of this city will be filled with the corpses of the men of this city whom I will *allow to be killed* because I am extremely angry [DOU] with them. I have abandoned them because of all the wicked things that they have done.

⁶ However, *there will be a time when* I will cause the people in this city to be healthy and strong again. I will enable them to be prosperous and have peace. ⁷ I will bring the people of Judah and Israel back from the lands to which they were exiled. I will enable them to rebuild their towns. ⁸ I will get rid of their guilt for all the sins that they have committed against me, and I will forgive them for their sin of rebelling against me. ⁹ *When that happens,* all the nations of the world will rejoice, and they will praise me and honor me. They will hear about all the good things that I have done for this city and, because of that, they will revere me, and they will tremble because I have caused *the people in this city* to have peace and to prosper.'

¹⁰ And this is also what I, Yahweh, say: 'You people have said that this is a land where there are no *longer* any people or animals. But in the streets of Jerusalem that are now completely empty [DOU], and in the *other* towns in Judah, ¹¹ *some day* people will again be happy and

laugh. Brides and bridegrooms will *again* sing *joyfully*. And many other people will also sing joyfully as they bring their offerings to me to thank me *for what I have done for them*. *They will sing this song:*

“We thank you, the Commander of the armies of angels,
because you are good *to us*.
You faithfully love *us* forever.”

They will sing that because I will cause the people of this land to be as prosperous as they were before.

¹² This land is *now* desolate. There are no people or animals living here. But *I*, the Commander of the armies of angels, say this: ‘In this land there will again be pastures/fields where shepherds will lead their sheep. ¹³ Shepherds will again count their sheep as the sheep walk by, outside the towns in the hilly area, in the western foothills, in the southern desert area, in the land *where the descendants* of Benjamin live, around Jerusalem, and outside *all the other* towns in Judah.’ *That will surely happen because I, Yahweh, have said it.*

¹⁴ Listen to this! *I, Yahweh*, say that there will be a time when I will do for the people of Israel and Judah *all the good things that I promised to do for them*.

¹⁵ At that time [DOU] I will appoint a righteous man who will be a descendant [MET] of King David.

Throughout the land, he will do what is just and right.

¹⁶ At that time, *the people of Judah* will be rescued *from their enemies*, and *the people of Jerusalem* will be safe.

And people will say that the name of the city is 'Yahweh is *the one who vindicates/defends us*'.

¹⁷ And this is *also* what I, Yahweh, say: 'There will be descendants of King David ruling [MTY] Israel forever. ¹⁸ And there will always be priests who are descendants of Levi who *stand* in front of me and offer sacrifices that will be completely burned *on the altar* and who will burn grain offerings and *other sacrifices*.' "

¹⁹ Then Yahweh gave me this message: ²⁰ "This is what I, Yahweh, say: 'You certainly cannot annul my promise/agreement to cause nighttime to follow daytime each day. ²¹ Similarly, you cannot annul the promise/agreement *that I made* with King David, who served me *well*, that there will always be descendants of his who will rule *Judah*. The same is true for my agreement with the descendants of Levi who are priests who do work for me. ²² No one can count the stars in the sky, and no one can count the grains of sand at the seashore. Similarly, I will cause there to be a huge number of priests who are descendants of David and descendants of Levi who will work for me.' "

²³ Yahweh gave another message to me. He said, ²⁴ "Have you noticed/heard that some people are saying, 'Yahweh chose two groups, the people *of Judah* and the people *of Israel*, and *later* abandoned them.' They are despising my people

and saying that Israel no longer deserves to be considered a nation. ²⁵ But this is what I say: 'I will not change my laws that control the day and the night, the sky and the earth. ²⁶ Similarly, I will never abandon the descendants of David or the *other* descendants of Jacob, and I will always allow descendants of David to rule the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. I will bring my people back to their land, and I will act mercifully toward them.' "

34

Jeremiah warned King Zedekiah

¹ King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon came with the armies of all the kingdoms that he ruled, and they fought against Jerusalem and the other towns *in Judah*. At that time, Yahweh gave me this message: ² "Go to Zedekiah the King of Judah, and say to him, 'This is what Yahweh, the God whom we Israelis *worship*, says: "I am about to enable the army of the King of Babylon to capture this city, and they will burn it down. ³ You will not escape from them; they will capture you and take you to the king of Babylon. And *then* they will take you to Babylon." "

⁴ But King Zedekiah, listen to this that Yahweh has promised: 'You will not be killed in a battle [MTY]; ⁵ you will die peacefully. *When you die*, people will burn incense to honor/remember you just as they did for your ancestors who were kings before you became king. They will mourn

for you, crying, “We are very sad that our king is dead!” I, Yahweh, promise that will happen.’ ”

⁶ So I took that message to King Zedekiah. ⁷ At that time the army of Babylonia had surrounded Jerusalem and Lachish and Azekah. Those *three* cities were the only cities in Judah that had high walls around them that still had not been captured.

Jeremiah warned them they would be punished for not freeing their slaves

⁸ King Zedekiah had decreed that the people must free their slaves. ⁹ *He decreed that the people must free their Hebrew slaves, both the men slaves and the women slaves.* No one would be allowed to force a fellow Jew to *continue to* be his slave. ¹⁰ The officials and the rest of the people had obeyed *what the king decreed*, ¹¹ but later they changed their minds. They forced the men and women whom they had freed to become their slaves again.

¹² So Yahweh gave me this message *to tell to them*: ¹³ “I, Yahweh, the God whom you Israelis *say you belong to*, ◀made an agreement with/ gave this command to▶ your ancestors *long ago*, when I rescued them from being slaves in Egypt. ¹⁴ I told them that they must free all their Hebrew slaves after the slaves had worked for them for six years. But your ancestors did not pay any attention to what I said. ¹⁵ Recently, you obeyed my command and stopped doing what was wrong and did what was right. You made a solemn agreement at my temple *that you would free your slaves*, and *then* you freed them. ¹⁶ But

now you have disregarded what you solemnly promised, and you have shown contempt for what I [MTY] said by taking back the women and men whom you had freed and said they could live wherever they wanted to. *Now* you have forced them to be your slaves again.

¹⁷ Therefore, this is what *I*, Yahweh, say: 'Because you have not obeyed me by freeing your fellow Israelis, I will free you to *be destroyed* by the swords *of your enemies* and by famines and diseases. All the nations of the earth will be horrified because of *what happens to you*.

¹⁸⁻¹⁹ Because you have disregarded what I said in my agreement with you, I will do to you just like you did to the calves that you cut in half to show that you would surely do what you solemnly promised that you would do. I will *enable your enemies to* cut you into pieces, you officials of Judah and you officials of Jerusalem, and you officials in the palace, and you priests and all you common people. I will do that because you have disregarded what you solemnly promised *about freeing your slaves*. ²⁰ I will enable your enemies to capture you, and they will kill you. And your bodies will be food for vultures and wild animals.

²¹ I will enable the army of the king of Babylon to capture King Zedekiah and his officials. Although the king of Babylon and his army have left Jerusalem *for a short time*, ²² I will summon them back again. *This time*, they will fight against this city and capture it and burn it down. I will make *sure* that all the towns in Judah are

destroyed, *with the result that no one will live there any more.*' ”

35

The lesson from the Rechabites

¹ *Several years earlier*, when Jehoiakim was the King of Judah, Yahweh gave me this message:
² “Go to the place where families of the Rechab clan live. Invite them to my temple. *When they arrive*, take them into one of the inside rooms and offer them *some wine.*”

³ So I went to see Jaazaniah and all his brothers and sons who represented the Rechab clan. Jaazaniah was the son of *another man named Jeremiah* and grandson of Habazziniah. ⁴ I took them to the temple, *and we went* into the room where the sons of Igdaliah’s son Hanan, who was a prophet, stayed. That room was next to the room that was used by the men who were in charge of the entrances to the temple. It was above the room that belonged to Maaseiah, who was the temple gatekeeper and the son of Shallum.

⁵ I set jugs of wine in front of them and urged them to drink some, ⁶ but they refused. They said, “We do not drink wine, because our ancestor Jehonadab, the son of Rechab, commanded us, saying ‘You and your descendants must never drink wine. ⁷ And you must not build houses or plant vineyards or *other* crops. Instead, you must always live in tents. If you obey those commands, you all will live for many years in this land.’ ⁸ So we have obeyed him in all

those matters. We have never drunk wine. Our wives and our sons and our daughters *have also never drunk wine*.⁹ We have not built houses or planted vineyards or *other* crops or *worked in fields*.¹⁰ We have lived in tents. We have obeyed all the commands that Jehonadab, our ancestor, gave us.¹¹ But when *the army of King Nebuchadnezzar* attacked this country, we said, 'We must go to Jerusalem to escape from the armies of Babylonia and Syria.' So, *we came to Jerusalem and we are living here.*"

¹² Then Yahweh gave this message to me: "This is what *I*, the Commander of the armies of angels, the God whom the Israeli *people say that they belong to*, say:¹³ 'Go and tell this to the people in Jerusalem and in *other places in Judah*: "Why do you not [RHQ] listen to me or learn something about how to obey me?"¹⁴ The Rechab clan still do not drink wine, because their ancestor Jehonadab told them to not do that. *In contrast*, I have spoken to you many times, but you refuse to obey me.¹⁵ Many times I sent prophets to you. They told you, 'Turn away from your wicked behavior, and do things that you should do. Stop worshiping other gods, in order that you will be able to live *peacefully* in this land that I gave to you and your ancestors.' But you would not pay attention to what I said or obey me.¹⁶ The descendants of Jehonadab have obeyed their ancestor, but you have refused to pay attention to what I told you.

¹⁷ Therefore, this is what *I*, the Commander of the armies of angels, the God whom you

Israeli people *say you belong to*, say: 'You have refused to listen to me and you did not answer when I called you. Therefore, I will cause the people in Jerusalem and *other places in Judah* to experience all the disasters that I said that I would cause to happen.' " ' "

¹⁸ Then I turned to the Rechab clan and said, "This is what the Commander of the armies of angels, the God whom *we Israelis say we belong to*, says: 'You have obeyed what your ancestor Jehonadab told you. You have obeyed all his instructions. ¹⁹ Therefore, this is what I say: "There will always be descendants of Jehonadab who will do work for me." ' ' "

36

They read Jeremiah's scroll

¹ When Jehoiakim had been the king of Judah for almost four years, Yahweh gave this message to me: ² "Get a scroll, and write on it the messages that I have given to you regarding Israel, Judah, and the other nations. Write all of the messages, starting from the time that I gave you the first message, when Josiah was the king, up until now. ³ When the people of Judah hear *again* about all the disasters that I plan to cause them to experience, perhaps each one of them will repent. If they do that, I will be able to forgive them for the wrong/evil things that they have done."

⁴ So I summoned Baruch, the son of Neraiah. Then, as I dictated to him all the messages that Yahweh had spoken to me, he wrote them on a

scroll. ⁵ Then I said to him, “I am not allowed to *leave here and go to the temple*. ⁶ So, you go *to the temple on the next day when the people are ◀fasting/abstaining from food▶*, and read to them the messages from Yahweh that you wrote while I dictated them to you. Read them *aloud* to all the people *who are there, including the people of Judah who come there from their towns*. ⁷ Perhaps they will turn from their evil behavior and request Yahweh *to act mercifully toward them*. *They must do that*, because Yahweh is very angry with them and has threatened to punish them severely.”

⁸ Baruch did what I told him to do. He *went to the temple and read to the people* all those messages from Yahweh. ⁹ He did it in December on a day when their leaders had proclaimed that all the people in Jerusalem and the people who had come there from *other* towns in Judah should fast to *please/honor* Yahweh. *It was when Jehoiakim had been king for almost five years*. ¹⁰ Baruch read to all the people the messages *that he had written* on the scroll. *He read them while he was in the temple, in the room where Gemariah stayed*. He was the son of Shaphan, *who had previously been the king’s secretary*. That room was close to the upper courtyard *of the temple*, near the entrance to the temple that is *called* the New Gate.

¹¹ When Micaiah, who was the son of Gemariah and grandson of Shaphan, heard those messages from Yahweh, ¹² he went down to the secretary’s room in the palace, where all

the king's officials were meeting. Elishama the king's secretary *was there*. Delaiah the son of Shemaiah, Elnathan the son of Acbor, Gemariah, Zedekiah the son of Hananiah, and all the *other officials of the king were also there*.

¹³ When Micaiah told them about the messages that Baruch had been reading to the people, ¹⁴ the officials sent Jehudi, who was the son of Nethaniah and grandson of Shelemiah and great-grandson of Cushi, to tell Baruch to come *and read the messages to them, also*. So Baruch took the scroll and went to them. ¹⁵ They said to him, "Please sit down and read it *to us*." So Baruch did what they requested.

¹⁶ After they had heard all the messages, they were afraid. They looked at each other and *then* they said, "We must tell these messages to the king!" ¹⁷ Then they asked Baruch, "How did you get this scroll? Did Jeremiah dictate to you all the messages on this scroll?"

¹⁸ Baruch replied, "Yes, Jeremiah dictated them to me, and I wrote them with ink on this scroll."

¹⁹ Then the officials told Baruch, "You and Jeremiah must both hide. Do not tell anyone where you are!"

²⁰ They put the scroll in the room of Elishama, the king's secretary. Then they went to the king, who was in the courtyard, and reported to him everything *that Baruch had read to them*.

The king burned Jeremiah's scroll

²¹ Then the king sent Jehudi to get the scroll. Jehudi brought it from Elishama's room and read

it to the king, while all the *king's* officials were standing there. ²² It was in the cold season, and the king was in a part of the palace where he stayed when it was cold. He was sitting in front of a fire *to keep/be warm*. ²³ Each time Jehudi finished reading three or four columns, the king cut off that section of the scroll with a knife and threw it into the fire. He did that, section by section, until the entire scroll was burned up. ²⁴ Neither the king nor his officials showed that they were afraid *that God would punish them*. They did not tear their clothes *to show that they were sorry for what they had done*. ²⁵ Elnathan, Delaiah, and Gemariah pleaded with the king not to burn the scroll, but he did not pay any attention. ²⁶ Then the king commanded his son Jerahmeel, Seraiah the son of Azriel, and Shelemiah the son of Abdeel to arrest Baruch and me. But *they were unable to do that because Yahweh had hidden us*.

Jeremiah had another scroll written

²⁷ After the king had burned the scroll on which were written the messages that I had dictated to Baruch, Yahweh said this to me: ²⁸ “Get another scroll, and *tell Baruch to write everything again, the same messages that he had written on the scroll that the king burned*. ²⁹ *Then go to the king and say to him, ‘Yahweh says this: “You burned the scroll because you did not like what was written on it, that the king of Babylon would surely [RHQ] come with his army and destroy this land and get rid of all*

the people and the animals. ³⁰ Now this is what *I*, Yahweh, say about *you*, Jehoiakim: 'None of your descendants will rule this kingdom [MTY]. Your corpse will be thrown out *on the ground and not be buried*; it will be under the hot sun during the days and *struck by* frost during the nights. ³¹ I will punish you and your family and your officials for their sins. And I will cause the people of Jerusalem and the people of the *other* towns in Judah to experience all the disasters that I promised, because you all would not pay attention *to what I said!*' " ' " "

³² So I took another scroll, and again I dictated the messages to Baruch. He wrote everything that had been written on the *other* scroll, the one that King Jehoiakim had burned in the fire. *But this time*, I added more messages.

37

King Zedekiah summoned Jeremiah

¹ After Jehoiakim died, *his son Jehoiachin became king for only three months, after which* King Josiah's son Zedekiah became the King of Judah. Nebuchadnezzar, the King of Babylon, appointed him to be the new king. ² But King Zedekiah and his palace officials and the other people in the land paid no attention to the messages that Yahweh gave me.

³ However, *one day* King Zedekiah sent Jehucal the son of Shelemiah, and Zephaniah the priest, who was the son of Maaseiah, to me. They

requested me to pray to Yahweh our God for our *nation*.

⁴ At that time I had not yet been put in prison, so I could come and go wherever and whenever I wanted to, *without being hindered*.

⁵ *At that time*, the army of Hophra, the King of Egypt, came *to the southern border of Judah*. When the army of Babylonia heard about that, they stopped surrounding Jerusalem and left there *to fight against the army from Egypt*.

⁶ Then Yahweh gave this message to me: ⁷ “I, Yahweh, the God whom you Israelis say you belong to, say this: ‘The King of Judah has sent messengers to you to ask me *what is going to happen*. Tell the king that even though the army of the King of Egypt came to help him, they are about to return to Egypt. ⁸ Then the army of Babylonia will return here and capture this city and burn everything in it.’

⁹ So, this is what I say *to you Israelis*: ‘You should not deceive yourselves, thinking that the army from Babylonia has gone and will not return. That is not true. ¹⁰ And even if your soldiers could destroy almost all of the soldiers from Babylonia who are attacking you, and allow only a few of them who were wounded to remain alive in their tents, they would come out *of their tents* and burn this city completely!’ ” ”

Jeremiah was put into a prison

¹¹ When the army from Babylonia left Jerusalem because the army from Egypt was approaching, ¹² I started to leave the city. I

intended to go to the area *where the descendants of Benjamin* live, in order to take possession of my share of the property from my family. ¹³ But as I was walking out the Benjamin Gate, a guard seized me and said, “You are deserting *us and going to the soldiers from Babylonia!*” The man who seized me was Irijah, the son of Shelemiah and grandson of Hananiah.

¹⁴ But I *protested and* said, “That is not true! I was not intending to do that!” But Irijah would not pay attention to what I said. He took me to the *king’s* officials. ¹⁵ They were very angry with me. They *commanded the guards to* beat me and *then to* put me in the house where Jonathan the king’s secretary stayed. They had changed Jonathan’s house to make it become a prison.

¹⁶ They put me in a dungeon/cell in that prison, and I remained there for several days. ¹⁷ Then King Zedekiah secretly sent a servant to me, who took me to the palace. There the king asked me, “Do you have any messages from Yahweh?” I replied, “Yes, *the message is that you will be handed over to the king of Babylon.*”

¹⁸ Then I asked the king, “What crime have I committed [RHQ] against you or against your officials or against the Israeli people, with the result that you have *commanded that* I be put in a prison? ¹⁹ Your prophets predicted that the army of the king of Babylon would not attack you or this land. Why were [RHQ] *their messages* not fulfilled? ²⁰ Your majesty, I plead with you to listen to me. Do not send me back to

the dungeon/cell in the house of Jonathan your secretary, because *if you do that*, I will die there.”

²¹ So King Zedekiah commanded that *I not be sent back to the prison cell. Instead*, I was allowed to be watched by the guards in the courtyard of *the palace. The king also commanded that they should* bring me a loaf of fresh bread every day, until there was no bread left in the city. So *they put me* in that courtyard and I remained there.

38

Jeremiah was put in a dry well

¹ *Four officials*, Shephatiah the son of Mattan, Gedaliah the son of Pashhur, Jehucal the son of Shelemiah, and Pashhur the son of Malkijah, heard what I had been telling all the people.

² *I had been telling them* that Yahweh was saying, “Everyone who stays in Jerusalem will die. They will be killed by *their enemies’* swords or from famines or from diseases. But those who surrender to the Babylonian army, they will be spared. They will not be killed. ³ Yahweh also says that the army of the King of Babylon will certainly capture this city [DOU].”

⁴ So those officials *went* to the king and said, “This man *Jeremiah* should be executed! Because of what he is saying, he is discouraging our soldiers who remain in the city. He is also discouraging the people. He is not saying things that will help us; he is saying things that will defeat us.”

⁵ King Zedekiah said, “All right, do to him what you want to; I do not have the power to stop you.”

⁶ So those officials took me from my cell and lowered me by ropes into a well in the courtyard. The well belonged to Malkijah, who was a son of the king. There was no water in the well, but there was *a lot of* mud, so I sank *down deep* into the mud.

⁷ But Ebed-Melech, a palace official from Ethiopia, heard *someone say* that I was in the well. *At that time* the king was deciding/judging people’s cases at the Benjamin Gate. ⁸ Ebed-Melech went out of the palace and said to the king, ⁹ “Your majesty, those men have done a very evil thing. They have put the prophet Jeremiah in a well. *Almost all the food in the city is gone, so they will not be able to bring him any food* and as a result he will die from hunger!”

¹⁰ So the king told Ebed-Melech, “Take thirty of my men/soldiers with you, and pull Jeremiah out of the well, in order that he does not die!”

¹¹ So Ebed-Melech took thirty men with him and they went into a room in the palace below the room where they stored very valuable things. There they found some old rags and discarded clothing. They took those things and went to the well. They fastened them to a rope and lowered the rope to me. ¹² Then Ebed-Melech called down to me, “Put these rags underneath your armpits, to protect you from *being injured by* the ropes!” So I did that. ¹³ Then they pulled me out of

the well. I *returned* to the courtyard where the palace guards stayed, and I stayed there.

Zedekiah questioned Jeremiah

¹⁴ *One day* King Zedekiah summoned me, and I was brought to the king, *who was waiting for me* at the entrance of the temple. He said to me, “I want to ask you something. I want you *to answer me truthfully, and* and to not conceal anything.”

¹⁵ I replied, “If I tell you *the truth*, you will *command that I* be executed. And if I give you *good* advice, you will not pay attention to what I say.”

¹⁶ But King Zedekiah secretly promised me, “*Tell me the truth!* And as surely as Yahweh lives, I will not *cause* you to be executed, and I will not hand you over to those who are wanting to kill you.”

¹⁷ So then I said to Zedekiah, “This is what the Commander of the armies of angels, the God whom *we* Israelis *worship*, says: ‘If you surrender to the officers of the king of Babylon, you and your family will ◀be spared/not be killed▶, and this city will not be burned. ¹⁸ But if you refuse to surrender to them, you will not escape. And the army from Babylonia will capture this city and completely burn it.’ ”

¹⁹ The king replied, “But I am afraid *to surrender to the soldiers from Babylon*, because their officers may hand me over to the people of Judah who have already joined the soldiers from Babylonia, and those people from Judah will mistreat me.”

²⁰ I replied, “If you obey Yahweh by doing what I tell you to do, they will not hand you over to our people. Things will go well for you, and you will remain alive. ²¹ But if you refuse to surrender, this is what Yahweh has revealed to me: ²² All the women who remain in your palace will be brought out and given to the officers of the king of Babylon. Then those women will say to you: ‘You had friends whom *you thought* you could trust, but they have deceived you and caused you to make a wrong decision.

Now *it is as though* you are stuck in mud, and your friends have abandoned you.’

²³ All of your wives and children *in the city* will be led out to the soldiers from Babylonia, and you also will not escape. *The soldiers of the King of Babylon* will seize you, and they will burn down this city.”

²⁴ Then Zedekiah said to me, “Do not tell anyone what you told me; if you tell anyone, my officials may kill you. ²⁵ If my officials find out that I talked to you, perhaps they will come to you and say, ‘Tell us what you and the king were talking about. If you do not tell us, we will kill you.’ ²⁶ If that happens, *just* tell them that you pleaded with me not to send you back to the *dungeon/cell in Jonathan’s house, because you were afraid that you would die if you were put there again.*”

²⁷ And *that is what happened.* The king’s officials came to me and asked *why the king had summoned me.* But I told them what the king

told me to tell them. So they did not ask me any more *questions*, because no one had heard what the king and I had said to each other.

²⁸ So I remained being guarded in the courtyard *of the palace*, until the day that *the army of Babylonia* captured Jerusalem.

39

Jerusalem was captured

¹ After King Zedekiah had been ruling Judah for almost nine years, King Nebuchadnezzar came in January with his army, and they surrounded Jerusalem. ² One and a half years later, after Zedekiah had been ruling for almost eleven years, on July 18, *soldiers from Babylonia* broke through the city wall. *Then they rushed in and captured the city.* ³ Then all the officers of the king of Babylon came in and sat down at the Middle Gate *to decide what they would do to the city.* *They included* Nergal-Sharezer from Samgar, Nebo-Sarsekim who was one of the chief army officers, another Nergal-Sharezer, the king's advisor, and many other officials.

⁴ When King Zedekiah and all his soldiers realized that *the army of Babylonia had broken into the city*, they fled. *They waited until* it was dark. Then they went out of the city through the king's garden, through the gate that was between the two walls. Then they started *running* toward the Jordan River Valley.

⁵ But the soldiers from Babylonia pursued the king, and they caught him on the plains near

Jericho. They took him to the King of Babylon, who was at Riblah *town* in the Hamath *region*. There the king of Babylon told *his soldiers what* they should do to punish Zedekiah. ⁶ They forced Zedekiah to watch while they killed his sons and all the officials from Judah. ⁷ *Then* they gouged out Zedekiah's eyes. They fastened him with bronze chains and took him to Babylon.

⁸ *Meanwhile*, the Babylonian army burned the palace and all the other buildings in Jerusalem. And they tore down the city walls. ⁹ Then Nebuzaradan, the captain of the *king's* bodyguards, forced to go to Babylon *most of* the other people who remained in the city and the Jews who had joined the soldiers of Babylonia. ¹⁰ But he allowed some of the very poor people to remain in Judah, and he gave them vineyards and fields *to take care of*.

Jeremiah stayed in Judah

¹¹ King Nebuchadnezzar had *previously* told Nebuzaradan to find me. He said, ¹² "Make sure that no one harms him. Take care of him, and do for him whatever he requests you to do." ¹³ So he and Nebushazban, who was one of their chief officers, and Nergal-Sharezer the king's advisor, and other officers of the King of Babylon ¹⁴ sent *some men* to bring me out of the courtyard outside of the palace. They took me to Gedaliah who was the son of Ahikam and grandson of Shaphan. Then Gedaliah took me to my home, and I stayed *in Judah* among *my own* people *who had been allowed to remain there*.

¹⁵ While I was *still* being guarded in the palace courtyard, Yahweh gave me this message: ¹⁶ “Say this to Ebed-Melech, the official from Ethiopia: ‘This is what the Commander of the armies of angels, the God whom *we* Israelis *worship*, says: “I will do to this city everything that I said that I would do. I will not enable the people to prosper; I will cause them to experience disasters. You will see Jerusalem being destroyed, ¹⁷ but I will rescue you from the people whom you are afraid of. ¹⁸ You trusted me, so I will save you. You will not be killed by *your enemies’* swords; you will remain alive. *That will surely happen because I, Yahweh, have said it.’* ”

40

Jeremiah decided to stay with Gedaliah

¹ *The soldiers from Babylonia* captured me and many other people from Jerusalem and *other places in Judah*. They *planned to take us to Babylon*. So they fastened chains around our wrists and took us to Ramah *town north of Jerusalem*. While we were there, I was released. *This is how it happened:* ² *Nebuzaradan, the captain of the king’s bodyguards, found that I was there*. He summoned me and said to me, “Yahweh your God said that he would cause this land to experience a disaster. ³ And now he has caused it to happen. He has done just what he said *that he would do*, because you people sinned against Yahweh and refused to obey him. ⁴ But today I am going to take the chains off your

wrists and release you. If you want to come with me to Babylon, *that will be fine*. I will take care of you. But if you do not want to come with me, do not come. *Stay here*. Look, the entire country is available; you can choose whatever part you want to go to. You can go wherever you wish." *Then he took the chains off my wrists.* ⁵ He said, "If you *decide to stay here*, go to Gedaliah. The King of Babylon appointed him to be the governor of Judah. *You will be allowed to stay here with the people that he is governing*. But you can do whatever you want to."

Then Nebuzaradan gave me some food and some money, and he allowed me to go.

⁶ I returned to Gedaliah at Mizpah, and I stayed in Judah with the people who still remained in the land.

Many people returned to Judah

⁷ The *Israeli soldiers who had not surrendered to the army of Babylonia* were roaming around in the countryside. Then their leaders heard someone say that the King of Babylon had appointed Gedaliah to be the governor of the very poor people *who were still in Judah*, who had not been taken to Babylon. ⁸ So they went *to talk to Gedaliah at Mizpah*. *Those who went included* Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, Johanan and Jonathan the sons of Kareah, Seraiah the son of Tanhumeth, the sons of Ephai from Netophath, and Jezaniah from Maacah, and the soldiers who were with them. ⁹ Gedaliah solemnly promised that the soldiers from Babylonia would not harm

them. He said, “Do not be afraid to do things for them. Stay *here* in this land and do things for the King of Babylon. If you do that, things will go well for you. ¹⁰ As for me, I will stay *here* at Mizpah to be your representative to the *officials from Babylonia* who come to *talk with us*. But you should *return to your towns, and eat the things that are produced on your land*. Harvest the grapes and the fruit *that ripen in the ◀summer/hot season▶* and the olives, *make wine and olive oil*, and store it.”

¹¹ Then the Jews who had fled to Moab, Ammon, Edom, and other *nearby* countries heard people say that the King of Babylon had allowed a few people *to remain* in Judah, and that he had appointed Gedaliah to be their governor. ¹² So they *began to return* to Judah. They stopped at Mizpah to *talk with Gedaliah*. Then *they went to various places in Judea*, and they harvested a great amount of grapes and summer fruit.

The plot to kill Gedaliah

¹³ *Some time later*, Johanan and all the *other* leaders of the Israeli soldiers *who had not surrendered to the army of Babylonia* came to Gedaliah at Mizpah. ¹⁴ They said to him, “Do you know that Baalis, the king of the Ammon *people-group*, has sent Ishmael the son of Nethaniah to assassinate you?” But Gedaliah did not believe what they said.

¹⁵ Later Johanan talked with Gedaliah privately. He said, “Allow me to go and murder Ishmael secretly. It would not be good [RHQ] to

allow him to come and murder you! If you are killed, what will happen to all the Jews who have returned to this area? They will be scattered, and the other people who remain in Judah will all be killed!”

¹⁶ But Gedaliah said to Johanan, “No, I will not allow you to do that. *I think that you are lying about Ishmael.*”

41

Gedaliah was murdered

¹ Ishmael was a member of the king’s family. He had been one of King Zedekiah’s important officials. In October of that year, he went to Mizpah with ten other men to *talk with Gedaliah*. While they were eating together, ² Ishmael and the other ten men jumped up, and with their swords they killed Gedaliah—the man whom the king of Babylon had appointed to be their governor! ³ *Ishmael and the other men* also killed all the Jews and the soldiers from Babylonia who were with Gedaliah at Mizpah.

⁴ The next day, before anyone had found out that Gedaliah had been murdered, ⁵ eighty men from Shechem, Shiloh, and Samaria *cities* came to worship at the temple of Yahweh *in Mizpah*. They had shaved off their beards and torn their clothes and cut themselves *to show that they were mourning*. And they had brought grain offerings and incense *to burn on the altar*. ⁶ Ishmael went out of the city to meet them, crying as he went. When he reached them, he said, “Come *and see what has happened to Gedaliah!*”

⁷ But as soon as they had all entered the town, Ishmael and his men killed *most of them* and threw their corpses into a well. ⁸ There were *only* ten of them whom they ◀spared/did not kill▶. They were not killed because they promised to Ishmael that *if he allowed them to remain alive, they would bring him* lots of wheat and barley and olive oil and honey that they had hidden. ⁹ The well where Ishmael's men had thrown the corpses of the men whom they had murdered was the deep well that King Asa's *men* had dug *in order that they would have water in the city* if the army of King Baasha of Israel would surround the city. Ishmael's men filled that well with corpses.

¹⁰ Then Ishmael *and his men* captured the king's daughters and some of the other people who had been left in Mizpah by Nebuzaradan in order that Gedaliah would take care of them. Ishmael and his men took those people and started back toward the Ammon area.

¹¹ But Johanan and all the other leaders of the Israeli soldiers who had not surrendered to the army of Babylonia heard about what Ishmael *and his men* had done. ¹² So they *immediately* went with all their men to stop them. They caught up with them at the large pool near Gibeon *city*. ¹³ When all the people whom Ishmael and his men had captured saw Johanan and the soldiers who were with him, they *shouted* joyfully. ¹⁴ So all those who had been captured in Mizpah escaped, and they started to help Johanan. ¹⁵ But Ishmael and eight

of his men escaped and fled to the Ammon area. ¹⁶ Then Johanan and the men who were with him *gathered together* all the people whom they had rescued at Gibeon. They included soldiers and women and children and some of the king's palace officials. They were all people whom Ishmael *and his men* had captured after they had killed Gedaliah. ¹⁷ They took them all to Geruth-Kimham *village* near Bethlehem. And they all prepared to go to Egypt. ¹⁸ They were worried about what the soldiers of Babylonia *would do to them when they found out* that Ishmael had killed Gedaliah, who had been appointed by the King of Babylonia to be their governor.

42

Jeremiah warned them to not go to Egypt

¹ Then Johanan and Azariah the son of Hoshaiah, and all the *other* leaders of the *Israeli* soldiers *who had not surrendered to the army of Babylonia*, and many [HYP] *other* people, including those who were important and those who were not important, came ² to me. They said, "Please listen to our request and pray to Yahweh our God for all of us. Although we were previously a huge number of people, you can see that now we are only a small number of people *who have survived*. ³ *Pray* that Yahweh our God will show us what we should do and where we should go."

⁴ I replied, "Okay, I will pray to Yahweh our God, like you have requested, and I will tell you

what he says. I will ◀tell you everything/not hide anything from you▶.”

⁵ They replied to me, “We hope/wish that Yahweh our God will be a faithful witness against us if we refuse to do everything that he tells us to do. ⁶ We are requesting you to ask Yahweh our God what we should do. *When he replies*, we will obey him, whether we like what he says or not. We will do that because *we know that* things will go well for us if we obey him.”

⁷ *So I prayed* to Yahweh, and ten days later he gave me his reply. ⁸ So I summoned Johanan and all his *other* soldiers and all the *other* people, including those who were important and those who were not important. ⁹ I said to them, “You told me to tell Yahweh, the God whom *we* Israelis *worship*, what you were requesting. This is what he replied: ¹⁰ ‘You *should* stay here in this land. If you do that, I will cause your *nation* to be strong and not be weak. I will cause you to prosper and not be exiled *again*. I am sorry about the disasters that I *was forced to* cause you to experience. ¹¹ But do not be afraid of the king of Babylon *any more*, because I will ◀be with/help▶ you. I will rescue you [DOU] from his power [MTY]. ¹² I will be merciful to you by causing him to act kindly toward you. So as a result, he will allow you to stay here in your land.’

¹³ But if you refuse to obey Yahweh our God, and if you say ‘We will not stay here; ¹⁴ instead, we will go to Egypt. There we will not experience *any* wars, we will not hear trumpets

signaling our soldiers to prepare for battles, and we will not be hungry,' ¹⁵ then listen to what the Commander of the armies of angels, the God whom *we* Israelis *worship*, says: 'If you are determined to go to Egypt, and you go and live there, ¹⁶ you will experience those wars and famines that you are afraid of, and you will *all* die there. ¹⁷ That is what will happen to all you who are determined to go to Egypt and live there. *Some of you* will be killed by the swords of *your enemies, and others of you* will die from famines and from diseases. None of you will escape the disasters that I will bring on you.'

¹⁸ And the Commander of the armies of angels, the God whom *we* Israelis *worship*, also says this: 'Because I was very angry, I severely punished [MTY] *all* the people of Jerusalem. I will do the same things to you when you go to Egypt. *The result will be that* people will curse you. They will be horrified about *what has happened* to you. They will make fun of you, and you will never see this land again.'

¹⁹ You little group of people of Judah who are still alive, *listen to me*: Yahweh has told you, 'Do not go to Egypt.' So do not forget what I have warned you today. ²⁰ I know that you were lying when you requested me to pray to Yahweh our God. ²¹ And today I have told you exactly what he said, but *I know that* you will not obey Yahweh our God now, just as you have not obeyed him previously. ²² You want to go to Egypt and live there. So now, you can be sure of this: *All of you*

will die there. *Some of you will be killed by the swords of your enemies and others will die from famines or from diseases.*"

43

Jeremiah was taken to Egypt

¹ So I finished telling to the people that message from Yahweh our God. ² But then Johanan and Azariah and some other insolent/arrogant men said to me, "You are lying! Yahweh our God has not told us that we should not go to Egypt! ³ *We think that* Baruch has urged/persuaded you to say this, in order that *if we stay here*, the soldiers from Babylonia will seize us and kill us or take us to Babylonia."

⁴ So Johanan and the other leaders of the *Israeli* soldiers and *many of* [HYP] the other people *who were there* refused to obey Yahweh's command to stay in Judah. ⁵ Johanan and all the *other* leaders gathered together all the people who had returned from the other countries to which they had been scattered. ⁶ *They included* men, women, children, the king's daughters, and all those whom Nebuzaradan had left with Gedaliah, and they also took Baruch and me. ⁷ They refused to obey Yahweh, and they took us all *to Egypt*, as far as Tahpenes city.

⁸ *While we were* at Tahpenes, Yahweh gave me another message. He said, ⁹ "While the people of Judah are watching you, take some large rocks and bury them under the brick pavement at the entrance to the king's palace there at

Tahpenes. ¹⁰ Then say to the people of Judah, "This is what the Commander of the armies of angels, the God whom *you* Israelis say you *belong to*, says: "I will summon Nebuchadnezzar the King of Babylon, who does my work, to come *with his army* to Egypt. I will set up his throne over these stones that I told Jeremiah to bury. And Nebuchadnezzar will set up his tent there *to show that he has become* the King of Egypt. ¹¹ When his *army* comes, they will attack Egypt. Then those will die who *I have determined* must die, those who *I have determined* must be captured will be captured, and those who *I have determined* must be killed by swords will be killed by swords. ¹²⁻¹³ Nebuchadnezzar's *soldiers* will burn down the temples of the gods of Egypt. *But before they burn the temples*, they will take away their idols *as souvenirs*. His *troops* will clean Egypt like a shepherd cleans lice from his cloak. They will tear down the sacred pillars that are in the temple of their sun god. And then Nebuchadnezzar's *troops* will leave there, without having been harmed." ' "

44

Jeremiah predicted disaster would come because of their idolatry

¹ *This is the message that Yahweh gave me concerning the Jews who were living in northern Egypt—in Migdol, Tahpenes, and Memphis cities, and in the Pathros region in southern Egypt:*
² "This is what *I*, the Commander of the armies of angels, the God whom *you* Israelis say you

belong to, say: ‘You saw the disaster that I caused *the people in* Jerusalem and the other towns in Judah to experience. Those towns are now ruined and deserted. ³ *That happened* because I was extremely angry with them on account of their being very wicked. They burned incense to other gods and worshiped them. They were gods that you *previously* did not know about, and your ancestors also *did not know about them*. ⁴ Many times I sent my prophets who served me, to say to them, “Do not do those abominable things that I hate!” ⁵ But my people would not pay any attention [DOU] *to what I said to them*. They would not turn away from their wicked behavior, or stop burning incense to *worship/honor* other gods. ⁶ So I poured out my anger [MTY] on them. I punished people on the streets of Jerusalem and on the *other* towns in Judah. It caused those towns to be ruined and deserted, and they are still like that.’

⁷ So now *I*, the Commander of the armies of angels, the God whom *you* Israelis say *you belong to*, ask you: ‘Why are you causing yourselves to experience these disasters? *Do you not realize that because of what you are doing*, soon there will be no more men or women or children or infants left among you *who have come here to Egypt* from Judah? ⁸ Why are you [RHQ] provoking me and causing me to be very angry by burning incense to the idols that you have made here in Egypt? *If you continue doing this*, you will destroy yourselves, and you will cause yourselves to be people whom all the nations

on the earth will curse and despise. ⁹ Have you forgotten *how I punished* your ancestors for the wicked things that they did, and *how I punished* the kings and queens of Judah for what they did, and you and your wives for the sins that you committed in the streets of Jerusalem and *the other towns* in Judah? ¹⁰ Up until this day you have not humbled yourselves or revered me. You have not obeyed the laws and decrees [DOU] that I gave to you and your ancestors.'

¹¹ Therefore, this is what *I*, the Commander of the armies of angels, the God whom *you* Israelis *say you belong to*, say: 'I am determined to cause all of you to experience disasters and to get rid of every one of you. ¹² *You* people from Judah who have survived were determined to come and live here in Egypt. So I will get rid of all of you here in Egypt. Every one of you will die, including those who are important and those who are not important. *Some of you* will be killed by *your enemies'* swords, *some will die* from famines. You will become *people whom others* curse, be horrified about, and make fun of. ¹³ I will punish you here in Egypt like I punished *others in Jerusalem, some of whom were killed by their enemies'* swords and *some of whom* died from famines or diseases. ¹⁴ *You* people who did not die in Judah fled here to Egypt, hoping that *some day* you would return to Judah. But very few [HYP] of you will survive and escape. You are longing/wanting to remain alive and return to Judah, but only a very few of you will escape and be able to do that.' "

¹⁵ Then a large group of the people who had started to live in northern Egypt and southern Egypt, including all the men who knew that their wives had been burning incense to other gods, and all the women who were standing there, said this to me: ¹⁶ “You are saying that [MTY] Yahweh gave messages to you, but we will not pay any attention to your messages! ¹⁷ We will certainly do everything that we said that we would do. We will burn incense to *worship our goddess Astarte*, the Queen of Heaven, and we will pour out offerings *of wine* to her, just like we and our ancestors and our kings and *their* officials have *always* done in the streets of Jerusalem and in the *other* towns in Judah. At that time, we had plenty of food, and we were prosperous and we did not have any troubles. ¹⁸ But ever since we stopped burning incense to the Queen of Heaven and giving her offerings *of wine*, we have had many troubles, and *some of our people* have been killed by *our enemies’* swords and *some have died* from hunger.”

¹⁹ And *the women* said, “Furthermore, we burned incense and poured out *wine* offerings to the Queen of Heaven, and we also made small cakes that resembled her idol, to offer to her. But our husbands certainly knew about *and approved of* [RHQ] what we were doing!”

²⁰ Then I said to all the men and women who had answered me, ²¹ “Do not think [RHQ] that Yahweh did not know that you and your ancestors and your kings and their officials and all the other people in Judah were burning

incense to *worship/honor* idols in the streets of Jerusalem and in the *other* towns in Judah! ²² It was because Yahweh could no longer endure/ tolerate your wicked actions and the detestable things that you were doing that he caused your land to be *a place whose name people say when they curse someone*, a land that is ruined and which has no one living in it. And your land is still like that. ²³ It is because you burned incense to *worship/honor* idols and committed *other* sins against Yahweh that you experienced *all* those disasters. It is because you have not obeyed him or his laws and decrees and commandments.”

²⁴ *Then* I said to all of them, including the women, “All you *people of* Judah who are *here* in Egypt, listen to this message from Yahweh. ²⁵ This is what the Commander of the armies of angels, the God whom *we* Israelis *worship*, says to you *Israeli men*: ‘You and your wives have said that you would continue to do what you promised, to burn incense and pour out wine to the *goddess whom you call* the Queen of Heaven. *And you have proved by your actions that you intend to continue to do that.* So go ahead and continue doing what you have promised to do *for her.*’

²⁶ But now, all you people from Judah who are *now* living *here* in Egypt, listen to this message from Yahweh. He says, ‘I have solemnly declared, using my great name, that *soon* none of you people from Judah who are here in Egypt will ever again use my name. *There will be none of you who, when you solemnly promise to do*

something, will ever again say, “*I will do it as surely as Yahweh lives.*” ²⁷ Because I will be watching over you, not to cause good things to happen to you but to cause things to happen that will harm you. *Almost everyone [HYP] from Judah who is now here in Egypt will experience being killed by their enemies’ swords, or dying from famine.* ²⁸ *Only a very few of you will not die, and will return to Judah. When that happens, all those who came to Egypt will find out whose words ◀were true/were fulfilled▶, theirs or mine.’*

²⁹ And Yahweh *also* says, ‘I will do something that will prove to you that everything that I have said will happen, and that I will punish you *here* in this place. ³⁰ I will cause Hophra, the king of Egypt, to be captured by his enemies who want to kill him, just like I caused King Zedekiah of Judah to be captured by *the soldiers of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon.*’ ” *And that is what happened several years later.*

45

A message for Baruch

¹ After Jehoiakim the son of King Josiah had been ruling Judah for almost four years, *I, Baruch, wrote down all the messages that the prophet Jeremiah had dictated to me. Then Jeremiah gave me a message. He said,* ² “Baruch, Yahweh, the God whom *we* Israelis *worship*, has a message for you. ³ You have said, ‘Terrible things *are happening* to me! I have endured

much pain already. And now Yahweh is causing me to be very sad, in addition to my having pain. I am exhausted from my ◀groaning/being sad▶, and I am unable to rest!’

⁴ But *Baruch*, this is what Yahweh says: ‘I will destroy this nation that I established. *This nation is like a tree* [MET] that I planted and that I will now pull up with its roots. ⁵ So, should you [RHQ] desire that people do things to honor you in a special way? Do not desire that. *It is true that* I will cause all these people to experience a great disaster, but wherever you go, I will protect you, and you will not be killed.’ ”

46

Messages about other nations

¹ These are messages that Yahweh gave to the prophet Jeremiah about *other* nations.

Messages about Egypt

² After Jehoiakim, son of King Josiah, had been ruling Judah for almost four years, this message about Egypt was given *by Yahweh*. It was when the army of King Neco of Egypt was defeated by the army of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon along the Euphrates River.

This is what Yahweh said: “The officers of the army of Egypt are saying to their troops,

³ ‘Prepare your shields

and march out to fight the battle!

⁴ Put harnesses on your horses,

and get on their backs.

◀Get into your positions/Line up▶ *for the battle;*

put on your helmets.
Sharpen your spears,
and put on your armor!’

⁵ But what [RHQ] do I see?

I see that the soldiers of Egypt will be
terrified and will be fleeing.

Even the bravest of their soldiers will be running
away,

without *even* looking backward!

I, Yahweh, say that *their soldiers* will be terrified
on all sides!

⁶ *Even* the fastest *runners* will try to run away,
but *even the greatest of* their warriors will
not escape.

In the north, by the Euphrates *River*,
they will stumble and fall.

⁷ What group is this that will be covering the land
like the water of the Nile *River* covers the
land when it floods?

⁸ *It is the army of* Egypt
that will be covering the land like a surging/
huge flood,

and they will boast that they will cover the earth
and will destroy cities and the people *who*
live in them.

⁹ You *riders of* horses, charge/rush *into the battle!*
You *drivers of* chariots, drive furiously!

All you warriors from Ethiopia and Libya
who carry your shields,

you warriors from Lydia

who shoot arrows,

you come!

10 But, *you need to know that* this is the day when I, Yahweh, the Commander of the armies of angels, will get revenge on my enemies. With my sword [PRS] I will kill *my enemies* until I am satisfied; my sword will *be like a monster that* [MET, PRS] drinks the blood *of the animals it kills* until it is no longer thirsty. *The enemy soldiers who will be killed* in the north beside the Euphrates River *will be like* [MET] a sacrifice to *me*, the Commander of the armies of angels.

11 You people [IDM] of Egypt, go up to the Gilead *region* to obtain medicine; but it will be useless to take all those medicines; you will not be healed.

12 *People in the other* nations will hear how you were humiliated. *People* all over the earth will hear you wailing. *Your mighty* warriors will stumble over each other and they will all fall down together.”

13 *Then* Yahweh gave me this message about King Nebuchadnezzar when he planned to attack Egypt *with his army*:

14 “Shout *this message* throughout Egypt! Proclaim it in Migdol, Memphis, and Tahpenes *cities*!
‘◀Get into your positions/Line up▶ *for the battle*;
Prepare to defend yourselves,

because *everyone* around you will be killed.’
[PRS, MTY]

15 Your god is a bull;

Why does he fall down?

He will not be able to stand up,

because Yahweh will knock him down.

16 The soldiers from other countries will stumble
and fall over each other,

and *then* they will say to each other,

‘Let’s get up and go back to our own people, to
our own land.

Let’s get away from the swords of our
enemies!’

17 There *in Egypt* they will say,

‘The king of Egypt talks loudly,

but when our *army* had an opportunity to
defeat our enemies, they failed.’

18 *I*, the King, who am called the Commander of
the armies of angels,
say this:

‘As *surely as I live*, someone’s army will be
coming to *fight against the army of Egypt*.

They will be *extremely powerful*,

as though they were as tall as Tabor Hill,

or *as high as Carmel Mountain* close to the
Mediterranean Sea.

19 *All you people* who live in Egypt,

pack your possessions/clothes and prepare
to be exiled.

Memphis *city* will be destroyed;

it will become a ruin, and no one will be
living there.

- 20 Egypt is *like* [SIM] a beautiful young cow,
 but *the army of a powerful king* from the
 northeast will come to attack it
like a horsefly [MET] bites a cow.
- 21 The ◀mercenaries/soldiers from other coun-
 tries who have been hired▶ will become
 like [SIM] fat calves;
 but they also will turn around and run away;
 they will not stand *there and fight*,
 because it will be a day when there will be
 a *great* disaster in Egypt,
 a day when their people will be *greatly*
 punished.
- 22 *The soldiers of* Egypt will run away,
 as silently as a snake scurries/crawls away.
The army of the enemy will advance;
 they will march along carrying their axes
 like [SIM] men who cut down trees.
- 23 *I, Yahweh, say that they will kill the soldiers of*
Egypt
 as though [SIM] they were a forest of trees,
 because the enemy soldiers will be as nu-
 merous as *a swarm of* locusts.
- 24 The people of Egypt will be humiliated;
 they will be conquered by people from the
 northeast.'
- 25 *I, the Commander of the armies of angels,*
 the God whom the Israelis *worship*, say, 'I will
 punish Amon, *the god whom the people* of Thebes
city worship, and *all the other* gods in Egypt.
I will punish the King of Egypt and *all those*
 who trust in him. 26 I will cause them to

be captured by those who want to kill them—Nebuchadnezzar the King of Babylon, and his army officers. But many years later, people will live in Egypt again. *That will surely happen because I, Yahweh, have said it.*

²⁷ But you people of Israel who serve me,
do not be at all dismayed [DOU] now,
because some day I will bring you back from
distant places;
I will bring your descendants from the land
to which they were exiled.
Then you Israeli people will again live peacefully
and safely,
and there will not be any *nation* to cause you
to be terrified.

²⁸ *I, Yahweh, say to you people of Israel who serve me,*
'Do not be afraid,
because I will be with you.
I will completely destroy the nations among
whom I have scattered you,
but I will not completely get rid of you.
I will punish you, but I will punish you only as
severely as you deserve:
It would be wrong if I did not punish you at
all.' "

47

A message about Philistia

¹ Yahweh gave to the prophet Jeremiah a message about the people of Philistia. *The message was given to me before Gaza city in Philistia was captured by the army of Egypt.*

- ² This is what Yahweh said:
“An army [MET] will be coming from the north-east
that will cover the land like a flood.
They will destroy the land and everything in it;
they will destroy people and cities.
People will scream;
everyone in the land will wail.
- ³ *They will hear* the sound of the hooves of the
enemy horses,
and *they will hear* the rumble/noise of the
wheels of their enemies’ chariots.
Men *will run away*;
they will not stop to help their children;
they will be completely weak and helpless
[MTY].
- ⁴ It will be the time for all the people of Philistia
to be destroyed,
and the time to prevent the remaining sol-
diers from helping *the people of* Tyre and
Sidon *cities*.
I, Yahweh, will get rid of the people of Philistia,
those whose ancestors *long ago* came from
Crete *island*.
- ⁵ *The people of* Gaza will be humiliated;
they will shave off all the hair on their heads
to indicate that they are ashamed.
The *people of* Ashkelon *city* will all be silent
because they will be mourning.
All you people who live along the coast of the
Mediterranean Sea who are still alive,
how long [RHQ] will you gash yourselves
because you are mourning?”

- 6 *The people of Philistia say, “Yahweh, when [RHQ] will you tell our enemies to stop killing us with [PRS] their swords? Tell them to [PRS] put them back into their sheaths and keep them there!”*
- 7 *But it would not be right [RHQ] for their swords to stay there, because Yahweh has commanded their enemies to do something more; Yahweh intends to tell them to attack all the people living in Ashkelon and in other cities along the coast.*

48

A message about Moab

- 1 *This is a message about Moab. The Commander of the armies of angels said: “Terrible things will happen to Nebo town; it will soon be ruined. Kiriathaim city will be captured and all its people will be humiliated; the high wall around their city will be ruined, and its people will become ashamed.*
- 2 *No one will boast about Moab again; the enemies of Moab will plan to destroy the capital city, Heshbon. They will say, ‘Come, let’s cause Moab to no longer be a nation.’ You people in Madmen town, you also will be silenced; enemy armies [MTY] will pursue you.*
- 3 *Listen to the people of Horonaim town screaming;*

they will be wailing because their town will have been devastated and destroyed [DOU].

⁴ *All of Moab will be ruined; even the little children will cry loudly.*

⁵ *They will cry bitterly as they climb up Luhith Hill.*

Others will wail on the road down to Horonaim, being very sad because of their town being destroyed.

⁶ *Someone will say to them, 'Flee! Hide in the desert!'*

⁷ *But you trusted that because you were rich and powerful, you would be safe; so you will be captured.*

The statue of your god Chemosh and all his priests and officials will be taken away to distant lands.

⁸ *All the towns in Moab will be destroyed; none of them will escape.*

Towns in the valleys and on the plateau will all be destroyed, because I, Yahweh, have said that is what will happen.

⁹ *Spread salt on the ground in order that it will become a wasteland with nothing growing there any more, and no one will be living in it!"*

¹⁰ *Yahweh will curse anyone who will not eagerly do what he desires, anyone who refrains from using his sword to kill [MTY] others in Moab.*

- 11 *The people of Moab* have always felt secure;
they have never been ◀exiled/forced by their
enemies to go to other countries▶.
They are like [MET] wine that has been left
undisturbed *in a container for many days*
to give it good flavor,
so now it smells good,
and it tastes good.
- 12 But Yahweh says that there will be a time when
he will send *enemies to attack them*;
they will get rid of the people of Moab like people
pour out wine *on the ground*
and then smash the wine jar.
- 13 Then *the people of Moab* will be ashamed of
their god/idol Chemosh because it did not
help them,
like the Israeli people were ashamed be-
cause their gold statue of a calf *was*
smashed at Bethel.
- 14 *The soldiers of Moab* previously said, “We are
warriors;
we have fought bravely in battles!”
- 15 But now our King, who is Yahweh, who is
called ‘the Commander of the armies of
angels’, says that *the country of Moab* and
all the towns in it will be destroyed.
Their fine young men will *all* be slaughtered.
- 16 Moab will very soon be destroyed.
It will soon experience disaster.
- 17 You *people who live in nations* near Moab,
who know that it is very famous,
should mourn for Moab,

and say, "Its glorious power [MTY, DOU] is *completely* ended/broken."

18 You people of Dibon *city*, stop being proud because of being honored, and sit in the dust/dirt, because those who will destroy other places in Moab will attack your *city* and destroy your high walls.

19 You people of Aroer *town*, stand along the road and watch. Shout to the men and women who will be fleeing *from Moab*, "What has happened *there*?"

20 *They will reply*, "Moab is ruined and *we are* disgraced!" So weep and wail [DOU].

Proclaim at the Aroer *River* that Moab has been destroyed.

21 *Yahweh* will have punished *the towns in Moab that are on the* ◀plateau/high level▶:

Holon and Jahaz and Mephaath,

22 Dibon and Nebo and Beth-Diblathaim,

23 Kiriathaim and Beth-Gamul and Beth-Meon,

24 Kerioth and Bozrah,

cities that are near *each other* and towns that are far away *from each other*.

25 *Yahweh* says, "The power [MTY] of Moab will be ended;

it is as though [MET] Moab will have a broken arm.

26 *You people of* Moab have rebelled against *me*, *Yahweh*;

- so *now* I will cause you all to *stagger like* [SIM] drunken people.
You *people of Moab* will wallow in your own vomit
and be ridiculed.
- 27 You *people of Moab* ridiculed *the people of* Israel [RHQ].
You treated them as though they were thieves [RHQ].
You shook your head at them scornfully and despised them [RHQ].
- 28 You people who live in Moab,
you should abandon your towns and go and live in caves.
Be like [SIM] doves that make their nests in the entrances of caves.”
- 29 We have *all* heard that *the people of Moab* are very proud;
they are extremely proud and conceited/arrogant. [IDM, DOU]
- 30 But Yahweh says, “I know about that,
but it is useless for them to boast *because* it will accomplish nothing.
- 31 So *now* I will wail for Moab;
I will cry about all its people.
I will moan for the men of Kir-Hareseth *city, the old capital of Moab.*
- 32 You people of Sibmah *city*, you have many vineyards.
It is as though the branches of your vines extend across the *Dead* Sea to Jazer *city.*
- 33 But no one will be joyful or happy in Moab now;

your fruit and grapes that ripen in the ◀summer/hot season▶ will soon be destroyed.
 There will be no grape juice coming from the winepresses,
 so there will be no wine.
 People will not shout joyfully
 as they tread on the grapes;
 people will shout,
 but they will not be shouting joyfully.

34 Instead, the sound of their wailing will rise
 from Heshbon *city* to Elealeh *town* and
 Jahaz *village*,
 from Zoar *city* as far as Horonaim *town* and
 Eglath-Shelishiyah *village*.

Even the water in Nimrim *Stream* will be dried up.

35 I, Yahweh, say that I will get rid of the people
 who offer sacrifices on the hilltops,
 and burn incense to their gods.

36 I [SYN] moan for the people of Moab and Kir-
 Hareseth
 like [SIM] *someone playing a funeral song on*
 a flute,
 because *all* their wealth will disappear.

37 The men will shave their heads and their
 beards *to show that they are mourning*.
 They all will slash their hands and wear
 ◀rough cloth/sackcloth▶ around their
 waists.

38 In every home and in the town plazas/centers
 in Moab there will be *people who are*
 mourning,
 because I will have destroyed Moab

like [SIM] someone smashes an *old* jar that
no one wants *any more*.

39 Moab will be completely shattered!

And you will hear the people wailing loudly!
They will be disgraced.

Moab will become a nation that people
ridicule.

The people in nearby *countries* will be horrified
about what has happened there.

40 This is what *I*, Yahweh, say:

'Look! Their enemies will be swooping/rushing
down over Moab
like an eagle [SIM] swoops down *to seize an
animal*.

41 Its cities will be captured,
its fortresses will be seized.

Even their warriors will be *afraid*,
like [SIM] a woman who is about to give
birth.

42 *The leaders of* Moab boasted against *me*,
Yahweh,
so Moab will be destroyed.

43 *I*, Yahweh, say that you people of Moab will be
terrified, and fall into pits and traps.

44 Those who are terrified and try to run away
will fall into deep pits.

Whoever climbs out of a pit will be caught
in a trap,
because I will punish them at the time that I have
chosen.'

45 The people will flee as far as Heshbon *city*,
but they will not be able to go any further,
because a fire will burn in Heshbon,

which is the city where King Sihon lived long ago,
and it will burn up all the people [SYN] in Moab
who noisily/loudly boasted very much.

⁴⁶ *You people of Moab, terrible things will happen to you!*

You people who worship *your god* Chemosh,
you will be destroyed.

Your sons and your daughters will be captured
and taken away *to other countries*.

⁴⁷ But some day, I will enable the people of Moab
to return to their land again.

*That will surely happen because I, Yahweh,
have said it."*

That is the end of what I prophesied about
Moab.

49

A message about Ammon

¹ *This message is about the Ammon people-group. This is what Yahweh says:*

*"There are [RHQ] plenty of Israeli people left
to occupy the land of the tribe of Gad.*

So, why are [RHQ] *the people who worship the
god Molech* living in those towns?

² There will be a time when I will sound the
battle-cry

for their enemies to attack *their capital city,*
Rabbah.

Then it will become a heap of ruins,
and *all* the nearby towns will be burned.

Then *the people of* Israel will again possess the land
that the Ammon people-group took away
from them.

³ You people of Heshbon *city* [MTY], wail,
because Ai *town nearby* will be destroyed.

You people of Rabbah *city*, weep;
put on ◀rough clothing/sackcloth▶ *to show
you are mourning*;

run back and forth *in confusion* inside the city
walls,
because *your god* Milcom, along with its
priests and officials, will be taken away
◀in exile/to other countries▶.

⁴ You are [RHQ] very proud of your very fertile
valleys,
but they will soon be ruined.

You rebellious people, you trusted in your
wealth,
and you said, 'Certainly no [RHQ] army will
be able to attack us!'

⁵ But listen to this: 'I, the Commander of the
armies of angels,
will cause you to become terrified.

You will all be forced to flee *to other countries*,
and no one will be able to bring you together
again.'

⁶ But some day I will enable the Ammon people-
group to return to their land.

*That will surely happen, because I, Yahweh,
have said it."*

Messages about Edom

⁷ *This message is about the Edom people-group. This is what the Commander of the armies of angels says:*

“It seems that [RHQ] there are no wise people in
Teman *district in Edom!*
There are no people left who can give others
good advice.
The people who were wise [PRS] have disappeared.

⁸ You people of Dedan *city in the south of Edom*,
turn and flee and hide in deep *caves*,
because when I cause the Edom people-group to
experience disaster,
I will punish you, too.

⁹ Those who harvest grapes
always [RHQ] leave some on the vines.
When thieves come at night,
they surely [RHQ] steal only as much as they
want.

¹⁰ But I will cause everything in Edom to be
destroyed, and there will be nothing left,
and there will be no place for people to hide.
Many of [HYP] the children, their relatives and
their neighbors, will die,
and Edom will not exist any more.

¹¹ But I will protect the orphans,
and the widows *also will be able to depend*
on me *to help them.*”

¹² And this is *also* what Yahweh says: “If
those who do not deserve to suffer [MET] must
suffer, you people of Edom must [RHQ] suffer
much more [DOU]! You will not escape being

punished. ¹³ I, Yahweh, have solemnly promised, using my own name, that *your chief city* Bozrah will become a place that people will be horrified about. It will be a heap of ruins. People will make fun of it and use its name when they curse people. All the nearby towns and villages will be a ruins forever.”

¹⁴ I heard this message from Yahweh:
 “I have sent an ambassador to *many* nations,
 to tell them to gather together to attack
 Edom.
 They must prepare for battle!”

¹⁵ *And Yahweh says to the people of Edom,*
 “I will cause your nation to become very unimportant among the *other* nations.
 They will all despise your country.

¹⁶ You have caused *people of other nations* to be terrified,
 and you [MTY] have been very proud,
 but you have deceived yourselves.

You live in caves in the rock cliffs;
you think that you are safe there because you
 live high up there.

But even if you make your homes as high up as
 the eagles’ nests,
 I will cause you to come *crashing* down.

¹⁷ Edom will become a place about which people
 are horrified;
 people who pass by will be horrified and will
 ◀gasp/be shocked▶
 when they see the destruction.

18 Edom will be destroyed as *completely as* Sodom and Gomorrah and the nearby towns were destroyed *long ago*.

As a result, no one will live there *any more* [DOU].

19 I will come to Edom *suddenly* like [SIM] a lion comes out of the jungle and *leaps on the sheep that are* eating in the good pastureland.

I will quickly chase the people of Edom from their land.

And *then* I will appoint for them a leader whom I will choose;

I can do that because there is no one [RHQ] like me who can object to what I do.

No ruler can oppose me.

20 Listen to what I have planned to do to the people of Teman *town* and *the rest of* Edom:

Even the little children will be dragged away, and I will completely get rid of the people [MET] who live there.

21 When Edom is destroyed, the noise *will be extremely great*,

with the result that the earth will shake, and the wailing of the people will be heard *as far away as* the Red Sea.

22 Look! The enemy troops will swoop/rush down over Bozrah like an eagle spreads its wings when it swoops down *to seize an animal*.

On that day, *even the strongest* warriors of Edom will *be afraid*

like [SIM] a woman who is about to give birth.”

A message about Damascus

²³ *This message is about Damascus. This is what Yahweh says:*

“*The people in the nearby cities of Hamath and Arpad are confused, because they have heard bad news about Damascus.*

They are very anxious and restless, like [SIM] a sea in a big storm.

²⁴ *The people of Damascus have become very weak, and they all have* ◀panicked/fled because they are very afraid▶.

The people are anguished and in pain like [SIM] a woman experiences who is about to give birth.

²⁵ *That famous city, that I was previously pleased with, will be abandoned.*

²⁶ *Its young men will fall in the streets. Its soldiers will all be killed in one day.*

²⁷ *And I, the Commander of the armies of angels, will start a fire to burn the walls that surround Damascus, and the palaces of King Ben-Hadad will be burned down.”*

A message about Kedar and Hazor

²⁸ *This is a message about the Kedar people-group and the kingdom of Hazor which the army of Nebuchadnezzar King of Babylon attacked. This is what Yahweh says:*

"I will cause an army to advance to attack Kedar and destroy those people who live east of Judah.

29 Their tents and their flocks of sheep will be captured.

The curtains in their tents and their camels and their other possessions will be taken away.

Everywhere men will shout,

'We are terrified because terrible things are happening all around us!'

30 So I, Yahweh, say, 'Run away quickly!

You people who live in Hazor, go and hide in deep caves,

because King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon wants to attack you with his army; he is planning to destroy you!'

31 But I say to Nebuchadnezzar,

'Go up and attack that nation whose people feel secure;

they do not have allies who will help them and do not have walls with gates that have bars in them.

32 Your troops will seize their camels and other livestock.

I will scatter in every direction [IDM] those people who live in remote places (OR, who cut their hair short).

I will cause them to experience disasters from every direction.

33 Hazor will become a place where jackals/wolves live,

and it will be deserted forever.
 No one will live there again;
 no one will settle there [DOU].’ ”

A message about Elam

³⁴ I received this message from Yahweh when King Zedekiah was starting to rule Judah.

³⁵ This is what the Commander of the armies of angels says:

“The men of Elam are famous ◀archers/men who shoot arrows well▶;
 that is how they have made their country very powerful.

But I will get rid of them [MET].

³⁶ I will bring their enemies from all directions [IDM, DOU],
 and they will scatter the people of Elam in all directions.

The people of Elam will be exiled to every nation on the earth [LIT, HYP].

³⁷ Because I am very angry with the people of Elam,
 I will enable their enemies to smash Elam;
 I will cause the people of Elam to experience great disasters.

I will enable their enemies, who want to kill them, to pursue them *and kill them* with swords
 until I completely get rid of all of them.

³⁸ I, Yahweh, will judge them there [MTY],
 and *then* I will get rid of their king and *his* officials.

³⁹ But some day, I will enable the people of Elam to return to their land.

That will surely happen because I, Yahweh, have said it."

50

A message about Babylon

¹ Yahweh gave to *me*, Jeremiah the prophet, a message about Babylon city and the country of Babylonia.

² *This is what Yahweh says:*

"Proclaim [DOU] *a message* among the nations;
do not withhold any of it;
raise up a signal flag
to announce that Babylon will be captured.
Its chief god Marduk, *whose other name is* Bel,
will be completely disgraced,
and all the *other* statues and idols will be
shattered.

³ *The army of* a nation will come from the north
to attack Babylon
and destroy the city very thoroughly,
with the result that no one will live there *again*.
Both people and animals will run away."

The people of Israel will return from Babylon

⁴ "But *I, Yahweh*, say that in the future, when that
is about to happen,
the people of Israel and the people of Judah
will join together.

They will be weeping
and wanting *to worship* me, their God.

⁵ They will inquire about the road to Jerusalem,
and then they will start traveling [IDM]
toward it.

They will say *to each other*,
'We must return to Yahweh *again!*'
They will make an everlasting agreement
with me that they will never forget.

⁶ My people have been *like* [MET] lost sheep.
Their *leaders/rulers* have caused them to
abandon me
like [MET] shepherds who have allowed
their sheep to wander in the hills and
mountains.
My people are like [MET] sheep
that do not know the path to return to the
sheepfold.

⁷ All their enemies who found them attacked
them.
They said, 'We did not sin *by attacking them*,
because they sinned against Yahweh;
he is the one who provides what they need;
he is the one to whom they should have re-
mained faithful;
he is the one whom their ancestors confi-
dently expected *to help them.*'

⁸ *But now, I say to the leaders of my people, 'Flee*
from Babylon!
Leave the land of Babylonia!
Be like [SIM] male goats *that go* in front of *the*
rest of the flock;
lead my people back to their own land.

⁹ *Do that* because I am going to gather an army
of great nations to the north *of Babylon.*
They will join together to attack Babylon and
will capture it.

Their arrows will be like [SIM] skilled warriors
that always hit what they aim at.

10 Babylonia will be conquered,
and those who conquer it will take away
everything they want.

*That will surely happen because I, Yahweh,
have said it.' "*

The conquest of Babylon

11 "You people of Babylon who ◀plundered/stole
everything valuable from▶ my chosen
people,
now you are very happy [DOU].

You run around joyfully like [SIM] a calf in a
meadow,
and are happy like [SIM] male horses are
happy when they are neighing.

12 But *soon* your people will be very disgraced
[DOU] *as a result of being conquered.*

Your country will be the most insignificant
nation;
it will be a desert, a dry and deserted land.

13 Because I, Yahweh, am angry *with you people
of Babylon,*

I will cause your city to become completely
deserted.

All who pass by will be horrified
and will ◀gasp/be shocked▶ because of the
destruction there.

14 *All you nations that surround Babylon,*
prepare to attack it!

Tell your archers to shoot at their enemies;
shoot all of your arrows at them [LIT],

because *the people/leaders of Babylon have sinned against me*, Yahweh.

15 Shout *war-cries* against Babylon from all sides *of the city*.

The soldiers of Babylon will surrender; the towers and walls will be torn down.

It is *I, Yahweh*, who will be getting revenge *on the people of Babylon*,
so help me to get revenge.

Do *to the people of Babylon* what they have done to others!

16 Take away from Babylon those who plant *crops* and those who reap the harvests!

Because of the swords carried by those who will attack *Babylon*,
those people in Babylon who have come from other countries
should all run away, back to their own countries [DOU]!”

God's people will return to Israel

17 “The Israeli *people* are *like* [MET] sheep that have been scattered by lions.

First *the army of the King of Assyria* defeated them.

Then *the army of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon* smashed them.

18 So this is what I, the Commander of the armies of angels, the God whom the Israeli people *worship*, say:

‘Now I will punish the King of Babylon and the people of his land,
like I punished the King of Assyria.

- 19 And I will bring the people of Israel back to their own land where they will eat *the food that grows* in the fields of the Carmel and Bashan *regions*, and *the people* in the hilly areas of Ephraim and Gilead will have all they want to eat.
- 20 At that time, there will not be people in Israel and in Judah who *are still guilty for having sinned* [DOU], because I will forgive the small group of people whom I enable to still be alive.' "

God's punishment on Babylon

- 21 "So, I, Yahweh, say to the enemies of *Babylonia*, 'Attack *the people who live in the Merathaim region* and the people in the *Pekod region of Babylonia*. Pursue them, kill them, and completely get rid of them, as I have commanded you to do.
- 22 Shout your battle cries throughout the land; shout *when you are causing* great destruction.
- 23 *The army of Babylon is like* [MET] the most powerful hammer on the earth, but it will be completely shattered. Babylon will be deserted among the *other nations*.'
- 24 You *people of Babylon*, listen, because I have set a trap for you; you will be caught *in that trap*, because you fought against me.

- 25 *It is as though* I have opened the place where
I store my weapons,
and I have brought out *all* the weapons
to use against the people with whom I am
angry.
- I, the Commander of the armies of angels, have
a lot of work to do
to punish the people of Babylonia.
- 26 *So, you enemies of Babylonia,* come from
distant lands and attack it.
Break open the places where they store the
grain.
Crush the walls of the city and the houses
and pile up *the rubble like* [SIM] heaps of
grain.
Destroy everything;
do not leave anything that is not destroyed.
- 27 Destroy all the *young men who are as strong as*
[MET] bulls;
take them to where you will slaughter them.
It will be terrible for them,
because it will be time for them to be
punished.
- 28 Listen to the people who have fled and escaped
from Babylon
while they tell in Jerusalem how *I, Yahweh,*
have gotten revenge against those who
destroyed my temple *in Jerusalem.*
- 29 Summon archers [DOU] to come to attack
Babylon;
surround the city
in order that no one will escape.

Do to *the people of Babylon* what they have done to others [DOU], because they have defied *me*, the Holy One of the Israeli *people*.

30 The young men of Babylon will fall in the streets;
all their soldiers will be killed in one day.

31 *I*, the Commander of the armies of angels, say this:

‘You arrogant/proud people,
it is now the time;
it is the time [DOU] when I will punish you.

32 *Your land is full of proud people*,
but you will stumble and fall,
and no one will lift you up *again*.

I will light a fire in the cities in Babylonia
that will burn up everything that is nearby.’

33 *I*, the Commander of the armies of angels,
also say this:

‘The people of Israel and Judah were ◀op-pressed/treated cruelly▶;
those who captured them guarded them
carefully and would not allow them to
leave *Babylon*.

34 But I am strong, and I will free them.
I am the Commander of the armies of angels;
I will defend my people
and enable them *to return to* their land
where they will have peace,
but the people of Babylonia will not have peace.

35 *I will send enemy soldiers carrying swords*
[PRS] to strike the people of Babylonia;

they will strike the officials and wise men
and all the *other* people who live in Babylon.

36 They will strike their false prophets with
swords
and they will become foolish.

They will strike the *strongest* warriors of Baby-
lonia,
and they will all be terrified.

37 They will strike their horses and chariots
and the foreigners who are in the army of
Babylonia,
and they will *all* become *as weak* as [MET]
women.

They will seize [MTY] all the valuable things
there in Babylon
and take them away.

38 *I* will cause the streams to become dry.
I will do all those things because the *entire* land
of Babylonia is filled with idols,
and those *horrible* idols have caused the
people *who worship them* to become crazy.

39 *Soon only* hyenas and *other* wild creatures will
live there;
and it will be a place where owls live.

People will never live there again;
it will be uninhabited forever [DOU].

40 *I will destroy Babylon* like I destroyed Sodom
and Gomorrah and the nearby towns;
no one will *ever* live there *again* [DOU].

41 Look! A *great* army will come from the north.

A great nation far away with many kings is
preparing *to attack you people of Babylon.*

⁴² Their *army* has bows *and arrows* and spears;
they are *very* cruel, and do not act mercifully
to anyone.

As they ride along on *their* horses,
the sound of the horses' hooves is like [SIM]
the roaring of the ocean *waves*;
they are riding in battle formation
to attack you, you people of Babylon.

⁴³ The King of Babylon says,
"I have heard reports about the enemy *approach-*
ing;
so I am very frightened, with the result that I
am weak.

I am *very fearful, and* anguished/worried,
like [SIM] a woman who is about to give
birth to a baby."

⁴⁴ I, *Yahweh*, will come to Babylon *suddenly* like
a lion comes out of the jungle
and *leaps on the sheep that are eating the*
good pastureland.

I will quickly chase the people of Babylonia from
their land.

And *then* I will appoint for them *a leader*
whom I will choose;

I will do that because there is no one [RHQ] like
me who can say that what I have done is
not right.

No ruler can [RHQ] oppose me.

- 45 Listen to what I have planned to do to the people of Babylon *city* and the rest of Babylonia:
even the little children will be dragged away,
and I will completely destroy the people [MET] who live there.
- 46 When Babylon is destroyed, the noise will be extremely loud,
with the result that the earth will shake,
and the wailing of the people will be heard by the *people of other nations.*' "

51

Babylon will be destroyed

- ¹ This is what Yahweh says:
"I will inspire/motivate *an army* to destroy Babylon *like a powerful wind* [MET],
and *also* to destroy the people of Babylonia.
- ² I will send a foreign army to come to get rid of Babylonia
like a strong wind that blows away chaff.
They will attack from every direction
on that day of disaster.
- ³ *I will tell them, 'Do not allow the archers of Babylon to have time to put on their armor or draw their bows.
Do not spare the young men of Babylon.
Completely destroy their army.'*
- ⁴ Their soldiers will fall dead in Babylonia;
they will die after being wounded in the streets.

⁵ *I, the Commander of the armies of angels, the Israelis' God, have not abandoned Israel and Judah.*

Even though their land was full of people who sinned against me, the Holy God of Israel,

I am still their God.

⁶ *You people of Israel and Judah, flee from Babylon!*

Run away from there!

Do not stay there and be killed when I punish the people of Babylon!

It will be the time when I will get revenge;

I will do to them what they deserve.

⁷ *Babylon has been like [MET] a gold cup in my hand, a cup that is full of wine that caused people all over the earth who drank some of it to become drunk.*

It is as though the rulers of the nations drank the wine from Babylon, and it caused them to become crazy.

⁸ *But suddenly Babylon will be conquered.*

You foreigners who live in Babylon, weep for its people.

Give them medicine for their wounds; perhaps they can be healed."

⁹ *We foreigners would have tried to heal them, but now they cannot be healed.*

So we will not try to help them; we will abandon them, and return to our own lands,

because *it is as though* the punishment they are receiving is so great that it reaches up to the clouds in sky,
so great that no one can measure it.

10 Yahweh has ◀vindicated us/shown that we were right▶;
so let's proclaim in Jerusalem everything that Yahweh our God has done for us.

11 *You enemy soldiers, sharpen your arrows!*
Lift up your shields,
because Yahweh has incited your kings of Media and Persia to march with their armies to Babylon and to destroy it.
That is how Yahweh will get revenge on *those foreigners who entered his temple in Jerusalem* and defiled it.

12 Lift up a battle flag close to the walls of Babylon!
◀Reinforce the/Appoint more▶ guards,
and tell the watchmen to stand *in their positions!*
Prepare an ambush,
because Yahweh is about to accomplish all that he has planned to do to the people of Babylon.

13 Babylon is *a city* near the great *Euphrates River*,
a city in which there are many rich people,
but it is time for Babylon to be finished;
the time *for the city* to exist is ended.

14 The Commander of the armies of angels has solemnly promised, using his own name,

“Your cities will be filled with your enemies;
I will cause them to be like [SIM] a swarm of locusts;
and they will shout triumphantly *when they conquer your city.*”

A song to praise Yahweh

- 15 Yahweh created the earth by his power;
he established it by his wisdom,
and he stretched out the sky by his understanding.
- 16 When he speaks loudly, there is thunder in the sky;
he causes clouds to form in every part of the earth.
He sends lightning with the rain
and releases the winds from his storehouses.
- 17 People are senseless, and they know very little [HYP];
those who make idols are *always* disappointed,
because their idols *do nothing for them.*
The images/statues that they make are not real *gods*;
they are lifeless.
- 18 Idols are worthless; they deserve to be ridiculed;
there will be a time when they will *all* be destroyed.
- 19 But the God whom *we* Israelis *worship* is not like those *idols*;
he is the one who created everything *that exists*;
we, the people of Israel, belong to him;

his name is ‘the Commander of the armies of angels’.

²⁰ Yahweh says *about the army of Babylonia* (OR, *about a nation that will attack Babylonia*),
“You have been *like* [MET] my battle-axe and war-club;

with your *power* I have shattered nations
and destroyed *many* kingdoms.

²¹ With your *power* I have shattered armies of
other nations:

I destroyed *their* horses and their riders,
their chariots and *their* chariot-drivers.

²² With your *power* I shattered men and women,
old people and children,
young men and young women.

²³ With your *power* I shattered shepherds and
their flocks of *sheep*,
farmers and their oxen,
governors and *their* officials.”

²⁴ But, Yahweh *also* says,
“Soon I will repay/punish *you* people in Babylon
and in the rest of Babylonia
for all the evil things that you have done in
Jerusalem.

²⁵ *Babylonia* is [APO] like [MET] a great mountain
from which bandits descend to ◀plunder/
steal things from▶ people all over the
earth.

But I, Yahweh, am the enemy of you *people of
Babylonia*.

I will raise my fist to strike you.

I will knock you down from the cliffs
and cause you to be *only* a huge pile of
burned rubble.

26 Your *city* will be abandoned forever;
even the stones in your *city* will never *again*
be used for buildings.
Your city will be completely destroyed."

27 *Tell* the nations to lift up a battle flag!
Tell them to shout the battle-cry!

Gather all their armies to fight against Babylon!
Prepare the nations to attack Babylon.
Summon *the armies of* the kingdoms *north*
of Babylonia—from Ararat, Minni, and
Ashkenaz.

Appoint a commander for them,
and bring *a great number of* horses;
there must be a huge number of horses; that
huge number will resemble [SIM] a swarm
of locusts.

28 Prepare the *armies of other nations*,
armies that will be led by the kings of Media
and Persia,
their governors and *their* officials.

29 *When they attack Babylon, it will be as though*
the earth will shake and writhe *in pain*,
because *those armies* will accomplish every-
thing that Yahweh has planned to do to
Babylon;

they will destroy it completely,
with the result that no one will live there
again.

30 *When their enemies attack*, the strongest warriors in Babylon will not fight.

They will remain in their barracks, without any strength.

They will be as timid/weak as [SIM] women.

The enemy soldiers will burn the buildings in the city

and pull down the bars *of the city gates*.

31 Messengers will go quickly, one after another, to tell the king that his city has been captured.

32 The places at which people can cross the river *to escape from the city* will be blocked.

The dry reeds in the marshes/swamps will be set on fire,

and the soldiers of Babylon will be terrified.

33 This is what the Commander of the armies of angels, the God whom *we* Israelis *worship*, says; “Babylon is like [SIM] wheat on the ground where it is about to be threshed by *animals* tramping on it.

Very soon *their enemies* will trample on *the city of Babylon* [MET].”

34 *The army of* Nebuchadnezzar, the King of Babylon, has attacked and crushed us *Israeli people*,

and we have no strength *left*.

It is as though they have swallowed us like a *great monster*

that filled its belly with all our tasty parts, and then has spit out *what it did not like*.

35 So the people of [PRS] Jerusalem say to *Yahweh*,
“Cause the people of Babylon to suffer
like they caused us to suffer!
Cause the people of Babylonia to be punished for
killing [MTY] our people!”

Yahweh will get revenge on Babylon

36 And this is what *Yahweh* replies to the
people of Jerusalem:

“I will *be like your lawyer* to defend you,
and I will avenge you.

I will dry up the river in Babylon
and *all* the springs of water.

37 Babylon will become a heap of ruins,
a place where jackals/wolves live.

It will become a place that people are horrified
about and will ridicule;
it will be a place where no one lives.

38 The people of Babylon will *all* roar like young
lions;
they will growl like baby lions.

39 But while they are extremely hungry,
I will prepare a *different kind of* feast for
them.

It is as though I will cause them to drink wine
until they are very drunk,
with the result that they will fall asleep.

But they will never wake up from that sleep!

40 I will bring them down to a place where they
will be slaughtered,
like [SIM] *someone who takes* lambs or rams
or goats *to where they will be slaughtered*
for sacrifices.

- 41 People all over the earth *now* ◀honor/praise▶
Babylon;
they say that it is a great city.
But I will cause it to become a *place about which*
people of all nations are horrified.
- 42 The *enemies of Babylon* will cover the city *like*
huge waves of the sea [DOU].
- 43 The towns in Babylonia will become ruins,
Babylonia will become a dry desert area.
It will be a land in which no one lives
and which no one walks through.
- 44 And I will punish Bel, *the god that the people*
of Babylon worship,
and I will cause the people to give back what
they have stolen [MET].
People of other nations will no longer come to
worship Bel.
And the walls of Babylon will collapse.”

A message for the Israeli people

- 45 *Yahweh also says*, “My people, come out of
Babylon!
Run away from there!
Run, because *I, Yahweh*, am extremely angry
[MTY] *with the people of Babylon*, and I will
get rid of them!”
- 46 Do not be discouraged/worried [IDM] or afraid
when you hear reports *about what is happen-*
ing in Babylon.
People will report rumors like that every year,
rumors about violent things being done in
the land,

and rumors about leaders fighting against each other.

47 But it will soon be the time for me to get rid of the idols in Babylon.

People all over the land will be ashamed because of being defeated;

and the corpses of their *soldiers* will lie in the streets.

48 Then all *the angels in* heaven and all the *people on* [PRS] the earth will rejoice,

because from the north will come *armies* that will destroy Babylon.

49 Like *the soldiers of Babylon* killed the people of Israel

and *also* killed others all over the world [HYP],

the people of Babylon must also be killed.

50 You *Israeli people* who have not been killed [MTY], get out of Babylon!

Do not wait!

Even though you are in a land far away from Israel,

think about Yahweh, and think about Jerusalem!"

51 *The Israeli people* say,

"We are ashamed.

We are completely disgraced [DOU],

because foreigners have entered Yahweh's temple and ◀defiled it/caused it to become unfit for worship▶."

52 Yahweh replies, "*That is true*, but there will soon be a time when I will destroy the idols in Babylon,

and throughout Babylonia there will be wounded people who will groan.

53 Even if *the walls around* Babylon could extend up to the sky,

and if its walls/fortifications were extremely strong,

I will send *armies* that will destroy the city.

That will surely happen because I, Yahweh, have said it."

Babylon will be completely destroyed

54 Listen to *the people of* Babylon crying *for help!*
And listen to the sounds of things being destroyed all over Babylonia!

55 Yahweh will be destroying Babylon.

He will cause the loud noises in the city to cease.

56 Enemy troops will surge against the city like [SIM] a great wave.

They will capture the city's mighty soldiers and break their weapons.

That will happen because Yahweh is a God who punishes *his enemies* justly; he will punish them as they deserve.

57 The king, the Commander of the armies of angels says,

"I will cause the city officials and wise men, the army captains and soldiers *in Babylon* to become drunk.

They will fall asleep,

but they will never wake up *again!*"

58 Yahweh also says,

"The thick walls around Babylon will be flattened to the ground.

The city gates will be burned.
People *from other countries* will work hard to
save the city,
but it will be ◀in vain/useless▶,
because everything *that they have built* will
be destroyed by fire.”

Jeremiah's message was taken to Babylon

⁵⁹ Seraiah was the man who made arrangements for the King of Babylon *whenever he traveled*. He was the son of Neraiah and grandson of Mahseiah. When he was about to go to Babylon with King Zedekiah, after Zedekiah had been ruling Judah for almost four years, the prophet Jeremiah gave him a message. ⁶⁰ Jeremiah had written on a scroll a list of all the disasters that he had written about, disasters that would soon occur in Babylon. ⁶¹ He said to Seraiah, “When you arrive in Babylon, read *aloud* everything that I have written *on this scroll*. ⁶² Then pray, ‘Yahweh, you said that you will thoroughly destroy Babylon, with the result that people and animals will no *longer* live there. You said that it will be desolate forever.’ ⁶³ Then, when you have finished reading *what I have written on the scroll*, tie it to a *heavy* stone and throw it into the Euphrates River. ⁶⁴ Then say, ‘In the same way, Babylon *and its people* will disappear and never exist again, because of the disasters that Yahweh will cause to occur there’ ”

That is the end of Jeremiah's messages.

52

Zedekiah tried to flee from Jerusalem

¹ Zedekiah was twenty-one years old when he became the King *of Judah*. He ruled in Jerusalem for eleven years. His mother was Hamutal, the daughter of *a man named Jeremiah* from Libnah town. ² Zedekiah did *many things* that Yahweh says are evil, like *his father Jehoiakim* had done. ³ *The events that are summarized here happened* because Yahweh was angry with *the people of Jerusalem and of other places in Judah*, and finally he ◀exiled them/forced them to go to other countries▶ *and said that he did not want to have anything to do with them any more.*

Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon. ⁴ So, on January 15, when Zedekiah had been ruling for almost nine years, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon led his entire army to attack Jerusalem. They surrounded the city and built dirt ramps up to the top of the city walls *to enable them to attack the city.* ⁵ They continued to surround Jerusalem until Zedekiah had been ruling for almost eleven years.

⁶ When Zedekiah had been ruling for almost eleven years, by July 18 of that year, the ◀famine/lack of food▶ in the city had become very severe, and there was no *more* food for the people *to eat.* ⁷ Then *the soldiers of Babylonia* broke through *a section of* the city wall, and all the *Israeli* soldiers fled. But because the city was surrounded by soldiers from Babylonia, *Zedekiah and the Israeli* soldiers waited until it became dark. Then they left the city through

the gate between the two walls behind the king's garden. Then they ran towards the Jordan River Valley. ⁸ But the soldiers of Babylonia pursued King Zedekiah, and they caught up with him on the plains near Jericho. *He was alone because all his men had deserted him and had scattered.* ⁹ The soldiers of Babylonia took him to the king of Babylon, who was at Riblah in the Hamath region. There the king of Babylon told *his soldiers what they should do to punish Zedekiah.* ¹⁰ They forced Zedekiah to watch while they killed his sons and all the officials from Judah. ¹¹ *Then they gouged out Zedekiah's eyes. They fastened him with bronze chains and took him to Babylon. They put him in a prison, and he remained there until the day that he died.*

¹² On August 17 of that year, which was when King Nebuchadnezzar had been ruling for almost 19 years, Nebuzaradan, who was the captain of the king's bodyguards and one of the king's officials, arrived in Jerusalem. ¹³ *He commanded his soldiers to burn down the temple of Yahweh, the king's palace, and all the houses in Jerusalem. They also destroyed all the important buildings in the city.* ¹⁴ Then he supervised the soldiers from Babylonia while they tore down the walls on all sides of Jerusalem. ¹⁵ Then Nebuzaradan ◀forced to go/exiled▶ *to Babylon* some of the poorest people, those Israelis who had said they would support the king of Babylon, the rest of the craftsmen, and other people who had remained in Jerusalem. ¹⁶ But Nebuzaradan allowed some of the very poor people to remain

in Judah to take care of the vineyards and fields.

¹⁷ The soldiers from Babylonia broke *into pieces* the *huge* bronze pillars that were in front of the temple, and the *large* bronze water tank, and the *ten bronze water* carts, and they took all the bronze to Babylon. ¹⁸ They also took away the basins *for holding the ashes from the burned sacrifices*, the shovels *for cleaning out the ashes*, the tools for snuffing out the wicks of the lamps, the basins *for holding the blood of the sacrificed animals*, the dishes *for incense*, and all the *other* bronze items that were used when sacrifices were made at the temple. ¹⁹ Nebuzaradan also *told his soldiers* to take away the small bowls, the dishes for burning incense, the basins, pots, lampstands, bowls *for incense*, and the bowls used for pouring out the wine offerings. They took all the other items that were made of pure gold or silver.

²⁰ The bronze from the two pillars, the *large water* tank and the twelve statues of oxen that were beneath it, and the water carts, was more/heavier than they could weigh. Those things had been made for the temple during the time that Solomon was the king. ²¹ Each of the pillars was ◀27 feet/8 meters▶ tall and ◀18 feet/5.5 meters▶ around. They were hollow, and each had sides/walls that were ◀3 in./8 cm.▶ thick. ²² The bronze head on the top of each pillar was ◀7-1/2 feet/over 2 meters▶ high and was decorated all around with a bronze *network of figures that represented* pomegranates. ²³ There was a total of 100 figures of pomegranates on the network

at the top, 96 of which could be seen from the ground.

²⁴ When Nebuzaradan *returned to Babylon*, he took *with him as prisoners* Seraiah the Supreme Priest, Zephaniah who was Seraiah's deputy, and the three men who guarded the entrances *to the temple*. ²⁵ He found *some other* people who were *hiding* in the city. So from them he took a commander of the army *of Judah*, seven of the king's advisors, the army commander's chief secretary who was in charge of recruiting *soldiers for the army*, and 60 *other* soldiers. ²⁶ Nebuzaradan took them all to the king of Babylon, *who was still* at Riblah. ²⁷ There at Riblah in the Hamath region, the king of Babylon commanded that they *all* be executed.

Many of the people of Judah were ◀forced to leave/exiled from▶ their own land. ²⁸ The number of people who were captured and sent to Babylon at that time, when Nebuchadnezzar had been ruling for almost seven years, was 3,023. ²⁹ Then, when he had been ruling for almost 18 years, his *soldiers* took 832 *more Israeli people to Babylonia*. ³⁰ When he had been ruling almost 23 years, he sent Nebuzaradan *to Jerusalem again*, and he brought back 745 *more Israelis to Babylonia*. That was a total of 4,600 Israelis *who were taken to Babylonia*.

Jehoiachin was released from prison

³¹ After King Jehoiachin of Judah had been in prison *in Babylon* for almost thirty-seven years, Evil-Merodach became the king of Babylon. He

was kind to Jehoiachin and ordered that he be released from prison. That was on March 31 of the year that Evil-Merodach became king. ³² He *always* spoke kindly to Jehoiachin and gave him a position in which he was honored more than *all* the other kings *who had been exiled/taken to Babylon*. ³³ He *supplied new clothes* for Jehoiachin, to replace the clothes that he had been wearing in prison. *He also allowed* Jehoiachin to eat with him every day, all during the rest of his life. ³⁴ Every day, the King of *Babylon* gave him some money *to buy the things that he needed*. *That continued* until the day that Jehoiachin died.

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