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Chronological Bible Plan

August



AUGUST

**“Every day I will bless you and praise
your name forever and ever” (Ps 145:2)**

August 1	<input type="checkbox"/> Bible Reading	<input type="checkbox"/> Prayer
August 2	<input type="checkbox"/> Bible Reading	<input type="checkbox"/> Prayer
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Habakkuk's Prophecy to Judah—The Rise of the Chaldeans [Babylonians] (c. 650 BC)

Habakkuk 1–3

Title

1:1 The following is the message which God revealed to Habakkuk the prophet:

Habakkuk's First Question—How Long Will You Let Judah's Wickedness Continue?

- 2 How long, LORD, must I cry for help?
But you do not listen!
I call out to you, "Violence!"
But you do not intervene!
- 3 Why do you force me to witness injustice?
Why do you put up with wrongdoing?
Destruction and violence confront me;
conflict is present and one must endure strife.
- 4 For this reason the law lacks power,
and justice is never carried out.
Indeed, the wicked intimidate the innocent.
For this reason justice is perverted.

God's Answer—Be Amazed: I Am About to Use the Babylonians to Judge Judah

- 5 "Look at the nations and pay attention!
You will be shocked and amazed!
For I will do something in your lifetime
that you will not believe even though you are forewarned. [[Acts 13:41](#)]
- 6 Look, I am about to empower the Babylonians,
that ruthless and greedy nation.
They sweep across the surface of the earth,
seizing dwelling places that do not belong to them.
- 7 They are frightening and terrifying;
they decide for themselves what is right.
- 8 Their horses are faster than leopards
and more alert than wolves in the desert.
Their horses gallop,
their horses come a great distance;
like a vulture they swoop down quickly to devour their prey.
- 9 All of them intend to do violence;
every face is determined.
They take prisoners as easily as one scoops up sand.
- 10 They mock kings
and laugh at rulers.
They laugh at every fortified city;
they build siege ramps and capture them.
- 11 They sweep by like the wind and pass on.
But the one who considers himself a god will be held guilty."

Habakkuk's Second Question—How Could You Use the Wicked Babylonians to Judge Judah?

- 12 LORD, you have been active from ancient times;
my sovereign God, you are immortal.
LORD, you have made them your instrument of judgment.
Protector, you have appointed them as your instrument of punishment.
- 13 You are too just to tolerate evil;
you are unable to condone wrongdoing.
So why do you put up with such treacherous people?
Why do you say nothing when the wicked devour those more righteous than they are?
- 14 You made people like fish in the sea,
like animals in the sea that have no ruler.
- 15 The Babylonian tyrant pulls them all up with a fishhook;
he hauls them in with his throw net.

When he catches them in his dragnet,
he is very happy.

- 16 Because of his success he offers sacrifices to his throw net
and burns incense to his dragnet;
for because of them he has plenty of food,
and more than enough to eat.
- 17 Will he then continue to fill and empty his throw net?
Will he always destroy nations and spare none?

Habakkuk Awaits God's Answer

- 2:1 I will stand at my watch post;
I will remain stationed on the city wall.
I will keep watching, so I can see what he says to me
and can know how I should answer
when he counters my argument.

God's Answer—I Will Use Babylon and Then It Too Will Be Judged

2 The LORD responded:

“Write down this message! Record it legibly on tablets,
so the one who announces it may read it easily.

- 3 For the message is a witness to what is decreed;
it gives reliable testimony about how matters will turn out.
Even if the message is not fulfilled right away, wait patiently;
for it will certainly come to pass—it will not arrive late. [[Heb 10:37](#)]
- 4 Look, the one whose desires are not upright will faint from exhaustion,
but the person of integrity will live because of his faithfulness. [[Rom 1:17](#); [Gal 3:11](#); [Heb 10:38](#)]
- 5 Indeed, wine will betray the proud, restless man!
His appetite is as big as Sheol's;
like death, he is never satisfied.
He gathers all the nations;
he seizes all peoples.
- 6 “But all these nations will someday taunt him
and ridicule him with proverbial sayings:
‘The one who accumulates what does not belong to him is as good as dead
(How long will this go on?)—
he who gets rich by extortion!’
- 7 Your creditors will suddenly attack;
those who terrify you will spring into action,
and they will rob you.
- 8 Because you robbed many countries,
all who are left among the nations will rob you.
You have shed human blood
and committed violent acts against lands, cities, and those who live in them.
- 9 The one who builds his house by unjust gain is as good as dead.
He does this so he can build his nest way up high
and escape the clutches of disaster.
- 10 Your schemes will bring shame to your house.
Because you destroyed many nations, you will self-destruct.
- 11 For the stones in the walls will cry out,
and the wooden rafters will answer back.
- 12 The one who builds a city by bloodshed is as good as dead—
he who starts a town by unjust deeds.
- 13 Be sure of this! The LORD who commands armies has decreed:
The nations' efforts will go up in smoke;
their exhausting work will be for nothing.
- 14 For recognition of the LORD's sovereign majesty will fill the earth
just as the waters fill up the sea. [[Isa 11:9](#)]

- 15 “You who force your neighbor to drink wine are as good as dead—
you who make others intoxicated by forcing them to drink from the bowl of your furious anger,
so you can look at their genitals.
- 16 But you will become drunk with shame, not majesty.
Now it is your turn to drink and expose your uncircumcised foreskin!
The cup of wine in the LORD’s right hand is coming to you,
and disgrace will replace your majestic glory!
- 17 For you will pay in full for your violent acts against Lebanon;
terrifying judgment will come upon you because of the way you destroyed the wild animals living there.
You have shed human blood
and committed violent acts against lands, cities, and those who live in them.
- 18 What good is an idol? Why would a craftsman make it?
What good is a metal image that gives misleading oracles?
Why would its creator place his trust in it
and make such mute, worthless things?
- 19 The one who says to wood, ‘Wake up!’ is as good as dead—
he who says to speechless stone, ‘Awake!’
Can it give reliable guidance?
It is overlaid with gold and silver;
it has no life’s breath inside it.
- 20 But the LORD is in his majestic palace.
The whole earth is speechless in his presence!”

Habakkuk’s Prayer (arranged for singing)

3:1 This is a prayer of Habakkuk the prophet:

- 2 LORD, I have heard the report of what you did;
I am awed, LORD, by what you accomplished.
In our time repeat those deeds;
in our time reveal them again.
But when you cause turmoil, remember to show us mercy!
- 3 God comes from Teman,
the sovereign one from Mount Paran. *Selah.*
His splendor covers the skies,
his glory fills the earth.
- 4 He is as bright as lightning;
a two-pronged lightning bolt flashes from his hand.
This is the outward display of his power.
- 5 Plague goes before him;
pestilence marches right behind him.
- 6 He takes his battle position and shakes the earth;
with a mere look he frightens the nations.
The ancient mountains disintegrate;
the primeval hills are flattened.
He travels on the ancient roads.
- 7 I see the tents of Cushan overwhelmed by trouble;
the tent curtains of the land of Midian are shaking.
- 8 Is the LORD mad at the rivers?
Are you angry with the rivers?
Are you enraged at the sea?
Is this why you climb into your horse-drawn chariots,
your victorious chariots?
- 9 Your bow is ready for action;
you commission your arrows. *Selah.*
You cause flash floods on the earth’s surface.
- 10 When the mountains see you, they shake.
The torrential downpour sweeps through.
The great deep shouts out;

it lifts its hands high.

- 11 The sun and moon stand still in their courses;
the flash of your arrows drives them away,
the bright light of your lightning-quick spear.
- 12 You furiously stomp on the earth,
you angrily trample down the nations.
- 13 You march out to deliver your people,
to deliver your special servant.
You strike the leader of the wicked nation,
laying him open from the lower body to the neck. *Selah*.
- 14 You pierce the heads of his warriors with a spear.
They storm forward to scatter us;
they shout with joy as if they were plundering the poor with no opposition.
- 15 But you trample on the sea with your horses,
on the surging, raging waters.
- 16 I listened and my stomach churned;
the sound made my lips quiver.
My frame went limp, as if my bones were decaying,
and I shook as I tried to walk.
I long for the day of distress
to come upon the people who attack us.
- 17 When the fig tree does not bud,
and there are no grapes on the vines;
when the olive trees do not produce,
and the fields yield no crops;
when the sheep disappear from the pen,
and there are no cattle in the stalls,
- 18 I will rejoice because of the LORD;
I will be happy because of the God who delivers me!
- 19 The sovereign LORD is my source of strength.
He gives me the agility of a deer;
he enables me to negotiate the rugged terrain.

(This prayer is for the song leader. It is to be accompanied by stringed instruments.)

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Chronological Notes

1) Habakkuk.

- A) The reference in Habakkuk 1:6 to the “Chaldeans” (*kasdim*) is generally accepted as evidence for a date in the 7th century BC.¹ Attempts to assign a more precise date have fallen into three time periods: Manasseh’s reign (697t–643t), Josiah’s reign (641t–610t) and Jehoiakim’s reign (609t–598t).

- (1) Currently, the majority view is that Habakkuk was written during Jehoiakim’s reign (e.g., Archer, Freeman, Hailey, Harrison, Hummel, Young, Robertson, and Blue).
- (2) Others (e.g., Bullock, Laetsch, Pusey, Unger) propose a date in the reign of Josiah before the finding of a copy of the law in 621. They argue that the desperate moral conditions denounced by Habakkuk could well be reflective of that period (cf. Jer 1–6) and relate Habakkuk’s prediction of the coming Chaldeans to the transitional nature of the period near the end of the Neo-Assyrian era.

¹ For a good survey of arguments for later dating among non-evangelical scholars, see R. K. Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, pp. 932–36.

(3) Still others (e.g., Keil, Patterson, Couch) defend a date in the time of Judah's most wicked king, Manasseh.² They cite the degraded moral and spiritual level of that time (2 Kgs 21:1–16; 2 Chr 33:1–10), an era whose debauchery was so pronounced that it drew God's declaration that He would effect a total "disaster on Jerusalem and Judah" (2 Kgs 21:12).

B) Internal evidence.

- (1) God tells Habakkuk that he will be amazed at what God plans to do—he would not believe it unless God told him (1:5).
- (2) God tells Habakkuk that at some point in the future He is going to use the Babylonians to judge Judah (1:6).
- (3) God's judgment will fall on Judah in Habakkuk's "days," that is, within his lifetime (1:5).³
- (4) The condition in Judah at the time of the prophecy was: "destruction and violence confront me; conflict is present and one must endure strife. For this reason the law lacks power, and justice is never carried out. Indeed, the wicked intimidate the innocent. For this reason justice is perverted" (1:3b–4, NET).

C) External evidence.

- (1) The Jewish historical treatise *Seder 'Olam Rabbah*, written in the 2nd–3rd century AD, dates Habakkuk to the reign of Manasseh.⁴
- (2) Some scholars feel that both Zephaniah and Jeremiah knew and utilized Habakkuk's prophecy (cf. Hab 1:8 with Jer 4:13; 5:6; Hab 2:10 with Jer 51:58; Hab 2:12 with Jer 22:13–17; Hab. 2:20 with Zeph. 1:7).⁵ Since Zephaniah and Jeremiah both ministered during Josiah's reign, Habakkuk should be dated earlier in Amon's or Manasseh's reign.
- (3) The first prominent king of Babylon, Nabopolassar, rose to power in 626. Nineveh, the Assyrian capital, fell to the Chaldeans and the Medes in 612. Prior to this, during Manasseh's reign, Assyria was the preeminent power in the Middle East under the rule of Ashurbanipal.

D) My personal view at this time is that an early date has the most explanatory power—that is, it can best answer all of the internal and external evidence. Thus I have chosen to place Habakkuk within the reign of Manasseh.

² Mal Couch, "Inerrancy and the Minor Prophets," *CTJ* 03:10 (Dec 1999): 380.

³ This seems to imply that God's judgment was not going to happen immediately but at some unspecified time in the future. If Habakkuk was 20 at the time of this prophecy (c. 650), he would have been 65 at the time of Nebuchadnezzar's first siege of Jerusalem (605), 73 at the second siege (597) and 81 at the third and last siege (589)—thus placing Habakkuk within Manasseh's reign does not preclude his being able to witness the fulfillment of the prophecy (contra Blue).

⁴ *Seder 'Olam Rabbah*, 20.

⁵ C. F. Keil & F. Delitzsch, "Minor Prophets," *Commentary on the Old Testament*, Vol. 10, pp. 387–390; Patterson, pp. 110–111.

Manasseh Repents (c. 648–645 BC)

2 Chronicles 33:11–17

- 11 So the LORD brought against them the commanders of the army of the king of Assyria. They seized Manasseh, put hooks in his nose, bound him with bronze chains, and carried him away to Babylon.
- 12 In his pain Manasseh asked the LORD his God for mercy and truly humbled himself before the God of his ancestors.
- 13 When he prayed to the LORD, the LORD responded to him and answered favorably his cry for mercy. The LORD brought him back to Jerusalem to his kingdom. Then Manasseh realized that the LORD is the true God.
- 14 After this Manasseh built up the outer wall of the City of David on the west side of the Gihon in the valley to the entrance of the Fish Gate and all around the terrace; he made it much higher. He placed army officers in all the fortified cities in Judah.
- 15 He removed the foreign gods and images from the LORD's temple and all the altars he had built on the hill of the LORD's temple and in Jerusalem; he threw them outside the city.
- 16 He erected the altar of the LORD and offered on it peace offerings and thank offerings. He told the people of Judah to serve the LORD God of Israel.
- 17 The people continued to offer sacrifices at the high places, but only to the LORD their God.

The Death of Manasseh (643t BC)

2 Kings 21:17–18

2 Chronicles 33:18–20

- 17 The rest of the events of Manasseh's reign and all his accomplishments, as well as the sinful acts he committed, are recorded in the scroll called the Annals of the Kings of Judah.
- 18 Manasseh passed away and was buried in his palace garden, the garden of Uzzah, and his son Amon replaced him as king.

- 18 The rest of the events of Manasseh's reign, including his prayer to his God and the words the prophets spoke to him in the name of the LORD God of Israel, are recorded in the Annals of the Kings of Israel.
- 19 The Annals of the Prophets include his prayer, give an account of how the LORD responded to it, record all his sins and unfaithful acts, and identify the sites where he built high places and erected Asherah poles and idols before he humbled himself.
- 20 Manasseh passed away and was buried in his palace.
- His son Amon replaced him as king.

Amon, Manasseh's Son, Assumes the Throne of Judah (643t BC)

2 Kings 21:19–22

2 Chronicles 33:21–23

- 19 Amon was twenty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned for two years in Jerusalem. His mother was Meshullemeth, the daughter of Haruz, from Jotbah.
- 20 He did evil in the sight of the LORD, just like his father Manasseh had done.
- 21 He followed in the footsteps of his father and worshiped and bowed down to the disgusting idols which his father had worshiped.
- 22 He abandoned the LORD God of his ancestors and did not follow the LORD's instructions.

- 21 Amon was twenty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned for two years in Jerusalem.
- 22 He did evil in the sight of the LORD, just like his father Manasseh had done.
- He offered sacrifices to all the idols his father Manasseh had made, and worshiped them.
- 23 He did not humble himself before the LORD as his father Manasseh had done. Amon was guilty of great sin.

Amon is Assassinated by His Servants (641t BC)

2 Kings 21:23–26

2 Chronicles 33:24–25

- 23 Amon's servants conspired against him and killed the king in his palace.
- 24 The people of the land executed all those who had conspired against King Amon, and they made his son Josiah king in his

- 24 His servants conspired against him and killed him in his palace.
- 25 The people of the land executed all who had conspired against King Amon, and they made his son Josiah king in his

place. 25 The rest of Amon's accomplishments are recorded in the scroll called the Annals of the Kings of Judah. 26 He was buried in his tomb in the garden of Uzzah, and his son Josiah replaced him as king.	place.
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Josiah, Amon's Son, Assumes the Throne of Judah (641t BC)

2 Kings 22:1–2	2 Chronicles 34:1–2
1 Josiah was eight years old when he became king, and he reigned for thirty-one years in Jerusalem. His mother was Jedidah, daughter of Adaiah, from Bozkath. 2 He did what the LORD approved and followed in his ancestor David's footsteps; he did not deviate to the right or the left.	1 Josiah was eight years old when he became king, and he reigned for thirty-one years in Jerusalem. 2 He did what the LORD approved and followed in his ancestor David's footsteps; he did not deviate to the right or the left.

Zephaniah's Prophecy to Judah – The Day of the Lord (c. 635–630 BC)

Zephaniah 1–3

Superscription

1:1 This is the prophetic message that the LORD gave to Zephaniah son of Cushi, son of Gedaliah, son of Amariah, son of Hezekiah. Zephaniah delivered this message during the reign of King Josiah son of Amon of Judah:

Judgment on the Entire Earth

- 2 "I will destroy everything from the face of the earth," says the LORD.
3 "I will destroy people and animals;
I will destroy the birds in the sky
and the fish in the sea.
(The idolatrous images of these creatures will be destroyed along with evil people.)
I will remove humanity from the face of the earth," says the LORD.

Judgment on Judah and Jerusalem

- 4 "I will attack Judah
and all who live in Jerusalem.
I will remove from this place every trace of Baal worship,
as well as the very memory of the pagan priests.
5 I will remove those who worship the stars in the sky from their rooftops,
those who swear allegiance to the LORD while taking oaths in the name of their 'king,'
6 and those who turn their backs on the LORD
and do not want the LORD's help or guidance."
7 Be silent before the Lord GOD,
for the LORD's day of judgment is almost here.
The LORD has prepared a sacrificial meal;
he has ritually purified his guests.
8 "On the day of the LORD's sacrificial meal,
I will punish the princes and the king's sons,
and all who wear foreign styles of clothing.
9 On that day I will punish all who leap over the threshold,
who fill the house of their master with wealth taken by violence and deceit.
10 On that day," says the LORD,
"a loud cry will go up from the Fish Gate,
wailing from the city's newer district,
and a loud crash from the hills.
11 Wail, you who live in the market district,
for all the merchants will disappear
and those who count money will be removed.
12 At that time I will search through Jerusalem with lamps.
I will punish the people who are entrenched in their sin,
those who think to themselves,

‘The LORD neither rewards nor punishes.’

- 13 Their wealth will be stolen
and their houses ruined!
They will not live in the houses they have built,
nor will they drink the wine from the vineyards they have planted.

Judgment at the Great Day of the Lord

- 14 The LORD’s great day of judgment is almost here;
it is approaching very rapidly!
There will be a bitter sound on the LORD’s day of judgment;
at that time warriors will cry out in battle.
- 15 That day will be a day of God’s anger,
a day of distress and hardship,
a day of devastation and ruin,
a day of darkness and gloom,
a day of clouds and dark skies, [[Joel 2:1–2](#)]
- 16 a day of trumpet blasts and battle cries.
Judgment will fall on the fortified cities
and the high corner towers.
- 17 I will bring distress on the people
and they will stumble like blind men,
for they have sinned against the LORD.
Their blood will be poured out like dirt;
their flesh will be scattered like manure.
- 18 Neither their silver nor their gold will be able to deliver them
in the day of the LORD’s angry judgment.
The whole earth will be consumed by his fiery wrath.
Indeed, he will bring terrifying destruction on all who live on the earth.”
- 2:1 Bunch yourselves together like straw, you undesirable nation,
2 before God’s decree becomes reality and the day of opportunity disappears like windblown chaff,
before the LORD’s raging anger overtakes you—
before the day of the LORD’s angry judgment overtakes you!
- 3 Seek the LORD’s favor, all you humble people of the land who have obeyed his commands!
Strive to do what is right! Strive to be humble!
Maybe you will be protected on the day of the LORD’s angry judgment.

Judgment on Philistia

- 4 Indeed, Gaza will be deserted
and Ashkelon will become a heap of ruins.
Invaders will drive away the people of Ashdod by noon,
and Ekron will be overthrown.
- 5 Those who live by the sea, the people who came from Crete, are as good as dead.
The LORD has decreed your downfall, Canaan, land of the Philistines:
“I will destroy everyone who lives there!”
- 6 The seacoast will be used as pasture lands by the shepherds
and as pens for their flocks.
- 7 Those who are left from the kingdom of Judah will take possession of it.
By the sea they will graze,
in the houses of Ashkelon they will lie down in the evening,
for the LORD their God will intervene for them and restore their prosperity.

Judgment on Moab and Ammon

- 8 “I have heard Moab’s taunts
and the Ammonites’ insults.
They taunted my people
and verbally harassed those living in Judah.
- 9 Therefore, as surely as I live,” says the LORD who commands armies, the God of Israel,
“be certain that Moab will become like Sodom

and the Ammonites like Gomorrah.
 They will be overrun by weeds,
 filled with salt pits,
 and permanently desolate.
 Those of my people who are left will plunder their belongings;
 those who are left in Judah will take possession of their land.”

- 10 This is how they will be repaid for their arrogance,
 for they taunted and verbally harassed the people of the LORD who commands armies.
- 11 The LORD will terrify them,
 for he will weaken all the gods of the earth.
 All the distant nations will worship the LORD in their own lands.

Judgment on Cush

- 12 “You Ethiopians will also die by my sword!”

Judgment on Assyria and Nineveh

- 13 The LORD will attack the north
 and destroy Assyria.
 He will make Nineveh a heap of ruins;
 it will be as barren as the desert.
- 14 Flocks and herds will lie down in the middle of it,
 as well as every kind of wild animal.
 Owls will sleep in the tops of its support pillars;
 they will hoot through the windows.
 Rubble will cover the thresholds;
 even the cedar work will be exposed to the elements.
- 15 This is how the once-proud city will end up—
 the city that was so secure.
 She thought to herself, “I am unique! No one can compare to me!”
 What a heap of ruins she has become, a place where wild animals live!
 Everyone who passes by her taunts her and shakes his fist.

Jerusalem’s Future—Destruction of the Rebellious

- 3:1 The filthy, stained city is as good as dead;
 the city filled with oppressors is finished!
- 2 She is disobedient;
 she refuses correction.
 She does not trust the LORD;
 she does not seek the advice of her God.
- 3 Her princes are as fierce as roaring lions;
 her rulers are as hungry as wolves in the desert,
 who completely devour their prey by morning.
- 4 Her prophets are proud;
 they are deceitful men.
 Her priests defile what is holy;
 they break God’s laws.
- 5 The just LORD resides within her;
 he commits no unjust acts.
 Every morning he reveals his justice.
 At dawn he appears without fail.
 Yet the unjust know no shame.
- 6 “I destroyed nations;
 their walled cities are in ruins.
 I turned their streets into ruins;
 no one passes through them.
 Their cities are desolate;
 no one lives there.
- 7 I thought, ‘Certainly you will respect me!

Now you will accept correction!
 If she had done so, her home would not be destroyed
 by all the punishments I have threatened.
 But they eagerly sinned
 in everything they did.

- 8 Therefore you must wait patiently for me,” says the LORD,
 “for the day when I attack and take plunder.
 I have decided to gather nations together
 and assemble kingdoms,
 so I can pour out my fury on them—
 all my raging anger.
 For the whole earth will be consumed
 by my fiery anger.

Jerusalem’s Future—Deliverance of the Righteous

- 9 Know for sure that I will then enable
 the nations to give me acceptable praise.
 All of them will invoke the LORD’s name when they pray,
 and will worship him in unison.
- 10 From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia,
 those who pray to me will bring me tribute.
- 11 In that day you will not be ashamed of all your rebelliousness against me,
 for then I will remove from your midst those who proudly boast,
 and you will never again be arrogant on my holy hill.
- 12 I will leave in your midst a humble and meek group of people,
 and they will find safety in the LORD’s presence.
- 13 The Israelites who remain will not act deceitfully.
 They will not lie,
 and a deceitful tongue will not be found in their mouth. [[Rev 14:5](#)]
 Indeed, they will graze peacefully like sheep and lie down;
 no one will terrify them.”

Jerusalem’s Future—Millennial Joy

- 14 Shout for joy, Daughter Zion!
 Shout out, Israel!
 Be happy and boast with all your heart, Daughter Jerusalem!
- 15 The LORD has removed the judgment against you;
 he has turned back your enemy.
 Israel’s king, the LORD, is in your midst!
 You no longer need to fear disaster.
- 16 On that day they will say to Jerusalem,
 “Don’t be afraid, Zion!
 Your hands must not be paralyzed from panic!
- 17 The LORD your God is in your midst;
 he is a warrior who can deliver.
 He takes great delight in you;
 he renews you by his love;
 he shouts for joy over you.”
- 18 “As for those who grieve because they cannot attend the festivals—
 I took them away from you;
 they became tribute and were a source of shame to you.
- 19 Look, at that time I will deal with those who mistreated you.
 I will rescue the lame sheep
 and gather together the scattered sheep.
 I will take away their humiliation
 and make the whole earth admire and respect them.
- 20 At that time I will lead you—
 at the time I gather you together.

Be sure of this! I will make all the nations of the earth respect and admire you when you see me restore you,” says the LORD.

Josiah Begins to Seek After God (633t BC)

2 Chronicles 34:3a

3a In the eighth year of his reign, while he was still young, he began to seek the God of his ancestor David.

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Chronological Notes

1) Manasseh’s repentance.

- A) The Assyrian ruler responsible for deporting Manasseh to Babylon was Ashurbanipal (668–627). The reference to Babylon provides a helpful chronological clue since Ashurbanipal did not bring Babylon under his control until 648.¹ Thus Manasseh’s repentance can be placed c. 648–645 BC.

2) Zephaniah.²

- A) The superscription of Zephaniah specifies that the prophecy was given during the reign of Josiah (641t–610t) and there has been little debate to the contrary. Rather, discussion concerning the date and background of the book has centered chiefly on the specific period within Josiah’s reign.
- (1) The moral and spiritual conditions mentioned by Zephaniah have been taken by many to refer to Judah’s persistent apostasy and immorality despite the Josianic reform that began in earnest after the finding of the Book of the Law (2 Kgs 22:8) in 621 B.C. (e.g., Fausset, Feinberg, Hannah, Keil, Reid, and Walker).
- (2) Others, however, believe that such matters as Zephaniah denounces could only be true of the earlier portion of Josiah’s reign, either when the boy king was yet unable to deal with the longstanding effects of the wickedness of Judah’s two previous kings, Manasseh and Amon, or when his reformation had only recently got underway (e.g., Bewer, Bullock, Craigie, Eiselen, Eissfeldt, Freeman, Hailey, Harrison, Hummel, Kapelrud, Laetsch, Larue, Pusey, Robinson, Smith, and von Orelli).³
- B) With capable scholars on both sides of the question, one is tempted to conclude with D. A. Schneider that “the evidence is insufficient to decide this debate.”⁴ In examining the internal data, however, several items seem to favor the earlier period in Josiah’s reign: (1) religious practices in Judah were still plagued with Canaanite syncretistic rites such as characterized the era of Manasseh (1:4–5, 9); (2) many failed to worship Yahweh at all (1:6); (3) royalty were enamored with wearing the clothing of foreign merchants (1:8) who had extensive business enterprises in Jerusalem (1:10–11); and (4) Judahite society was beset by socio-economic ills (1:12–13, 18) and political and religious corruption (3:1–4, 7, 11). Moreover, several of the specific sins (e.g., 1:4–5, 9; 3:4) would likely have been corrected in Josiah’s reforms. “Accordingly, I am inclined to side with those who prefer a date before 621 BC.”⁵
- C) But how much before? Some have suggested that the political situation brought about by a Scythian raid (c. 630 BC) occasioned both Zephaniah’s response to God’s call and his urgent message concerning God’s impending judgment of the

¹ Eugene H. Merrill, *Kingdom of Priests*, p. 435.

² Richard D. Patterson, *Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah: An Exegetical Commentary*, pp. 249–250. Note that Patterson favors a date for Habakkuk of sometime in Manasseh’s reign.

³ A good discussion of the setting of the book is given by F. C. Fensham, “Book of Zephaniah,” *IDBSup*, pp. 983–84. Fensham also favors a date for Zephaniah early in Josiah’s reign.

⁴ D. A. Schneider, “Book of Zephaniah,” *ISBE* 4:1189.

⁵ Patterson, 250.

world. However, because the evidence of such an invasion is now considered to be tenuous at best, “the Scythian hypothesis has now been almost universally abandoned.”⁶ Thus the search for a precise date for Zephaniah cannot be pressed too far. Nevertheless, when one considers that Josiah was only eight years old when he ascended the throne in 641t and was dependent upon royal officials of questionable integrity (cf. 3:3), the cause for Zephaniah’s alarm is apparent. Further, that Josiah’s reforms were not instituted until the twelfth year of his reign (629t), a few years after his initial spiritual awakening (2 Chr 34:3), suggests that Zephaniah’s prophetic activities may have had a salutary effect in the reformation of that era. Thus a date of 635–630 bc is not unlikely.

⁶ Fensham, “Zephaniah,” p. 983. For a defense of the Scythian hypothesis, see CAH 3:295 where the somewhat fantastic elements of Herodotus’s account are duly recognized as well as the probability that the supposed Scythian sack of Ashdod was as much an Egyptian enterprise as Scythian. See also R. K. Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971), p. 940.

Jeremiah Begins His Prophetic Ministry to Judah (629t BC)

Jeremiah 1

Superscription

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

Jeremiah's Call and Commission

- 4 The LORD said to me,
- 5 "Before I formed you in your mother's womb I chose you.
Before you were born I set you apart.
I appointed you to be a prophet to the nations."
- 6 I answered, "Oh, Lord God, I really do not know how to speak well enough for that, for I am too young."
- 7 The LORD said to me, "Do not say, 'I am too young.' But go to whomever I send you and say whatever I tell you.
- 8 Do not be afraid of those to whom I send you, for I will be with you to protect you," says the LORD.
- 9 Then the LORD reached out his hand and touched my mouth and said to me, "I will most assuredly give you the words you are to speak for me.
- 10 Know for certain that I hereby give you the authority to announce to nations and kingdoms that they will be uprooted and torn down, destroyed and demolished, rebuilt and firmly planted."

Vision of the Branch of an Almond Tree

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

Vision of a Boiling Pot

- 13 The LORD again asked me, "What do you see?" I answered, "I see a pot of boiling water; it is tipped toward us from the north."
- 14 Then the LORD said, "This means destruction will break out from the north on all who live in the land.
- 15 For I will soon summon all the peoples of the kingdoms of the north," says the LORD. "They will come and their kings will set up their thrones near the entrances of the gates of Jerusalem. They will attack all the walls surrounding it, and all the towns in Judah.
- 16 In this way I will pass sentence on the people of Jerusalem and Judah because of all their wickedness. For they rejected me and offered sacrifices to other gods, worshiping what they made with their own hands."

A Divine Challenge and Promise

- 17 "But you, Jeremiah, get yourself ready! Go and tell these people everything I instruct you to say. Do not be terrified of them, or I will give you good reason to be terrified of them.
- 18 I, the LORD, hereby promise to make you as strong as a fortified city, an iron pillar, and a bronze wall. You will be able to stand up against all who live in the land, including the kings of Judah, its officials, its priests and all the people of the land.
- 19 They will attack you but they will not be able to overcome you, for I will be with you to rescue you," says the LORD.

Jeremiah's Prophecy to Judah—God's Case Against Israel (c. 629t BC)

Jeremiah 2

God's Fond Memories of Israel's Youth

- 1 The LORD spoke to me. He said:
- 2 "Go and declare in the hearing of the people of Jerusalem: 'This is what the LORD says:

"I have fond memories of you,
how devoted you were to me in your early years.
I remember how you loved me like a new bride;
you followed me through the wilderness,
through a land that had never been planted.

- 3 Israel was set apart to the LORD;
they were like the first fruits of a harvest to him.
All who tried to devour them were punished;

disaster came upon them," says the LORD."

Israel's Current Apostasy

4 Now listen to what the Lord has to say, you descendants of Jacob, all you family groups from the nation of Israel.

5 This is what the Lord says:

"What fault could your ancestors have possibly found in me
that they strayed so far from me?
They paid allegiance to worthless idols, and so became worthless to me.

6 They did not ask:

'Where is the LORD who delivered us out of Egypt,
who brought us through the wilderness,
through a land of desert sands and rift valleys,
through a land of drought and deep darkness,
through a land in which no one travels, and where no one lives?'

7 I brought you into a fertile land

so you could enjoy its fruits and its rich bounty.
But when you entered my land, you defiled it;
you made the land I call my own loathsome to me.

8 Your priests did not ask, 'Where is the LORD?'

Those responsible for teaching my law did not really know me.
Your rulers rebelled against me.

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

9 "So, once more I will state my case against you," says the LORD.

"I will also state it against your children and grandchildren.

10 Go west across the sea to the coasts of Cyprus and see.

Send someone east to Kedar and have them look carefully.
See if such a thing as this has ever happened:

11 Has a nation ever changed its gods

(even though they are not really gods at all)?
But my people have exchanged me, their glorious God,
for a god that cannot help them at all!

12 Be amazed at this, O heavens!

Be shocked and utterly dumbfounded," says the LORD.

13 "Do so because my people have committed a double wrong:

they have rejected me, the fountain of life-giving water,
and they have dug cisterns for themselves,
cracked cisterns which cannot even hold water."

The Consequences of Israel's Apostasy

14 "Israel is not a slave, is he?

He was not born into slavery, was he?
If not, why then is he being carried off?

15 Like lions his enemies roar victoriously over him;

they raise their voices in triumph.
They have laid his land waste;
his cities have been burned down and deserted.

16 Even the soldiers from Memphis and Tahpanhes
have cracked your skulls, people of Israel.

17 You have brought all this on yourself, Israel,
by deserting the LORD your God
when he was leading you along the right path.

18 What good will it do you then to go down to Egypt
to seek help from the Egyptians?

What good will it do you to go over to Assyria
to seek help from the Assyrians?

19 Your own wickedness will bring about your punishment.

Your unfaithful acts will bring down discipline on you.
Know, then, and realize how utterly harmful
it was for you to reject me, the LORD your God,
to show no respect for me,”
says the Lord God who rules over all.

The Strange Fascination With and Futility of Idolatry

- 20 “Indeed, long ago you threw off my authority
and refused to be subject to me.
You said, ‘I will not serve you.’
Instead, you gave yourself to other gods on every high hill
and under every green tree,
like a prostitute sprawls out before her lovers.
- 21 I planted you in the land
like a special vine of the very best stock.
Why in the world have you turned into something like a wild vine
that produces rotten, foul-smelling grapes?
- 22 You can try to wash away your guilt with a strong detergent.
You can use as much soap as you want.
But the stain of your guilt is still there for me to see,”
says the Lord GOD.
- 23 “How can you say, ‘I have not made myself unclean.
I have not paid allegiance to the gods called Baal.’
Just look at the way you have behaved in the Valley of Hinnom!
Think about the things you have done there!
You are like a flighty, young female camel
that rushes here and there, crisscrossing its path.
- 24 You are like a wild female donkey brought up in the wilderness.
In her lust she sniffs the wind to get the scent of a male.
No one can hold her back when she is in heat.
None of the males need wear themselves out chasing after her.
At mating time she is easy to find.
- 25 Do not chase after other gods until your shoes wear out
and your throats become dry.
But you say, ‘It is useless for you to try and stop me
because I love those foreign gods and want to pursue them!’
- 26 Just as a thief has to suffer dishonor when he is caught,
so the people of Israel will suffer dishonor for what they have done.
So will their kings and officials,
their priests and their prophets.
- 27 They say to a wooden idol, ‘You are my father.’
They say to a stone image, ‘You gave birth to me.’
Yes, they have turned away from me instead of turning to me.
Yet when they are in trouble, they say, ‘Come and save us!’
- 28 But where are the gods you made for yourselves?
Let them save you when you are in trouble.
The sad fact is that you have as many gods
as you have towns, Judah.

Israel Deserves Judgment

- 29 “Why do you try to refute me?
All of you have rebelled against me,” says the LORD.
- 30 “It did no good for me to punish your people.
They did not respond to such correction.
You slaughtered your prophets
like a voracious lion.”
- 31 You people of this generation,
listen to what the LORD says.

- “Have I been like a wilderness to you, Israel?
 Have I been like a dark and dangerous land to you?
 Why then do you say, ‘We are free to wander.
 We will not come to you any more?’
- 32 Does a young woman forget to put on her jewels?
 Does a bride forget to put on her bridal attire?
 But my people have forgotten me
 for more days than can even be counted.
- 33 “My, how good you have become
 at chasing after your lovers!
 Why, you could even teach prostitutes a thing or two!
- 34 Even your clothes are stained with
 the lifeblood of the poor who had not done anything wrong;
 you did not catch them breaking into your homes.
 Yet, in spite of all these things you have done,
- 35 you say, ‘I have not done anything wrong,
 so the LORD cannot really be angry with me any more.’
 But, watch out! I will bring down judgment on you
 because you say, ‘I have not committed any sin.’
- 36 Why do you constantly go about
 changing your political allegiances?
 You will get no help from Egypt
 just as you got no help from Assyria.
- 37 Moreover, you will come away from Egypt
 with your hands covering your faces in sorrow and shame
 because the LORD will not allow your reliance on them to be successful
 and you will not gain any help from them.

Jeremiah’s Prophecy to Judah—An Appeal to Return to God (c. 629t BC)

Jeremiah 3:1–4:4

A Faithless Wife

- 3:1 “If a man divorces his wife
 and she leaves him and becomes another man’s wife,
 he may not take her back again.
 Doing that would utterly defile the land. [cf. [Deut 24:1–4](#)]
 But you, Israel, have given yourself as a prostitute to many gods.
 So what makes you think you can return to me?” says the LORD.
- 2 “Look up at the hilltops and consider this.
 You have had sex with other gods on every one of them.
 You waited for those gods like a thief lying in wait in the desert.
 You defiled the land by your wicked prostitution to other gods.
- 3 That is why the rains have been withheld,
 and the spring rains have not come.
 Yet in spite of this you are obstinate as a prostitute.
 You refuse to be ashamed of what you have done.
- 4 Even now you say to me, ‘You are my father!
 You have been my faithful companion ever since I was young.
- 5 You will not always be angry with me, will you?
 You will not be mad at me forever, will you?’
 That is what you say,
 but you continually do all the evil that you can.”

Judah More Guilty Than Israel

- 6 When Josiah was king of Judah, the LORD said to me, “Jeremiah, you have no doubt seen what wayward Israel has done. You have seen how she went up to every high hill and under every green tree to give herself like a prostitute to other gods.
 7 Yet even after she had done all that, I thought that she might come back to me. But she did not. Her sister, unfaithful Judah, saw what she did.

8 She also saw that I gave wayward Israel her divorce papers and sent her away because of her adulterous worship of other gods. Even after her unfaithful sister Judah had seen this, she still was not afraid, and she too went and gave herself like a prostitute to other gods.

9 Because she took her prostitution so lightly, she defiled the land through her adulterous worship of gods made of wood and stone.

10 In spite of all this, Israel's sister, unfaithful Judah, has not turned back to me with any sincerity; she has only pretended to do so," says the LORD.

11 Then the LORD said to me, "Under the circumstances, wayward Israel could even be considered less guilty than unfaithful Judah.

A Call for Repentance

12 "Go and shout this message to my people in the countries in the north. Tell them,

'Come back to me, wayward Israel,' says the LORD.

'I will not continue to look on you with displeasure.

For I am merciful,' says the LORD.

'I will not be angry with you forever.

13 However, you must confess that you have done wrong, and that you have rebelled against the LORD your God.

You must confess that you have given yourself to foreign gods under every green tree, and have not obeyed my commands,' says the LORD.

14a "Come back to me, my wayward sons," says the LORD, "for I am your true master.

Millennial Blessings

14b If you do, I will take one of you from each town and two of you from each family group, and I will bring you back to Zion.

15 I will give you leaders who will be faithful to me. They will lead you with knowledge and insight.

16 In those days, your population will greatly increase in the land. At that time," says the LORD, "people will no longer talk about having the ark that contains the LORD's covenant with us. They will not call it to mind, remember it, or miss it. No, that will not be done any more!

17 At that time the city of Jerusalem will be called the LORD's throne. All nations will gather there in Jerusalem to honor the LORD's name. They will no longer follow the stubborn inclinations of their own evil hearts.

18 At that time the nation of Judah and the nation of Israel will be reunited. Together they will come back from a land in the north to the land that I gave to your ancestors as a permanent possession."

God Describes the True Repentance He Desires

19 "I thought to myself,

'Oh what a joy it would be for me to treat you like a son!

What a joy it would be for me to give you a pleasant land,

the most beautiful piece of property there is in all the world!

I thought you would call me, 'Father'

and would never cease being loyal to me.

20 But, you have been unfaithful to me, nation of Israel,

like an unfaithful wife who has left her husband," says the LORD.

21 "A noise is heard on the hilltops.

It is the sound of the people of Israel crying and pleading to their gods.

Indeed they have followed sinful ways;

they have forgotten to be true to the LORD their God.

22 Come back to me, you wayward people.

I want to cure your waywardness.

Say, 'Here we are. We come to you

because you are the LORD our God.

23 We know our noisy worship of false gods

on the hills and mountains did not help us.

We know that the LORD our God

is the only one who can deliver Israel.

24 From earliest times our worship of that shameful god, Baal,

has taken away all that our ancestors worked for.

It has taken away our flocks and our herds,

and even our sons and daughters.

- 25 Let us acknowledge our shame.
Let us bear the disgrace that we deserve.
For we have sinned against the LORD our God,
both we and our ancestors.
From earliest times to this very day
we have not obeyed the LORD our God.’
- 4:1 “If you, Israel, want to come back,” says the LORD,
“if you want to come back to me
you must get those disgusting idols out of my sight
and must no longer go astray.
- 2 You must be truthful, honest and upright
when you take an oath saying, ‘As surely as the LORD lives!’
If you do, the nations will pray to be as blessed by him as you are
and will make him the object of their boasting.”
- 3 Yes, the LORD has this to say
to the people of Judah and Jerusalem:
“Like a farmer breaking up hard unplowed ground,
you must break your rebellious will and make a new beginning;
just as a farmer must clear away thorns lest the seed is wasted,
you must get rid of the sin that is ruining your lives.
- 4 Just as ritual circumcision cuts away the foreskin
as an external symbol of dedicated covenant commitment,
you must genuinely dedicate yourselves to the LORD
and get rid of everything that hinders your commitment to me,
people of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem.
If you do not, my anger will blaze up like a flaming fire against you
that no one will be able to extinguish.
That will happen because of the evil you have done.”

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Chronological Notes

1) Jeremiah.

A) Josiah’s 13th Year.

- (1) In Jeremiah 25:3, the prophet counted 23 years from the 13th year of Josiah to the 4th year of Jehoiakim, 606t. The cardinal number 23 is given without any preposition or modifier and must be taken in an absolute (accession) sense; this puts the 13th year of Josiah in 606t + 23 = 629t. By Jeremiah’s non-accession reckoning, Josiah’s beginning year can be calculated as 629t + 12 (acc.) = 641t. This date for the accession of Josiah provides the means of determining if the 31 years for his reign given in 2 Kings 22:1 is an accession or non-accession figure. The Babylonian Chronicles allow the date of his death to be calculated as the fourth month of 609 BC, which was in the year 610t. This was 31 years after the beginning of Josiah’s reign in 641t, so the reign length as given in 2 Kings 22:1 is by accession reckoning, showing, incidentally, that somewhere between 2 Kings 22:1 and 24:1 the counting system changed from accession to non-accession (*Important: Josiah’s 13th year in Jer 1:2 = Josiah’s 12th year in 2 Chr 34:3).¹

B) Chronological Arrangement of Jeremiah.

- (1) Jeremiah’s ministry spanned the reigns of Josiah, Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, Zedekiah and the governorship of Gedaliah (cf. Jer 1:1–3; 40:7). The book of Jeremiah contains many chronological references which date the various events and prophecies:

¹ Rodger C. Young, “When Did Jerusalem Fall?” *JETS* 47.1 (Mar 2004): 35.

- Jeremiah 1:1–3 — the 13th year of Josiah’s reign.
- Jeremiah 3:6 — during Josiah’s reign.
- Jeremiah 21:1 — during Nebuchadnezzar’s siege of Jerusalem in Zedekiah’s reign.
- Jeremiah 22:10–13 — just after Josiah’s death, Jehoahaz’s (Shallum’s) exile and Jehoiakim’s accession.
- Jeremiah 24:1 — after Nebuchadnezzar deported Jehoiachin to Babylon.
- Jeremiah 25:1 — the 4th year of Jehoiakim’s reign.
- Jeremiah 25:3 — marks 23 years of ministry between Josiah’s 13th year and Jehoiakim’s 4th year.
- Jeremiah 26:1 — the beginning of Jehoiakim’s reign.
- Jeremiah 27:1 — early in Zedekiah’s reign.
- Jeremiah 28:1 — the 5th month of the 4th year of Zedekiah’s reign.
- Jeremiah 29:1–2 — after Nebuchadnezzar deported Jehoiachin to Babylon.
- Jeremiah 32:1 — the 10th year of Zedekiah’s reign (Nebuchadnezzar’s 18th year).
- Jeremiah 32:2, 8 — when Jeremiah was confined in the courtyard of the guardhouse during Zedekiah’s reign.
- Jeremiah 33:1 — when Jeremiah was confined in the courtyard of the guardhouse during Zedekiah’s reign.
- Jeremiah 34:1–10 — during Nebuchadnezzar’s siege of Jerusalem during Zedekiah’s reign.
- Jeremiah 36:1–8 — the 4th year of Jehoiakim’s reign.
- Jeremiah 36:9–32 — the 9th month of the 5th year of Jehoiakim’s reign
- Jeremiah 37:1–5 — the brief respite in Nebuchadnezzar’s siege of Jerusalem during Zedekiah’s reign.
- Jeremiah 37:21 — Jeremiah is committed to the courtyard of the guardhouse during Zedekiah’s reign.
- Jeremiah 39:1 — the 10th month of the 9th year of Zedekiah’s reign.
- Jeremiah 39:15 — when Jeremiah was confined in the courtyard of the guardhouse during Zedekiah’s reign.
- Jeremiah 41:1 — the 7th month of 587.
- Jeremiah 45:1 — the 4th year of Jehoiakim’s reign.
- Jeremiah 46:1 — the 4th year of Jehoiakim’s reign.
- Jeremiah 47:1 — before Pharaoh attacked Gaza.
- Jeremiah 49:34 — early in the reign of Zedekiah.
- Jeremiah 51:59 — the 4th year of Zedekiah’s reign.

(2) The chronological data above makes it clear that the canonical order of Jeremiah does not follow the historical order. This has given rise to various attempts to organize Jeremiah chronologically.² For the most part, I will be following the arrangement of J. Barton Payne.

² Charles H. Dyer, “Jeremiah,” *Bible Knowledge Commentary*, chart on p. 1126; J. Barton Payne, “The Arrangement of Jeremiah’s Prophecies,” *JETS* 7.4 (Fall 1964), chart on p. 125; Charles L. Feinberg, “Jeremiah,” *EBC*, Vol. 6, 358.

Jeremiah's Prophecy to Judah—Invasion from the North (c. 629t BC)

Jeremiah 4:5–31

The Alarm—Invasion is Threatened

5 The LORD said,

“Announce this in Judah and proclaim it in Jerusalem:

‘Sound the trumpet throughout the land!’

Shout out loudly,

‘Gather together! Let us flee into the fortified cities!’

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

Run for safety! Do not delay!

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

It will bring great destruction.

7 Like a lion that has come up from its lair

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

He is coming out to lay your land waste.

Your cities will become ruins and lie uninhabited.

8 So put on sackcloth!

Mourn and wail, saying,

‘The fierce anger of the LORD

has not turned away from us!’”

9 “When this happens,” says the LORD,

“the king and his officials will lose their courage.

The priests will be struck with horror,

and the prophets will be speechless in astonishment.”

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

The Scorching Hot Wind of Judgment

11 “At that time the people of Judah and Jerusalem will be told,

‘A scorching wind will sweep down

from the hilltops in the desert on my dear people.

It will not be a gentle breeze

for winnowing the grain and blowing away the chaff.

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

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

13 Look! The enemy is approaching like gathering clouds.

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

His horses move more swiftly than eagles.”

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

14 “Oh people of Jerusalem, purify your hearts from evil

so that you may yet be delivered.

How long will you continue to harbor up

wicked schemes within you?

15 For messengers are coming, heralding disaster,

from the city of Dan and from the hills of Ephraim.

16 They are saying,

‘Announce to the surrounding nations,

“The enemy is coming!”

Proclaim this message to Jerusalem:

“Those who besiege cities are coming from a distant land.

They are ready to raise the battle cry against the towns in Judah.”’

17 They will surround Jerusalem

like men guarding a field

because they have rebelled against me,” says the LORD.

18 “The way you have lived and the things you have done

will bring this on you.

This is the punishment you deserve, and it will be painful indeed.
The pain will be so bad it will pierce your heart.”

Jeremiah’s Anguished Cry

19 I said,

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

20 I see one destruction after another taking place,
so that the whole land lies in ruins.
I see our tents suddenly destroyed,
their curtains torn down in a mere instant.

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

22 The LORD answered,

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

A Vision and an Oracle about the Coming Destruction

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

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

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

26 I looked and saw that the fruitful land had become a desert
and that all of the cities had been laid in ruins.
The LORD had brought this all about
because of his blazing anger.

27 All this will happen because the LORD said,
“The whole land will be desolate;
however, I will not completely destroy it.

28 Because of this the land will mourn
and the sky above will grow black.
For I have made my purpose known
and I will not relent or turn back from carrying it out.”

The Death Agony of Zion

29 At the sound of the approaching horsemen and archers
the people of every town will flee.
Some of them will hide in the thickets.
Others will climb up among the rocks.
All the cities will be deserted.
No one will remain in them.

30 And you, Zion, city doomed to destruction,
you accomplish nothing by wearing a beautiful dress,
decking yourself out in jewels of gold,

and putting on eye shadow!
 You are making yourself beautiful for nothing.
 Your lovers spurn you.
 They want to kill you.

- 31 In fact, I hear a cry like that of a woman in labor,
 a cry of anguish like that of a woman giving birth to her first baby.
 It is the cry of Daughter Zion gasping for breath,
 reaching out for help, saying, "I am done in!
 My life is ebbing away before these murderers!"

Jeremiah's Prophecy to Judah—Total Sinfulness of Judah (c. 629t BC)

Jeremiah 5

Jeremiah's Vain Search for a Righteous Person

1 The LORD said,

"Go up and down through the streets of Jerusalem.

Look around and see for yourselves.

Search through its public squares.

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

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

- 2 These people make promises in the name of the LORD.

But the fact is, what they swear to is really a lie."

- 3 LORD, I know you look for faithfulness.

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

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

They have become as hardheaded as a rock.

They refuse to change their ways.

- 4 I thought, "Surely it is only the ignorant poor who act this way.

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

They do not know what their God requires of them.

- 5 I will go to the leaders

and speak with them.

Surely they know what the LORD demands.

Surely they know what their God requires of them."

Yet all of them, too, have rejected his authority

and refuse to submit to him.

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

Like a wolf from the desert they will destroy them.

Like a leopard they will lie in wait outside their cities

and totally destroy anyone who ventures out.

For they have rebelled so much

and done so many unfaithful things.

God's Justification for Judah's Punishment

7 The LORD asked,

"How can I leave you unpunished, Jerusalem?

Your people have rejected me

and have worshiped gods that are not gods at all.

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

They went flocking to the houses of prostitutes.

- 8 They are like lusty, well-fed stallions.

Each of them lusts after his neighbor's wife.

- 9 I will surely punish them for doing such things!" says the LORD.

"I will surely bring retribution on such a nation as this!"

- 10 The LORD commanded the enemy,

“March through the vineyards of Israel and Judah and ruin them.
But do not destroy them completely.
Strip off their branches
for these people do not belong to the LORD.

- 11 For the nations of Israel and Judah
have been very unfaithful to me,”

says the LORD.

- 12 “These people have denied what the LORD says.
They have said, ‘That is not so!
No harm will come to us.
We will not experience war and famine.
13 The prophets will prove to be full of wind.
The LORD has not spoken through them.
So, let what they say happen to them.’”

The Coming of a Distant Nation against Judah

14 Because of that, the LORD, the God who rules over all, said to me,

“Because these people have spoken like this,
I will make the words that I put in your mouth like fire.
And I will make this people like wood
which the fiery judgments you speak will burn up.”

- 15 The LORD says, “Listen, nation of Israel!
I am about to bring a nation from far away to attack you.
It will be a nation that was founded long ago
and has lasted for a long time.
It will be a nation whose language you will not know.
Its people will speak words that you will not be able to understand.
16 All of its soldiers are strong and mighty.
Their arrows will send you to your grave.
17 They will eat up your crops and your food.
They will kill off your sons and your daughters.
They will eat up your sheep and your cattle.
They will destroy your vines and your fig trees.
Their weapons will batter down
the fortified cities you trust in.

18 Yet even then I will not completely destroy you,” says the LORD.

19 “So then, Jeremiah, when your people ask, ‘Why has the LORD our God done all this to us?’ tell them, ‘It is because you rejected me and served foreign gods in your own land. So you must serve foreigners in a land that does not belong to you.’”

Warning to a Foolish and Rebellious People

- 20 “Proclaim this message among the descendants of Jacob.
Make it known throughout Judah.
21 Tell them: ‘Hear this,
you foolish people who have no understanding,
who have eyes but do not discern,
who have ears but do not perceive: [\[Mark 8:18\]](#)
22 “You should fear me!” says the LORD.
“You should tremble in awe before me!
I made the sand to be a boundary for the sea,
a permanent barrier that it can never cross.
Its waves may roll, but they can never prevail.
They may roar, but they can never cross beyond that boundary.”
23 But these people have stubborn and rebellious hearts.
They have turned aside and gone their own way.

- 24 They do not say to themselves,
 “Let us revere the LORD our God.
 It is he who gives us the autumn rains and the spring rains at the proper time.
 It is he who assures us of the regular weeks of harvest.”
- 25 Your misdeeds have stopped these things from coming.
 Your sins have deprived you of my bounty.’
- 26 “Indeed, there are wicked scoundrels among my people.
 They lie in wait like bird catchers hiding in ambush.
 They set deadly traps to catch people.
- 27 Like a cage filled with the birds that have been caught,
 their houses are filled with the gains of their fraud and deceit.
 That is how they have gotten so rich and powerful.
- 28 That is how they have grown fat and sleek.
 There is no limit to the evil things they do.
 They do not plead the cause of the fatherless in such a way as to win it.
 They do not defend the rights of the poor.
- 29 I will certainly punish them for doing such things!” says the LORD.
 “I will certainly bring retribution on such a nation as this!
- 30 “Something horrible and shocking
 is going on in the land of Judah:
- 31 The prophets prophesy lies.
 The priests exercise power by their own authority.
 And my people love to have it this way.
 But they will not be able to help you when the time of judgment comes!

Jeremiah’s Prophecy to Judah—The Coming Siege and Fall of Jerusalem (c. 629t BC)

Jeremiah 6

An Appeal to Flee the Coming Siege

- 1 “Run for safety, people of Benjamin!
 Get out of Jerusalem!
 Sound the trumpet in Tekoa!
 Light the signal fires at Beth Hakkerem!
 For disaster lurks out of the north;
 it will bring great destruction.
- 2 I will destroy Daughter Zion,
 who is as delicate and defenseless as a young maiden.
- 3 Kings will come against it with their armies.
 They will encamp in siege all around it.
 Each of them will devastate the portion assigned to him.
- 4 They will say, ‘Prepare to do battle against it!
 Come on! Let’s attack it at noon!’
 But later they will say, ‘Oh, oh! Too bad!
 The day is almost over
 and the shadows of evening are getting long.
- 5 So come on, let’s go ahead and attack it by night
 and destroy all its fortified buildings.’
- 6 All of this is because the LORD who rules over all has said:
 ‘Cut down the trees around Jerusalem
 and build up a siege ramp against its walls.
 This is the city which is to be punished.
 Nothing but oppression happens in it.
- 7 As a well continually pours out fresh water
 so it continually pours out wicked deeds.
 Sounds of violence and destruction echo throughout it.
 All I see are sick and wounded people.’
- 8 So take warning, Jerusalem,
 or I will abandon you in disgust

and make you desolate,
a place where no one can live.”

Punishment of a Shameless People

9 This is what the LORD who rules over all said to me:

“Those who remain in Israel will be
like the grapes thoroughly gleaned from a vine.
So go over them again, as though you were a grape harvester
passing your hand over the branches one last time.”

10 I answered,

“Who would listen
if I spoke to them and warned them?
Their ears are so closed
that they cannot hear!
Indeed, what the LORD says is offensive to them.
They do not like it at all.

11 I am as full of anger as you are, LORD,
I am tired of trying to hold it in.”

The LORD answered,

“Vent it, then, on the children who play in the street
and on the young men who are gathered together.
Husbands and wives are to be included,
as well as the old and those who are advanced in years.

12 Their houses will be turned over to others
as will their fields and their wives.
For I will unleash my power
against those who live in this land,”

says the LORD.

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

14 They offer only superficial help
for the harm my people have suffered.
They say, ‘Everything will be all right!’
But everything is not all right!

15 Are they ashamed because they have done such shameful things?
No, they are not at all ashamed.
They do not even know how to blush!
So they will die, just like others have died.
They will be brought to ruin when I punish them,”

says the LORD.

Refusal to Heed God’s Warnings

16 The LORD said to his people:

“You are standing at the crossroads. So consider your path.
Ask where the old, reliable paths are.
Ask where the path is that leads to blessing and follow it.
If you do, you will find rest for your souls.”

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

17 The LORD said,

“I appointed prophets as watchmen to warn you, saying:
‘Pay attention to the warning sound of the trumpet!’”
But they said, “We will not pay attention!”

18 So the LORD said,

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

19 Hear this, you peoples of the earth:

‘Take note! I am about to bring disaster on these people.
It will come as punishment for their scheming.
For they have paid no attention to what I have said,
and they have rejected my law.

20 I take no delight when they offer up to me
frankincense that comes from Sheba
or sweet-smelling cane imported from a faraway land.
I cannot accept the burnt offerings they bring me.
I get no pleasure from the sacrifices they offer to me.’

The Terrors of the Approaching Enemy

21 So, this is what the LORD says:

‘I will assuredly make these people stumble to their doom.
Parents and children will stumble and fall to their destruction.
Friends and neighbors will die.’

22 “This is what the LORD says:

‘Beware! An army is coming from a land in the north.
A mighty nation is stirring into action in faraway parts of the earth.

23 Its soldiers are armed with bows and spears.

They are cruel and show no mercy.

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

Lined up in formation like men going into battle
to attack you, Daughter Zion.”

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

We have become helpless with fear!

Anguish grips us,
agony like that of a woman giving birth to a baby!

25 Do not go out into the countryside.

Do not travel on the roads.

For the enemy is there with sword in hand.

They are spreading terror everywhere.”

26 So I said, “Oh, my dear people, put on sackcloth
and roll in ashes.

Mourn with painful sobs
as though you had lost your only child.

For any moment now that destructive army
will come against us.”

God Commissions Jeremiah to Test His People

27 The LORD said to me,

“I have made you like a metal assayer
to test my people like ore.

You are to observe them
and evaluate how they behave.”

28 I reported,

“All of them are the most stubborn of rebels!
They are as hard as bronze or iron.
They go about telling lies.
They all deal corruptly.

29 The fiery bellows of judgment burn fiercely.
But there is too much dross to be removed.
The process of refining them has proved useless.
The wicked have not been purged.

30 They are regarded as ‘rejected silver’
because the LORD rejects them.”

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Jeremiah's Prophecy to Judah—The Temple Sermon (c. 629t BC)

Jeremiah 7:1–8:3

The Temple Sermon

7:1 The LORD said to Jeremiah:

2 “Stand in the gate of the LORD’s temple and proclaim this message: ‘Listen, all you people of Judah who have passed through these gates to worship the LORD. Hear what the LORD has to say.

3 The LORD God of Israel who rules over all says: Change the way you have been living and do what is right. If you do, I will allow you to continue to live in this land.

4 Stop putting your confidence in the false belief that says, “We are safe! The temple of the LORD is here! The temple of the LORD is here! The temple of the LORD is here!”

5 You must change the way you have been living and do what is right. You must treat one another fairly.

6 Stop oppressing foreigners who live in your land, children who have lost their fathers, and women who have lost their husbands. Stop killing innocent people in this land. Stop paying allegiance to other gods. That will only bring about your ruin.

7 If you stop doing these things, I will allow you to continue to live in this land which I gave to your ancestors as a lasting possession.

8 “But just look at you! You are putting your confidence in a false belief that will not deliver you.

9 You steal. You murder. You commit adultery. You lie when you swear on oath. You sacrifice to the god Baal. You pay allegiance to other gods whom you have not previously known.

10 Then you come and stand in my presence in this temple I have claimed as my own and say, “We are safe!” You think you are so safe that you go on doing all those hateful sins!

11 Do you think this temple I have claimed as my own is to be a hideout for robbers? You had better take note! I have seen for myself what you have done! says the LORD. [\[Matt 21:13; Mark 11:17; Luke 19:46\]](#)

12 So, go to the place in Shiloh where I allowed myself to be worshiped in the early days. See what I did to it because of the wicked things my people Israel did.

13 You also have done all these things, says the LORD, and I have spoken to you over and over again. But you have not listened! You have refused to respond when I called you to repent!

14 So I will destroy this temple which I have claimed as my own, this temple that you are trusting to protect you. I will destroy this place that I gave to you and your ancestors, just like I destroyed Shiloh.

15 And I will drive you out of my sight just like I drove out your relatives, the people of Israel.”

Worship of the Queen of Heaven

16 Then the LORD said, “As for you, Jeremiah, do not pray for these people! Do not cry out to me or petition me on their behalf! Do not plead with me to save them, because I will not listen to you.

17 Do you see what they are doing in the towns of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem?

18 Children are gathering firewood, fathers are building fires with it, and women are mixing dough to bake cakes to offer to the goddess they call the Queen of Heaven. They are also pouring out drink offerings to other gods. They seem to do all this just to trouble me.

19 But I am not really the one being troubled!” says the LORD. “Rather they are bringing trouble on themselves to their own shame!

20 So,” the Lord GOD says, “my raging fury will be poured out on this land. It will be poured out on human beings and animals, on trees and crops. And it will burn like a fire which cannot be extinguished.”

A Disobedient Nation

21 The LORD said to the people of Judah, “The LORD God of Israel who rules over all says: ‘You might as well go ahead and add the meat of your burnt offerings to that of the other sacrifices and eat it, too!

22 Consider this: When I spoke to your ancestors after I brought them out of Egypt, I did not merely give them commands about burnt offerings and sacrifices.

23 I also explicitly commanded them: “Obey me. If you do, I will be your God and you will be my people. Live exactly the way I tell you and things will go well with you.”

24 But they did not listen to me or pay any attention to me. They followed the stubborn inclinations of their own wicked hearts. They acted worse and worse instead of better.

25 From the time your ancestors departed the land of Egypt until now, I sent my servants the prophets to you again and again, day after day.

26 But your ancestors did not listen to me nor pay attention to me. They became obstinate and were more wicked than even their own forefathers.”

27 Then the LORD said to me, “When you tell them all this, they will not listen to you. When you call out to them, they will not respond to you.

28 So tell them: ‘This is a nation that has not obeyed the LORD their God and has not accepted correction. Faithfulness is nowhere to be found in it. These people do not even profess it anymore.

29 So, mourn, you people of this nation. Cut off your hair and throw it away. Sing a song of mourning on the hilltops. For the LORD

has decided to reject and forsake this generation that has provoked his wrath!”

Coming Judgment of Human Sacrifice

30 The LORD says, “I have rejected them because the people of Judah have done what I consider evil. They have set up their disgusting idols in the temple which I have claimed for my own and have defiled it.

31 They have also built places of worship in a place called Topheth in the Valley of Ben Hinnom so that they can sacrifice their sons and daughters by fire. That is something I never commanded them to do! Indeed, it never even entered my mind to command such a thing!

32 So, watch out!” says the LORD. “The time will soon come when people will no longer call those places Topheth or the Valley of Ben Hinnom. But they will call that valley the Valley of Slaughter and they will bury so many people in Topheth they will run out of room.

33 Then the dead bodies of these people will be left on the ground for the birds and wild animals to eat. There will not be any survivors to scare them away.

34 I will put an end to the sounds of joy and gladness, or the glad celebration of brides and grooms throughout the towns of Judah and the streets of Jerusalem. For the whole land will become a desolate wasteland.”

Desecration of Graves by the Enemy

8:1 The LORD says, “When that time comes, the bones of the kings of Judah and its leaders, the bones of the priests and prophets and of all the other people who lived in Jerusalem will be dug up from their graves.

2 They will be spread out and exposed to the sun, the moon and the stars. These are things they adored and served, things to which they paid allegiance, from which they sought guidance, and worshiped. The bones of these people will never be regathered and reburied. They will be like manure used to fertilize the ground.

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

Jeremiah’s Prophecy to Judah—A Depraved and Incurable People (c. 629t BC)

Jeremiah 8:4–9:6

Stubborn Refusal to Return to God

8:4 The LORD said to me,

“Tell them, ‘The LORD says,

Do people not get back up when they fall down?

Do they not turn around when they go the wrong way?

5 Why, then, do these people of Jerusalem continually turn away from me in apostasy?

They hold fast to their deception.

They refuse to turn back to me.

6 I have listened to them very carefully,

but they do not speak honestly.

None of them regrets the evil he has done.

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

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

7 Even the stork knows

when it is time to move on.

The turtledove, swallow, and crane recognize the normal times for their migration.

But my people pay no attention to what I, the LORD, require of them.

8 How can you say, “We are wise!

We have the law of the LORD”?

The truth is, those who teach it have used their writings to make it say what it does not really mean.

9 Your wise men will be put to shame.

They will be dumbfounded and be brought to judgment.

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

10 So I will give their wives to other men

and their fields to new owners.

For from the least important to the most important of them,
all of them are greedy for dishonest gain.

Prophets and priests alike,
all practice deceit.

- 11 They offer only superficial help
for the hurt my dear people have suffered.
They say, "Everything will be all right!"
But everything is not all right!
- 12 Are they ashamed because they have done such disgusting things?
No, they are not at all ashamed!
They do not even know how to blush!
So they will die just like others have died.
They will be brought to ruin when I punish them,
says the LORD.
- 13 I will take away their harvests, says the LORD.
There will be no grapes on their vines.
There will be no figs on their fig trees.
Even the leaves on their trees will wither.
The crops that I gave them will be taken away."

The People's Resignation to the Coming Invasion

14 The people say,

"Why are we just sitting here?
Let us gather together inside the fortified cities.
Let us at least die there fighting,
since the LORD our God has condemned us to die.
He has condemned us to drink the poison waters of judgment
because we have sinned against him.

- 15 We hoped for good fortune, but nothing good has come of it.
We hoped for a time of relief, but instead we experience terror.
- 16 The snorting of the enemy's horses
is already being heard in the city of Dan.
The sound of the neighing of their stallions
causes the whole land to tremble with fear.
They are coming to destroy the land and everything in it!
They are coming to destroy the cities and everyone who lives in them!"

17 The LORD says,

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

Lament for a Stricken People

18 Then I said,

"There is no cure for my grief!
I am sick at heart!

- 19 I hear my dear people crying out
throughout the length and breadth of the land.
They are crying, 'Is the LORD no longer in Zion?
Is her divine King no longer there?'"
The LORD answers,
"Why then do they provoke me to anger with their images,
with their worthless foreign idols?"
- 20 "They cry, 'Harvest time has come and gone, and the summer is over,

and still we have not been delivered.’

- 21 My heart is crushed because my dear people are being crushed.
I go about crying and grieving. I am overwhelmed with dismay.
- 22 There is still medicinal ointment available in Gilead!
There is still a physician there!
Why then have my dear people
not been restored to health?
- 9:1 I wish that my head were a well full of water
and my eyes were a fountain full of tears!
If they were, I could cry day and night
for those of my dear people who have been killed.
- 2 I wish I had a lodging place in the desert
where I could spend some time like a weary traveler.
Then I would desert my people
and walk away from them
because they are all unfaithful to God,
a congregation of people that has been disloyal to him.

3 The LORD says,

“These people are like soldiers who have readied their bows.
Their tongues are always ready to shoot out lies.
They have become powerful in the land,
but they have not done so by honest means.
Indeed, they do one evil thing after another
and do not pay attention to me.

- 4 Everyone must be on his guard around his friends.
He must not even trust any of his relatives.
For every one of them will find some way to cheat him.
And all of his friends will tell lies about him.
- 5 One friend deceives another
and no one tells the truth.
These people have trained themselves to tell lies.
They do wrong and are unable to repent.
- 6 They do one act of violence after another,
and one deceitful thing after another.
They refuse to pay attention to me,”
says the LORD.

Jeremiah’s Prophecy to Judah—Jerusalem’s Coming Ruin (c. 629t BC)

Jeremiah 9:7–26

God’s Justification for the Coming Punishment

7 Therefore the LORD who rules over all says,

“I will now purify them in the fires of affliction and test them.
The wickedness of my dear people has left me no choice.
What else can I do?

- 8 Their tongues are like deadly arrows.
They are always telling lies.
Friendly words for their neighbors come from their mouths.
But their minds are thinking up ways to trap them.
- 9 I will certainly punish them for doing such things!” says the LORD. “I will certainly bring retribution on such a nation as this!”

10 I said,

“I will weep and mourn for the grasslands on the mountains,
I will sing a mournful song for the pastures in the wilderness

because they are so scorched no one travels through them.
The sound of livestock is no longer heard there.
Even the birds in the sky and the wild animals in the fields
have fled and are gone.”

11 The LORD said,

“I will make Jerusalem a heap of ruins.
Jackals will make their home there.
I will destroy the towns of Judah
so that no one will be able to live in them.”

12 I said,

“Who is wise enough to understand why this has happened?
Who has a word from the LORD that can explain it?
Why does the land lie in ruins?
Why is it as scorched as a desert through which no one travels?”

13 The LORD answered, “This has happened because these people have rejected my laws which I gave them. They have not obeyed me or followed those laws.

14 Instead they have followed the stubborn inclinations of their own hearts. They have paid allegiance to the gods called Baal, as their fathers taught them to do.

15 So then, listen to what I, the LORD God of Israel who rules over all, say. ‘I will make these people eat the bitter food of suffering and drink the poison water of judgment.

16 I will scatter them among nations that neither they nor their ancestors have known anything about. I will send people chasing after them with swords until I have destroyed them.’”

A Lament over Jerusalem’s Destruction

17 The LORD who rules over all told me to say to this people,

Take note of what I say.
Call for the women who mourn for the dead!
Summon those who are the most skilled at it!”

18 I said, “Indeed, let them come quickly and sing a song of mourning for us.
Let them wail loudly until tears stream from our own eyes
and our eyelids overflow with water.

19 For the sound of wailing is soon to be heard in Zion.
They will wail, ‘We are utterly ruined! We are completely disgraced!
For our houses have been torn down
and we must leave our land.’”

20 I said,

“So now, you wailing women, hear what the LORD says.
Open your ears to the words from his mouth.
Teach your daughters this mournful song,
and each of you teach your neighbor this lament.

21 ‘Death has climbed in through our windows.
It has entered into our fortified houses.
It has taken away our children who play in the streets.
It has taken away our young men who gather in the city squares.’

22 Tell your daughters and neighbors, ‘The LORD says,
“The dead bodies of people will lie scattered everywhere
like manure scattered on a field.
They will lie scattered on the ground
like grain that has been cut down but has not been gathered.’”’”

The Only Basis for Boasting

23 The LORD says,

“Wise people should not boast that they are wise.
Powerful people should not boast that they are powerful.
Rich people should not boast that they are rich.

24 If people want to boast, they should boast about this:

They should boast that they understand and know me. [[1 Cor 1:31](#); [2 Cor 10:17](#)]

They should boast that they know and understand
that I, the LORD, act out of faithfulness, fairness, and justice in the earth
and that I desire people to do these things,”

says the LORD.

Circumcision Will Not Save You—Circumcise Your Hearts!

25 The LORD says, “Watch out! The time is soon coming when I will punish all those who are circumcised only in the flesh.

26 That is, I will punish the Egyptians, the Judeans, the Edomites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, and all the desert people who cut their hair short at the temples. I will do so because none of the people of those nations are really circumcised in the LORD’s sight.

Moreover, none of the people of Israel are circumcised when it comes to their hearts.”

Jeremiah’s Prophecy to Judah—Idolatry and the Coming Exile (c. 629t BC)

Jeremiah 10

The Foolishness of Idolatry

1 You people of Israel, listen to what the LORD has to say to you.

2 The LORD says,

“Do not start following pagan religious practices.
Do not be in awe of signs that occur in the sky
even though the nations hold them in awe.

3 For the religion of these people is worthless.

They cut down a tree in the forest,
and a craftsman makes it into an idol with his tools.

4 He decorates it with overlays of silver and gold.

He uses hammer and nails to fasten it together
so that it will not fall over.

5 Such idols are like scarecrows in a cucumber field.

They cannot talk.
They must be carried
because they cannot walk.

Do not be afraid of them
because they cannot hurt you.
And they do not have any power to help you.”

6 I said,

“There is no one like you, LORD.
You are great.

And you are renowned for your power.

7 Everyone should revere you, O King of all nations,
because you deserve to be revered.

For there is no one like you
among any of the wise people of the nations nor among any of their kings.

8 The people of those nations are both stupid and foolish.

Instruction from a wooden idol is worthless!

9 Hammered-out silver is brought from Tarshish
and gold is brought from Uphaz to cover those idols.
They are the handiwork of carpenters and goldsmiths.

- They are clothed in blue and purple clothes.
They are all made by skillful workers.
- 10 The LORD is the only true God.
He is the living God and the everlasting King.
When he shows his anger the earth shakes.
None of the nations can stand up to his fury.
- 11 You people of Israel should tell those nations this:
'These gods did not make heaven and earth.
They will disappear from the earth and from under the heavens.'
- 12 The LORD is the one who by his power made the earth.
He is the one who by his wisdom established the world.
And by his understanding he spread out the skies.
- 13 When his voice thunders, the heavenly ocean roars.
He makes the clouds rise from the far-off horizons.
He makes the lightning flash out in the midst of the rain.
He unleashes the wind from the places where he stores it.
- 14 All these idolaters will prove to be stupid and ignorant.
Every goldsmith will be disgraced by the idol he made.
For the image he forges is merely a sham.
There is no breath in any of those idols.
- 15 They are worthless, mere objects to be mocked.
When the time comes to punish them, they will be destroyed.
- 16 The LORD, who is the inheritance of Jacob's descendants, is not like them.
He is the one who created everything.
And the people of Israel are those he claims as his own.
He is known as the LORD who rules over all."

Announcement of Exile

- 17 Gather your belongings together and prepare to leave the land,
you people of Jerusalem who are being besieged.
- 18 For the LORD says, "I will now throw out
those who live in this land.
I will bring so much trouble on them
that they will actually feel it."
- 19 And I cried out, "We are doomed!
Our wound is severe!
We once thought, 'This is only an illness.
And we will be able to bear it!'
- 20 But our tents have been destroyed.
The ropes that held them in place have been ripped apart.
Our children are gone and are not coming back.
There is no survivor to put our tents back up,
no one left to hang their tent curtains in place.
- 21 For our leaders are stupid.
They have not sought the LORD's advice.
So they do not act wisely,
and the people they are responsible for have all been scattered.
- 22 Listen! News is coming even now.
The rumble of a great army is heard approaching from a land in the north.
It is coming to turn the towns of Judah into rubble,
places where only jackals live.

Jeremiah's Prayer

- 23 LORD, we know that people do not control their own destiny.
It is not in their power to determine what will happen to them.
- 24 Correct us, LORD, but only in due measure.
Do not punish us in anger or you will reduce us to nothing.
- 25 Vent your anger on the nations that do not acknowledge you.

Vent it on the peoples who do not worship you.
For they have destroyed the people of Jacob.
They have completely destroyed them
and left their homeland in utter ruin.

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Chronological Notes

- 1) The current majority view is that the “Temple Speech” recorded in Jeremiah 7 belongs to the time of Jehoiakim and should be harmonized with Jeremiah 26 (e.g., Lalleman, Harrison, Thompson, Craigie-Kelley-Drinkard, Feinberg, and Brown). However, Laetsch is not convinced: “The reasons advanced for this identification do not seem convincing. 1) The same demand for a change of conduct. Yet that was the subject and purpose of all the preaching of Jeremiah. 2) The same occasion, a festival. Yet these festivals gave an opportunity to preach to all the people and were quite generally used by the prophets. 3) The same place. Yet Jeremiah and others spoke in the gates and courts of the Temple, cp. ch. 19:14; 35:2, 4; 36:5–10; also 28:1, 5. 4) In ch. 26 only the main thoughts of ch. 7 are repeated. That does not prove identity! 5) The reference to Shiloh. Why should not Shiloh have been repeatedly mentioned as a warning example of the folly of relying on external possession of God’s house? A warning like this was not only possible, but quite to be expected in the days of Josiah, when the Lord announced His readiness to fulfill all the threats contained in the rediscovered Book of the Law (2 Kgs 22:16–20). One of these threats referred to the overturning of Jerusalem ‘as Sodom and Gomorrah’ (Deut 29:23), involving the destruction of the Temple. Linking up with Huldah’s message, Jeremiah may have reminded the Jews of the destruction of the Tabernacle at Shiloh as a warning against misplaced trust in the Temple. In ch. 7 there is not the slightest indication of opposition. That also would fit well into the time of Josiah’s reform.”¹
- 2) Given the speculation involved in identifying Jeremiah 7 with Jeremiah 26, I have decided to go against the majority view and place Jeremiah 7–10 just prior to the discovery of the Book of the Law (solidly within Josiah’s reign).

¹ Theo. Laetsch, *Jeremiah*, pp. 93–94. See also F. B. Huey, Jr., “Jeremiah, Lamentations,” *NAC*, pp. 103–104 and J. Barton Paine, “The Arrangement of Jeremiah’s Prophecies,” *JETS* 07:4 (Fall 1964), pp. 121–128.

Josiah's National Religious Reform (629t BC)

2 Kings 23:4–20

2 Chronicles 34:3b–7

4 The king ordered

Hilkiah the high priest, the high-ranking priests, and the guards to bring out of the LORD's temple all the items that were used in the worship of Baal, Asherah, and all the stars of the sky.

The king burned them outside of Jerusalem in the terraces of Kidron, and carried their ashes to Bethel.

5 He eliminated the pagan priests whom the kings of Judah had appointed to offer sacrifices on the high places in the cities of Judah and in the area right around Jerusalem. (They offered sacrifices to Baal, the sun god, the moon god, the constellations, and all the stars in the sky.)

6 He removed the Asherah pole from the LORD's temple and took it outside Jerusalem to the Kidron Valley, where he burned it.

He smashed it to dust and then threw the dust in the public graveyard.

7 He tore down the quarters of the male cultic prostitutes in the LORD's temple, where women were weaving shrines for Asherah.

8 He brought all the priests from the cities of Judah and ruined the high places where the priests had offered sacrifices, from Geba to Beer Sheba. He tore down the high place of the goat idols situated at the entrance of the gate of Joshua, the city official, on the left side of the city gate.

9 (Now the priests of the high places did not go up to the altar of the LORD in Jerusalem, but they did eat unleavened cakes among their fellow priests.)

10 The king ruined Topheth in the Valley of Ben Hinnom so that no one could pass his son or his daughter through the fire to Molech.

11 He removed from the entrance to the LORD's temple the statues of horses that the kings of Judah had placed there in honor of the sun god. (They were kept near the room of Nathan Melech the eunuch, which was situated among the courtyards.) He burned up the chariots devoted to the sun god.

12 The king tore down the altars the kings of Judah had set up on the roof of Ahaz's upper room, as well as the altars Manasseh had set up in the two courtyards of the LORD's temple. He crushed them up and threw the dust in the Kidron Valley.

13 The king ruined the high places east of Jerusalem, south of the Mount of Destruction, that King Solomon of Israel had built for the detestable Sidonian goddess Astarte, the detestable Moabite god Chemosh, and the horrible Ammonite god Milcom.

14 He smashed the sacred pillars to bits, cut down the Asherah pole, and filled those shrines with human bones.

15 He also tore down the altar in Bethel at the high place made by Jeroboam son of Nebat, who encouraged Israel to sin. He burned all the combustible items at that high place and crushed them to dust; including the Asherah pole.

16 When Josiah turned around, he saw the tombs there on the hill. So he ordered the bones from the tombs to be brought; he burned them on the altar and defiled it. This fulfilled the LORD's announcement made by the prophet while Jeroboam

3b In his twelfth year he began ridding Judah and Jerusalem of the high places, Asherah poles, idols, and images.

4 He ordered

the altars of the Baals to be torn down, and broke the incense altars that were above them.

He smashed the Asherah poles, idols and images,

crushed them up and sprinkled the dust over the tombs of those who had sacrificed to them.

stood by the altar during a festival. [1 Kgs 13:1–3] King Josiah turned and saw the grave of the prophet who had foretold this. 17 He asked, “What is this grave marker I see?” The men from the city replied, “It’s the grave of the prophet who came from Judah and foretold these very things you have done to the altar of Bethel.”

18 The king said, “Leave it alone! No one must touch his bones.” So they left his bones undisturbed, as well as the bones of the Israelite prophet buried beside him.

19 Josiah also removed all the shrines on the high places in the cities of Samaria. The kings of Israel had made them and angered the LORD. He did to them what he had done to the high place in Bethel.

20 He sacrificed all the priests of the high places on the altars located there, and burned human bones on them.

Then he returned to Jerusalem.

6 In the cities of Manasseh, Ephraim, and Simeon, as far as Naphtali, and in the ruins around them, 7a he tore down the altars and Asherah poles, demolished the idols, and smashed all the incense altars throughout the land of Israel.

5 He burned the bones of the pagan priests on their altars; he purified Judah and Jerusalem.

7b Then he returned to Jerusalem.

Josiah Orders Repairs to the Temple (Tishri [October] 623 – Nisan [April] 622 BC)

2 Kings 22:3–7

3 In the eighteenth year of King Josiah’s reign, the king sent the scribe Shaphan son of Azaliah, son of Meshullam,

to the LORD’s temple with these orders:

4 “Go up to Hilkiah the high priest and have him melt down the silver that has been brought by the people to the LORD’s temple and has been collected by the guards at the door.

5 Have them hand it over to the construction foremen assigned to the LORD’s temple. They in turn should pay the temple workers to repair it,

6 including craftsmen, builders, and masons, and should buy wood and chiseled stone for the repair work.

7 Do not audit the foremen who disburse the silver, for they are honest.”

2 Chronicles 34:8–14

8 In the eighteenth year of his reign, he continued his policy of purifying the land and the temple. He sent Shaphan son of Azaliah,

Maaseiah the city official, and Joah son of Joahaz the secretary to repair the temple of the LORD his God.

9 They went to Hilkiah the high priest and gave him the silver that had been brought to God’s temple. The Levites who guarded the door had collected it from the people of Manasseh and Ephraim and from all who were left in Israel, as well as from all the people of Judah and Benjamin and the residents of Jerusalem.

10 They handed it over to the construction foremen assigned to the LORD’s temple. They in turn paid the temple workers to restore and repair it.

11 They gave money to the craftsmen and builders to buy chiseled stone and wood for the braces and rafters of the buildings that the kings of Judah had allowed to fall into disrepair.

12 The men worked faithfully. Their supervisors were Jahath and

	<p>Obadiah (Levites descended from Merari), as well as Zechariah and Meshullam (descendants of Kohath). The Levites, all of whom were skilled musicians, 13 supervised the laborers and all the foremen on their various jobs. Some of the Levites were scribes, officials, and guards. 14 When they took out the silver that had been brought to the LORD's temple, Hilkiah the priest found the law scroll the LORD had given to Moses.</p>
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Hilkiah the High Priest Discovers a Copy of the Torah (c. Nisan [April] 622 BC)

2 Kings 22:8–20	2 Chronicles 34:15–28
<p>8 Hilkiah the high priest informed Shaphan the scribe, "I found the law scroll in the LORD's temple." Hilkiah gave the scroll to Shaphan and he read it.</p> <p>9 Shaphan the scribe went to the king and reported, "Your servants melted down the silver in the temple and handed it over to the construction foremen assigned to the LORD's temple." 10 Then Shaphan the scribe told the king, "Hilkiah the priest has given me a scroll." Shaphan read it out loud before the king.</p> <p>11 When the king heard the words of the law scroll, he tore his clothes.</p> <p>12 The king ordered Hilkiah the priest, Ahikam son of Shaphan, Acbor son of Micaiah, Shaphan the scribe, and Asaiah the king's servant, 13 "Go, seek an oracle from the LORD for me and the people—for all Judah. Find out about the words of this scroll that has been discovered. For the LORD's fury has been ignited against us, because our ancestors have not obeyed the words of this scroll by doing all that it instructs us to do." 14 So Hilkiah the priest, Ahikam, Acbor, Shaphan, and Asaiah went to Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum son of Tikvah, the son of Harhas, the supervisor of the wardrobe. (She lived in Jerusalem in the Mishneh district.) They stated their business, 15 and she said to them: "This is what the LORD God of Israel says: 'Say this to the man who sent you to me: 16 "This is what the LORD says: 'I am about to bring disaster on this place and its residents, the details of which are recorded in the scroll which the king of Judah has read. [cf. Deut 28:15–68] 17 This will happen because they have abandoned me and offered sacrifices to other gods, angering me with all the idols they have made. My anger will ignite against this place and will not be extinguished!" 18 Say this to the king of Judah, who sent you to seek an oracle from the LORD: "This is what the LORD God of Israel says concerning the words you have heard: 19 'You displayed a sensitive spirit and humbled yourself before the LORD when you heard how I intended to make this place and its residents into an appalling example of an accursed people. You tore your clothes and wept before me, and I have heard you,' says the LORD.</p>	<p>15 Hilkiah informed Shaphan the scribe, "I found the law scroll in the LORD's temple." Hilkiah gave the scroll to Shaphan.</p> <p>16 Shaphan brought the scroll to the king and reported, "Your servants are doing everything assigned to them." 17 They melted down the silver in the LORD's temple and handed it over to the supervisors of the construction foremen."</p> <p>18 Then Shaphan the scribe told the king, "Hilkiah the priest has given me a scroll." Shaphan read it out loud before the king.</p> <p>19 When the king heard the words of the law scroll, he tore his clothes.</p> <p>20 The king ordered Hilkiah, Ahikam son of Shaphan, Abdon son of Micah, Shaphan the scribe, and Asaiah the king's servant, 21 "Go, seek an oracle from the LORD for me and those who remain in Israel and Judah. Find out about the words of this scroll that has been discovered. For the LORD's fury has been ignited against us, because our ancestors have not obeyed the word of the LORD by doing all that this scroll instructs!" 22 So Hilkiah and the others sent by the king went to Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum son of Tokhath, the son of Hasrah, the supervisor of the wardrobe. (She lived in Jerusalem in the Mishneh district.) They stated their business, 23 and she said to them: "This is what the LORD God of Israel says: 'Say this to the man who sent you to me: 24 "This is what the LORD says: 'I am about to bring disaster on this place and its residents, the details of which are recorded in the scroll which they read before the king of Judah. 25 This will happen because they have abandoned me and offered sacrifices to other gods, angering me with all the idols they have made. My anger will ignite against this place and will not be extinguished!" 26 Say this to the king of Judah, who sent you to seek an oracle from the LORD: "This is what the LORD God of Israel says concerning the words you have heard: 27 'You displayed a sensitive spirit and humbled yourself before God when you heard his words concerning this place and its residents. You humbled yourself before me, tore your clothes and wept before me, and I have heard you,' says the LORD.</p>

20 'Therefore I will allow you to die and be buried in peace. You will not have to witness all the disaster I will bring on this place.'"" Then they reported back to the king.	28 'Therefore I will allow you to die and be buried in peace. You will not have to witness all the disaster I will bring on this place and its residents.'"" Then they reported back to the king.
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Chronological Notes

- 1) The account of Josiah's religious reforms in Chronicles differs from that found in Kings. According to 2 Kings 22:3ff., the reform is a one-time, all-embracing event, which took place at Josiah's eighteenth year as a result of the discovery of the Book of the Law. In Chronicles, the reform is seen as a prolonged process, beginning in the eighth year of Josiah's reign, with the main phase of the purge of the land belonging to the twelfth year of his reign. These stages of the reform predated the finding of the Law and may be seen, along with Jeremiah's preaching, as its cause. The reform is concluded by the events of the eighteenth year: the renewing of the covenant and the celebration of the Passover.¹ My opinion at this time is that Kings contains a compressed account of Josiah's reforms and that Chronicles expands that account giving the hidden chronology. Thus I have re-ordered Kings and harmonized it with Chronicles.

¹ Sara Japhet, "I & II Chronicles," *The Old Testament Library*, pp. 1017-1018.

Jeremiah's Prophecy to Judah—The Broken Covenant (c. Nisan [April] 622 BC)

Jeremiah 11–12

The Broken Covenant

11:1 The LORD said to Jeremiah:

2 “Hear the terms of the covenant I made with Israel and pass them on to the people of Judah and the citizens of Jerusalem.

3 Tell them that the LORD, the God of Israel, says, ‘Anyone who does not keep the terms of the covenant will be under a curse.

4 Those are the terms that I charged your ancestors to keep when I brought them out of Egypt, that place which was like an iron-smelting furnace. I said at that time, “Obey me and carry out the terms of the agreement exactly as I commanded you. If you do, you will be my people and I will be your God.

5 Then I will keep the promise I swore on oath to your ancestors to give them a land flowing with milk and honey.” That is the very land that you still live in today.” And I responded, “Amen! Let it be so, LORD!”

6 The LORD said to me, “Announce all the following words in the towns of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem: ‘Listen to the terms of my covenant with you and carry them out!

7 For I solemnly warned your ancestors to obey me. I warned them again and again, ever since I delivered them out of Egypt until this very day.

8 But they did not listen to me or pay any attention to me! Each one of them followed the stubborn inclinations of his own wicked heart. So I brought on them all the punishments threatened in the covenant because they did not carry out its terms as I commanded them to do.”

Inescapable Punishment of the Covenant Breakers

9 The LORD said to me, “The people of Judah and the citizens of Jerusalem have plotted rebellion against me!

10 They have gone back to the evil ways of their ancestors of old who refused to obey what I told them. They, too, have paid allegiance to other gods and worshiped them. Both the nation of Israel and the nation of Judah have violated the covenant I made with their ancestors.

11 So I, the LORD, say this: ‘I will soon bring disaster on them which they will not be able to escape! When they cry out to me for help, I will not listen to them.

12 Then those living in the towns of Judah and in Jerusalem will go and cry out for help to the gods to whom they have been sacrificing. However, those gods will by no means be able to save them when disaster strikes them.

13 This is in spite of the fact that the people of Judah have as many gods as they have towns and the citizens of Jerusalem have set up as many altars to sacrifice to that disgusting god, Baal, as they have streets in the city!’

Jeremiah Forbidden to Pray for the People

14 So, Jeremiah, do not pray for these people. Do not cry out to me or petition me on their behalf. Do not plead with me to save them. For I will not listen to them when they call out to me for help when disaster strikes them.”

15 The LORD says to the people of Judah,

“What right do you have to be in my temple, my beloved people?

Many of you have done wicked things.

Can your acts of treachery be so easily canceled by sacred offerings that you take joy in doing evil even while you make them?

16 I, the LORD, once called you a thriving olive tree, one that produced beautiful fruit.

But I will set you on fire,

fire that will blaze with a mighty roar.

Then all your branches will be good for nothing.

17 For though I, the LORD who rules over all, planted you in the land, I now decree that disaster will come on you

because the nations of Israel and Judah have done evil

and have made me angry by offering sacrifices to the god Baal.”

A Plot against Jeremiah's Life

18 The LORD gave me knowledge, that I might have understanding.

Then he showed me what the people were doing.

19 Before this I had been like a docile lamb ready to be led to the slaughter.

I did not know they were making plans to kill me.

I did not know they were saying,

“Let's destroy the tree along with its fruit!

Let's remove Jeremiah from the world of the living

so people will not even be reminded of him any more.”

- 20 So I said to the LORD,
 “O LORD who rules over all, you are a just judge!
 You examine people’s hearts and minds.
 I want to see you pay them back for what they have done
 because I trust you to vindicate my cause.”

God’s Assurance of Punishment of the Conspirators

21 Then the LORD told me about some men from Anathoth who were threatening to kill me. They had threatened, “Stop prophesying in the name of the LORD or we will kill you!”

22 So the LORD who rules over all said, “I will surely punish them! Their young men will be killed in battle. Their sons and daughters will die of starvation.

23 Not one of them will survive. I will bring disaster on those men from Anathoth who threatened you. A day of reckoning is coming for them.”

Jeremiah’s Question about the Prosperity of the Wicked

- 12:1 LORD, you have always been fair
 whenever I have complained to you.
 However, I would like to speak with you about the disposition of justice.
 Why are wicked people successful?
 Why do all dishonest people have such easy lives?
- 2 You plant them like trees and they put down their roots.
 They grow prosperous and are very fruitful.
 They always talk about you,
 but they really care nothing about you.
- 3 But you, LORD, know all about me.
 You watch me and test my devotion to you.
 Drag these wicked men away like sheep to be slaughtered!
 Appoint a time when they will be killed!
- 4 How long must the land be parched
 and the grass in every field be withered?
 How long must the animals and the birds die
 because of the wickedness of the people who live in this land?
 For these people boast,
 “God will not see what happens to us.”

God’s Answer

- 5 The LORD answered,
 “If you have raced on foot against men and they have worn you out,
 how will you be able to compete with horses?
 And if you feel secure only in safe and open country,
 how will you manage in the thick undergrowth along the Jordan River?”
- 6 As a matter of fact, even your own brothers
 and the members of your own family have betrayed you too.
 Even they have plotted to do away with you.
 So do not trust them even when they say kind things to you.

God’s Rejection of His Inheritance

- 7 “I will abandon my nation.
 I will forsake the people I call my own.
 I will turn my beloved people
 over to the power of their enemies.
- 8 The people I call my own have turned on me
 like a lion in the forest.
 They have roared defiantly at me.
 So I will treat them as though I hate them.
- 9 The people I call my own attack me like birds of prey or like hyenas.

- But other birds of prey are all around them.
 Let all the nations gather together like wild beasts.
 Let them come and destroy these people I call my own.
- 10 Many foreign rulers will ruin the land where I planted my people.
 They will trample all over my chosen land.
 They will turn my beautiful land
 into a desolate wasteland.
- 11 They will lay it waste.
 It will lie parched and empty before me.
 The whole land will be laid waste.
 But no one living in it will pay any heed.
- 12 A destructive army will come marching
 over the hilltops in the desert.
 For the LORD will use them as his destructive weapon
 against everyone from one end of the land to the other.
 No one will be safe.
- 13 My people will sow wheat, but will harvest weeds.
 They will work until they are exhausted, but will get nothing from it.
 They will be disappointed in their harvests
 because the LORD will take them away in his fierce anger.

A Conditional Promise for Israel's Neighbors

- 14 "I, the LORD, also have something to say concerning the wicked nations who surround my land and have attacked and plundered the land that I gave to my people as a permanent possession. I say: 'I will uproot the people of those nations from their lands and I will free the people of Judah who have been taken there.'
- 15 But after I have uprooted the people of those nations, I will relent and have pity on them. I will restore the people of each of those nations to their own lands and to their own country.
- 16 But they must make sure you learn to follow the religious practices of my people. Once they taught my people to swear their oaths using the name of the god Baal. But then, they must swear oaths using my name, saying, "As surely as the LORD lives, I swear." If they do these things, then they will be included among the people I call my own.
- 17 But I will completely uproot and destroy any of those nations that will not pay heed,'" says the LORD.

Josiah Renews the Covenant (c. Nisan [April] 622 BC)

2 Kings 23:1–3

1 The king summoned all the leaders of Judah and Jerusalem.
 2 The king went up to the LORD's temple, accompanied by all the people of Judah, all the residents of Jerusalem, the priests, and the prophets. All the people were there, from the youngest to the oldest. He read aloud all the words of the scroll of the covenant that had been discovered in the LORD's temple.
 3 The king stood by the pillar and renewed the covenant before the LORD, agreeing to follow the LORD and to obey his commandments, laws, and rules with all his heart and being, by carrying out the terms of this covenant recorded on this scroll.
 All the people agreed to keep the covenant.

2 Chronicles 34:29–32

29 The king summoned all the leaders of Judah and Jerusalem.
 30 The king went up to the LORD's temple, accompanied by all the people of Judah, the residents of Jerusalem, the priests, and the Levites. All the people were there, from the oldest to the youngest. He read aloud all the words of the scroll of the covenant that had been discovered in the LORD's temple.
 31 The king stood by his pillar and renewed the covenant before the LORD, agreeing to follow the LORD and to obey his commandments, laws, and rules with all his heart and being, by carrying out the terms of this covenant recorded on this scroll.
 32 He made all who were in Jerusalem and Benjamin agree to it. The residents of Jerusalem acted in accordance with the covenant of God, the God of their ancestors.

Josiah Celebrates the Passover (14–21 Nisan [April] 622 BC)

2 Kings 23:21–23

21 The king ordered all the people,
 "Observe the Passover of the LORD your God,
 as prescribed in this scroll of the covenant."

2 Chronicles 35:1–19

1 Josiah
 observed a Passover festival for the LORD in Jerusalem.
 They slaughtered the Passover lambs on the fourteenth day of the first month.
 2 He appointed the priests to fulfill their duties and encouraged

them to carry out their service in the LORD's temple.

3 He told the Levites, who instructed all Israel about things consecrated to the LORD, "Place the holy ark in the temple which King Solomon son of David of Israel built. Don't carry it on your shoulders. Now serve the LORD your God and his people Israel!

4 Prepare yourselves by your families according to your divisions, as instructed by King David of Israel and his son Solomon.

5 Stand in the sanctuary and, together with the Levites, represent the family divisions of your countrymen.

6 Slaughter the Passover lambs, consecrate yourselves, and make preparations for your countrymen to do what the LORD commanded through Moses."

7 From his own royal flocks and herds, Josiah supplied the people with 30,000 lambs and goats for the Passover sacrifice, as well as 3,000 cattle.

8 His officials also willingly contributed to the people, priests, and Levites. Hilkiah, Zechariah, and Jehiel, the leaders of God's temple, supplied 2,600 Passover sacrifices and 300 cattle.

9 Konaniah and his brothers Shemaiah and Nethanel, along with Hashabiah, Jeiel, and Jozabad, the officials of the Levites, supplied the Levites with 5,000 Passover sacrifices and 500 cattle.

10 Preparations were made, and the priests stood at their posts and the Levites in their divisions as prescribed by the king.

11 They slaughtered the Passover lambs and the priests splashed the blood, while the Levites skinned the animals.

12 They reserved the burnt offerings and the cattle for the family divisions of the people to present to the LORD, as prescribed in the scroll of Moses.

13 They cooked the Passover sacrifices over the open fire as prescribed and cooked the consecrated offerings in pots, kettles, and pans. They quickly served them to all the people.

14 Afterward they made preparations for themselves and for the priests, because the priests, the descendants of Aaron, were offering burnt sacrifices and fat portions until evening. The Levites made preparations for themselves and for the priests, the descendants of Aaron.

15 The musicians, the descendants of Asaph, manned their posts, as prescribed by David, Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun the king's prophet. The guards at the various gates did not need to leave their posts, for their fellow Levites made preparations for them.

16 So all the preparations for the LORD's service were made that day, as the Passover was observed and the burnt sacrifices were offered on the altar of the LORD, as prescribed by King Josiah.

17 So the Israelites who were present observed the Passover at that time, as well as the Feast of Unleavened Bread for seven days.

18 A Passover like this had not been observed in Israel since the days of Samuel the prophet. None of the kings of Israel had observed a Passover like the one celebrated by Josiah, the priests, the Levites, all the people of Judah and Israel who were there, and the residents of Jerusalem.

19 This Passover was observed in the eighteenth year of Josiah's reign.

22 He issued this edict because a Passover like this had not been observed since the days of the judges; it was neglected for the entire period of the kings of Israel and Judah.

23 But in the eighteenth year of King Josiah's reign, such a Passover of the LORD was observed in Jerusalem.

Josiah Removes Idolatry That Had Appeared Since His Twelfth Year (c. Iyyar [May] 622 BC)

2 Kings 23:24–27	2 Chronicles 34:33
<p>24 Josiah also got rid of the ritual pits used to conjure up spirits, the magicians, personal idols, disgusting images, and all the detestable idols that had appeared in the land of Judah and in Jerusalem.</p> <p>In this way he carried out the terms of the law recorded on the scroll that Hilkiah the priest had discovered in the LORD’s temple.</p> <p>25 No king before or after repented before the LORD as he did, with his whole heart, soul, and being in accordance with the whole law of Moses.</p> <p>26 Yet the LORD’s great anger against Judah did not subside; he was still infuriated by all the things Manasseh had done.</p> <p>27 The LORD announced, “I will also spurn Judah, just as I spurned Israel. I will reject this city that I chose—both Jerusalem and the temple, about which I said, “I will live there.”</p>	<p>33 Josiah removed</p> <p>all the detestable idols from all the areas belonging to the Israelites and encouraged all who were in Israel to worship the LORD their God.</p> <p>Throughout the rest of his reign they did not turn aside from following the LORD God of their ancestors.</p>

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Jeremiah's Prophecy to Judah—A Corrupt People and Their Punishment (c. 620–609 BC)

Jeremiah 13:1–14

The Ruined Linen Garment

- 1 The LORD said to me, "Go and buy some linen shorts [loincloth] and put them on. Do not put them in water."
- 2 So I bought the shorts as the LORD had told me to do and put them on.
- 3 Then the LORD spoke to me again and said,
- 4 "Take the shorts that you bought and are wearing and go at once to Perath. Bury the shorts there in a crack in the rocks."
- 5 So I went and buried them at Perath as the LORD had ordered me to do.
- 6 Many days later the LORD said to me, "Go at once to Perath and get the shorts I ordered you to bury there."
- 7 So I went to Perath and dug up the shorts from the place where I had buried them. I found that they were ruined; they were good for nothing.
- 8 Then the LORD said to me,
- 9 "I, the LORD, say: 'This shows how I will ruin the highly exalted position in which Judah and Jerusalem take pride.
- 10 These wicked people refuse to obey what I have said. They follow the stubborn inclinations of their own hearts and pay allegiance to other gods by worshiping and serving them. So they will become just like these linen shorts which are good for nothing.
- 11 For,' I say, 'just as shorts cling tightly to a person's body, so I bound the whole nation of Israel and the whole nation of Judah tightly to me.' I intended for them to be my special people and to bring me fame, honor, and praise. But they would not obey me.

The Smashed Wineskins

- 12 "So tell them, 'The LORD, the God of Israel, says, "Every wine jar is made to be filled with wine.'" And they will probably say to you, 'Do you not think we know that every wine jar is supposed to be filled with wine?'
- 13 Then tell them, 'The LORD says, "I will soon fill all the people who live in this land with stupor. I will also fill the kings from David's dynasty, the priests, the prophets, and the citizens of Jerusalem with stupor.
- 14 And I will smash them like wine bottles against one another, children and parents alike. I will not show any pity, mercy, or compassion. Nothing will keep me from destroying them,' says the LORD."

Jeremiah's Prophecy to Judah—Catastrophes That Cannot Be Averted (c. 620–609 BC)

Jeremiah 14:1–15:9

A Severe Drought

- 14:1 The LORD spoke to Jeremiah about the drought.
- 2 "The people of Judah are in mourning.
The people in her cities are pining away.
They lie on the ground expressing their sorrow.
Cries of distress come up to me from Jerusalem.
 - 3 The leading men of the cities send their servants for water.
They go to the cisterns, but they do not find any water there.
They return with their containers empty.
Disappointed and dismayed, they bury their faces in their hands.
 - 4 They are dismayed because the ground is cracked
because there has been no rain in the land.
The farmers, too, are dismayed
and bury their faces in their hands.
 - 5 Even the doe abandons her newborn fawn in the field
because there is no grass.
 - 6 Wild donkeys stand on the hilltops
and pant for breath like jackals.
Their eyes are strained looking for food,
because there is none to be found."

Jeremiah Intercedes for the People

- 7 Then I said,
- "O LORD, intervene for the honor of your name
even though our sins speak out against us.
Indeed, we have turned away from you many times.
We have sinned against you.

- 8 You have been the object of Israel's hopes.
 You have saved them when they were in trouble.
 Why have you become like a resident foreigner in the land?
 Why have you become like a traveler who only stops in to spend the night?
- 9 Why should you be like someone who is helpless,
 like a champion who cannot save anyone?
 You are indeed with us,
 and we belong to you.
 Do not abandon us!"

God Commands Jeremiah to Stop Praying

10 Then the LORD spoke about these people.

"They truly love to go astray.
 They cannot keep from running away from me.
 So I am not pleased with them.
 I will now call to mind the wrongs they have done
 and punish them for their sins."

11 Then the LORD said to me, "Do not pray for good to come to these people!

12 Even if they fast, I will not hear their cries for help. Even if they offer burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them. Instead, I will kill them through wars, famines, and plagues."

Jeremiah Blames False Prophets

13 Then I said, "Oh, Lord GOD, look! The prophets are telling them that you said, 'You will not experience war or suffer famine. I will give you lasting peace and prosperity in this land.'"

God's Judgment on the False Prophets

14 Then the LORD said to me, "Those prophets are prophesying lies while claiming my authority! I did not send them. I did not commission them. I did not speak to them. They are prophesying to these people false visions, worthless predictions, and the delusions of their own mind.

15 I did not send those prophets, though they claim to be prophesying in my name. They may be saying, 'No war or famine will happen in this land.' But I, the LORD, say this about them: 'War and starvation will kill those prophets.'

16 The people to whom they are prophesying will die through war and famine. Their bodies will be thrown out into the streets of Jerusalem and there will be no one to bury them. This will happen to the men and their wives, their sons, and their daughters. For I will pour out on them the destruction they deserve."

Jeremiah's Lament and Supplication

17 "Tell these people this, Jeremiah:
 'My eyes overflow with tears
 day and night without ceasing.
 For my people, my dear children, have suffered a crushing blow.
 They have suffered a serious wound.

18 If I go out into the countryside,
 I see those who have been killed in battle.
 If I go into the city,
 I see those who are sick because of starvation.
 For both prophet and priest go about their own business
 in the land without having any real understanding.'"

19 Then I said,

"LORD, have you completely rejected the nation of Judah?
 Do you despise the city of Zion?
 Why have you struck us with such force
 that we are beyond recovery?
 We hope for peace, but nothing good has come of it.
 We hope for a time of relief from our troubles, but experience terror.

- 20 LORD, we confess that we have been wicked.
We confess that our ancestors have done wrong.
We have indeed sinned against you.
- 21 For the honor of your name, do not treat Jerusalem with contempt.
Do not treat with disdain the place where your glorious throne sits.
Be mindful of your covenant with us. Do not break it!
- 22 Do any of the worthless idols of the nations cause rain to fall?
Do the skies themselves send showers?
Is it not you, O Lord our God, who does this?
So we put our hopes in you
because you alone do all this.”

The Futility of Intercession

15:1 Then the LORD said to me, “Even if Moses and Samuel stood before me pleading for these people, I would not feel pity for them! Get them away from me! Tell them to go away!

2 If they ask you, ‘Where should we go?’ tell them the LORD says this:

“Those who are destined to die of disease will go to death by disease.
Those who are destined to die in war will go to death in war.
Those who are destined to die of starvation will go to death by starvation.
Those who are destined to go into exile will go into exile.”

3 “I will punish them in four different ways: I will have war kill them. I will have dogs drag off their dead bodies. I will have birds and wild beasts devour and destroy their corpses.

4 I will make all the people in all the kingdoms of the world horrified at what has happened to them because of what Hezekiah’s son Manasseh, king of Judah, did in Jerusalem.”

The End of God’s Pity

5 The LORD cried out,

“Who in the world will have pity on you, Jerusalem?
Who will grieve over you?
Who will stop long enough
to inquire about how you are doing?

- 6 I, the LORD, say: ‘You people have deserted me!
You keep turning your back on me.’
So I have unleashed my power against you and have begun to destroy you.
I have grown tired of feeling sorry for you!”

7 The LORD continued,

“In every town in the land I will purge them
like straw blown away by the wind.
I will destroy my people.
I will kill off their children.
I will do so because they did not change their behavior.

- 8 Their widows will become in my sight more numerous
than the grains of sand on the seashores.
At noontime I will bring a destroyer
against the mothers of their young men.
I will cause anguish and terror
to fall suddenly upon them.

- 9 The mother who had seven children will grow faint.
All the breath will go out of her.
Her pride and joy will be taken from her in the prime of their life.
It will seem as if the sun had set while it was still day.
She will suffer shame and humiliation.
I will cause any of them who are still left alive

to be killed in war by the onslaughts of their enemies,”

says the LORD.

Jeremiah's Prophecy to Judah—Jeremiah's Complaint and God's Rebuke (c. 620–609 BC)

Jeremiah 15:10–21

Jeremiah Feels Sorry for Himself

10 I said,

“Oh, mother, how I regret that you ever gave birth to me!
I am always starting arguments and quarrels with the people of this land.
I have not lent money to anyone and I have not borrowed from anyone.
Yet all of these people are treating me with contempt.”

11 The LORD said,

“Jerusalem, I will surely send you away for your own good.
I will surely bring the enemy upon you in a time of trouble and distress.

12 Can you people who are like iron and bronze
break that iron fist from the north?

13 I will give away your wealth and your treasures as plunder.
I will give it away free of charge for the sins you have committed throughout your land.

14 I will make you serve your enemies in a land that you know nothing about.
For my anger is like a fire that will burn against you.”

15 I said,

“LORD, you know how I suffer.
Take thought of me and care for me.
Pay back for me those who have been persecuting me.
Do not be so patient with them that you allow them to kill me.
Be mindful of how I have put up with their insults for your sake.

16 As your words came to me I drank them in,
and they filled my heart with joy and happiness
because I belong to you.

17 I did not spend my time in the company of other people,
laughing and having a good time.
I stayed to myself because I felt obligated to you
and because I was filled with anger at what they had done.

18 Why must I continually suffer such painful anguish?
Why must I endure the sting of their insults like an incurable wound?
Will you let me down when I need you
like a brook one goes to for water, but that cannot be relied on?”

God Rebukes Jeremiah

19 Because of this, the LORD said,

“You must repent of such words and thoughts!
If you do, I will restore you to the privilege of serving me.
If you say what is worthwhile instead of what is worthless,
I will again allow you to be my spokesman.
They must become as you have been.
You must not become like them.

20 I will make you as strong as a wall to these people,
a fortified wall of bronze.
They will attack you,
but they will not be able to overcome you.

For I will be with you to rescue you and deliver you,”
says the LORD.

- 21 “I will deliver you from the power of the wicked.
I will free you from the clutches of violent people.”

Jeremiah’s Prophecy to Judah—Threats and Promises (c. 620–609 BC)

Jeremiah 16

Jeremiah Forbidden to Marry

- 1 The LORD said to me,
2 “Do not get married and do not have children here in this land.
3 For I, the LORD, tell you what will happen to the children who are born here in this land and to the men and women who are their mothers and fathers.
4 They will die of deadly diseases. No one will mourn for them. They will not be buried. Their dead bodies will lie like manure spread on the ground. They will be killed in war or die of starvation. Their corpses will be food for the birds and wild animals.

Jeremiah Forbidden to Mourn or Feast

- 5 “Moreover I, the LORD, tell you: ‘Do not go into a house where they are having a funeral meal. Do not go there to mourn and express your sorrow for them. For I have stopped showing them my good favor, my love, and my compassion. I, the LORD, so affirm it!
6 Rich and poor alike will die in this land. They will not be buried or mourned. People will not cut their bodies or shave off their hair to show their grief for them.
7 No one will take any food to those who mourn for the dead to comfort them. No one will give them any wine to drink to console them for the loss of their father or mother.
8 “Do not go to a house where people are feasting and sit down to eat and drink with them either.

Judah’s Coming Punishment

- 9 For I, the LORD God of Israel who rules over all, tell you what will happen. I will put an end to the sounds of joy and gladness, to the glad celebration of brides and grooms in this land. You and the rest of the people will live to see this happen.”
10 “When you tell these people about all this, they will undoubtedly ask you, ‘Why has the LORD threatened us with such great disaster? What wrong have we done? What sin have we done to offend the LORD our God?’
11 Then tell them that the LORD says, ‘It is because your ancestors rejected me and paid allegiance to other gods. They have served them and worshiped them. But they have rejected me and not obeyed my law.
12 And you have acted even more wickedly than your ancestors! Each one of you has followed the stubborn inclinations of your own wicked heart and not obeyed me.
13 So I will throw you out of this land into a land that neither you nor your ancestors have ever known. There you must worship other gods day and night, for I will show you no mercy.’”

God Foresees a Future Restoration

- 14 Yet I, the LORD, say: “A new time will certainly come. People now affirm their oaths with ‘I swear as surely as the LORD lives who delivered the people of Israel out of Egypt.’
15 But in that time they will affirm them with ‘I swear as surely as the LORD lives who delivered the people of Israel from the land of the north and from all the other lands where he had banished them.’ At that time I will bring them back to the land I gave their ancestors.”

Futility of Hiding from God

- 16 But for now I, the LORD, say: “I will send many enemies who will catch these people like fishermen. After that I will send others who will hunt them out like hunters from all the mountains, all the hills, and the crevices in the rocks.
17 For I see everything they do. Their wicked ways are not hidden from me. Their sin is not hidden away where I cannot see it.
18 Before I restore them I will punish them in full for their sins and the wrongs they have done. For they have polluted my land with the lifeless statues of their disgusting idols. They have filled the land I have claimed as my own with their detestable idols.”

All Nations Will One Day Acknowledge the Lord

- 19 Then I said,
“LORD, you give me strength and protect me.
You are the one I can run to for safety when I am in trouble.
Nations from all over the earth

will come to you and say,
'Our ancestors had nothing but false gods—
worthless idols that could not help them at all.

20 Can people make their own gods?
No, what they make are not gods at all."

21 The LORD said,

"So I will now let this wicked people know—
I will let them know my mighty power in judgment.
Then they will know that my name is the LORD."

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Jeremiah's Prophecy to Judah—Further Warnings and Exhortations (c. 620–609 BC)

Jeremiah 17

Judah's Indelible Sin

- 1 The sin of Judah is engraved with an iron chisel
on their stone-hard hearts.
It is inscribed with a diamond point
on the horns of their altars.
- 2 Their children are always thinking about their altars
and their sacred poles dedicated to the goddess Asherah,
set up beside the green trees on the high hills
- 3 and on the mountains and in the fields.
I will give your wealth and all your treasures away as plunder.
I will give it away as the price for the sins you have committed throughout your land.
- 4 You will lose your hold on the land
which I gave to you as a permanent possession.
I will make you serve your enemies in a land that you know nothing about.
For you have made my anger burn like a fire that will never be put out.”

A Choice of Curse or Blessing

5 The LORD says,

- “I will put a curse on people
who trust in mere human beings,
who depend on mere flesh and blood for their strength,
and whose hearts have turned away from the LORD.
- 6 They will be like a shrub in the desert.
They will not experience good things even when they happen.
It will be as though they were growing in the desert,
in a salt land where no one can live.
 - 7 My blessing is on those people who trust in me,
who put their confidence in me.
 - 8 They will be like a tree planted near a stream
whose roots spread out toward the water.
It has nothing to fear when the heat comes.
Its leaves are always green.
It has no need to be concerned in a year of drought.
It does not stop bearing fruit. [cf. [Ps 1:3](#)]

The Incurable Condition of the Human Heart

- 9 The human mind [heart] is more deceitful than anything else.
It is incurably bad. Who can understand it?
- 10 I, the LORD, probe into people's minds.
I examine people's hearts.
I deal with each person according to how he has behaved.
I give them what they deserve based on what they have done.
- 11 The person who gathers wealth by unjust means
is like the partridge that broods over eggs but does not hatch them.
Before his life is half over he will lose his ill-gotten gains.
At the end of his life it will be clear he was a fool.”

Jeremiah's Appeal for Vindication

12 Then I said,

- “LORD, from the very beginning
you have been seated on your glorious throne on high.
You are the place where we can find refuge.
- 13 You are the one in whom Israel may find hope.
All who leave you will suffer shame.

Those who turn away from you will be consigned to the netherworld.
For they have rejected you, the LORD, the fountain of life.

- 14 LORD, grant me relief from my suffering
so that I may have some relief.
Rescue me from those who persecute me
so that I may be rescued.
- 15 Listen to what they are saying to me.
They are saying, "Where are the things the LORD threatens us with?
Come on! Let's see them happen!"
- 16 But I have not pestered you to bring disaster.
I have not desired the time of irreparable devastation.
You know that.
You are fully aware of every word that I have spoken.
- 17 Do not cause me dismay!
You are my source of safety in times of trouble.
- 18 May those who persecute me be disgraced.
Do not let me be disgraced.
May they be dismayed.
Do not let me be dismayed.
Bring days of disaster on them.
Bring on them the destruction they deserve."

Warning About Sabbath Observance

- 19 The LORD told me, "Go and stand in the People's Gate through which the kings of Judah enter and leave the city. Then go and stand in all the other gates of the city of Jerusalem.
- 20 As you stand in those places announce, 'Listen, all you people who pass through these gates. Listen, all you kings of Judah, all you people of Judah and all you citizens of Jerusalem. Listen to what the LORD says.
- 21 The LORD says, 'Be very careful if you value your lives! Do not carry any loads in through the gates of Jerusalem on the Sabbath day.
- 22 Do not carry any loads out of your houses or do any work on the Sabbath day. But observe the Sabbath day as a day set apart to the LORD, as I commanded your ancestors.
- 23 Your ancestors, however, did not listen to me or pay any attention to me. They stubbornly refused to pay attention or to respond to any discipline.'
- 24 The LORD says, 'You must make sure to obey me. You must not bring any loads through the gates of this city on the Sabbath day. You must set the Sabbath day apart to me. You must not do any work on that day.
- 25 If you do this, then the kings and princes who follow in David's succession and ride in chariots or on horses will continue to enter through these gates, as well as their officials and the people of Judah and the citizens of Jerusalem. This city will always be filled with people.
- 26 Then people will come here from the towns in Judah, from the villages surrounding Jerusalem, from the territory of Benjamin, from the western foothills, from the southern hill country, and from the southern part of Judah. They will come bringing offerings to the temple of the LORD: burnt offerings, sacrifices, grain offerings, and incense along with their thank offerings.
- 27 But you must obey me and set the Sabbath day apart to me. You must not carry any loads in through the gates of Jerusalem on the Sabbath day. If you disobey, I will set the gates of Jerusalem on fire. It will burn down all the fortified dwellings in Jerusalem and no one will be able to put it out."

Jeremiah's Prophecy to Judah—The Visit to the Potter (c. 620–609 BC)

Jeremiah 18

The Message of the Potter

- 1 The LORD said to Jeremiah:
- 2 "Go down at once to the potter's house. I will speak to you further there."
- 3 So I went down to the potter's house and found him working at his wheel.
- 4 Now and then there would be something wrong with the pot he was molding from the clay with his hands. So he would rework the clay into another kind of pot as he saw fit.
- 5 Then the LORD said to me,
- 6 "I, the LORD, say: 'O nation of Israel, can I not deal with you as this potter deals with the clay? In my hands, you, O nation of Israel, are just like the clay in this potter's hand.'
- 7 There are times, Jeremiah, when I threaten to uproot, tear down, and destroy a nation or kingdom.

8 But if that nation I threatened stops doing wrong, I will cancel the destruction I intended to do to it.

9 And there are times when I promise to build up and establish a nation or kingdom.

10 But if that nation does what displeases me and does not obey me, then I will cancel the good I promised to do to it.

11 So now, tell the people of Judah and the citizens of Jerusalem this: The LORD says, 'I am preparing to bring disaster on you! I am making plans to punish you. So, every one of you, stop the evil things you have been doing. Correct the way you have been living and do what is right.'

12 But they just keep saying, 'We do not care what you say! We will do whatever we want to do! We will continue to behave wickedly and stubbornly!'"

Punishment of a Forgetful People

13 Therefore, the LORD says,

"Ask the people of other nations
whether they have heard of anything like this.
Israel should have been like a virgin.

But she has done something utterly revolting!

14 Does the snow ever completely vanish from the rocky slopes of Lebanon?
Do the cool waters from those distant mountains ever cease to flow?

15 Yet my people have forgotten me
and offered sacrifices to worthless idols!
This makes them stumble along in the way they live
and leave the old reliable path of their fathers.
They have left them to walk in bypaths,
in roads that are not smooth and level.

16 So their land will become an object of horror.
People will forever hiss out their scorn over it.
All who pass that way will be filled with horror
and will shake their heads in derision.

17 I will scatter them before their enemies
like dust blowing in front of a burning east wind.
I will turn my back on them and not look favorably on them
when disaster strikes them."

A Plot against Jeremiah

18 Then some people said, "Come on! Let us consider how to deal with Jeremiah! There will still be priests to instruct us, wise men to give us advice, and prophets to declare God's word. Come on! Let's bring charges against him and get rid of him! Then we will not need to pay attention to anything he says."

19 Then I said,

"LORD, pay attention to me.
Listen to what my enemies are saying.

20 Should good be paid back with evil?
Yet they are virtually digging a pit to kill me.
Just remember how I stood before you
pleading on their behalf
to keep you from venting your anger on them.

21 So let their children die of starvation.
Let them be cut down by the sword.
Let their wives lose their husbands and children.
Let the older men die of disease
and the younger men die by the sword in battle.

22 Let cries of terror be heard in their houses
when you send bands of raiders unexpectedly to plunder them.
For they have virtually dug a pit to capture me
and have hidden traps for me to step into.

23 But you, LORD, know
all their plots to kill me.

Do not pardon their crimes!
 Do not ignore their sins as though you had erased them!
 Let them be brought down in defeat before you!
 Deal with them while you are still angry!

Jeremiah's Prophecy to Judah—Lessons from a Broken Clay Jar (c. 620–609 BC)

Jeremiah 19

Assembling at the Valley of Ben Hinnom

1 The LORD told Jeremiah, "Go and buy a clay jar from a potter. Take with you some of the leaders of the people and some of the leaders of the priests.
 2 Go out to the part of the Hinnom Valley which is near the entrance of the Potsherd Gate. Announce there what I tell you.
 3 Say, 'Listen to what the LORD says, you kings of Judah and citizens of Jerusalem! The LORD God of Israel who rules over all says, "I will bring a disaster on this place that will make the ears of everyone who hears about it ring!
 4 I will do so because these people have rejected me and have defiled this place. They have offered sacrifices in it to other gods which neither they nor their ancestors nor the kings of Judah knew anything about. They have filled it with the blood of innocent children.
 5 They have built places here for worship of the god Baal so that they could sacrifice their children as burnt offerings to him in the fire. Such sacrifices are something I never commanded them to make! They are something I never told them to do! Indeed, such a thing never even entered my mind!
 6 So I, the LORD, say: "The time will soon come that people will no longer call this place Topheth or the Hinnom Valley. But they will call this valley the Valley of Slaughter!
 7 In this place I will thwart the plans of the people of Judah and Jerusalem. I will deliver them over to the power of their enemies who are seeking to kill them. They will die by the sword at the hands of their enemies. I will make their dead bodies food for the birds and wild beasts to eat.
 8 I will make this city an object of horror, a thing to be hissed at. All who pass by it will be filled with horror and will hiss out their scorn because of all the disasters that have happened to it.
 9 I will reduce the people of this city to desperate straits during the siege imposed on it by their enemies who are seeking to kill them. I will make them so desperate that they will eat the flesh of their own sons and daughters and the flesh of one another.'"

The Broken Jar and Its Symbolic Meaning

10 The LORD continued, "Now break the jar in front of those who have come here with you.
 11 Tell them the LORD who rules over all says, 'I will do just as Jeremiah has done. I will smash this nation and this city as though it were a potter's vessel which is broken beyond repair. The dead will be buried here in Topheth until there is no more room to bury them.'
 12 I, the LORD, say: 'That is how I will deal with this city and its citizens. I will make it like Topheth.
 13 The houses in Jerusalem and the houses of the kings of Judah will be defiled by dead bodies just like this place, Topheth. For they offered sacrifice to the stars and poured out drink offerings to other gods on the roofs of those houses.'
 14 Then Jeremiah left Topheth where the LORD had sent him to give that prophecy. He went to the LORD's temple and stood in its courtyard and called out to all the people.
 15 "The LORD God of Israel who rules over all says, 'I will soon bring on this city and all the towns surrounding it all the disaster I threatened to do to it. I will do so because they have stubbornly refused to pay any attention to what I have said!'"

Jeremiah's Prophecy to Judah—Jeremiah's Humiliation and Despair (c. 620–609 BC)

Jeremiah 20

Pashhur's Punishment of Jeremiah

1 Now Pashhur son of Immer heard Jeremiah prophesy these things. He was the priest who was chief of security in the LORD's temple.
 2 When he heard Jeremiah's prophecy, he had the prophet flogged. Then he put him in the stocks which were at the Upper Gate of Benjamin in the LORD's temple.
 3 But the next day Pashhur released Jeremiah from the stocks. When he did, Jeremiah said to him, "The LORD's name for you is not 'Pashhur' but 'Terror is Everywhere.'
 4 For the LORD says, 'I will make both you and your friends terrified of what will happen to you. You will see all of them die by the swords of their enemies. I will hand all the people of Judah over to the king of Babylon. He will carry some of them away into exile in Babylon and he will kill others of them with the sword.
 5 I will hand over all the wealth of this city to their enemies. I will hand over to them all the fruits of the labor of the people of this city and all their prized possessions, as well as all the treasures of the kings of Judah. Their enemies will seize it all as plunder and carry it off to Babylon.

6 You, Pashhur, and all your household will go into exile in Babylon. You will die there and you will be buried there. The same thing will happen to all your friends to whom you have prophesied lies.”

Jeremiah Bemoans His Lot

- 7 LORD, you coerced me into being a prophet,
and I allowed you to do it.
You overcame my resistance and prevailed over me.
Now I have become a constant laughingstock.
Everyone ridicules me.
- 8 For whenever I prophesy, I must cry out,
“Violence and destruction are coming!”
This message from the LORD has made me
an object of continual insults and derision.
- 9 Sometimes I think, “I will make no mention of his message.
I will not speak as his messenger any more.”
But then his message becomes like a fire
locked up inside of me, burning in my heart and soul.
I grow weary of trying to hold it in;
I cannot contain it.
- 10 I hear many whispering words of intrigue against me.
those who would cause me terror are everywhere!
They are saying, “Come on, let’s publicly denounce him!”
All my so-called friends are just watching for
something that would lead to my downfall.
They say, “Perhaps he can be enticed into slipping up,
so we can prevail over him and get our revenge on him.

Jeremiah Prays for Vengeance

- 11 But the LORD is with me to help me like an awe-inspiring warrior.
Therefore those who persecute me will fail and will not prevail over me.
They will be thoroughly disgraced because they did not succeed.
Their disgrace will never be forgotten.
- 12 O LORD who rules over all, you test and prove the righteous.
You see into people’s hearts and minds.
Pay them back for what they have done
because I trust you to vindicate my cause.
- 13 Sing to the LORD! Praise the LORD!
For he rescues the oppressed from the clutches of evildoers.

Jeremiah’s Curses the Day of His Birth (Echoes of Job)

- 14 Cursed be the day I was born!
May that day not be blessed when my mother gave birth to me.
- 15 Cursed be the man
who made my father very glad
when he brought him the news
that a baby boy had been born to him!
- 16 May that man be like the cities
that the LORD destroyed without showing any mercy.
May he hear a cry of distress in the morning
and a battle cry at noon.
- 17 For he did not kill me before I came from the womb,
making my pregnant mother’s womb my grave forever.
- 18 Why did I ever come forth from my mother’s womb?
All I experience is trouble and grief,
and I spend my days in shame.

The Death of Josiah (Tammuz [July] 609 BC)

2 Kings 23:28–30	2 Chronicles 35:20–36:1
<p>29 During Josiah's reign Pharaoh Necho king of Egypt marched toward the Euphrates River to help the king of Assyria. King Josiah marched out to fight him,</p> <p>but Necho killed him at Megiddo when he saw him.</p> <p>30a His servants transported his dead body from Megiddo in a chariot and brought it to Jerusalem, where they buried him in his tomb.</p> <p>28 The rest of the events of Josiah's reign</p> <p>and all his accomplishments are recorded in the scroll called the Annals of the Kings of Judah.</p> <p>30b The people of the land took Josiah's son Jehoahaz, poured olive oil on his head, and made him king in his father's place.</p>	<p>35:20 After Josiah had done all this for the temple, King Necho of Egypt marched up to do battle at Carchemish on the Euphrates River.</p> <p>Josiah marched out to oppose him.</p> <p>21 Necho sent messengers to him, saying, "Why are you opposing me, O king of Judah? I am not attacking you today, but the kingdom with which I am at war. God told me to hurry. Stop opposing God, who is with me, or else he will destroy you."</p> <p>22 But Josiah did not turn back from him; he disguised himself for battle. He did not take seriously the words of Necho which he had received from God; he went to fight him in the Plain of Megiddo.</p> <p>23 Archers shot King Josiah; the king ordered his servants, "Take me out of this chariot, for I am seriously wounded."</p> <p>24 So his servants took him out of the chariot, put him in another chariot that he owned, and brought him to Jerusalem, where he died. He was buried in the tombs of his ancestors; all the people of Judah and Jerusalem mourned Josiah.</p> <p>25 Jeremiah composed laments for Josiah which all the male and female singers use to mourn Josiah to this very day. It has become customary in Israel to sing these; they are recorded in the Book of Laments.</p> <p>26 The rest of the events of Josiah's reign, including the faithful acts he did in obedience to what is written in the law of the LORD</p> <p>27 and his accomplishments, from start to finish, are recorded in the Scroll of the Kings of Israel and Judah.</p> <p>36:1 The people of the land took Jehoahaz son of Josiah and made him king in his father's place in Jerusalem.</p>

Jehoahaz, Josiah's Son, Assumes the Throne of Judah (Tammuz [July] 609 BC)

2 Kings 23:31–32	2 Chronicles 36:2
<p>31 Jehoahaz was twenty-three years old when he became king, and he reigned three months in Jerusalem. His mother was Hamutal the daughter of Jeremiah, from Libnah.</p> <p>32 He did evil in the sight of the LORD as his ancestors had done.</p>	<p>2 Jehoahaz was twenty-three years old when he became king, and he reigned three months in Jerusalem.</p>

Pharaoh Necho II Exiles Jehoahaz to Egypt (Tishri [October] 609 BC)

2 Kings 23:33–35	2 Chronicles 36:3–4
<p>33 Pharaoh Necho imprisoned him in Riblah in the land of Hamath and prevented him from ruling in Jerusalem. He imposed on the land a special tax of one hundred talents of silver and a talent of gold.</p> <p>34 Pharaoh Necho made Josiah's son Eliakim king in Josiah's place, and changed his name to Jehoiakim. He took Jehoahaz to Egypt, where he died.</p>	<p>3 The king of Egypt prevented him from ruling in Jerusalem and imposed on the land a special tax of one hundred talents of silver and a talent of gold.</p> <p>4 The king of Egypt made Jehoahaz's brother Eliakim king over Judah and Jerusalem, and changed his name to Jehoiakim. Necho seized his brother Jehoahaz and took him to Egypt.</p>

35 Jehoiakim paid Pharaoh the required amount of silver and gold, but to meet Pharaoh's demands Jehoiakim had to tax the land. He collected an assessed amount from each man among the people of the land in order to pay Pharaoh Necho.

Jehoiakim, Jehoahaz's Brother, Assumes the Throne of Judah (Tishri [October] 609 BC)

2 Kings 23:36–37

2 Chronicles 36:5

36 Jehoiakim was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned for eleven years in Jerusalem.
His mother was Zebidah the daughter of Pedaiah, from Rumah.
37 He did evil in the sight of the LORD as his ancestors had done.

5 Jehoiakim was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned for eleven years in Jerusalem.

He did evil in the sight of the LORD his God.

Jeremiah's Prophecy to Judah—A Tale of Three Kings (609/608 BC)

Jeremiah 22

A Message for King Jehoiakim and Jerusalem

1 The LORD told me, "Go down to the palace of the king of Judah. Give him a message from me there.

2 Say: 'Listen, O king of Judah who follows in David's succession. You, your officials, and your subjects who pass through the gates of this palace must listen to what the LORD says.

3 The LORD says, "Do what is just and right. Deliver those who have been robbed from those who oppress them. Do not exploit or mistreat foreigners who live in your land, children who have no fathers, or widows. Do not kill innocent people in this land.

4 If you are careful to obey these commands, then the kings who follow in David's succession and ride in chariots or on horses will continue to come through the gates of this palace, as will their officials and their subjects.

5 But, if you do not obey these commands, I solemnly swear that this palace will become a pile of rubble. I, the LORD, affirm it!"

6 "For the LORD says concerning the palace of the king of Judah,
"This place looks like a veritable forest of Gilead to me.
It is like the wooded heights of Lebanon in my eyes.
But I swear that I will make it like a wilderness
whose towns have all been deserted.

7 I will send men against it to destroy it
with their axes and hatchets.
They will hack up its fine cedar panels and columns
and throw them into the fire.

8 "People from other nations will pass by this city. They will ask one another, "Why has the LORD done such a thing to this great city?"

9 The answer will come back, "It is because they broke their covenant with the LORD their God and worshiped and served other gods."

Judgment on Shallum (Jehoahaz)

10 "Do not weep for the king who was killed [Josiah].
Do not grieve for him.
But weep mournfully for the king who has gone into exile [Jehoahaz].
For he will never return to see his native land again.

11 "For the LORD has spoken about Shallum [Jehoahaz] son of Josiah, who succeeded his father as king of Judah but was carried off into exile. He has said, "He will never return to this land.

12 For he will die in the country where they took him as a captive. He will never see this land again."

Judgment on Jehoiakim

13 "Sure to be judged is the king who builds his palace using injustice
and treats people unfairly while adding its upper rooms.
He makes his countrymen work for him for nothing.
He does not pay them for their labor.

14 He says, "I will build myself a large palace

- with spacious upper rooms.”
 He cuts windows in its walls,
 panels it with cedar, and paints its rooms red.
- 15 Does it make you any more of a king
 that you outstrip everyone else in building with cedar?
 Just think about your father.
 He was content that he had food and drink.
 He did what was just and right.
 So things went well with him.
- 16 He upheld the cause of the poor and needy.
 So things went well for Judah.’
 The LORD says,
 ‘That is a good example of what it means to know me.’
- 17 But you are always thinking and looking
 for ways to increase your wealth by dishonest means.
 Your eyes and your heart are set
 on killing some innocent person
 and committing fraud and oppression.
- 18 So the LORD has this to say about Josiah’s son, King Jehoiakim of Judah:
 People will not mourn for him, saying,
 “This makes me sad, my brother!
 This makes me sad, my sister!”
 They will not mourn for him, saying,
 “Poor, poor lord! Poor, poor majesty!”
- 19 He will be left unburied just like a dead donkey.
 His body will be dragged off and thrown outside the gates of Jerusalem.”

The Consequences of Jerusalem’s Disobedience

- 20 People of Jerusalem, go up to Lebanon and cry out in mourning.
 Go to the land of Bashan and cry out loudly.
 Cry out in mourning from the mountains of Moab.
 For your allies have all been defeated.
- 21 While you were feeling secure I gave you warning.
 But you said, “I refuse to listen to you.”
 That is the way you have acted from your earliest history onward.
 Indeed, you have never paid attention to me.
- 22 My judgment will carry off all your leaders like a storm wind!
 Your allies will go into captivity.
 Then you will certainly be disgraced and put to shame
 because of all the wickedness you have done.
- 23 You may feel as secure as a bird
 nesting in the cedars of Lebanon.
 But oh how you will groan when the pains of judgment come on you.
 They will be like those of a woman giving birth to a baby.

The Future Fate of Jeconiah (Jehoiachin)

- 24 The LORD says, “As surely as I am the living God, you, Jeconiah, king of Judah, son of Jehoiakim, will not be the earthly representative of my authority. Indeed, I will take that right away from you.
- 25 I will hand you over to those who want to take your life and of whom you are afraid. I will hand you over to King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon and his Babylonian soldiers.
- 26 I will force you and your mother who gave you birth into exile. You will be exiled to a country where neither of you were born, and you will both die there.
- 27 You will never come back to this land to which you will long to return!”
- 28 This man, Jeconiah, will be like a broken pot someone threw away.
 He will be like a clay vessel that no one wants.
 Why will he and his children be forced into exile?
 Why will they be thrown out into a country they know nothing about?

29 O land of Judah, land of Judah, land of Judah!
Listen to what the LORD has to say!

30 The LORD says,

“Enroll this man in the register as though he were childless.
Enroll him as a man who will not enjoy success during his lifetime.
For none of his sons will succeed in occupying the throne of David
or ever succeed in ruling over Judah.”

Jeremiah's Prophecy to Judah—Promise of a Better Day (609/608 BC)

Jeremiah 23:1–8

Wicked Shepherds and Their Fate

1 The LORD says, “The leaders of my people are sure to be judged. They were supposed to watch over my people like shepherds watch over their sheep. But they are causing my people to be destroyed and scattered.

2 So the LORD God of Israel has this to say about the leaders who are ruling over his people: “You have caused my people to be dispersed and driven into exile. You have not taken care of them. So I will punish you for the evil that you have done. I, the LORD, affirm it!

The Coming Righteous King—Jesus

3 Then I myself will regather those of my people who are still alive from all the countries where I have driven them. I will bring them back to their homeland. They will greatly increase in number.

4 I will install rulers over them who will care for them. Then they will no longer need to fear or be terrified. None of them will turn up missing. I, the LORD, promise it!

5 “I, the LORD, promise that a new time will certainly come when I will raise up for them a righteous branch, a descendant of David. He will rule over them with wisdom and understanding and will do what is just and right in the land.

6 Under his rule Judah will enjoy safety and Israel will live in security. This is the name he will go by: ‘The LORD has provided us with justice.’

7 “So I, the LORD, say: ‘A new time will certainly come. People now affirm their oaths with “I swear as surely as the LORD lives who delivered the people of Israel out of Egypt.”

8 But at that time they will affirm them with “I swear as surely as the LORD lives who delivered the descendants of the former nation of Israel from the land of the north and from all the other lands where he had banished them.” At that time they will live in their own land.”

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Jeremiah's Prophecy to Judah—Condemnation of False Prophets (609/608 BC)

Jeremiah 23:9–40

Condemnation of Godless Prophets and Priests

9 Here is what the LORD says concerning the false prophets:

My heart and my mind are deeply disturbed.

I tremble all over.

I am like a drunk person,

like a person who has had too much wine,

because of the way the LORD

and his holy word are being mistreated.

10 For the land is full of people unfaithful to him.

They live wicked lives and they misuse their power.

So the land is dried up because it is under his curse.

The pastures in the wilderness are withered.

11 Moreover, the LORD says, "Both the prophets and priests are godless.

I have even found them doing evil in my temple!

12 So the paths they follow will be dark and slippery.

They will stumble and fall headlong.

For I will bring disaster on them.

A day of reckoning is coming for them."

The LORD affirms it!

Evil Prophets of Samaria Compared to Prophets of Jerusalem

13 The LORD says, "I saw the prophets of Samaria

doing something that was disgusting.

They prophesied in the name of the god Baal

and led my people Israel astray.

14 But I see the prophets of Jerusalem

doing something just as shocking.

They are unfaithful to me

and continually prophesy lies.

So they give encouragement to people who are doing evil,

with the result that they do not stop their evildoing.

I consider all of them as bad as the people of Sodom,

and the citizens of Jerusalem as bad as the people of Gomorrah.

15 So then I, the LORD who rules over all,

have something to say concerning the prophets of Jerusalem:

'I will make these prophets eat the bitter food of suffering

and drink the poison water of judgment.

For the prophets of Jerusalem are the reason

that ungodliness has spread throughout the land.'"

God Warns Judah to Reject the Message of the False Prophets

16 The LORD who rules over all says to the people of Jerusalem:

"Do not listen to what those prophets are saying to you.

They are filling you with false hopes.

They are reporting visions of their own imaginations,

not something the LORD has given them to say.

17 They continually say to those who reject what the LORD has said,

'Things will go well for you!'

They say to all those who follow the stubborn inclinations of their own hearts,

'Nothing bad will happen to you!'

18 Yet which of them has ever stood in the LORD's inner circle

so they could see and hear what he has to say?

Which of them have ever paid attention or listened to what he has said?

19 But just watch! The wrath of the LORD

will come like a storm!

- Like a raging storm it will rage down
on the heads of those who are wicked.
- 20 The anger of the LORD will not turn back
until he has fully carried out his intended purposes.
In days to come
you people will come to understand this clearly.
- 21 I did not send those prophets.
Yet they were in a hurry to give their message.
I did not tell them anything.
Yet they prophesied anyway.
- 22 But if they had stood in my inner circle,
they would have proclaimed my message to my people.
They would have caused my people to turn from their wicked ways
and stop doing the evil things they are doing.
- 23 Do you people think that I am some local deity
and not the transcendent God?" the LORD asks.
- 24 "Do you really think anyone can hide himself
where I cannot see him?" the LORD asks.
"Do you not know that I am everywhere?"
the LORD asks.

God's Rejection of the Lying Prophets

- 25 The LORD says, "I have heard what those prophets who are prophesying lies in my name are saying. They are saying, 'I have had a dream! I have had a dream!'
- 26 Those prophets are just prophesying lies. They are prophesying the delusions of their own minds.
- 27 How long will they go on plotting to make my people forget who I am through the dreams they tell one another? That is just as bad as what their ancestors did when they forgot who I am by worshiping the god Baal.
- 28 Let the prophet who has had a dream go ahead and tell his dream. Let the person who has received my message report that message faithfully. What is like straw cannot compare to what is like grain! I, the LORD, affirm it!
- 29 My message is like a fire that purges dross! It is like a hammer that breaks a rock in pieces! I, the LORD, so affirm it!
- 30 So I, the LORD, affirm that I am opposed to those prophets who steal messages from one another that they claim are from me.
- 31 I, the LORD, affirm that I am opposed to those prophets who are using their own tongues to declare, 'The LORD declares...'
- 32 I, the LORD, affirm that I am opposed to those prophets who dream up lies and report them. They are misleading my people with their reckless lies. I did not send them. I did not commission them. They are not helping these people at all. I, the LORD, affirm it!"

The Burden of the Lord

- 33 The LORD said to me, "Jeremiah, when one of these people, or a prophet, or a priest asks you, 'What burdensome message do you have from the LORD?' Tell them, 'You are the burden, and I will cast you away. I, the LORD, affirm it!'
- 34 I will punish any prophet, priest, or other person who says "The LORD's message is burdensome." I will punish both that person and his whole family."
- 35 So I, Jeremiah, tell you, "Each of you people should say to his friend or his relative, 'How did the LORD answer? Or what did the LORD say?'
- 36 You must no longer say that the LORD's message is burdensome. For what is 'burdensome' really pertains to what a person himself says. You are misrepresenting the words of our God, the living God, the LORD who rules over all.
- 37 Each of you should merely ask the prophet, 'What answer did the LORD give you? Or what did the LORD say?'
- 38 But just suppose you continue to say, 'The message of the LORD is burdensome.' Here is what the LORD says will happen: 'I sent word to you that you must not say, "The LORD's message is burdensome." But you used the words "The LORD's message is burdensome" anyway.
- 39 So I will carry you far off and throw you away. I will send both you and the city I gave to you and to your ancestors out of my sight.
- 40 I will bring on you lasting shame and lasting disgrace which will never be forgotten!"

Jeremiah Calls on Jehoiakim and Judah to Repent (609/608 BC)

Jeremiah 26

Another Temple Sermon (see Jeremiah 7–10)

- 1 The LORD spoke to Jeremiah at the beginning of the reign of Josiah's son, King Jehoiakim of Judah.
- 2 The LORD said, "Go stand in the courtyard of the LORD's temple. Speak out to all the people who are coming from the towns of

Judah to worship in the LORD's temple. Tell them everything I command you to tell them. Do not leave out a single word!

3 Maybe they will pay attention and each of them will stop living the evil way they do. If they do that, then I will forgo destroying them as I had intended to do because of the wicked things they have been doing.

4 Tell them that the LORD says, 'You must obey me! You must live according to the way I have instructed you in my laws.

5 You must pay attention to the exhortations of my servants the prophets. I have sent them to you over and over again. But you have not paid any attention to them.

6 If you do not obey me, then I will do to this temple what I did to Shiloh. And I will make this city an example to be used in curses by people from all the nations on the earth.'"

Arrest and Trial of Jeremiah

7 The priests, the prophets, and all the people heard Jeremiah say these things in the LORD's temple.

8 Jeremiah had just barely finished saying all the LORD had commanded him to say to all the people. All at once some of the priests, the prophets, and the people grabbed him and shouted, "You deserve to die!

9 How dare you claim the LORD's authority to prophesy such things! How dare you claim his authority to prophesy that this temple will become like Shiloh and that this city will become an uninhabited ruin!" Then all the people crowded around Jeremiah.

10 However, some of the officials of Judah heard about what was happening and they rushed up to the LORD's temple from the royal palace. They set up court at the entrance of the New Gate of the LORD's temple.

11 Then the priests and the prophets made their charges before the officials and all the people. They said, "This man should be condemned to die because he prophesied against this city. You have heard him do so with your own ears."

12 Then Jeremiah made his defense before all the officials and all the people. "The LORD sent me to prophesy everything you have heard me say against this temple and against this city.

13 But correct the way you have been living and do what is right. Obey the LORD your God. If you do, the LORD will forgo destroying you as he threatened he would.

14 As to my case, I am in your power. Do to me what you deem fair and proper.

15 But you should take careful note of this: If you put me to death, you will bring on yourselves and this city and those who live in it the guilt of murdering an innocent man. For the LORD has sent me to speak all this where you can hear it. That is the truth!"

16 Then the officials and all the people rendered their verdict to the priests and the prophets. They said, "This man should not be condemned to die. For he has spoken to us under the authority of the LORD our God."

17 Then some of the elders of Judah stepped forward and spoke to all the people gathered there. They said,

18 "Micah from Moresheth prophesied during the time Hezekiah was king of Judah. He told all the people of Judah,

'The LORD who rules over all says,

"Zion will become a plowed field.

Jerusalem will become a pile of rubble.

The temple mount will become a mere wooded ridge.'" [\[Mic 3:12\]](#)

19 King Hezekiah and all the people of Judah did not put him to death, did they? Did not Hezekiah show reverence for the LORD and seek the LORD's favor? Did not the LORD forgo destroying them as he threatened he would? But we are on the verge of bringing great disaster on ourselves."

Arrest and Slaying of Uriah the Prophet

20 Now there was another man who prophesied as the LORD's representative against this city and this land just as Jeremiah did. His name was Uriah son of Shemaiah from Kiriath Jearim.

21 When the king and all his bodyguards and officials heard what he was prophesying, the king sought to have him executed. But Uriah found out about it and fled to Egypt out of fear.

22 However, King Jehoiakim sent some men to Egypt, including Elnathan son of Achbor,

23 and they brought Uriah back from there. They took him to King Jehoiakim, who had him executed and had his body thrown into the burial place of the common people.

Jeremiah is Released

24 However, Ahikam son of Shaphan used his influence to keep Jeremiah from being handed over and executed by the people.

Jeremiah Warns Judah About the Coming Babylonian Attack (early 605 BC)

Jeremiah 25

Judah's Refusal to Listen to the Prophets

1 In the fourth year that Jehoiakim son of Josiah was king of Judah, the LORD spoke to Jeremiah concerning all the people of Judah. (That was the same as the first year that Nebuchadnezzar was king of Babylon.)

- 2 So the prophet Jeremiah spoke to all the people of Judah and to all the people who were living in Jerusalem.
- 3 “For the last twenty-three years, from the thirteenth year that Josiah son of Amon was ruling in Judah until now, the LORD has been speaking to me. I told you over and over again what he said. But you would not listen.
- 4 Over and over again the LORD has sent his servants the prophets to you. But you have not listened or paid attention.
- 5 He said through them, ‘Each of you must turn from your wicked ways and stop doing the evil things you are doing. If you do, I will allow you to continue to live here in the land that I gave to you and your ancestors as a lasting possession.
- 6 Do not pay allegiance to other gods and worship and serve them. Do not make me angry by the things that you do. Then I will not cause you any harm.’
- 7 So, now the LORD says, ‘You have not listened to me. But you have made me angry by the things that you have done. Thus you have brought harm on yourselves.’

Seventy Years of Punishment

- 8 “Therefore, the LORD who rules over all says, ‘You have not listened to what I said.
- 9 So I, the LORD, affirm that I will send for all the peoples of the north and my servant, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. I will bring them against this land and its inhabitants and all the nations that surround it. I will utterly destroy this land, its inhabitants, and all the nations that surround it and make them everlasting ruins. I will make them objects of horror and hissing scorn.
- 10 I will put an end to the sounds of joy and gladness, to the glad celebration of brides and grooms in these lands. I will put an end to the sound of people grinding meal. I will put an end to lamps shining in their houses.
- 11 This whole area will become a desolate wasteland. These nations will be subject to the king of Babylon for seventy years.’
- 12 “‘But when the seventy years are over, I will punish the king of Babylon and his nation for their sins. I will make the land of Babylon an everlasting ruin. I, the LORD, affirm it!
- 13 I will bring on that land everything that I said I would. I will bring on it everything that is written in this book. I will bring on it everything that Jeremiah has prophesied against all the nations.
- 14 For many nations and great kings will make slaves of the king of Babylon and his nation too. I will repay them for all they have done!’”

The Cup of God’s Wrath

- 15 So the LORD, the God of Israel, spoke to me in a vision. “Take this cup from my hand. It is filled with the wine of my wrath. Take it and make the nations to whom I send you drink it.
- 16 When they have drunk it, they will stagger to and fro and act insane. For I will send wars sweeping through them.”
- 17 So I took the cup from the LORD’s hand. I made all the nations to whom he sent me drink the wine of his wrath.
- 18 I made Jerusalem and the cities of Judah, its kings and its officials drink it. I did it so Judah would become a ruin. I did it so Judah, its kings, and its officials would become an object of horror and of hissing scorn, an example used in curses. Such is already becoming the case!
- 19 I made all of these other people drink it: Pharaoh, king of Egypt; his attendants, his officials, his people,
- 20 the foreigners living in Egypt; all the kings of the land of Uz; all the kings of the land of the Philistines, the people of Ashkelon, Gaza, Ekron, the people who had been left alive from Ashdod;
- 21 all the people of Edom, Moab, Ammon;
- 22 all the kings of Tyre, all the kings of Sidon; all the kings of the coastlands along the sea;
- 23 the people of Dedan, Tema, Buz, all the desert people who cut their hair short at the temples;
- 24 all the kings of Arabia who live in the desert;
- 25 all the kings of Zimri; all the kings of Elam; all the kings of Media;
- 26 all the kings of the north, whether near or far from one another; and all the other kingdoms which are on the face of the earth. After all of them have drunk the wine of the LORD’s wrath, the king of Babylon must drink it.
- 27 Then the LORD said to me, “Tell them that the LORD God of Israel who rules over all says, ‘Drink this cup until you get drunk and vomit. Drink until you fall down and can’t get up. For I will send wars sweeping through you.’
- 28 If they refuse to take the cup from your hand and drink it, tell them that the LORD who rules over all says ‘You most certainly must drink it!
- 29 For take note, I am already beginning to bring disaster on the city that I call my own. So how can you possibly avoid being punished? You will not go unpunished! For I am proclaiming war against all who live on the earth. I, the LORD who rules over all, affirm it!’

God’s Coming Judgment on All Nations

- 30 “Then, Jeremiah, make the following prophecy against them:

‘Like a lion about to attack, the LORD will roar from the heights of heaven;
from his holy dwelling on high he will roar loudly.
He will roar mightily against his land.

- He will shout in triumph like those stomping juice from the grapes against all those who live on the earth.
- 31 The sounds of battle will resound to the ends of the earth.
For the LORD will bring charges against the nations.
He will pass judgment on all humankind
and will hand the wicked over to be killed in war.’
The LORD so affirms it!
- 32 The LORD who rules over all says,
‘Disaster will soon come on one nation after another.
A mighty storm of military destruction is rising up
from the distant parts of the earth.’
- 33 Those who have been killed by the LORD at that time
will be scattered from one end of the earth to the other.
They will not be mourned over, gathered up, or buried.
Their dead bodies will lie scattered over the ground like manure.
- 34 Wail and cry out in anguish, you rulers!
Roll in the dust, you who shepherd flocks of people!
The time for you to be slaughtered has come.
You will lie scattered and fallen like broken pieces of fine pottery.
- 35 The leaders will not be able to run away and hide.
The shepherds of the flocks will not be able to escape.
- 36 Listen to the cries of anguish of the leaders.
Listen to the wails of the shepherds of the flocks.
They are wailing because the LORD
is about to destroy their lands.
- 37 Their peaceful dwelling places will be laid waste
by the fierce anger of the LORD.
- 38 The LORD is like a lion who has left his lair.
So their lands will certainly be laid waste
by the warfare of the oppressive nation
and by the fierce anger of the LORD.”

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Jeremiah's Prophecy Concerning the Nations: Egypt (early 605 BC)

Jeremiah 46

Introduction to Jeremiah's Messages Concerning the Nations

1 The LORD spoke to Jeremiah about the nations.

Egypt's Defeat at Carchemish (605 BC)

2 He spoke about Egypt and the army of Pharaoh Necho king of Egypt which was encamped along the Euphrates River at Carchemish. Now this was the army that King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon defeated in the fourth year that Jehoiakim son of Josiah was ruling over Judah.

- 3 "Fall into ranks with your shields ready!
Prepare to march into battle!
- 4 Harness the horses to the chariots!
Mount your horses!
Put on your helmets and take your positions!
Sharpen your spears!
Put on your armor!
- 5 What do I see?" says the LORD.
"The soldiers are terrified.
They are retreating.
They have been defeated.
They are overcome with terror;
they desert quickly without looking back.
- 6 But even the swiftest cannot get away.
Even the strongest cannot escape.
There in the north by the Euphrates River
they stumble and fall in defeat.
- 7 "Who is this that rises like the Nile,
like its streams turbulent at flood stage?
- 8 Egypt rises like the Nile,
like its streams turbulent at flood stage.
Egypt says, 'I will arise and cover the earth.
I will destroy cities and the people who inhabit them.'
- 9 Go ahead and charge into battle, you horsemen!
Drive furiously, you charioteers!
Let the soldiers march out into battle,
those from Ethiopia and Libya who carry shields,
and those from Lydia who are armed with the bow.
- 10 But that day belongs to the Lord God who rules over all.
It is the day when he will pay back his enemies.
His sword will devour them until its appetite is satisfied!
It will drink their blood until it is full!
For the Lord GOD who rules over all will offer them up as a sacrifice
in the land of the north by the Euphrates River.
- 11 Go up to Gilead and get medicinal ointment,
you dear poor people of Egypt.
But it will prove useless no matter how much medicine you use;
there will be no healing for you.
- 12 The nations will hear of your devastating defeat;
your cries of distress will echo throughout the earth.
In the panic of their flight one soldier will trip over another
and both of them will fall down defeated."

Nebuchadnezzar's Future Invasion of Egypt (568/7 BC)

13 The LORD spoke to the prophet Jeremiah about Nebuchadnezzar coming to attack the land of Egypt.

- 14 "Make an announcement throughout Egypt.
Proclaim it in Migdol, Memphis, and Tahpanhes.

- ‘Take your positions and prepare to do battle.
For the enemy army is destroying all the nations around you.’
- 15 Why will your soldiers be defeated?
They will not stand because I, the LORD, will thrust them down.
- 16 I will make many stumble.
They will fall over one another in their hurry to flee.
They will say, ‘Get up!
Let’s go back to our own people.
Let’s go back to our homelands
because the enemy is coming to destroy us.’
- 17 There at home they will say, ‘Pharaoh [Amasis] king of Egypt is just a big noise!
He has let the most opportune moment pass by.’
- 18 I the King, whose name is the LORD who rules over all, swear this:
I swear as surely as I live that a conqueror is coming.
He will be as imposing as Mount Tabor is among the mountains,
as Mount Carmel is against the backdrop of the sea.
- 19 Pack your bags for exile,
you inhabitants of poor dear Egypt.
For Memphis will be laid waste.
It will lie in ruins and be uninhabited.
- 20 Egypt is like a beautiful young cow.
But northern armies will attack her like swarms of stinging flies.
- 21 Even her mercenaries
will prove to be like pampered, well-fed calves.
For they too will turn and run away.
They will not stand their ground
when the time for them to be destroyed comes,
the time for them to be punished.
- 22 Egypt will run away, hissing like a snake,
as the enemy comes marching up in force.
They will come against her with axes
as if they were woodsmen chopping down trees.
- 23 The population of Egypt is like a vast, impenetrable forest.
But I, the LORD, affirm that the enemy will cut them down.
For those who chop them down will be more numerous than locusts.
They will be too numerous to count.
- 24 Poor dear Egypt will be put to shame.
She will be handed over to the people from the north.”

A Word of Hope to Egypt

25 The LORD God of Israel who rules over all says, “I will punish Amon, the god of Thebes. I will punish Egypt, its gods, and its kings. I will punish Pharaoh and all who trust in him.

26 I will hand them over to Nebuchadnezzar and his troops, who want to kill them. But later on, people will live in Egypt again as they did in former times. I, the LORD, affirm it!”

Words of Assurance to Israel

- 27 “You descendants of Jacob, my servants, do not be afraid;
do not be terrified, people of Israel.
For I will rescue you and your descendants
from the faraway lands where you are captives.
The descendants of Jacob will return to their land and enjoy peace.
They will be secure and no one will terrify them.
- 28 I, the LORD, tell you not to be afraid,
you descendants of Jacob, my servant,
for I am with you.
Though I completely destroy all the nations where I scatter you,
I will not completely destroy you.
I will indeed discipline you but only in due measure.

I will not allow you to go entirely unpunished.”

Jeremiah's Prophecy Concerning the Nations: Philistia (early 605 BC)

Jeremiah 47

- 1 The LORD spoke to the prophet Jeremiah about the Philistines before Pharaoh attacked Gaza.
- 2 “Look! Enemies are gathering in the north like water rising in a river.
They will be like an overflowing stream.
They will overwhelm the whole country and everything in it like a flood.
They will overwhelm the cities and their inhabitants.
People will cry out in alarm.
Everyone living in the country will cry out in pain.
- 3 Fathers will hear the hoofbeats of the enemies' horses,
the clatter of their chariots and the rumbling of their wheels.
They will not turn back to save their children
because they will be paralyzed with fear.
- 4 For the time has come
to destroy all the Philistines.
The time has come to destroy all the help
that remains for Tyre and Sidon.
For I, the LORD, will destroy the Philistines,
that remnant that came from the island of Crete.
- 5 The people of Gaza will shave their heads in mourning.
The people of Ashkelon will be struck dumb.
How long will you gash yourselves to show your sorrow,
you who remain of Philistia's power?
- 6 How long will you cry out, ‘Oh, sword of the LORD,
how long will it be before you stop killing?
Go back into your sheath!
Stay there and rest!’
- 7 But how can it rest
when I, the LORD, have given it orders?
I have ordered it to attack
the people of Ashkelon and the seacoast.

Jeremiah's Prophecy Concerning the Nations: Moab (early 605 BC)

Jeremiah 48

The Destruction of Moab

- 1 The LORD God of Israel who rules over all spoke about Moab.

“Sure to be judged is Nebo! Indeed, it will be destroyed!
Kiriathaim will suffer disgrace. It will be captured!
Its fortress will suffer disgrace. It will be torn down!
- 2 People will not praise Moab any more.
The enemy will capture Heshbon and plot how to destroy Moab,
saying, ‘Come, let's put an end to that nation!’
City of Madmen, you will also be destroyed.
A destructive army will march against you.
- 3 Cries of anguish will arise in Horonaim,
‘Oh, the ruin and great destruction!’
- 4 “Moab will be crushed.
Her children will cry out in distress.
- 5 Indeed they will climb the slopes of Luhith,
weeping continually as they go.
For on the road down to Horonaim
they will hear the cries of distress over the destruction.

- 6 They will hear, 'Run! Save yourselves!
Even if you must be like a lonely shrub in the desert!'
- 7 "Moab, you trust in the things you do and in your riches.
So you too will be conquered.
Your god Chemosh will go into exile
along with his priests and his officials.
- 8 The destroyer will come against every town.
Not one town will escape.
The towns in the valley will be destroyed.
The cities on the high plain will be laid waste.
I, the LORD, have spoken!
- 9 Set up a gravestone for Moab,
for it will certainly be laid in ruins!
Its cities will be laid waste
and become uninhabited."
- 10 A curse on anyone who is lax in doing the LORD's work!
A curse on anyone who keeps from carrying out his destruction!

The Humbling of a Complacent Nation

- 11 "From its earliest days Moab has lived undisturbed.
It has never been taken into exile.
Its people are like wine allowed to settle undisturbed on its dregs,
never poured out from one jar to another.
They are like wine which tastes like it always did,
whose aroma has remained unchanged.
- 12 But the time is coming when I will send
men against Moab who will empty it out.
They will empty the towns of their people,
then will lay those towns in ruins.
I, the LORD, affirm it!
- 13 The people of Moab will be disappointed by their god Chemosh.
They will be as disappointed as the people of Israel were
when they put their trust in the calf god at Bethel.
- 14 How can you men of Moab say, 'We are heroes,
men who are mighty in battle?'
- 15 Moab will be destroyed. Its towns will be invaded.
Its finest young men will be slaughtered.
I, the King, the LORD who rules over all, affirm it!
- 16 Moab's destruction is at hand.
Disaster will come on it quickly.
- 17 Mourn for that nation, all you nations living around it,
all of you nations that know of its fame.
Mourn and say, 'Alas, its powerful influence has been broken!
Its glory and power have been done away!'

Judgment on Moab's Cities

- 18 Come down from your place of honor;
sit on the dry ground, you who live in Dibon.
For the one who will destroy Moab will attack you;
he will destroy your fortifications.
- 19 You who live in Aroer, stand by the road and watch.
Question the man who is fleeing and the woman who is escaping.
Ask them, 'What has happened?'
- 20 They will answer, 'Moab is disgraced, for it has fallen!
Wail and cry out in mourning!
Announce along the Arnon River
that Moab has been destroyed.'

21 “Judgment will come on the cities on the high plain: on Holon, Jahzah, and Mephaath,
22 on Dibon, Nebo, and Beth Diblathaim,
23 on Kiriathaim, Beth Gamul, and Beth Meon,
24 on Kerioth and Bozrah. It will come on all the towns of Moab, both far and near.
25 Moab’s might will be crushed. Its power will be broken. I, the LORD, affirm it!

The Futility of Moab’s Insolence

26 “Moab has vaunted itself against me.
So make him drunk with the wine of my wrath
until he splashes around in his own vomit,
until others treat him as a laughingstock.
27 For did not you people of Moab laugh at the people of Israel?
Did you think that they were nothing but thieves,
that you shook your head in contempt
every time you talked about them?
28 Leave your towns, you inhabitants of Moab.
Go and live in the cliffs.
Be like a dove that makes its nest
high on the sides of a ravine.
29 I have heard how proud the people of Moab are,
I know how haughty they are.
I have heard how arrogant, proud, and haughty they are,
what a high opinion they have of themselves.
30 I, the LORD, affirm that I know how arrogant they are.
But their pride is ill-founded.
Their boastings will prove to be false.

Lament for Moab

31 So I will weep with sorrow for Moab.
I will cry out in sadness for all of Moab.
I will moan for the people of Kir Heres.
32 I will weep for the grapevines of Sibmah
just like the town of Jazer weeps over them.
Their branches once spread as far as the Dead Sea.
They reached as far as the town of Jazer.
The destroyer will ravage her fig, date, and grape crops.
33 Joy and gladness will disappear
from the fruitful land of Moab.
I will stop the flow of wine from the winepresses.
No one will stomp on the grapes there and shout for joy.
The shouts there will be shouts of soldiers,
not the shouts of those making wine.
34 Cries of anguish raised from Heshbon and Elealeh
will be sounded as far as Jahaz.
They will be sounded from Zoar as far as Horonaim and Eglath Shelishiyah.
For even the waters of Nimrim will be dried up.
35 I will put an end in Moab
to those who make offerings at her places of worship.
I will put an end to those who sacrifice to other gods.
I, the LORD, affirm it!
36 So my heart moans for Moab
like a flute playing a funeral song.
Yes, like a flute playing a funeral song,
my heart moans for the people of Kir Heres.
For the wealth they have gained will perish.
37 For all of them will shave their heads in mourning.
They will all cut off their beards to show their sorrow.
They will all make gashes in their hands.

- They will all put on sackcloth.
- 38 On all the housetops in Moab
and in all its public squares
there will be nothing but mourning.
For I will break Moab like an unwanted jar.
I, the LORD, affirm it!
- 39 Oh, how shattered Moab will be!
Oh, how her people will wail!
Oh, how she will turn away in shame!
Moab will become an object of ridicule,
a terrifying sight to all the nations that surround her.”

Moab’s Punishment and Restoration

- 40 For the LORD says,
“Look! Like an eagle with outspread wings
a nation will swoop down on Moab.
- 41 Her towns will be captured.
Her fortresses will be taken.
At that time the soldiers of Moab will be frightened
like a woman in labor.
- 42 Moab will be destroyed and no longer be a nation,
because she has vaunted herself against the LORD.
- 43 Terror, pits, and traps are in store
for the people who live in Moab.
I, the LORD, affirm it!
- 44 Anyone who flees at the sound of terror
will fall into a pit.
Anyone who climbs out of the pit
will be caught in a trap.
For the time is coming
when I will punish the people of Moab.
I, the LORD, affirm it!
- 45 In the shadows of the walls of Heshbon
those trying to escape will stand helpless.
For a fire will burst forth from Heshbon.
Flames will shoot out from the former territory of Sihon.
They will burn the foreheads of the people of Moab,
the skulls of those war-loving people.
- 46 Moab, you are doomed!
You people who worship Chemosh will be destroyed.
Your sons will be taken away captive.
Your daughters will be carried away into exile.
- 47 Yet in days to come
I will reverse Moab’s ill fortune.”
says the LORD.

The judgment against Moab ends here.

Jeremiah’s Prophecy Concerning the Nations: Ammon (early 605 BC)

Jeremiah 49:1–6

- 1 The LORD spoke about the Ammonites.

“Do you think there are not any people of the nation of Israel remaining?
Do you think there are not any of them remaining to reinherit their land?
Is that why you people who worship the god Milcom
have taken possession of the territory of Gad and live in his cities?

- 2 Because you did that,

I, the LORD, affirm that a time is coming
when I will make Rabbah, the capital city of Ammon,
hear the sound of the battle cry.
It will become a mound covered with ruins.
Its villages will be burned to the ground.
Then Israel will take back its land
from those who took their land from them.
I, the Lord, affirm it!

- 3 Wail, you people in Heshbon, because Ai in Ammon is destroyed.
Cry out in anguish, you people in the villages surrounding Rabbah.
Put on sackcloth and cry out in mourning.
Run about covered with gashes.
For your god Milcom will go into exile
along with his priests and officials.
- 4 Why do you brag about your great power?
Your power is ebbing away, you rebellious people of Ammon,
who trust in your riches and say,
‘Who would dare to attack us?’
- 5 I will bring terror on you from every side,”
says the Lord GOD who rules over all.
“You will be scattered in every direction.
No one will gather the fugitives back together.
- 6 Yet in days to come
I will reverse Ammon’s ill fortune.”
says the LORD.

Jeremiah’s Prophecy Concerning the Nations: Edom (early 605 bc)

Jeremiah 49:7–22

7 The LORD who rules over all spoke about Edom.

“Is wisdom no longer to be found in Teman?
Can Edom’s counselors not give her any good advice?
Has all of their wisdom turned bad?

- 8 Turn and flee! Take up refuge in remote places,
you people who live in Dedan.
For I will bring disaster on the descendants of Esau.
I have decided it is time for me to punish them.
- 9 If grape pickers came to pick your grapes,
would they not leave a few grapes behind?
If robbers came at night,
would they not pillage only what they needed?
- 10 But I will strip everything away from Esau’s descendants.
I will uncover their hiding places so they cannot hide.
Their children, relatives, and neighbors will all be destroyed.
Not one of them will be left!
- 11 Leave your orphans behind and I will keep them alive.
Your widows too can depend on me.”

12 For the LORD says, “If even those who did not deserve to drink from the cup of my wrath must drink from it, do you think you will go unpunished? You will not go unpunished, but must certainly drink from the cup of my wrath.

13 For I solemnly swear,” says the LORD, “that Bozrah will become a pile of ruins. It will become an object of horror and ridicule, an example to be used in curses. All the towns around it will lie in ruins forever.”

- 14 I said, “I have heard a message from the LORD.
A messenger has been sent among the nations to say,
‘Gather your armies and march out against her!
Prepare to do battle with her!’”

- 15 The LORD says to Edom,
 “I will certainly make you small among nations.
 I will make you despised by all humankind.
- 16 The terror you inspire in others
 and the arrogance of your heart have deceived you.
 You may make your home in the clefts of the rocks;
 you may occupy the highest places in the hills.
 But even if you made your home where the eagles nest,
 I would bring you down from there,”
 says the LORD.
- 17 “Edom will become an object of horror.
 All who pass by it will be filled with horror;
 they will hiss out their scorn
 because of all the disasters that have happened to it.
- 18 Edom will be destroyed like Sodom and Gomorrah
 and the towns that were around them.
 No one will live there.
 No human being will settle in it,”
 says the LORD.
- 19 “A lion coming up from the thick undergrowth along the Jordan
 scatters the sheep in the pastureland around it.
 So too I will chase the Edomites off their land.
 Then I will appoint over it whomever I choose.
 For there is no one like me, and there is no one who can call me to account.
 There is no ruler who can stand up against me.
- 20 So listen to what I, the LORD, have planned against Edom,
 what I intend to do to the people who live in Teman.
 Their little ones will be dragged off.
 I will completely destroy their land because of what they have done.
- 21 The people of the earth will quake when they hear of their downfall.
 Their cries of anguish will be heard all the way to the Gulf of Aqaba.
- 22 Look! Like an eagle with outspread wings,
 a nation will soar up and swoop down on Bozrah.
 At that time the soldiers of Edom will be as fearful
 as a woman in labor.”

Jeremiah's Prophecy Concerning the Nations: Damascus (early 605 BC)

Jeremiah 49:23–27

- 23 The LORD spoke about Damascus.
- “The people of Hamath and Arpad will be dismayed
 because they have heard bad news.
 Their courage will melt away because of worry.
 Their hearts will not be able to rest.
- 24 The people of Damascus will lose heart and turn to flee.
 Panic will grip them.
 Pain and anguish will seize them
 like a woman in labor.
- 25 How deserted will that once-famous city be,
 that city that was once filled with joy!
- 26 For her young men will fall in her city squares.
 All her soldiers will be destroyed at that time,”
 says the LORD who rules over all.
- 27 “I will set fire to the walls of Damascus;
 it will burn up the palaces of Ben Hadad.”

Jeremiah's Prophecy Concerning the Nations: Kedar and Hazor (early 605 BC)

Jeremiah 49:28–33

28 The LORD spoke about Kedar and the kingdoms of Hazor that King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon conquered.

“Army of Babylon, go and attack Kedar.

Lay waste those who live in the eastern desert.

29 Their tents and their flocks will be taken away.

Their tent curtains, equipment, and camels will be carried off.

People will shout to them,

“Terror is all around you!”

30 The LORD says, “Flee quickly, you who live in Hazor.

Take up refuge in remote places.

For King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon has laid out plans to attack you.

He has formed his strategy on how to defeat you.”

31 The LORD says, “Army of Babylon, go and attack

a nation that lives in peace and security.

They have no gates or walls to protect them.

They live all alone.

32 Their camels will be taken as plunder.

Their vast herds will be taken as spoil.

I will scatter to the four winds

those desert peoples who cut their hair short at the temples.

I will bring disaster against them

from every direction,” says the LORD.

33 “Hazor will become a permanent wasteland,

a place where only jackals live.

No one will live there.

No human being will settle in it.”

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God Tells Jeremiah to Write the Prophecies on a Scroll (early 605 BC)

Jeremiah 36:1–8

- 1 The LORD spoke to Jeremiah in the fourth year that Jehoiakim son of Josiah was ruling over Judah.
- 2 “Get a scroll. Write on it everything I have told you to say about Israel, Judah, and all the other nations since I began to speak to you in the reign of Josiah until now.
- 3 Perhaps when the people of Judah hear about all the disaster I intend to bring on them, they will all stop doing the evil things they have been doing. If they do, I will forgive their sins and the wicked things they have done.”
- 4 So Jeremiah summoned Baruch son of Neriah. Then Jeremiah dictated to Baruch everything the LORD had told him to say and Baruch wrote it all down in a scroll.
- 5 Then Jeremiah told Baruch, “I am no longer allowed to go into the LORD’s temple.
- 6 So you go there the next time all the people of Judah come in from their towns to fast in the LORD’s temple. Read out loud where all of them can hear you what I told you the LORD said, which you wrote in the scroll.
- 7 Perhaps then they will ask the LORD for mercy and will all stop doing the evil things they have been doing. For the LORD has threatened to bring great anger and wrath against these people.”
- 8 So Baruch son of Neriah did exactly what the prophet Jeremiah had told him to do. He read what the LORD had said from the scroll in the temple of the LORD.

Jeremiah Gives Baruch a Message from God (early 605 BC)

Jeremiah 45

Baruch’s Complaint

- 1 The prophet Jeremiah spoke to Baruch son of Neriah while he was writing down in a scroll the words that Jeremiah spoke to him. This happened in the fourth year that Jehoiakim son of Josiah was ruling over Judah.
- 2 “The LORD God of Israel has a message for you, Baruch.
- 3 ‘You have said, “I feel so hopeless! For the LORD has added sorrow to my suffering. I am worn out from groaning. I can’t find any rest.”’”

The Lord’s Assurance

- 4 The LORD told Jeremiah, “Tell Baruch, ‘The LORD says, “I am about to tear down what I have built and to uproot what I have planted. I will do this throughout the whole earth.
- 5 Are you looking for great things for yourself? Do not look for such things. For I, the LORD, affirm that I am about to bring disaster on all humanity. But I will allow you to escape with your life wherever you go.”’”

Nebuchadnezzar’s [Babylon] First Siege of Jerusalem (June 605–January 604 BC)

2 Kings 24:1a	2 Chronicles 36:6a	Daniel 1:1
<p>1a During Jehoiakim’s reign, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon attacked.</p> <p>Jehoiakim was his subject for three years,</p>	<p>6a King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon attacked him,</p>	<p>1 In the third year [<i>accession reckoning</i>] of the reign of King Jehoiakim of Judah, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon advanced against Jerusalem and laid it under siege.</p>

Jehoiakim Burns Jeremiah’s Scroll (December 605 BC)

Jeremiah 36:9–32

Baruch Reads the Scroll at the Temple

- 9 All the people living in Jerusalem and all the people who came into Jerusalem from the towns of Judah came to observe a fast before the LORD. The fast took place in the ninth month of the fifth year that Jehoiakim son of Josiah was ruling over Judah.
- 10 At that time Baruch went into the temple of the LORD. He stood in the entrance of the room of Gemariah the son of Shaphan who had been the royal secretary. That room was in the upper court near the entrance of the New Gate. There, where all the people could hear him, he read from the scroll what Jeremiah had said.

Baruch Reads the Scroll to the Officials

- 11 Micaiah, who was the son of Gemariah and the grandson of Shaphan, heard Baruch read from the scroll everything the LORD had said.
- 12 He went down to the chamber of the royal secretary in the king’s palace and found all the court officials in session there.

Elishama the royal secretary, Delaiah son of Shemaiah, Elnathan son of Achbor, Gemariah son of Shaphan, Zedekiah son of Hananiah, and all the other officials were seated there.

13 Micaiah told them everything he had heard Baruch read from the scroll in the hearing of the people.

14 All the officials sent Jehudi, who was the son of Nethaniah and the grandson of Cush, to Baruch. They ordered him to tell Baruch, "Come here and bring with you the scroll you read in the hearing of the people." So Baruch son of Neriah went to them, carrying the scroll in his hand.

15 They said to him, "Please sit down and read it to us." So Baruch sat down and read it to them.

16 When they had heard it all, they expressed their alarm to one another. Then they said to Baruch, "We must certainly give the king a report about everything you have read!"

17 Then they asked Baruch, "How did you come to write all these words? Do they actually come from Jeremiah's mouth?"

18 Baruch answered, "Yes, they came from his own mouth. He dictated all these words to me and I wrote them down in ink on this scroll."

19 Then the officials said to Baruch, "You and Jeremiah must go and hide. You must not let anyone know where you are."

Jehudi Reads the Scroll to Jehoiakim

20 The officials put the scroll in the room of Elishama, the royal secretary, for safekeeping. Then they went to the court and reported everything to the king.

21 The king sent Jehudi to get the scroll. He went and got it from the room of Elishama, the royal secretary. Then he himself read it to the king and all the officials who were standing around him.

22 Since it was the ninth month of the year, the king was sitting in his winter quarters. A fire was burning in the firepot in front of him.

23 As soon as Jehudi had read three or four columns of the scroll, the king would cut them off with a penknife and throw them on the fire in the firepot. He kept doing so until the whole scroll was burned up in the fire.

24 Neither he nor any of his attendants showed any alarm when they heard all that had been read. Nor did they tear their clothes to show any grief or sorrow.

25 The king did not even listen to Elnathan, Delaiah, and Gemariah, who had urged him not to burn the scroll.

26 He also ordered Jerahmeel, who was one of the royal princes, Seraiah son of Azriel, and Shelemiah son of Abdeel to arrest the scribe Baruch and the prophet Jeremiah. However, the LORD hid them.

Baruch Rewrites the Scroll

27 The LORD spoke to Jeremiah after Jehoiakim had burned the scroll containing what Jeremiah had spoken and Baruch had written down.

28 "Get another scroll and write on it everything that was written on the original scroll that King Jehoiakim of Judah burned.

29 Tell King Jehoiakim of Judah, 'The LORD says, "You burned the scroll. You asked Jeremiah, 'How dare you write in this scroll that the king of Babylon will certainly come and destroy this land and wipe out all the people and animals on it?'"

30 So the LORD says concerning King Jehoiakim of Judah, "None of his line will occupy the throne of David. His dead body will be thrown out to be exposed to scorching heat by day and frost by night.

31 I will punish him and his descendants and the officials who serve him for the wicked things they have done. I will bring on them, the citizens of Jerusalem, and the people of Judah all the disaster that I threatened to do to them. I will punish them because I threatened them but they still paid no heed.'"

32 Then Jeremiah got another scroll and gave it to the scribe Baruch son of Neriah. As Jeremiah dictated, Baruch wrote on this scroll everything that had been on the scroll that King Jehoiakim of Judah burned in the fire. They also added on this scroll several other messages of the same kind.

Jehoiakim Taken to Babylon (February 604 BC)

2 Chronicles 36:6b–7	Daniel 1:2
<p>6b bound him with bronze chains, and carried him away to Babylon.</p> <p>7 Nebuchadnezzar took some of the items in the LORD's temple to Babylon and put them in his palace there.</p>	<p>2 Now the Lord delivered King Jehoiakim of Judah into his power,</p> <p>along with some of the vessels of the temple of God. He brought them to the land of Babylonia to the temple of his god and put the vessels in the treasury of his god.</p>

Daniel and His Friends are Exiled to Babylon (February 604 BC)

Daniel 1:3–17

Daniel and His Three Friends

3 The king commanded Ashpenaz, who was in charge of his court officials, to choose some of the Israelites who were of royal and noble descent—

4 young men in whom there was no physical defect and who were handsome, well versed in all kinds of wisdom, well educated and having keen insight, and who were capable of entering the king's royal service—and to teach them the literature and language of the Babylonians.

5 So the king assigned them a daily ration from his royal delicacies and from the wine he himself drank. They were to be trained for the next three years. At the end of that time they were to enter the king's service.

6 As it turned out, among these young men were some from Judah: Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah.

7 But the overseer of the court officials renamed them. He gave Daniel the name Belteshazzar, Hananiah he named Shadrach, Mishael he named Meshach, and Azariah he named Abednego.

Daniel's Example of Appealing to Authority

8 But Daniel made up his mind that he would not defile himself with the royal delicacies or the royal wine. He therefore asked the overseer of the court officials for permission not to defile himself.

9 Then God made the overseer of the court officials sympathetic to Daniel.

10 But he responded to Daniel, "I fear my master the king. He is the one who has decided your food and drink. What would happen if he saw that you looked malnourished in comparison to the other young men your age? If that happened, you would endanger my life with the king!"

The Test

11 Daniel then spoke to the warden whom the overseer of the court officials had appointed over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah:

12 "Please test your servants for ten days by providing us with some vegetables to eat and water to drink.

13 Then compare our appearance with that of the young men who are eating the royal delicacies; deal with us in light of what you see."

14 So the warden agreed to their proposal and tested them for ten days.

15 At the end of the ten days their appearance was better and their bodies were healthier than all the young men who had been eating the royal delicacies.

16 So the warden removed the delicacies and the wine from their diet and gave them a diet of vegetables instead.

God Blesses Daniel With Wisdom

17 Now as for these four young men, God endowed them with knowledge and skill in all sorts of literature and wisdom—and Daniel had insight into all kinds of visions and dreams.

Daniel Enters Nebuchadnezzar's Service (c. Fall 603 BC)

Daniel 1:18–21

18 When the time appointed by the king arrived, the overseer of the court officials brought them into Nebuchadnezzar's presence.

19 When the king spoke with them, he did not find among the entire group anyone like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, or Azariah. So they entered the king's service.

20 In every matter of wisdom and insight the king asked them about, he found them to be ten times better than any of the magicians and astrologers that were in his entire empire.

21 Now Daniel lived on until the first year of Cyrus the king.

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Chronological Notes

- 1) "The first phrase of Daniel 1:1, 'in the third year' of Jehoiakim, has been a historical problem for interpreters because Jeremiah 25:1 equates the fourth year of Jehoiakim with Nebuchadnezzar's first year. The problem is easily solved, however, when it is noted that Jeremiah employs the nonaccession-year system for counting the years of a king's reign. Under this system, if a king began his reign in the middle of a year, this first, partial year was counted as his first year. Daniel, however, uses the accession-

year system that was current in Babylon under the Babylonian and Persian kings. This system did not count the partial year at the beginning of a king's reign. Thus under the nonaccession-year system used by Jeremiah, this was Jehoiakim's fourth year, counting his partial first (accession) year as his first year. However, under the accession-year system used by Daniel, this was Jehoiakim's third year, with his accession year not counted in the total."¹

- 2) Jehoiakim's fifth year began on Tishri 1 in the fall of 605 BC and ended on the last day of Elul in the fall of 604 BC. When Jeremiah 36:9 says that the fast took place in the "ninth month of the fifth year," this means that the fast took place in Kislev of 605 BC—months were always counted from Nisan, whether or not the regnal year started in Tishri and Nisan.²
- 3) Daniel's Training.³
 - A) Critical scholars often point to the date notice at the beginning of chapter 2 as an inaccuracy in Daniel and a sign that the author was confused over the sequence of the historical events. That confusion allegedly created another contradiction between chapters 1 and 2. The second year of Nebuchadnezzar (2:1), they argue, would occur before the end of the three-year period (1:5) prescribed before the young Judean men would complete their training (1:18). Their promotion to positions of prominence in Babylon (2:48–49) would then come before their interview with Nebuchadnezzar, which completed their training (1:18–19).
 - B) However, there is no conflict here. Nebuchadnezzar's second regnal year is actually the third year in the Daniel narratives. The Babylonian system of reckoning the years of a king's reign did not count his first partial (accession) year. Nebuchadnezzar's accession year lasted from 1 Elul 605 BC to the end of Adar 604 (September 7, 605–April 1, 604). His first (full) regnal year was from 1 Nisan 604 to the end of Adar 603 (April 2, 604–March 21, 603). His second regnal year lasted from 1 Nisan 603 to the end of Adar 602 (March 22, 603–April 9, 602). Since it was normal for people in the ancient Near East to count partial years when reckoning time spans, the Judeans would have been in training during the last part of Nebuchadnezzar's accession year, his entire first year, and part of his second year, making three years according to Hebrew count, fulfilling the "three years" in 1:5. Thus the notice that the events of chapter 2 took place in Nebuchadnezzar's second year (2:1) implies that it was shortly after Daniel and his companions had completed their training (1:18). Therefore, chapter 2 immediately illustrates the statement in 1:20 that Daniel was superior in every way to Nebuchadnezzar's other wise men.
 - C) Thus the time notices in Daniel 1 and 2 imply this sequence of events:
 - (1) Nebuchadnezzar's Accession Year (First Year of Training).
 - (a) Sometime between June 605 and January 604, Jerusalem capitulates to Nebuchadnezzar (Dan 1:1–2). (Nebuchadnezzar assumes the throne in September 605.)
 - (b) In February 604, captives from the Judean nobility (1:3) are taken to Babylon.
 - (c) Sometime between February 604 and April 1, 604, Daniel, Hananiah, Azariah, and Mishael begin their training (1:3–7). This is year 1 of that training.
 - (2) Nebuchadnezzar's First Year (Second Year of Training).
 - (a) From April 2, 604, to March 21, 603, Nebuchadnezzar's first regnal year, the Judeans are in training to serve in Nebuchadnezzar's court (1:8–17). This is year 2 of their training.
 - (3) Nebuchadnezzar's Second Year (Third Year of Training).
 - (a) Sometime between March 22, 603, and fall 603, during Nebuchadnezzar's second regnal year, the Judeans complete their training (1:18–19, fulfilling 1:5). This is year 3 of their training.
 - (b) Also during his second regnal year, in fall 603 or winter 603–602, Nebuchadnezzar dreams the dream recorded in Daniel 2; God reveals the dream and its interpretation to Daniel; and the Judeans are promoted (2:48–49).

¹ Andrew E. Steinmann, "Daniel," *Concordia Commentary*, (Concordia Publishing House, 2008), p. 81.

² Rodger C. Young, "Tables of Reign Lengths from the Hebrew Court Recorders," *JETS* 48.2 (June 2005): 225.

³ Steinmann, p. 111–113.

Nebuchadnezzar's Dream (603/602 BC)

Daniel 2

Circumstances of the Dream

1 In the second year of his reign Nebuchadnezzar had many dreams. His mind was disturbed and he suffered from insomnia.

The Futility of Pagan Interpreters

2 The king issued an order to summon the magicians, astrologers, sorcerers, and wise men in order to explain his dreams to him. So they came and awaited the king's instructions.

3 The king told them, "I have had a dream, and I am anxious to understand the dream."

4 The wise men replied to the king: What follows is in Aramaic "O king, live forever! Tell your servants the dream, and we will disclose its interpretation."

5 The king replied to the wise men, "My decision is firm. If you do not inform me of both the dream and its interpretation, you will be dismembered and your homes reduced to rubble!

6 But if you can disclose the dream and its interpretation, you will receive from me gifts, a reward, and considerable honor. So disclose to me the dream and its interpretation!"

7 They again replied, "Let the king inform us of the dream; then we will disclose its interpretation."

8 The king replied, "I know for sure that you are attempting to gain time, because you see that my decision is firm.

9 If you don't inform me of the dream, there is only one thing that is going to happen to you. For you have agreed among yourselves to report to me something false and deceitful until such time as things might change. So tell me the dream, and I will have confidence that you can disclose its interpretation."

10 The wise men replied to the king, "There is no man on earth who is able to disclose the king's secret, for no king, regardless of his position and power, has ever requested such a thing from any magician, astrologer, or wise man.

11 What the king is asking is too difficult, and no one exists who can disclose it to the king, except for the gods—but they don't live among mortals!"

12 Because of this the king got furiously angry and gave orders to destroy all the wise men of Babylon.

13 So a decree went out, and the wise men were about to be executed. They also sought Daniel and his friends so that they could be executed.

Daniel's Intervention

14 Then Daniel spoke with prudent counsel to Arioch, who was in charge of the king's executioners and who had gone out to execute the wise men of Babylon.

15 He inquired of Arioch the king's deputy, "Why is the decree from the king so urgent?" Then Arioch informed Daniel about the matter.

16 So Daniel went in and requested the king to grant him time, that he might disclose the interpretation to the king.

17 Then Daniel went to his home and informed his friends Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah of the matter.

18 He asked them to pray for mercy from the God of heaven concerning this mystery so that he and his friends would not be destroyed along with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.

19 Then in a night vision the mystery was revealed to Daniel. So Daniel praised the God of heaven,

20 saying,

"Let the name of God be praised forever and ever,
for wisdom and power belong to him.

21 He changes times and seasons,
deposing some kings
and establishing others.

He gives wisdom to the wise;
he imparts knowledge to those with understanding;

22 he reveals deep and hidden things.
He knows what is in the darkness,
and light resides with him.

23 O God of my fathers, I acknowledge and glorify you,
for you have bestowed wisdom and power on me.
Now you have enabled me to understand what I requested from you.
For you have enabled me to understand the king's dilemma."

24 Then Daniel went in to see Arioch (whom the king had appointed to destroy the wise men of Babylon). He came and said to him, "Don't destroy the wise men of Babylon! Escort me to the king, and I will disclose the interpretation to him!"

25 So Arioch quickly ushered Daniel into the king's presence, saying to him, "I have found a man from the captives of Judah who can

make known the interpretation to the king.”

26 The king then asked Daniel (whose name was also Belteshazzar), “Are you able to make known to me the dream that I saw, as well as its interpretation?”

27 Daniel replied to the king, “The mystery that the king is asking about is such that no wise men, astrologers, magicians, or diviners can possibly disclose it to the king.

28 However, there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries, and he has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will happen in the times to come. The dream and the visions you had while lying on your bed are as follows.

29 “As for you, O king, while you were in your bed your thoughts turned to future things. The revealer of mysteries has made known to you what will take place.

30 As for me, this mystery was revealed to me not because I possess more wisdom than any other living person, but so that the king may understand the interpretation and comprehend the thoughts of your mind.

The Dream Revealed

31 “You, O king, were watching as a great statue—one of impressive size and extraordinary brightness—was standing before you. Its appearance caused alarm.

32 As for that statue, its head was of fine gold, its chest and arms were of silver, its belly and thighs were of bronze.

33 Its legs were of iron; its feet were partly of iron and partly of clay.

34 You were watching as a stone was cut out, but not by human hands. It struck the statue on its iron and clay feet, breaking them in pieces.

35 Then the iron, clay, bronze, silver, and gold were broken in pieces without distinction and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors that the wind carries away. Not a trace of them could be found. But the stone that struck the statue became a large mountain that filled the entire earth.

The Interpretation of the Dream

36 This was the dream. Now we will set forth before the king its interpretation.

37 “You, O king, are the king of kings. The God of heaven has granted you sovereignty, power, strength, and honor.

38 Wherever human beings, wild animals, and birds of the sky live—he has given them into your power. He has given you authority over them all. You are the head of gold.

39 Now after you another kingdom will arise, one inferior to yours. Then a third kingdom, one of bronze, will rule in all the earth.

40 Then there will be a fourth kingdom, one strong like iron. Just like iron breaks in pieces and shatters everything, and as iron breaks in pieces all of these metals, so it will break in pieces and crush the others.

41 In that you were seeing feet and toes partly of wet clay and partly of iron, so this will be a divided kingdom. Some of the strength of iron will be in it, for you saw iron mixed with wet clay.

42 In that the toes of the feet were partly of iron and partly of clay, the latter stages of this kingdom will be partly strong and partly fragile.

43 And in that you saw iron mixed with wet clay, so people will be mixed with one another without adhering to one another, just as iron does not mix with clay.

44 In the days of those kings the God of heaven will raise up an everlasting kingdom that will not be destroyed and a kingdom that will not be left to another people. It will break in pieces and bring about the demise of all these kingdoms. But it will stand forever.

45 You saw that a stone was cut from a mountain, but not by human hands; it smashed the iron, bronze, clay, silver, and gold into pieces. The great God has made known to the king what will occur in the future. The dream is certain, and its interpretation is reliable.”

Nebuchadnezzar’s Response

46 Then King Nebuchadnezzar bowed down with his face to the ground and paid homage to Daniel. He gave orders to offer sacrifice and incense to him.

47 The king replied to Daniel, “Certainly your God is a God of gods and Lord of kings and revealer of mysteries, for you were able to reveal this mystery!”

48 Then the king elevated Daniel to high position and bestowed on him many marvelous gifts. He granted him authority over the entire province of Babylon and made him the main prefect over all the wise men of Babylon.

49 And at Daniel’s request, the king appointed Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego over the administration of the province of Babylon. Daniel himself served in the king’s court.

Jehoiakim Rebels Against Nebuchadnezzar (c. 601/600 BC)

2 Kings 24:1b–4

1b but then he [Jehoiakim] rebelled against him [Nebuchadnezzar].

2 The LORD sent against him Babylonian, Syrian, Moabite, and Ammonite raiding bands; he sent them to destroy Judah, as he had warned he would do through his servants the prophets.

3 Just as the LORD had announced, he rejected Judah because of all the sins which Manasseh had committed.

4 Because he killed innocent people and stained Jerusalem with their blood, the LORD was unwilling to forgive them.

Jeremiah and the Rechabites (c. 600/599 BC)

Jeremiah 35

Jeremiah's Test of the Rechabites' Loyalty

1 The LORD spoke to Jeremiah when Jehoiakim son of Josiah was ruling over Judah.

2 "Go to the Rechabite community. Invite them to come into one of the side rooms of the LORD's temple and offer them some wine to drink."

3 So I went and got Jaazaniah son of Jeremiah the grandson of Habazziniah, his brothers, all his sons, and all the rest of the Rechabite community.

4 I took them to the LORD's temple. I took them into the room where the disciples of the prophet Hanan son of Igdaliah stayed. That room was next to the one where the temple officers stayed and above the room where Maaseiah son of Shallum, one of the doorkeepers of the temple, stayed.

5 Then I set cups and pitchers full of wine in front of the members of the Rechabite community and said to them, "Have some wine."

Refusal to Break Jonadab's Vow

6 But they answered, "We do not drink wine because our ancestor Jonadab son of Rechab commanded us not to. He told us, 'You and your children must never drink wine.'

7 Do not build houses. Do not plant crops. Do not plant a vineyard or own one. Live in tents all your lives. If you do these things you will live a long time in the land that you wander about on.'

8 We and our wives and our sons and daughters have obeyed everything our ancestor Jonadab commanded us. We have never drunk wine.

9 We have not built any houses to live in. We do not own any vineyards, fields, or crops.

10 We have lived in tents. We have obeyed our ancestor Jonadab and done exactly as he commanded us. [\[2 Kgs 10:15–28\]](#)

11 But when King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon invaded the land we said, 'Let's get up and go to Jerusalem to get away from the Babylonian and Aramean armies.' That is why we are staying here in Jerusalem."

The Lesson for Judah

12 Then the LORD spoke to Jeremiah.

13 The LORD God of Israel who rules over all told him, "Go and speak to the people of Judah and the citizens of Jerusalem. Tell them, 'I, the LORD, say: "You must learn a lesson from this about obeying what I say!

14 Jonadab son of Rechab ordered his descendants not to drink wine. His orders have been carried out. To this day his descendants have drunk no wine because they have obeyed what their ancestor commanded them. But I have spoken to you over and over again, but you have not obeyed me!

15 I sent all my servants the prophets to warn you over and over again. They said, "Every one of you, stop doing the evil things you have been doing and do what is right. Do not pay allegiance to other gods and worship them. Then you can continue to live in this land that I gave to you and your ancestors." But you did not pay any attention or listen to me.

16 Yes, the descendants of Jonadab son of Rechab have carried out the orders that their ancestor gave them. But you people have not obeyed me!

17 So I, the LORD, the God who rules over all, the God of Israel, say: "I will soon bring on Judah and all the citizens of Jerusalem all the disaster that I threatened to bring on them. I will do this because I spoke to them but they did not listen. I called out to them but they did not answer.""

God's Blessing on the Rechabites

18 Then Jeremiah spoke to the Rechabite community, "The LORD God of Israel who rules over all says, 'You have obeyed the orders of your ancestor Jonadab. You have followed all his instructions. You have done exactly as he commanded you.'

19 So the LORD God of Israel who rules over all says, 'Jonadab son of Rechab will never lack a male descendant to serve me.'"

The Death of Jehoiakim (c. December 7, 598 BC)

2 Kings 24:5–7	2 Chronicles 36:8
<p>5 The rest of the events of Jehoiakim's reign and all his accomplishments, are recorded in the scroll called the Annals of the Kings of Judah.</p> <p>6 He passed away and his son Jehoiachin replaced him as king.</p> <p>7 The king of Egypt did not march out from his land again, for the king of Babylon conquered all the territory that the king of Egypt had formerly controlled between the Brook of Egypt and the Euphrates River.</p>	<p>8 The rest of the events of Jehoiakim's reign, including the horrible sins he committed and his shortcomings, are recorded in the Scroll of the Kings of Israel and Judah.</p> <p>His son Jehoiachin replaced him as king.</p>

Jehoiachin, Jehoiakim's Son, Assumes the Throne of Judah (c. December 7, 598 BC)

2 Kings 24:8–9	2 Chronicles 36:9
<p>8 Jehoiachin was eighteen years old when he became king, and he reigned three months in Jerusalem. His mother was Nehushta the daughter of Elnathan, from Jerusalem.</p> <p>9 He did evil in the sight of the LORD as his ancestors had done.</p>	<p>9 Jehoiachin was eighteen years old when he became king, and he reigned three months and ten days in Jerusalem.</p> <p>He did evil in the sight of the LORD.</p>

Jeremiah's Prophecy to Judah—A Last Warning (c. January 597 BC)

Jeremiah 13:15–27

The Threat of Captivity

15 Then I said to the people of Judah,

“Listen and pay attention! Do not be arrogant!
For the LORD has spoken.

16 Show the LORD your God the respect that is due him.
Do it before he brings the darkness of disaster.
Do it before you stumble into distress
like a traveler on the mountains at twilight.
Do it before he turns the light of deliverance you hope for
into the darkness and gloom of exile.

17 But if you will not pay attention to this warning,
I will weep alone because of your arrogant pride.
I will weep bitterly and my eyes will overflow with tears
because you, the LORD's flock, will be carried into exile.”

18 The LORD told me,

“Tell the king and the queen mother,
‘Surrender your thrones,
for your glorious crowns
will be removed from your heads.

19 The gates of the towns in southern Judah will be shut tight.
No one will be able to go in or out of them.
All Judah will be carried off into exile.
They will be completely carried off into exile.”

The Humiliation of an Unclean People

20 Then I said,

“Look up, Jerusalem, and see
the enemy that is coming from the north.

Where now is the flock of people that were entrusted to your care?
 Where now are the 'sheep' that you take such pride in?

21 What will you say when the LORD appoints as rulers over you those allies that you, yourself, had actually prepared as such?
 Then anguish and agony will grip you like that of a woman giving birth to a baby.

22 You will probably ask yourself,
 'Why have these things happened to me?
 Why have I been treated like a disgraced adulteress whose skirt has been torn off and her limbs exposed?'
 It is because you have sinned so much.

23 But there is little hope for you ever doing good, you who are so accustomed to doing evil.
 Can an Ethiopian change the color of his skin?
 Can a leopard remove its spots?

24 "The LORD says,
 'That is why I will scatter your people like chaff that is blown away by a desert wind.

25 This is your fate,
 the destiny to which I have appointed you, because you have forgotten me and have trusted in false gods.

26 So I will pull your skirt up over your face and expose you to shame like a disgraced adulteress!

27 People of Jerusalem, I have seen your adulterous worship, your shameless prostitution to, and your lustful pursuit of, other gods.
 I have seen your disgusting acts of worship on the hills throughout the countryside.
 You are doomed to destruction!
 How long will you continue to be unclean?"

Nebuchadnezzar's Second Siege of Jerusalem (March 16, 597 BC)			
2 Kings 24:10-17	2 Chronicles 36:10	Jeremiah 37:1	Jeremiah 52:28
<p>10 At that time the generals of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon marched to Jerusalem and besieged the city.</p> <p>11 King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon came to the city while his generals were besieging it.</p> <p>12 King Jehoiachin of Judah, along with his mother, his servants, his officials, and his eunuchs surrendered to the king of Babylon.</p> <p>The king of Babylon, in the eighth year of his reign, took Jehoiachin prisoner.</p> <p>13 Nebuchadnezzar took from there all the riches in the treasuries of</p>	<p>10 At the beginning of the year</p> <p>King Nebuchadnezzar</p> <p>ordered him to be brought to Babylon,</p> <p>along with the valuable items in the</p>		<p>28 Here is the official record of the number of people Nebuchadnezzar carried into exile: In the seventh year,</p>

<p>the LORD's temple and of the royal palace. He removed all the gold items which King Solomon of Israel had made for the LORD's temple, just as the LORD had warned.</p> <p>14 He deported all the residents of Jerusalem, including all the officials and all the soldiers (10,000 people in all). This included all the craftsmen and those who worked with metal. No one was left except for the poorest among the people of the land.</p> <p>15 He deported Jehoiachin from Jerusalem to Babylon, along with the king's mother and wives, his eunuchs, and the high-ranking officials of the land.</p> <p>16 The king of Babylon deported to Babylon all the soldiers (there were 7,000), as well as 1,000 craftsmen and metal workers. This included all the best warriors.</p> <p>17 The king of Babylon made Mattaniah, Jehoiachin's uncle, king in Jehoiachin's place. He renamed him Zedekiah.</p>	<p>LORD's temple.</p> <p>In his place he made his relative Zedekiah king over Judah and Jerusalem.</p>	<p>1 Zedekiah son of Josiah succeeded Jeconiah son of Jehoiakim as king. He was elevated to the throne of the land of Judah by King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon.</p>	<p>3,023 Jews;</p>
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Zedekiah, Jehoiachin's Uncle, Appointed King of Judah (March 16, 597 BC)

2 Kings 24:18–19	Jeremiah 37:2	Jeremiah 52:1–2	2 Chronicles 36:11–12
<p>18 Zedekiah was twenty-one years old when he became king, and he ruled for eleven years in Jerusalem. His mother was Hamutal, the daughter of Jeremiah, from Libnah.</p> <p>19 He did evil in the sight of the LORD, as Jehoiakim had done.</p>	<p>2 Neither he nor the officials who served him nor the people of Judah paid any attention to what the LORD said through the prophet Jeremiah.</p>	<p>1 Zedekiah was twenty-one years old when he became king, and he ruled in Jerusalem for eleven years. His mother's name was Hamutal daughter of Jeremiah, from Libnah.</p> <p>2 He did what displeased the LORD just as Jehoiakim had done.</p>	<p>11 Zedekiah was twenty-one years old when he became king, and he ruled for eleven years in Jerusalem.</p> <p>12 He did evil in the sight of the LORD his God. He did not humble himself before Jeremiah the prophet, the LORD's spokesman.</p>

Jeremiah's Vision of Two Baskets of Figs (597 BC)

Jeremiah 24

Description of the Figs

1 The LORD showed me two baskets of figs sitting before his temple. This happened after King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon deported Jehoiakim's son, King Jeconiah of Judah. He deported him and the leaders of Judah, along with the craftsmen and metal workers, and took them to Babylon.

2 One basket had very good-looking figs in it. They looked like those that had ripened early. The other basket had very bad-looking figs in it, so bad they could not be eaten.

3 The LORD said to me, "What do you see, Jeremiah?" I answered, "I see figs. The good ones look very good. But the bad ones look very bad, so bad that they cannot be eaten."

Meaning of the Good Figs

4 The LORD said to me,

5 "I, the LORD, the God of Israel, say: 'The exiles whom I sent away from here to the land of Babylon are like those good figs. I consider them to be good.

6 I will look after their welfare and will restore them to this land. There I will build them up and will not tear them down. I will plant them firmly in the land and will not uproot them.

7 I will give them the desire to acknowledge that I am the LORD. I will be their God and they will be my people. For they will wholeheartedly return to me.'

Meaning of the Bad Figs

8 "I, the LORD, also solemnly assert: 'King Zedekiah of Judah, his officials, and the people who remain in Jerusalem or who have gone to live in Egypt are like those bad figs. I consider them to be just like those bad figs that are so bad they cannot be eaten.

9 I will bring such disaster on them that all the kingdoms of the earth will be horrified. I will make them an object of reproach, a proverbial example of disaster. I will make them an object of ridicule, an example to be used in curses. That is how they will be remembered wherever I banish them.

10 I will bring war, starvation, and disease on them until they are completely destroyed from the land I gave them and their ancestors.'"

Jeremiah's Letter to the Exiles in Babylon (597 BC)

Jeremiah 29

Sending of the Letter

1 The prophet Jeremiah sent a letter to the exiles Nebuchadnezzar had carried off from Jerusalem to Babylon. It was addressed to the elders who were left among the exiles, to the priests, to the prophets, and to all the other people who were exiled in Babylon.

2 He sent it after King Jeconiah, the queen mother, the palace officials, the leaders of Judah and Jerusalem, the craftsmen, and the metal workers had been exiled from Jerusalem.

3 He sent it with Elasah son of Shaphan and Gemariah son of Hilkiah. King Zedekiah of Judah had sent these men to Babylon to King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. The letter said:

Settle Down in Babylon

4 "The LORD God of Israel who rules over all says to all those he sent into exile to Babylon from Jerusalem,

5 'Build houses and settle down. Plant gardens and eat what they produce.

6 Marry and have sons and daughters. Find wives for your sons and allow your daughters get married so that they too can have sons and daughters. Grow in number; do not dwindle away.

7 Work to see that the city where I sent you as exiles enjoys peace and prosperity. Pray to the LORD for it. For as it prospers you will prosper.'

Warning against False Prophets

8 "For the LORD God of Israel who rules over all says, 'Do not let the prophets or those among you who claim to be able to predict the future by divination deceive you. And do not pay any attention to the dreams that you are encouraging them to dream.

9 They are prophesying lies to you and claiming my authority to do so. But I did not send them. I, the LORD, affirm it!'

10 "For the LORD says, 'Only when the seventy years of Babylonian rule are over will I again take up consideration for you. Then I will fulfill my gracious promise to you and restore you to your homeland.

11 For I know what I have planned for you,' says the LORD. 'I have plans to prosper you, not to harm you. I have plans to give you a future filled with hope.

12 When you call out to me and come to me in prayer, I will hear your prayers.

13 When you seek me in prayer and worship, you will find me available to you. If you seek me with all your heart and soul,

14 I will make myself available to you,' says the LORD. 'Then I will reverse your plight and will regather you from all the nations and all the places where I have exiled you,' says the LORD. 'I will bring you back to the place from which I exiled you.'

15 "You say, 'The LORD has raised up prophets of good news for us here in Babylon.'

16 But just listen to what the LORD has to say about the king who occupies David's throne and all your fellow countrymen who are still living in this city of Jerusalem and were not carried off into exile with you.

17 The LORD who rules over all says, 'I will bring war, starvation, and disease on them. I will treat them like figs that are so rotten they cannot be eaten.

18 I will chase after them with war, starvation, and disease. I will make all the kingdoms of the earth horrified at what happens to them. I will make them examples of those who are cursed, objects of horror, hissing scorn, and ridicule among all the nations where I exile them.

19 For they have not paid attention to what I said to them through my servants the prophets whom I sent to them over and over again,' says the LORD. 'And you exiles have not paid any attention to them either,' says the LORD.

20 'So pay attention to what I, the LORD, have said, all you exiles whom I have sent to Babylon from Jerusalem.'

21 "The LORD God of Israel who rules over all also has something to say about Ahab son of Kolaiah and Zedekiah son of Maaseiah, who are prophesying lies to you and claiming my authority to do so. 'I will hand them over to King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon and he will execute them before your very eyes.

22 And all the exiles of Judah who are in Babylon will use them as examples when they put a curse on anyone. They will say, "May the LORD treat you like Zedekiah and Ahab whom the king of Babylon roasted to death in the fire!"

23 This will happen to them because they have done what is shameful in Israel. They have committed adultery with their neighbors' wives and have spoken lies while claiming my authority. They have spoken words that I did not command them to speak. I know what they have done. I have been a witness to it,' says the LORD."

Shemaiah Resists Jeremiah's Message

24 The LORD told Jeremiah, "Tell Shemaiah the Nehelamite

25 that the LORD God of Israel who rules over all has a message for him. Tell him, 'On your own initiative you sent a letter to the priest Zephaniah son of Maaseiah and to all the other priests and to all the people in Jerusalem. In your letter you said to Zephaniah,

26 "The LORD has made you priest in place of Jehoiada. He has put you in charge in the LORD's temple of controlling any lunatic who pretends to be a prophet. And it is your duty to put any such person in the stocks with an iron collar around his neck.

27 You should have reprimanded Jeremiah from Anathoth who is pretending to be a prophet among you!

28 For he has even sent a message to us here in Babylon. He wrote and told us, "You will be there a long time. Build houses and settle down. Plant gardens and eat what they produce."'"

God's Message to the Exiles About Shemaiah

29 Zephaniah the priest read that letter to the prophet Jeremiah.

30 Then the LORD spoke to Jeremiah.

31 "Send a message to all the exiles in Babylon. Tell them, 'The LORD has spoken about Shemaiah the Nehelamite. "Shemaiah has spoken to you as a prophet even though I did not send him. He is making you trust in a lie.

32 Because he has done this," the LORD says, "I will punish Shemaiah the Nehelamite and his whole family. There will not be any of them left to experience the good things that I will do for my people. I, the LORD, affirm it! For he counseled rebellion against the LORD."'"

Jeremiah's Prophecy to Judah—Promises of Restoration (c. 597 BC)

Jeremiah 30

Introduction

1 The LORD spoke to Jeremiah.

2 "The LORD God of Israel says, 'Write everything that I am about to tell you in a scroll.

3 For I, the LORD, affirm that the time will come when I will reverse the plight of my people, Israel and Judah,' says the LORD. 'I will bring them back to the land I gave their ancestors and they will take possession of it once again.'"

Promise of Restoration for Israel

4 So here is what the LORD has to say about Israel and Judah.

5 Yes, here is what he says:

"You hear cries of panic and of terror;
there is no peace in sight.

6 Ask yourselves this and consider it carefully:

Have you ever seen a man give birth to a baby?

- Why then do I see all these strong men
grabbing their stomachs in pain like a woman giving birth?
And why do their faces
turn so deathly pale?
- 7 Alas, what a terrible time of trouble it is!
There has never been any like it.
It is a time of trouble for the descendants of Jacob,
but some of them will be rescued out of it.
- 8 When the time for them to be rescued comes,”
says the LORD who rules over all,
“I will rescue you from foreign subjugation.
I will deliver you from captivity.
Foreigners will then no longer subjugate them.
- 9 But they will be subject to the LORD their God
and to the Davidic ruler whom I will raise up as king over them.
- 10 So I, the LORD, tell you not to be afraid,
you descendants of Jacob, my servants.
Do not be terrified, people of Israel.
For I will rescue you and your descendants
from a faraway land where you are captives.
The descendants of Jacob will return to their land and enjoy peace.
They will be secure and no one will terrify them.
- 11 For I, the LORD, affirm that
I will be with you and will rescue you.
I will completely destroy all the nations where I scattered you.
But I will not completely destroy you.
I will indeed discipline you, but only in due measure.
I will not allow you to go entirely unpunished.”

Promise of Healing for an Incurable Wound

12 Moreover, the LORD says to the people of Zion,

- “Your injuries are incurable;
your wounds are severe.
- 13 There is no one to plead your cause.
There are no remedies for your wounds.
There is no healing for you.
- 14 All your allies have abandoned you.
They no longer have any concern for you.
For I have attacked you like an enemy would.
I have chastened you cruelly.
For your wickedness is so great
and your sin is so much.
- 15 Why do you complain about your injuries,
that your pain is incurable?
I have done all this to you
because your wickedness is so great
and your sin is so much.
- 16 But all who destroyed you will be destroyed.
All your enemies will go into exile.
Those who plundered you will be plundered.
I will cause those who pillaged you to be pillaged.
- 17 Yes, I will restore you to health.
I will heal your wounds.
I, the LORD, affirm it!
For you have been called an outcast,
Zion, whom no one cares for.”

Promise of Restoration of the Fortunes of Israel

18 The LORD says,

“I will restore the ruined houses of the descendants of Jacob.
I will show compassion on their ruined homes.
Every city will be rebuilt on its former ruins.
Every fortified dwelling will occupy its traditional site.

19 Out of those places you will hear songs of thanksgiving
and the sounds of laughter and merriment.

I will increase their number and they will not dwindle away.
I will bring them honor and they will no longer be despised.

20 The descendants of Jacob will enjoy their former privileges.
Their community will be reestablished in my favor
and I will punish all who try to oppress them.

21 One of their own people will be their leader.
Their ruler will come from their own number.
I will invite him to approach me, and he will do so.
For no one would dare approach me on his own.
I, the LORD, affirm it!

22 Then you will again be my people
and I will be your God.

The Fierce Anger of the Lord

23 Just watch! The wrath of the LORD
will come like a storm.
Like a raging storm it will rage down
on the heads of those who are wicked.

24 The anger of the LORD will not turn back
until he has fully carried out his intended purposes.
In days to come you will come to understand this.

Jeremiah's Prophecy to Judah—The New Covenant (c. 597 BC)

Jeremiah 31

The Rebuilding of Israel

1 At that time I will be the God of all the clans of Israel
and they will be my people.
I, the LORD, affirm it!”

2 The LORD says,

“The people of Israel who survived
death at the hands of the enemy
will find favor in the wilderness
as they journey to find rest for themselves.

3 In a far-off land the LORD will manifest himself to them.
He will say to them, ‘I have loved you with an everlasting love.
That is why I have continued to be faithful to you.

4 I will rebuild you, my dear children Israel,
so that you will once again be built up.
Once again you will take up the tambourine
and join in the happy throng of dancers.

5 Once again you will plant vineyards
on the hills of Samaria.
Those who plant them
will once again enjoy their fruit.

6 Yes, a time is coming
when watchmen will call out on the mountains of Ephraim,

“Come! Let us go to Zion
to worship the LORD our God!””

Return of the Scattered People

7 Moreover, the LORD says,

“Sing for joy for the descendants of Jacob.
Utter glad shouts for that foremost of the nations.
Make your praises heard.
Then say, ‘LORD, rescue your people.
Deliver those of Israel who remain alive.’

8 Then I will reply, ‘I will bring them back from the land of the north.
I will gather them in from the distant parts of the earth.
Blind and lame people will come with them,
so will pregnant women and women about to give birth.
A vast throng of people will come back here.

9 They will come back shedding tears of contrition.
I will bring them back praying prayers of repentance.
I will lead them besides streams of water,
along smooth paths where they will never stumble.
I will do this because I am Israel’s father;
Ephraim is my firstborn son.”

10 Hear what the LORD has to say, O nations.
Proclaim it in the faraway lands along the sea.
Say, “The one who scattered Israel will regather them.
He will watch over his people like a shepherd watches over his flock.”

11 For the LORD will rescue the descendants of Jacob.
He will secure their release from those who had overpowered them.

12 They will come and shout for joy on Mount Zion.
They will be radiant with joy over the good things the LORD provides,
the grain, the fresh wine, the olive oil,
the young sheep and calves he has given to them.
They will be like a well-watered garden
and will not grow faint or weary any more.

13 The LORD says, “At that time young women will dance and be glad.
Young men and old men will rejoice.
I will turn their grief into gladness.
I will give them comfort and joy in place of their sorrow.

14 I will provide the priests with abundant provisions.
My people will be filled to the full with the good things I provide.”

The End of Rachel’s Weeping for Her Children

15 The LORD says,

“A sound is heard in Ramah,
a sound of crying in bitter grief.
It is the sound of Rachel weeping for her children
and refusing to be comforted, because her children are gone.” [\[Matt 2:17–18\]](#)

16 The LORD says to her,
“Stop crying! Do not shed any more tears!
For your heartfelt repentance will be rewarded.
Your children will return from the land of the enemy.
I, the LORD, affirm it!

17 Indeed, there is hope for your posterity.
Your children will return to their own territory.
I, the LORD, affirm it!

18 I have indeed heard the people of Israel say mournfully,
‘We were like a calf untrained to the yoke.

You disciplined us and we learned from it.
Let us come back to you and we will do so,
for you are the LORD our God.

- 19 For after we turned away from you we repented.
After we came to our senses we [struck] our [thigh] in sorrow.
We are ashamed and humiliated
because of the disgraceful things we did previously.’
- 20 Indeed, the people of Israel are my dear children.
They are the children I take delight in.
For even though I must often rebuke them,
I still remember them with fondness.
So I am deeply moved with pity for them
and will surely have compassion on them.
I, the LORD, affirm it!
- 21 I will say, ‘My dear children of Israel, keep in mind
the road you took when you were carried off.
Mark off in your minds the landmarks.
Make a mental note of telltale signs marking the way back.
Return, my dear children of Israel.
Return to these cities of yours.
- 22 How long will you vacillate,
you who were once like an unfaithful daughter?
For I, the LORD, promise to bring about something new on the earth,
something as unique as a woman protecting a man!’”

Description of Future Blessing

23 The LORD God of Israel who rules over all says,

“I will restore the people of Judah to their land and to their towns.
When I do, they will again say of Jerusalem,
‘May the LORD bless you, you holy mountain,
the place where righteousness dwells.’

- 24 The land of Judah will be inhabited by people who live in its towns
as well as by farmers and shepherds with their flocks.
- 25 I will fully satisfy the needs of those who are weary
and fully refresh the souls of those who are faint.
- 26 Then they will say, ‘Under these conditions I can enjoy sweet sleep
when I wake up and look around.’”

27 “Indeed, a time is coming,” says the LORD, “when I will cause people and animals to sprout up in the lands of Israel and Judah.

28 In the past I saw to it that they were uprooted and torn down, that they were destroyed and demolished. But now I will see to it that they are built up and firmly planted. I, the LORD, affirm it!”

Repudiation of a Popular Saying

29 “When that time comes, people will no longer say, ‘The parents have eaten sour grapes, but the children’s teeth have grown numb.’

30 Rather, each person will die for his own sins. The teeth of the person who eats the sour grapes will themselves grow numb.

Announcement of a New Covenant

31 “Indeed, a time is coming,” says the LORD, “when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and Judah.

32 It will not be like the old covenant that I made with their ancestors when I delivered them from Egypt. For they violated that covenant, even though I was like a faithful husband to them,” says the LORD.

33 “But I will make a new covenant with the whole nation of Israel after I plant them back in the land,” says the LORD. “I will put my law within them and write it on their hearts and minds. I will be their God and they will be my people.

34 “People will no longer need to teach their neighbors and relatives to know me. For all of them, from the least important to the most important, will know me,” says the LORD. “For I will forgive their sin and will no longer call to mind the wrong they have done.” [\[Heb 8:8–12; 10:16–17\]](#)

God's Assurance of Israel's Eternal Duration

- 35 The LORD has made a promise to Israel.
He promises it as the one who fixed the sun to give light by day
and the moon and stars to give light by night.
He promises it as the one who stirs up the sea so that its waves roll.
He promises it as the one who is known as the LORD who rules over all.
- 36 The LORD affirms, "The descendants of Israel will not
cease forever to be a nation in my sight.
That could only happen if the fixed ordering of the heavenly lights
were to cease to operate before me."
- 37 The LORD says, "I will not reject all the descendants of Israel
because of all that they have done.
That could only happen if the heavens above could be measured
or the foundations of the earth below could all be explored,"
says the LORD.

God's Promise that Jerusalem Will be Rebuilt

- 38 "Indeed a time is coming," says the LORD, "when the city of Jerusalem will be rebuilt as my special city. It will be built from the Tower of Hananel westward to the Corner Gate.
39 The boundary line will extend beyond that, straight west from there to the Hill of Gareb and then turn southward to Goah.
40 The whole valley where dead bodies and sacrificial ashes are thrown and all the terraced fields out to the Kidron Valley on the east as far north as the Horse Gate will be included within this city that is sacred to the LORD. The city will never again be torn down or destroyed."

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Jeremiah's Prophecy Concerning the Nations: Elam (c. 597–596 BC)

Jeremiah 49:34–39

34 Early in the reign of King Zedekiah of Judah, the LORD spoke to the prophet Jeremiah about Elam.

35 The LORD who rules over all said,

“I will kill all the archers of Elam,
who are the chief source of her military might.

36 I will cause enemies to blow through Elam from every direction
like the winds blowing in from the four quarters of heaven.

I will scatter the people of Elam to the four winds.
There will not be any nation where the refugees of Elam will not go.

37 I will make the people of Elam terrified of their enemies,
who are seeking to kill them.

I will vent my fierce anger
and bring disaster upon them,” says the LORD.

“I will send armies chasing after them
until I have completely destroyed them.

38 I will establish my sovereignty over Elam.

I will destroy their king and their leaders,” says the LORD.

39 “Yet in days to come

I will reverse Elam's ill fortune,” says the LORD.

Jeremiah's Prophecy Concerning the Nations: Babylon's Doom (c. 597–596 BC)

Jeremiah 50

Announcement of Babylon's Doom

1 The LORD spoke concerning Babylon and the land of Babylonia through the prophet Jeremiah.

2 “Announce the news among the nations! Proclaim it!

Signal for people to pay attention!
Declare the news! Do not hide it! Say:
‘Babylon will be captured.

Bel will be put to shame.

Marduk will be dismayed.

Babylon's idols will be put to shame.

Her disgusting images will be dismayed.

3 For a nation from the north will attack Babylon.

It will lay her land waste.

People and animals will flee out of it.

No one will inhabit it.’

4 “When that time comes,” says the LORD,

“the people of Israel and Judah will return to the land together.

They will come back with tears of repentance

as they seek the LORD their God.

5 They will ask the way to Zion;

they will turn their faces toward it.

They will come and bind themselves to the LORD

in a lasting covenant that will never be forgotten.

6 “My people have been lost sheep.

Their shepherds have allowed them to go astray.

They have wandered around in the mountains.

They have roamed from one mountain and hill to another.

They have forgotten their resting place.

7 All who encountered them devoured them.

Their enemies who did this said, ‘We are not liable for punishment!

For those people have sinned against the LORD, their true pasture.

They have sinned against the LORD in whom their ancestors trusted.’

8 “People of Judah, get out of Babylon quickly!

- Leave the land of Babylonia!
 Be the first to depart!
 Be like the male goats that lead the herd.
- 9 For I will rouse into action and bring against Babylon
 a host of mighty nations from the land of the north.
 They will set up their battle lines against her.
 They will come from the north and capture her.
 Their arrows will be like a skilled soldier
 who does not return from the battle empty-handed.
- 10 Babylonia will be plundered.
 Those who plunder it will take all they want," says the LORD.

Explanation for Its Punishment

- 11 "People of Babylonia, you plundered my people.
 That made you happy and glad.
 You frolic about like calves in a pasture.
 Your joyous sounds are like the neighs of a stallion.
- 12 But Babylonia will be put to great shame.
 The land where you were born will be disgraced.
 Indeed, Babylonia will become the least important of all nations.
 It will become a dry and barren desert.
- 13 After I vent my wrath on it Babylon will be uninhabited.
 It will be totally desolate.
 All who pass by will be filled with horror and will hiss out their scorn
 because of all the disasters that have happened to it.
- 14 "Take up your battle positions all around Babylon,
 all you soldiers who are armed with bows.
 Shoot all your arrows at her! Do not hold any back!
 For she has sinned against the LORD.
- 15 Shout the battle cry from all around the city.
 She will throw up her hands in surrender.
 Her towers will fall.
 Her walls will be torn down.
 Because I, the LORD, am wreaking revenge,
 take out your vengeance on her!
 Do to her as she has done!
- 16 Kill all the farmers who sow the seed in the land of Babylon.
 Kill all those who wield the sickle at harvest time.
 Let all the foreigners return to their own people.
 Let them hurry back to their own lands
 to escape destruction by that enemy army.
- 17 "The people of Israel are like scattered sheep
 which lions have chased away.
 First the king of Assyria devoured them.
 Now last of all King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon has gnawed their bones.

The Restoration of Israel

- 18 So I, the LORD God of Israel who rules over all, say:
 'I will punish the king of Babylon and his land
 just as I punished the king of Assyria.
- 19 But I will restore the flock of Israel to their own pasture.
 They will graze on Mount Carmel and the land of Bashan.
 They will eat until they are full
 on the hills of Ephraim and the land of Gilead.
- 20 When that time comes,
 no guilt will be found in Israel.
 No sin will be found in Judah.
 For I will forgive those of them I have allowed to survive.

I, the LORD, affirm it!”

God’s Wrath against Babylon

- 21 The LORD says,
“Attack the land of Merathaim
and the people who live in Pekod!
Pursue, kill, and completely destroy them!
Do just as I have commanded you!
- 22 The noise of battle can be heard in the land of Babylonia.
There is the sound of great destruction.
- 23 Babylon hammered the whole world to pieces.
But see how that ‘hammer’ has been broken and shattered!
See what an object of horror
Babylon has become among the nations!
- 24 I set a trap for you, Babylon;
you were caught before you knew it.
You fought against me.
So you were found and captured.
- 25 I have opened up the place where my weapons are stored.
I have brought out the weapons for carrying out my wrath.
For I, the Lord GOD who rules over all,
have work to carry out in the land of Babylonia.
- 26 Come from far away and attack Babylonia!
Open up the places where she stores her grain!
Pile her up in ruins! Destroy her completely!
Do not leave anyone alive!
- 27 Kill all her soldiers!
Let them be slaughtered!
They are doomed, for their day of reckoning has come,
the time for them to be punished.”
- 28 Listen! Fugitives and refugees are coming from the land of Babylon.
They are coming to Zion to declare there
how the LORD our God is getting revenge,
getting revenge for what they have done to his temple.
- 29 “Call for archers to come against Babylon!
Summon against her all who draw the bow!
Set up camp all around the city!
Do not allow anyone to escape!
Pay her back for what she has done.
Do to her what she has done to others.
For she has proudly defied me,
the Holy One of Israel.
- 30 So her young men will fall in her city squares.
All her soldiers will be destroyed at that time,” says the LORD.
- 31 “Listen! I am opposed to you, you proud city,”
says the Lord GOD who rules over all.
“Indeed, your day of reckoning has come,
the time when I will punish you.
- 32 You will stumble and fall, you proud city;
no one will help you get up.
I will set fire to your towns;
it will burn up everything that surrounds you.”

The Desolation of Babylon

- 33 The LORD who rules over all says,
“The people of Israel are oppressed.
So too are the people of Judah.
All those who took them captive are holding them prisoners.

- They refuse to set them free.
- 34 But the one who will rescue them is strong.
He is known as the LORD who rules over all.
He will strongly champion their cause.
As a result he will bring peace and rest to the earth,
but trouble and turmoil to the people who inhabit Babylonia.
- 35 “Destructive forces will come against the Babylonians,” says the LORD.
“They will come against the people who inhabit Babylonia,
against her leaders and her men of wisdom.
- 36 Destructive forces will come against her false prophets;
they will be shown to be fools!
Destructive forces will come against her soldiers;
they will be filled with terror!
- 37 Destructive forces will come against her horses and her chariots.
Destructive forces will come against all the foreign troops within her;
they will be as frightened as women!
Destructive forces will come against her treasures;
they will be taken away as plunder!
- 38 A drought will come upon her land;
her rivers and canals will be dried up.
All of this will happen because her land is filled with idols.
Her people act like madmen because of those idols they fear.
- 39 Therefore desert creatures and jackals will live there.
Ostriches will dwell in it too.
But no people will ever live there again.
No one will dwell there for all time to come.
- 40 I will destroy Babylonia just like I did
Sodom and Gomorrah and the neighboring towns.
No one will live there.
No human being will settle in it,” says the LORD.

Babylon’s Helplessness

- 41 “Look! An army is about to come from the north.
A mighty nation and many kings are stirring into action
in faraway parts of the earth.
- 42 Its soldiers are armed with bows and spears.
They are cruel and show no mercy.
They sound like the roaring sea
as they ride forth on their horses.
Lined up in formation like men going into battle,
they are coming against you, fair Babylon!
- 43 The king of Babylon will become paralyzed with fear
when he hears news of their coming.
Anguish will grip him,
agony like that of a woman giving birth to a baby.
- 44 “A lion coming up from the thick undergrowth along the Jordan
scatters the sheep in the pastureland around it.
So too I will chase the Babylonians off of their land.
Then I will appoint over it whomever I choose.
For there is no one like me.
There is no one who can call me to account.
There is no ruler that can stand up against me.
- 45 So listen to what I, the LORD, have planned against Babylon,
what I intend to do to the people who inhabit the land of Babylonia.
Their little ones will be dragged off.
I will completely destroy their land because of what they have done.
- 46 The people of the earth will quake when they hear Babylon has been captured.
Her cries of anguish will be heard by the other nations.”

Jeremiah's Prophecy Concerning the Nations: Babylon's Coming Fall (c. 597–596 BC)

Jeremiah 51:1–58

The Lord's Vengeance on Babylon

- 1 The LORD says,
“I will cause a destructive wind to blow
against Babylon and the people who inhabit Babylonia.
- 2 I will send people to winnow Babylonia like a wind blowing away chaff.
They will winnow her and strip her land bare.
This will happen when they come against her from every direction,
when it is time to destroy her.
- 3 Do not give her archers time to string their bows
or to put on their coats of armor.
Do not spare any of her young men.
Completely destroy her whole army.
- 4 Let them fall slain in the land of Babylonia,
mortally wounded in the streets of her cities.
- 5 “For Israel and Judah will not be forsaken
by their God, the LORD who rules over all.
For the land of Babylonia is full of guilt
against the Holy One of Israel.
- 6 Get out of Babylonia quickly, you foreign people.
Flee to save your lives.
Do not let yourselves be killed because of her sins.
For it is time for the LORD to wreak his revenge.
He will pay Babylonia back for what she has done.
- 7 Babylonia had been a gold cup in the LORD's hand.
She had made the whole world drunk.
The nations had drunk from the wine of her wrath.
So they have all gone mad.
- 8 But suddenly Babylonia will fall and be destroyed.
Cry out in mourning over it!
Get medicine for her wounds!
Perhaps she can be healed!
- 9 Foreigners living there will say,
‘We tried to heal her, but she could not be healed.
Let's leave Babylonia and each go back to his own country.
For judgment on her will be vast in its proportions.
It will be like it is piled up to heaven, stacked up into the clouds.’
- 10 The exiles from Judah will say,
‘The LORD has brought about a great deliverance for us!
Come on, let's go and proclaim in Zion
what the LORD our God has done!’
- 11 “Sharpen your arrows!
Fill your quivers!
The LORD will arouse a spirit of hostility in the kings of Media.
For he intends to destroy Babylonia.
For that is how the LORD will get his revenge—
how he will get his revenge for the Babylonians' destruction of his temple.
- 12 Give the signal to attack Babylon's wall!
Bring more guards!
Post them all around the city!
Put men in ambush!
For the LORD will do what he has planned.
He will do what he said he would do to the people of Babylon.
- 13 “You who live along the rivers of Babylon,
the time of your end has come.
You who are rich in plundered treasure,
it is time for your lives to be cut off.

- 14 The LORD who rules over all has solemnly sworn,
‘I will fill your land with enemy soldiers.
They will swarm over it like locusts.
They will raise up shouts of victory over it.’

A Hymn of Praise to the Lord

- 15 He is the one who by his power made the earth.
He is the one who by his wisdom fixed the world in place,
by his understanding he spread out the heavens.
- 16 When his voice thunders, the waters in the heavens roar.
He makes the clouds rise from the far-off horizons.
He makes the lightning flash out in the midst of the rain.
He unleashes the wind from the places where he stores it.
- 17 All idolaters will prove to be stupid and ignorant.
Every goldsmith will be disgraced by the idol he made.
For the image he forges is merely a sham.
There is no breath in any of those idols.
- 18 They are worthless, objects to be ridiculed.
When the time comes to punish them, they will be destroyed.
- 19 The LORD, who is the portion of the descendants of Jacob, is not like them.
For he is the one who created everything,
including the people of Israel whom he claims as his own.
He is known as the LORD who rules over all.

God’s Power against Enemies

- 20 “Babylon, you are my war club,
my weapon for battle.
I used you to smash nations.
I used you to destroy kingdoms.
- 21 I used you to smash horses and their riders.
I used you to smash chariots and their drivers.
- 22 I used you to smash men and women.
I used you to smash old men and young men.
I used you to smash young men and young women.
- 23 I used you to smash shepherds and their flocks.
I used you to smash farmers and their teams of oxen.
I used you to smash governors and leaders.”
- 24 “But I will repay Babylon
and all who live in Babylonia
for all the wicked things they did in Zion
right before the eyes of you Judeans,” says the LORD.
- 25 The LORD says, “Beware! I am opposed to you, Babylon!
You are like a destructive mountain that destroys all the earth.
I will unleash my power against you;
I will roll you off the cliffs and make you like a burned-out mountain.
- 26 No one will use any of your stones as a cornerstone.
No one will use any of them in the foundation of his house.
For you will lie desolate forever,” says the LORD.

Nations Summoned against Babylon

- 27 “Raise up battle flags throughout the lands.
Sound the trumpets calling the nations to do battle.
Prepare the nations to do battle against Babylonia.
Call for these kingdoms to attack her:
Ararat, Minni, and Ashkenaz.
Appoint a commander to lead the attack.
Send horses against her like a swarm of locusts.
- 28 Prepare the nations to do battle against her.

- Prepare the kings of the Medes.
Prepare their governors and all their leaders.
Prepare all the countries they rule to do battle against her.
- 29 The earth will tremble and writhe in agony.
For the LORD will carry out his plan.
He plans to make the land of Babylonia
a wasteland where no one lives.
- 30 The soldiers of Babylonia will stop fighting.
They will remain in their fortified cities.
They will lose their strength to do battle.
They will be as frightened as women.
The houses in her cities will be set on fire.
The gates of her cities will be broken down.
- 31 One runner after another will come to the king of Babylon.
One messenger after another will come bringing news.
They will bring news to the king of Babylon
that his whole city has been captured.
- 32 They will report that the fords have been captured,
the reed marshes have been burned,
the soldiers are terrified.

A Call for Retribution

- 33 For the LORD God of Israel who rules over all says,
'Fair Babylonia will be like a threshing floor
which has been trampled flat for harvest.
The time for her to be cut down and harvested
will come very soon.'
- 34 "King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylonia
devoured me and drove my people out.
Like a monster from the deep he swallowed me.
He filled his belly with my riches.
He made me an empty dish.
He completely cleaned me out."
- 35 The person who lives in Zion says,
"May Babylonia pay for the violence done to me and to my relatives."
Jerusalem says,
"May those living in Babylonia pay for the bloodshed of my people."

God Answers the Call—Payback Time!

- 36 Therefore the LORD says,
"I will stand up for your cause.
I will pay the Babylonians back for what they have done to you.
I will dry up their sea.
I will make their springs run dry.
- 37 Babylonia will become a heap of ruins.
Jackals will make their home there.
It will become an object of horror and of hissing scorn,
a place where no one lives.
- 38 The Babylonians are all like lions roaring for prey.
They are like lion cubs growling for something to eat.
- 39 When their appetites are all stirred up,
I will set out a banquet for them.
I will make them drunk
so that they will pass out,
they will fall asleep forever,
they will never wake up," says the LORD.
- 40 "I will lead them off to be slaughtered
like lambs, rams, and male goats."

- 41 “See how Babylon has been captured!
See how the pride of the whole earth has been taken!
See what an object of horror
Babylon has become among the nations!
- 42 The sea has swept over Babylon.
She has been covered by a multitude of its waves.
- 43 The towns of Babylonia have become heaps of ruins.
She has become a dry and barren desert.
No one lives in those towns any more.
No one even passes through them.
- 44 I will punish the god Bel in Babylon.
I will make him spit out what he has swallowed.
The nations will not come streaming to him any longer.
Indeed, the walls of Babylon will fall.”

An Appeal to Flee from Babylon

- 45 “Get out of Babylon, my people!
Flee to save your lives
from the fierce anger of the LORD!
- 46 Do not lose your courage or become afraid
because of the reports that are heard in the land.
For a report will come in one year.
Another report will follow it in the next.
There will be violence in the land
with ruler fighting against ruler.”
- 47 “So the time will certainly come
when I will punish the idols of Babylon.
Her whole land will be put to shame.
All her mortally wounded will collapse in her midst.
- 48 Then heaven and earth and all that is in them
will sing for joy over Babylon.
For destroyers from the north will attack it,” says the LORD.

Another Warning of Babylon’s Coming Destruction

- 49 “Babylon must fall
because of the Israelites she has killed,
just as the earth’s mortally wounded fell
because of Babylon.
- 50 You who have escaped the sword,
go, do not delay.
Remember the LORD in a faraway land.
Think about Jerusalem.
- 51 ‘We are ashamed because we have been insulted.
Our faces show our disgrace.
For foreigners have invaded
the holy rooms in the LORD’s temple.’
- 52 Yes, but the time will certainly come,” says the LORD,
“when I will punish her idols.
Throughout her land the mortally wounded will groan.
- 53 Even if Babylon climbs high into the sky
and fortifies her elevated stronghold,
I will send destroyers against her,” says the LORD.
- 54 Cries of anguish will come from Babylon,
the sound of great destruction from the land of the Babylonians.
- 55 For the LORD is ready to destroy Babylon,
and put an end to her loud noise.
Their waves will roar like turbulent waters.
They will make a deafening noise.

- 56 For a destroyer is attacking Babylon.
Her warriors will be captured;
their bows will be broken.
For the LORD is a God who punishes;
he pays back in full.
- 57 “I will make her officials and wise men drunk,
along with her governors, leaders, and warriors.
They will fall asleep forever and never wake up,”
says the King whose name is the LORD who rules over all.
- 58 This is what the LORD who rules over all says,
“Babylon’s thick wall will be completely demolished.
Her high gates will be set on fire.
The peoples strive for what does not satisfy.
The nations grow weary trying to get what will be destroyed.”

Jeremiah Sends the Babylon Prophecy (Tishri [October] 595–Adar [March] 594 BC)

Jeremiah 51:59–64

- 59 This is the order Jeremiah the prophet gave to Seraiah son of Neriah, son of Mahseiah, when he went to King Zedekiah of Judah in Babylon during the fourth year of his reign. (Seraiah was a quartermaster.)
- 60 Jeremiah recorded on one scroll all the judgments that would come upon Babylon—all these prophecies written about Babylon.
- 61 Then Jeremiah said to Seraiah, “When you arrive in Babylon, make sure you read aloud all these prophecies.
- 62 Then say, ‘O LORD, you have announced that you will destroy this place so that no people or animals live in it any longer. Certainly it will lie desolate forever!’
- 63 When you finish reading this scroll aloud, tie a stone to it and throw it into the middle of the Euphrates River.
- 64 Then say, ‘In the same way Babylon will sink and never rise again because of the judgments I am ready to bring upon her; they will grow faint.’” The prophecies of Jeremiah end here.

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Chronological Notes

- 1) The historical context of Jeremiah 50–51 is the early years of the reign of Zedekiah (cf. Jer 51:59–64). Jeremiah’s prophecies against Babylon were written on one scroll and taken to Babylon itself so they could be read aloud (51:60–61).

Nebuchadnezzar's Golden Image and the Fiery Furnace (Tishri [October] 595–Adar [March] 594 BC)**Daniel 3****The Golden Image**

1 King Nebuchadnezzar had a golden statue made. It was ninety feet tall and nine feet wide. He erected it on the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon.

2 Then King Nebuchadnezzar sent out a summons to assemble the satraps, prefects, governors, counselors, treasurers, judges, magistrates, and all the other authorities of the province to attend the dedication of the statue that he had erected.

3 So the satraps, prefects, governors, counselors, treasurers, judges, magistrates, and all the other provincial authorities assembled for the dedication of the statue that King Nebuchadnezzar had erected. They were standing in front of the statue that Nebuchadnezzar had erected.

4 Then the herald made a loud proclamation: "To you, O peoples, nations, and language groups, the following command is given:

5 When you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, trigon, harp, pipes, and all kinds of music, you must bow down and pay homage to the golden statue that King Nebuchadnezzar has erected.

6 Whoever does not bow down and pay homage will immediately be thrown into the midst of a furnace of blazing fire!"

7 Therefore when they all heard the sound of the horn, flute, zither, trigon, harp, pipes, and all kinds of music, all the peoples, nations, and language groups began bowing down and paying homage to the golden statue that King Nebuchadnezzar had erected.

Daniel's Friends Refuse to Worship

8 Now at that time certain Chaldeans came forward and brought malicious accusations against the Jews.

9 They said to King Nebuchadnezzar, "O king, live forever!

10 You have issued an edict, O king, that everyone must bow down and pay homage to the golden statue when they hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, trigon, harp, pipes, and all kinds of music.

11 And whoever does not bow down and pay homage must be thrown into the midst of a furnace of blazing fire.

12 But there are Jewish men whom you appointed over the administration of the province of Babylon—Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego—and these men have not shown proper respect to you, O king. They don't serve your gods and they don't pay homage to the golden statue that you have erected."

Nebuchadnezzar Confronts Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego

13 Then Nebuchadnezzar in a fit of rage demanded that they bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego before him. So they brought them before the king.

14 Nebuchadnezzar said to them, "Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, that you don't serve my gods and that you don't pay homage to the golden statue that I erected?"

15 Now if you are ready, when you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, trigon, harp, pipes, and all kinds of music, you must bow down and pay homage to the statue that I had made. If you don't pay homage to it, you will immediately be thrown into the midst of the furnace of blazing fire. Now, who is that god who can rescue you from my power?"

16 Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego replied to King Nebuchadnezzar, "We do not need to give you a reply concerning this.

17 If our God whom we are serving exists, he is able to rescue us from the furnace of blazing fire, and he will rescue us, O king, from your power as well.

18 But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we don't serve your gods, and we will not pay homage to the golden statue that you have erected."

The Fiery Furnace

19 Then Nebuchadnezzar was filled with rage, and his disposition changed toward Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. He gave orders to heat the furnace seven times hotter than it was normally heated.

20 He ordered strong soldiers in his army to tie up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego and to throw them into the furnace of blazing fire.

21 So those men were tied up while still wearing their cloaks, trousers, turbans, and other clothes, and were thrown into the furnace of blazing fire.

22 But since the king's command was so urgent, and the furnace was so excessively hot, the men who escorted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were killed by the leaping flames.

23 But those three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, fell into the furnace of blazing fire while still securely bound.

24 Then King Nebuchadnezzar was startled and quickly got up. He said to his ministers, "Wasn't it three men that we tied up and threw into the fire?" They replied to the king, "For sure, O king."

25 He answered, "But I see four men, untied and walking around in the midst of the fire! No harm has come to them! And the appearance of the fourth is like that of a god!"

26 Then Nebuchadnezzar approached the door of the furnace of blazing fire. He called out, "Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, servants of the most high God, come out! Come here!" Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego emerged from the fire.

27 Once the satraps, prefects, governors, and ministers of the king had gathered around, they saw that those men were physically

unharmd by the fire. The hair of their heads was not singed, nor were their trousers damaged. Not even the smell of fire was to be found on them!

Nebuchadnezzar Honors God

28 Nebuchadnezzar exclaimed, “Praised be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who has sent forth his angel and has rescued his servants who trusted in him, ignoring the edict of the king and giving up their bodies rather than serve or pay homage to any god other than their God!

29 I hereby decree that any people, nation, or language group that blasphemes the god of Shadrach, Meshach, or Abednego will be dismembered and his home reduced to rubble! For there exists no other god who can deliver in this way.”

30 Then Nebuchadnezzar promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the province of Babylon.

Jeremiah Urges Submission to Babylon (Ab [August] 594 BC)

Jeremiah 27

Jeremiah Warns the Nations to Submit to and Serve Nebuchadnezzar

1 The LORD spoke to Jeremiah early in the reign of Josiah’s son, King Zedekiah of Judah.

2 The LORD told me, “Make a yoke out of leather straps and wooden crossbars and put it on your neck.

3 Use it to send messages to the kings of Edom, Moab, Ammon, Tyre, and Sidon. Send them through the envoys who have come to Jerusalem to King Zedekiah of Judah.

4 Charge them to give their masters a message from me. Tell them, ‘The LORD God of Israel who rules over all says to give your masters this message.

5 “I made the earth and the people and animals on it by my mighty power and great strength, and I give it to whomever I see fit.

6 I have at this time placed all these nations of yours under the power of my servant, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. I have even made all the wild animals subject to him.

7 All nations must serve him and his son and grandson until the time comes for his own nation to fall. Then many nations and great kings will in turn subjugate Babylon.

8 But suppose a nation or a kingdom will not be subject to King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. Suppose it will not submit to the yoke of servitude to him. I, the LORD, affirm that I will punish that nation. I will use the king of Babylon to punish it with war, starvation, and disease until I have destroyed it.

9 So do not listen to your prophets or to those who claim to predict the future by divination, by dreams, by consulting the dead, or by practicing magic. They keep telling you, ‘You do not need to be subject to the king of Babylon.’

10 Do not listen to them, because their prophecies are lies. Listening to them will only cause you to be taken far away from your native land. I will drive you out of your country and you will die in exile.

11 Things will go better for the nation that submits to the yoke of servitude to the king of Babylon and is subject to him. I will leave that nation in its native land. Its people can continue to farm it and live in it. I, the LORD, affirm it!”

Jeremiah Warns Zedekiah to Submit to Babylon and Not to Listen to False Prophets

12 I told King Zedekiah of Judah the same thing. I said, “Submit to the yoke of servitude to the king of Babylon. Be subject to him and his people. Then you will continue to live.

13 There is no reason why you and your people should die in war or from starvation or disease! That’s what the LORD says will happen to any nation that will not be subject to the king of Babylon.

14 Do not listen to the prophets who are telling you that you do not need to serve the king of Babylon. For they are prophesying lies to you.

15 For I, the LORD, affirm that I did not send them. They are prophesying lies to you. If you listen to them, I will drive you and the prophets who are prophesying lies out of the land and you will all die in exile.”

Jeremiah Warns the Priests and all the People to Ignore the False Prophets

16 I also told the priests and all the people, “The LORD says, ‘Do not listen to what your prophets are saying. They are prophesying to you that the valuable articles taken from the LORD’s temple will be brought back from Babylon very soon. But they are prophesying a lie to you.

17 Do not listen to them. Be subject to the king of Babylon. Then you will continue to live. Why should this city be made a pile of rubble?’”

18 I also told them, “If they are really prophets and the LORD is speaking to them, let them pray earnestly to the LORD who rules over all. Let them plead with him not to let the valuable articles that are still left in the LORD’s temple, in the royal palace, and in Jerusalem be taken away to Babylon.

19 For the LORD who rules over all has already spoken about the two bronze pillars, the large bronze basin called ‘The Sea,’ and the movable bronze stands. He has already spoken about the rest of the valuable articles that are left in this city.

20 He has already spoken about these things that King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon did not take away when he carried Jehoiakim’s

son King Jeconiah of Judah and the nobles of Judah and Jerusalem away as captives.

21 Indeed, the LORD God of Israel who rules over all has already spoken about the valuable articles that are left in the LORD's temple, in the royal palace of Judah, and in Jerusalem.

22 He has said, 'They will be carried off to Babylon. They will remain there until it is time for me to show consideration for them again. Then I will bring them back and restore them to this place.' I, the LORD, affirm this!"

Conflict between Jeremiah and Hananiah (Ab [August] 594 BC)

Jeremiah 28

Hananiah's False Prophecy

1 The following events occurred in that same year, early in the reign of King Zedekiah of Judah. To be more precise, it was the fifth month of the fourth year of his reign. The prophet Hananiah son of Azzur, who was from Gibeon, spoke to Jeremiah in the LORD's temple in the presence of the priests and all the people.

2 "The LORD God of Israel who rules over all says, 'I will break the yoke of servitude to the king of Babylon.

3 Before two years are over, I will bring back to this place everything that King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon took from it and carried away to Babylon.

4 I will also bring back to this place Jehoiakim's son King Jeconiah of Judah and all the exiles who were taken to Babylon.' Indeed, the LORD affirms, 'I will break the yoke of servitude to the king of Babylon.'"

Jeremiah's Response to Hananiah

5 Then the prophet Jeremiah responded to the prophet Hananiah in the presence of the priests and all the people who were standing in the LORD's temple.

6 The prophet Jeremiah said, "Amen! May the LORD do all this! May the LORD make your prophecy come true! May he bring back to this place from Babylon all the valuable articles taken from the LORD's temple and the people who were carried into exile.

7 But listen to what I say to you and to all these people.

8 From earliest times, the prophets who preceded you and me invariably prophesied war, disaster, and plagues against many countries and great kingdoms.

9 So if a prophet prophesied peace and prosperity, it was only known that the LORD truly sent him when what he prophesied came true."

Hananiah's Symbolic Act

10 The prophet Hananiah then took the yoke off the prophet Jeremiah's neck and broke it.

11 Then he spoke up in the presence of all the people. "The LORD says, 'In the same way I will break the yoke of servitude of all the nations to King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon before two years are over.'" After he heard this, the prophet Jeremiah departed and went on his way.

Jeremiah Denounces Hananiah

12 But shortly after the prophet Hananiah had broken the yoke off the prophet Jeremiah's neck, the LORD spoke to Jeremiah.

13 "Go and tell Hananiah that the LORD says, 'You have indeed broken the wooden yoke. But you have only succeeded in replacing it with an iron one!

14 For the LORD God of Israel who rules over all says, "I have put an irresistible yoke of servitude on all these nations so they will serve King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. And they will indeed serve him. I have even given him control over the wild animals.'"

15 Then the prophet Jeremiah told the prophet Hananiah, "Listen, Hananiah! The LORD did not send you! You are making these people trust in a lie!

16 So the LORD says, 'I will most assuredly remove you from the face of the earth. You will die this very year because you have counseled rebellion against the LORD.'"

17 In the seventh month of that very same year [2 months later] the prophet Hananiah died.

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Chronological Notes

- 1) A Possible Historical Setting for Daniel 3.¹
 - A) Unlike most of the major sections of Daniel, chapter 3 contains no chronological notice for the setting of the events it relates.² However, a careful investigation into the book of Jeremiah and into the surviving chronicles of Nebuchadnezzar's reign suggests a date of late December 594 or January 593 BC for the convocation to dedicate the golden statue.³
 - B) The Babylonian Chronicle states that a rebellion took place in Babylon from the month of Kislev (December 15, 595–January 12, 594) to the month of Tebeth (January 13–February 11, 594) in the tenth year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign.⁴ Nebuchadnezzar suppressed the rebellion and also purged his army of those he suspected of supporting the uprising.⁵ At the end of that year (the Babylonian year ended on April 11, 594), Nebuchadnezzar made a trip to his western provinces to collect tribute from his vassals.⁶ This trip was probably to enforce his authority in light of the rebellion that he recently suppressed. Moreover, he returned to those western provinces with his army in the month of Kislev the next year (December 4, 594–January 1, 593).⁷
 - C) Early in Zedekiah's fourth year as king of Judah (which corresponds to the last six months of Nebuchadnezzar's eleventh year and the first six months of his twelfth year),⁸ Zedekiah made a trip to Babylon (Jer 51:59–64). Zedekiah's trip most likely took place upon the return of Nebuchadnezzar to Babylon, perhaps in late Kislev 594 (late December 594) or more likely in Tebeth 593 (January 593). Zedekiah probably was asked to make this trip to profess his loyalty to Nebuchadnezzar. However, it appears to have had the opposite effect, since later that year, before the end of month of Shebat (February 1–March 1, 593),⁹ Zedekiah, having returned to Jerusalem, plotted with emissaries from Edom, Moab, Ammon, Tyre, and Sidon to rebel against Nebuchadnezzar, even though Jeremiah advised against this rebellion (Jer 27:1–22).
 - D) This sequence of events would yield a date of late December 594 or January 593 for Zedekiah's trip to Babylon and his return. The convocation in Daniel 3 is a likely setting for the destination of Zedekiah's trip, since the trip probably was for the purpose of ensuring his loyalty to Nebuchadnezzar. Zedekiah would have been one of a number of vassals who were brought to Babylon to demonstrate their loyalty to Nebuchadnezzar by worshiping the huge statue he erected. Most commentators believe that the presupposition in the narrative of Daniel 3 is that willingness to bow down to the golden image was equated with loyalty to Nebuchadnezzar.¹⁰

¹ Sourced from Andrew E. Steinmann, "Daniel," *Concordia Commentary*, (Concordia Publishing House, 2008), 167–170. The footnotes that follow are also from Steinmann.

² Both the Old Greek and Theodotion prefix the words ἑνδεκάτου ἔτους to the start of 3:1 to indicate that the convocation took place in Nebuchadnezzar's "eighteenth year." However, these words probably are a secondary addition based on Jer 52:29.

³ The specific chronicle is preserved on tablet BM 21946. See Wiseman, *Chronicles of Chaldean Kings*, 66–75. The identification of the chronological sequence that includes the convocation was first proposed by Shea, "Daniel 3," *AUSS* 20.1 (Spring 1982): 29–52. It has been favored by Dyer, "The Musical Instruments in Daniel 3," 426–27. Goldingay, *Daniel*, 69, notes Shea's work without comment. However, Miller, *Daniel*, 112, n. 24, and Collins, *Daniel*, 183, n. 47, reject this identification first proposed by Shea. Miller states that the events probably occurred earlier in Nebuchadnezzar's reign, and Collins calls the identification "unwarranted," but neither Miller nor Collins gives any reason for his position. More controversial and much less certain is Shea's identification of three officials of Nebuchadnezzar listed on a clay prism as Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego (Shea, "Daniel 3," 37–41, 46–50).

⁴ BM 21946, reverse, line 21 (Wiseman, *Chronicles of Chaldean Kings*, 72–73).

⁵ BM 21946, reverse, line 22 (Wiseman, *Chronicles of Chaldean Kings*, 72–73).

⁶ BM 21946, reverse, lines 23–24 (Wiseman, *Chronicles of Chaldean Kings*, 72–73).

⁷ BM 21946, reverse, line 25 (Wiseman, *Chronicles of Chaldean Kings*, 74–75).

⁸ Official years of Judean kings were reckoned as beginning in the fall with the beginning of the month of Tishri. Thus Zedekiah's fourth year began on 1 Tishri 594 (October 6, 594), six months after the beginning of Nebuchadnezzar's eleventh year on 1 Nisan 594 (April 12, 594).

⁹ Jer 28:1 dates the false prophet Hananiah's prophecy recorded in Jeremiah 28 to the fifth month (Shebat) of the same year as the events recorded in Jeremiah 27.

¹⁰ Commentators who believe this include Archer, "Daniel," 50; Baldwin, *Daniel*, 99; Collins, *Daniel*, 183; Goldingay, *Daniel*, 73; Gowan, *Daniel*, 65; Leupold, *Daniel*, 135; Lucas, *Daniel*, 93; Miller, *Daniel*, 112; Montgomery, *Daniel*, 195; Walvoord, *Daniel*, 82; Young, *Daniel*, 88.

Ezekiel's Vision of God (July 31, 593 BC)

Ezekiel 1:1–3:14

Introduction

1:1 In the thirtieth year, on the fifth day of the fourth month, while I was among the exiles at the Kebar River, the heavens opened and I saw a divine vision.

2 (On the fifth day of the month—it was the fifth year of King Jehoiachin's exile—

3 the word of the LORD came to the priest Ezekiel the son of Buzi, at the Kebar River in the land of the Babylonians. The hand of the LORD came on him there).

The Windstorm

4 As I watched, I noticed a windstorm coming from the north—an enormous cloud, with lightning flashing, such that bright light rimmed it and came from it like glowing amber from the middle of a fire.

The Four Living Creatures

5 In the fire were what looked like four living beings. In their appearance they had human form,

6 but each had four faces and four wings.

7 Their legs were straight, but the soles of their feet were like calves' feet. They gleamed like polished bronze.

8 They had human hands under their wings on their four sides. As for the faces and wings of the four of them,

9 their wings touched each other; they did not turn as they moved, but went straight ahead.

10 Their faces had this appearance: Each of the four had the face of a man, with the face of a lion on the right, the face of an ox on the left and also the face of an eagle.

11 Their wings were spread out above them; each had two wings touching the wings of one of the other beings on either side and two wings covering their bodies.

12 Each moved straight ahead—wherever the spirit would go, they would go, without turning as they went.

13 In the middle of the living beings was something like burning coals of fire or like torches. It moved back and forth among the living beings. It was bright, and lightning was flashing out of the fire.

14 The living beings moved backward and forward as quickly as flashes of lightning.

The Wheels

15 Then I looked, and I saw one wheel on the ground beside each of the four beings.

16 The appearance of the wheels and their construction was like gleaming jasper, and all four wheels looked alike. Their structure was like a wheel within a wheel.

17 When they moved they would go in any of the four directions they faced without turning as they moved.

18 Their rims were high and awesome, and the rims of all four wheels were full of eyes all around.

19 When the living beings moved, the wheels beside them moved; when the living beings rose up from the ground, the wheels rose up too.

20 Wherever the spirit would go, they would go, and the wheels would rise up beside them because the spirit of the living being was in the wheel.

21 When the living beings moved, the wheels moved, and when they stopped moving, the wheels stopped. When they rose up from the ground, the wheels rose up from the ground; the wheels rose up beside them because the spirit of the living being was in the wheel.

The Platform

22 Over the heads of the living beings was something like a platform, glittering awesomely like ice, stretched out over their heads.

23 Under the platform their wings were stretched out, each toward the other. Each of the beings also had two wings covering its body.

24 When they moved, I heard the sound of their wings—it was like the sound of rushing waters, or the voice of the Almighty, or the tumult of an army. When they stood still, they lowered their wings.

25 Then there was a voice from above the platform over their heads when they stood still.

The Throne

26 Above the platform over their heads was something like a sapphire shaped like a throne. High above on the throne was a form that appeared to be a man.

27 I saw an amber glow like a fire enclosed all around from his waist up. From his waist down I saw something that looked like fire. There was a brilliant light around it,

28 like the appearance of a rainbow in the clouds after the rain. This was the appearance of the surrounding brilliant light; it looked like the glory of the LORD. When I saw it, I threw myself face down, and I heard a voice speaking.

God Sends Ezekiel to be His Prophet to the Exiles

2:1 He said to me, “Son of man, stand on your feet and I will speak with you.”

2 As he spoke to me, a wind came into me and stood me on my feet, and I heard the one speaking to me.

3 He said to me, “Son of man, I am sending you to the house of Israel, to rebellious nations who have rebelled against me; both they and their fathers have revolted against me to this very day.

4 The people to whom I am sending you are obstinate and hard-hearted, and you must say to them, ‘This is what the sovereign LORD says.’

5 And as for them, whether they listen or not—for they are a rebellious house—they will know that a prophet has been among them.

6 But you, son of man, do not fear them, and do not fear their words—even though briars and thorns surround you and you live among scorpions—do not fear their words and do not be terrified of the looks they give you, for they are a rebellious house!

7 You must speak my words to them whether they listen or not, for they are rebellious.

8 As for you, son of man, listen to what I am saying to you: Do not rebel like that rebellious house! Open your mouth and eat what I am giving you.”

9 Then I looked and realized a hand was stretched out to me, and in it was a written scroll.

10 He unrolled it before me, and it had writing on the front and back; written on it were laments, mourning, and woe.

Ezekiel and the Scroll

3:1 He said to me, “Son of man, eat what you see in front of you—eat this scroll—and then go and speak to the house of Israel.”

2 So I opened my mouth and he fed me the scroll.

3 He said to me, “Son of man, feed your stomach and fill your belly with this scroll I am giving to you.” So I ate it, and it was sweet like honey in my mouth.

4 He said to me, “Son of man, go to the house of Israel and speak my words to them.

5 For you are not being sent to a people of unintelligible speech and difficult language, but to the house of Israel—

6 not to many peoples of unintelligible speech and difficult language, whose words you cannot understand—surely if I had sent you to them, they would listen to you!

7 But the house of Israel is unwilling to listen to you, because they are not willing to listen to me, for the whole house of Israel is hard-headed and hard-hearted.

8 “I have made your face adamant to match their faces, and your forehead hard to match their foreheads.

9 I have made your forehead harder than flint—like diamond! Do not fear them or be terrified of the looks they give you, for they are a rebellious house.”

10 And he said to me, “Son of man, take all my words that I speak to you to heart and listen carefully.

11 Go to the exiles, to your fellow countrymen, and speak to them—say to them, ‘This is what the sovereign LORD says,’ whether they pay attention or not.”

12 Then a wind lifted me up and I heard a great rumbling sound behind me as the glory of the LORD rose from its place,

13 and the sound of the living beings’ wings brushing against each other, and the sound of the wheels alongside them, a great rumbling sound.

14 A wind lifted me up and carried me away. I went bitterly, my spirit full of fury, and the hand of the LORD rested powerfully on me.

Ezekiel Appointed as Watchman for Israel (August 6, 593 BC)**Ezekiel 3:15–27**

15 I came to the exiles at Tel Abib, who lived by the Kebar River. I sat dumbfounded among them there, where they were living, for seven days.

16 At the end of seven days the word of the LORD came to me:

17 “Son of man, I have appointed you a watchman for the house of Israel. Whenever you hear a word from my mouth, you must give them a warning from me.

18 When I say to the wicked, “You will certainly die,” and you do not warn him—you do not speak out to warn the wicked to turn from his wicked deed and wicked lifestyle so that he may live—that wicked person will die for his iniquity, but I will hold you accountable for his death.

19 But as for you, if you warn the wicked and he does not turn from his wicked deed and from his wicked lifestyle, he will die for his iniquity but you will have saved your own life.

20 “When a righteous person turns from his righteousness and commits iniquity, and I set an obstacle before him, he will die. If you have not warned him, he will die for his sin. The righteous deeds he performed will not be considered, but I will hold you accountable for his death.

21 However, if you warn the righteous person not to sin, and he does not sin, he will certainly live because he was warned, and you will have saved your own life.”

22 The hand of the LORD rested on me there, and he said to me, “Get up, go out to the valley, and I will speak with you there.”

23 So I got up and went out to the valley, and the glory of the LORD was standing there, just like the glory I had seen by the Kebar River, and I threw myself face down.

24 Then a wind came into me and stood me on my feet. The LORD spoke to me and said, “Go shut yourself in your house.

25 As for you, son of man, they will put ropes on you and tie you up with them, so you cannot go out among them.

26 I will make your tongue stick to the roof of your mouth so that you will be silent and unable to reprove them, for they are a rebellious house.

27 But when I speak with you, I will loosen your tongue and you must say to them, ‘This is what the sovereign LORD says.’ Those who listen will listen, but the indifferent will refuse, for they are a rebellious house.

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Chronological Notes

1) Ezekiel was exiled to Babylon with king Jehoiachin (2 Kgs 24:10–17; 2 Chr 36:10; Ezek 1:1–3), and his prophecies show a genuine concern to date the significant events he lived through. He measured these dates in terms of the captivity of Jehoiachin (Ezek 1:2).¹ The following dates are given:²

- 5th year, 4th month, 5th day (July 31, 593) – Ezek 1:2.
- 6th year, 6th month, 5th day (September 17, 592) – Ezek 8:1.
- 7th year, 5th month, 10th day (August 14, 591) – Ezek 20:1.
- 9th year, 10th month, 10th day (January 27, 589) – Ezek 24:1.
- 11th year, ? month, 1st day (September 18, 587) – Ezek 26:1.³
- 10th year, 10th month, 12th day (January 17, 588) – Ezek 29:1.⁴
- 27th year, 1st month, 1st day (April 26, 571) – Ezek 29:17.
- 11th year, 1st month, 7th day (April 29, 587) – Ezek 30:20.
- 11th year, 3rd month, 1st day (June 21, 587) – Ezek 31:1.
- 12th year, 12th month, 1st day (March 15, 586) – Ezek 32:1.
- 12th year, 12th month, 15th day (March 29, 586) – Ezek 32:17.
- 12th year, 10th month, 5th day (January 19, 586) – Ezek 33:21.⁵
- 25th year, 1st month, 10th day (November 2, 574) – Ezek 40:1.⁶

¹ The single exception to this rule is found in Ezekiel 1:1 in which Ezekiel makes reference to “the thirtieth year.” Block comments: “the explanation Origen proposed long ago remains the most likely: the *terminus a quo* is the year of the prophet’s own birth” (Daniel I. Block, “The Book of Ezekiel, Chapters 1–24,” *NICOT*, 82). However, I believe Hoeh makes an insightful suggestion when he says: “The original Hebrew expression is not a reference to the age of the prophet Ezekiel, but to the fifth year of the captivity of the king (593–592) would clearly be the thirtieth year of the renewal of the covenant which occurred, in the eighteenth year (622–621) of Josiah (2 Chr 34:8–33)” (Herman L. Hoeh, “When Did Nebuchadnezzar Conquer Jerusalem?” This paper was delivered at the Symposium of “Frontiers of Knowledge” at Ambassador College, Pasadena, California, 1976).

² All Julian dates are based on the computation of R. A. Parker and W. H. Dubberstein, *Babylonian Chronology 626 B.C.–A.D. 75*, BUS 19 (Providence: Brown University Press, 1956), p. 28. See also the online Babylonian Calendar Converter available at http://www.staff.science.uu.nl/~gent0113/babylon/babycal_converter.htm#converter.

³ The month is assumed to be the first month of the 11th year.

⁴ This is the first deviation from strict chronological order in the book of Ezekiel.

⁵ See the details of Rules 1, 3 and 7 in Rodger C. Young, “When Did Jerusalem Fall?” *JETS* 47.1 (Mar 2004): 26–27 where the length of time between Jerusalem’s fall and Ezekiel hearing from the fugitive is solved by the July 29, 587 date (it would be 18 months with the 586 date which commentators agree is too long [cf. Block]).

⁶ For confirmation that Ezekiel used the Tishri calendar and that the fall of Jerusalem is correctly dated to July 29, 587, see the following articles: Rodger C. Young, “Ezekiel 40:1 As a Corrective for Seven Wrong Ideas in Biblical Interpretation,” *AUSS*, Vol. 44, 265–283; Rodger C. Young, “When Did Jerusalem Fall?” *JETS* 47.1 (Mar 2004): 21–38.

Ezekiel's Prophecy to the Exiles—The Siege of Jerusalem (August 6, 593 BC)

Ezekiel 4

The Clay Brick

- 1 “And you, son of man, take a brick and set it in front of you. Inscribe a city on it—Jerusalem.
- 2 Lay siege to it! Build siege works against it. Erect a siege ramp against it! Post soldiers outside it and station battering rams around it.
- 3 Then for your part take an iron frying pan and set it up as an iron wall between you and the city. Set your face toward it. It is to be under siege; you are to besiege it. This is a sign for the house of Israel.
- 4 “Also for your part lie on your left side and place the iniquity of the house of Israel on it. For the number of days you lie on your side you will bear their iniquity.
- 5 I have determined that the number of the years of their iniquity are to be the number of days for you—390 days. So bear the iniquity of the house of Israel.
- 6 “When you have completed these days, then lie down a second time, but on your right side, and bear the iniquity of the house of Judah 40 days—I have assigned one day for each year.
- 7 You must turn your face toward the siege of Jerusalem with your arm bared and prophesy against it.
- 8 Look here, I will tie you up with ropes, so you cannot turn from one side to the other until you complete the days of your siege.

The Unclean Meal

- 9 “As for you, take wheat, barley, beans, lentils, millet, and spelt, put them in a single container, and make food from them for yourself. For the same number of days that you lie on your side—390 days—you will eat it.
- 10 The food you eat will be eight ounces a day by weight; you must eat it at fixed times.
- 11 And you must drink water by measure, a pint and a half; you must drink it at fixed times.
- 12 And you must eat the food like you would a barley cake. You must bake it in front of them over a fire made with dried human excrement.”
- 13 And the LORD said, “This is how the people of Israel will eat their unclean food among the nations where I will banish them.”
- 14 And I said, “Ah, sovereign LORD, I have never been ceremonially defiled before. I have never eaten a carcass or an animal torn by wild beasts; from my youth up, unclean meat has never entered my mouth.”
- 15 So he said to me, “All right then, I will substitute cow’s manure instead of human excrement. You will cook your food over it.”
- 16 Then he said to me, “Son of man, I am about to remove the bread supply in Jerusalem. They will eat their bread ration anxiously, and they will drink their water ration in terror
- 17 because they will lack bread and water. Each one will be terrified, and they will rot for their iniquity.

Ezekiel's Prophecy to the Exiles—The Fall of Jerusalem (August 6, 593 BC)

Ezekiel 5

The Shaved Head and Beard

- 1 “As for you, son of man, take a sharp sword and use it as a barber’s razor. Shave off some of the hair from your head and your beard. Then take scales and divide up the hair you cut off.
- 2 Burn a third of it in the fire inside the city when the days of your siege are completed. Take a third and slash it with a sword all around the city. Scatter a third to the wind, and I will unleash a sword behind them.
- 3 But take a few strands of hair from those and tie them in the ends of your garment.
- 4 Again, take more of them and throw them into the fire, and burn them up. From there a fire will spread to all the house of Israel.
- 5 “This is what the sovereign LORD says: This is Jerusalem; I placed her in the center of the nations with countries all around her.
- 6 Then she defied my regulations and my statutes, becoming more wicked than the nations and the countries around her. Indeed, they have rejected my regulations, and they do not follow my statutes.

First Announcement of Judgment on Jerusalem

- 7 “Therefore this is what the sovereign LORD says: Because you are more arrogant than the nations around you, you have not followed my statutes and have not carried out my regulations. You have not even carried out the regulations of the nations around you!
- 8 “Therefore this is what the sovereign LORD says: I—even I—am against you, and I will execute judgment among you while the nations watch.
- 9 I will do to you what I have never done before and will never do again because of all your abominable practices.
- 10 Therefore fathers will eat their sons within you, Jerusalem, and sons will eat their fathers. I will execute judgments on you, and I will scatter any survivors to the winds.

Second Announcement of Judgment on Jerusalem

- 11 “Therefore, as surely as I live, says the sovereign LORD, because you defiled my sanctuary with all your detestable idols and with

all your abominable practices, I will withdraw; my eye will not pity you, nor will I spare you.

12 A third of your people will die of plague or be overcome by the famine within you. A third of your people will fall by the sword surrounding you, and a third I will scatter to the winds. I will unleash a sword behind them.

13 Then my anger will be fully vented; I will exhaust my rage on them, and I will be appeased. Then they will know that I, the LORD, have spoken in my jealousy when I have fully vented my rage against them.

14 “I will make you desolate and an object of scorn among the nations around you, in the sight of everyone who passes by.

15 You will be an object of scorn and taunting, a prime example of destruction among the nations around you when I execute judgments against you in anger and raging fury. I, the LORD, have spoken!

16 I will shoot against them deadly, destructive arrows of famine, which I will shoot to destroy you. I will prolong a famine on you and will remove the bread supply.

17 I will send famine and wild beasts against you and they will take your children from you. Plague and bloodshed will overwhelm you, and I will bring a sword against you. I, the LORD, have spoken!”

Ezekiel’s Prophecy to the Exiles—Message to the Mountains (c. 592 BC)

Ezekiel 6

Destruction of All Idolatry

1 The word of the LORD came to me:

2 “Son of man, turn toward the mountains of Israel and prophesy against them:

3 Say, ‘Mountains of Israel, Hear the word of the sovereign LORD! This is what the sovereign LORD says to the mountains and the hills, to the ravines and the valleys: I am bringing a sword against you, and I will destroy your high places.

4 Your altars will be ruined and your incense altars will be broken. I will throw down your slain in front of your idols.

5 I will place the corpses of the people of Israel in front of their idols, and I will scatter your bones around your altars.

6 In all your dwellings, the cities will be laid waste and the high places ruined so that your altars will be laid waste and ruined, your idols will be shattered and demolished, your incense altars will be broken down, and your works wiped out.

7 The slain will fall among you and then you will know that I am the LORD.

“Then They Will Know”

8 “‘But I will spare some of you. Some will escape the sword when you are scattered in foreign lands.

9 Then your survivors will remember me among the nations where they are exiled. They will realize how I was crushed by their unfaithful heart which turned from me and by their eyes which lusted after their idols. They will loathe themselves because of the evil they have done and because of all their abominable practices.

10 They will know that I am the LORD; my threats to bring this catastrophe on them were not empty.’

11 “‘This is what the sovereign LORD says: Clap your hands, stamp your feet, and say, “Ah!” because of all the evil, abominable practices of the house of Israel, for they will fall by the sword, famine, and pestilence.

12 The one far away will die by pestilence, the one close by will fall by the sword, and whoever is left and has escaped these will die by famine. I will fully vent my rage against them.

13 Then you will know that I am the LORD—when their dead lie among their idols around their altars, on every high hill and all the mountaintops, under every green tree and every leafy oak, the places where they have offered fragrant incense to all their idols.

14 I will stretch out my hand against them and make the land a desolate waste from the wilderness to Riblah, in all the places where they live. Then they will know that I am the LORD!”

Ezekiel’s Prophecy to the Exiles—Disaster Is Coming (c. 592 BC)

Ezekiel 7

The First Alarm

1 The word of the LORD came to me:

2 “You, son of man—this is what the sovereign LORD says to the land of Israel: An end! The end is coming on the four corners of the land!

3 The end is now upon you, and I will release my anger against you; I will judge you according to your behavior, I will hold you accountable for all your abominable practices.

4 My eye will not pity you; I will not spare you. For I will hold you responsible for your behavior, and you will suffer the consequences of your abominable practices. Then you will know that I am the LORD!

The Second Alarm

5 “This is what the sovereign LORD says: A disaster—a one-of-a-kind disaster—is coming!

6 An end comes—the end comes! It has awakened against you—the end is upon you! Look, it is coming!

7 Doom is coming upon you who live in the land! The time is coming, the day is near. There are sounds of tumult, not shouts of joy,

on the mountains.

8 Soon now I will pour out my rage on you; I will fully vent my anger against you. I will judge you according to your behavior. I will hold you accountable for all your abominable practices.

9 My eye will not pity you; I will not spare you. For your behavior I will hold you accountable, and you will suffer the consequences of your abominable practices. Then you will know that it is I, the LORD, who is striking you.

The Third Alarm

10 “Look, the day! Look, it is coming! Doom has gone out! The staff has budded, pride has blossomed!

11 Violence has grown into a staff that supports wickedness. Not one of them will be left—not from their crowd, not from their wealth, not from their prominence.

12 The time has come; the day has struck! The customer should not rejoice, nor the seller mourn; for divine wrath comes against their whole crowd.

13 The customer will no longer pay the seller while both parties are alive, for the vision against their whole crowd will not be revoked. Each person, for his iniquity, will fail to preserve his life.

14 “They have blown the trumpet and everyone is ready, but no one goes to battle, because my anger is against their whole crowd.

15 The sword is outside; pestilence and famine are inside the house. Whoever is in the open field will die by the sword, and famine and pestilence will consume everyone in the city.

16 Their survivors will escape to the mountains and become like doves of the valleys; all of them will moan—each one for his iniquity.

17 All of their hands will hang limp; their knees will be wet with urine.

18 They will wear sackcloth, terror will cover them; shame will be on all their faces, and all of their heads will be shaved bald.

19 They will discard their silver in the streets, and their gold will be treated like filth. Their silver and gold will not be able to deliver them on the day of the LORD’s fury. They will not satisfy their hunger or fill their stomachs because their wealth was the obstacle leading to their iniquity.

20 They rendered the beauty of his ornaments into pride, and with it they made their abominable images—their detestable idols. Therefore I will render it filthy to them.

21 I will give it to foreigners as loot, to the world’s wicked ones as plunder, and they will desecrate it.

22 I will turn my face away from them and they will desecrate my treasured place. Vandals will enter it and desecrate it.

23 (Make the chain, because the land is full of murder and the city is full of violence.)

24 I will bring the most wicked of the nations and they will take possession of their houses. I will put an end to the arrogance of the strong, and their sanctuaries will be desecrated.

25 Terror is coming! They will seek peace, but find none.

26 Disaster after disaster will come, and one rumor after another. They will seek a vision from a prophet; priestly instruction will disappear, along with counsel from the elders.

27 The king will mourn and the prince will be clothed with shuddering; the hands of the people of the land will tremble. Based on their behavior I will deal with them, and by their standard of justice I will judge them. Then they will know that I am the LORD!”

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Ezekiel's Prophecy to the Exiles—A Vision of the Departure of God's Glory (September 17, 592 BC)**Ezekiel 8–11****Introduction to the Visions**

8:1 In the sixth year, in the sixth month, on the fifth of the month, as I was sitting in my house with the elders of Judah sitting in front of me, the hand of the sovereign LORD seized me.

The Idol of Jealousy

2 As I watched, I noticed a form that appeared to be a man. From his waist downward was something like fire, and from his waist upward something like a brightness, like an amber glow.

3 He stretched out the form of a hand and grabbed me by a lock of hair on my head. Then a wind lifted me up between the earth and sky and brought me to Jerusalem by means of divine visions, to the door of the inner gate which faces north where the statue which provokes to jealousy was located.

4 Then I perceived that the glory of the God of Israel was there, as in the vision I had seen earlier in the valley.

5 He said to me, "Son of man, look up toward the north." So I looked up toward the north, and I noticed to the north of the altar gate was this statue of jealousy at the entrance.

6 He said to me, "Son of man, do you see what they are doing—the great abominations that the people of Israel are practicing here, to drive me far from my sanctuary? But you will see greater abominations than these!"

Idol Worship by the Elders

7 He brought me to the entrance of the court, and as I watched, I noticed a hole in the wall.

8 He said to me, "Son of man, dig into the wall." So I dug into the wall and discovered a doorway.

9 He said to me, "Go in and see the evil abominations they are practicing here."

10 So I went in and looked. I noticed every figure of creeping thing and beast—detestable images—and every idol of the house of Israel, engraved on the wall all around.

11 Seventy men from the elders of the house of Israel (with Jaazaniah son of Shaphan standing among them) were standing in front of them, each with a censer in his hand, and fragrant vapors from a cloud of incense were swirling upward.

12 He said to me, "Do you see, son of man, what the elders of the house of Israel are doing in the dark, each in the chamber of his idolatrous images? For they think, 'The LORD does not see us! The LORD has abandoned the land!'"

13 He said to me, "You will see them practicing even greater abominations!"

Idol Worship by the Women

14 Then he brought me to the entrance of the north gate of the LORD's house. I noticed women sitting there weeping for Tammuz.

15 He said to me, "Do you see this, son of man? You will see even greater abominations than these!"

Worshipping the Sun

16 Then he brought me to the inner court of the LORD's house. Right there at the entrance to the LORD's temple, between the porch and the altar, were about twenty-five men with their backs to the LORD's temple, facing east—they were worshipping the sun toward the east!

17 He said to me, "Do you see, son of man? Is it a trivial thing that the house of Judah commits these abominations they are practicing here? For they have filled the land with violence and provoked me to anger still further. Look, they are putting the branch to their nose!

18 Therefore I will act with fury! My eye will not pity them nor will I spare them. When they have shouted in my ears, I will not listen to them."

The Heavenly Executioners

9:1 Then he shouted in my ears, "Approach, you who are to visit destruction on the city, each with his destructive weapon in his hand!"

2 Next, I noticed six men coming from the direction of the upper gate which faces north, each with his war club in his hand. Among them was a man dressed in linen with a writing kit at his side. They came and stood beside the bronze altar.

3 Then the glory of the God of Israel went up from the cherub where it had rested to the threshold of the temple. He called to the man dressed in linen who had the writing kit at his side.

4 The LORD said to him, "Go through the city of Jerusalem and put a mark on the foreheads of the people who moan and groan over all the abominations practiced in it."

5 While I listened, he said to the others, "Go through the city after him and strike people down; do not let your eye pity nor spare anyone!"

6 Old men, young men, young women, little children, and women—wipe them out! But do not touch anyone who has the mark. Begin at my sanctuary!" So they began with the elders who were at the front of the temple.

7 He said to them, "Defile the temple and fill the courtyards with corpses. Go!" So they went out and struck people down

throughout the city.

8 While they were striking them down, I was left alone, and I threw myself face down and cried out, “Ah, sovereign LORD! Will you destroy the entire remnant of Israel when you pour out your fury on Jerusalem?”

9 He said to me, “The sin of the house of Israel and Judah is extremely great; the land is full of murder, and the city is full of corruption, for they say, ‘The LORD has abandoned the land, and the LORD does not see!’

10 But as for me, my eye will not pity them nor will I spare them; I hereby repay them for what they have done.”

11 Next I noticed the man dressed in linen with the writing kit at his side bringing back word: “I have done just as you commanded me.”

God’s Glory Leaves the Most Holy Place

10:1 As I watched, I saw on the platform above the top of the cherubim something like a sapphire, resembling the shape of a throne, appearing above them.

2 The LORD said to the man dressed in linen, “Go between the wheelwork underneath the cherubim. Fill your hands with burning coals from among the cherubim and scatter them over the city.” He went as I watched.

3 (The cherubim were standing on the south side of the temple when the man went in, and a cloud filled the inner court.)

4 Then the glory of the LORD arose from the cherub [inside the Most Holy Place] and moved to the threshold of the temple. The temple was filled with the cloud while the court was filled with the brightness of the LORD’s glory. [cf. 9:3]

5 The sound of the wings of the cherubim could be heard from the outer court, like the sound of the sovereign God when he speaks.

6 When the LORD commanded the man dressed in linen, “Take fire from within the wheelwork, from among the cherubim,” the man went in and stood by one of the wheels.

7 Then one of the cherubim stretched out his hand toward the fire which was among the cherubim. He took some and put it into the hands of the man dressed in linen, who took it and left.

8 (The cherubim appeared to have the form of human hands under their wings.)

God’s Glory Leaves the Temple

9 As I watched, I noticed four wheels by the cherubim, one wheel beside each cherub; the wheels gleamed like jasper.

10 As for their appearance, all four of them looked the same, something like a wheel within a wheel.

11 When they moved, they would go in any of the four directions they faced without turning as they moved; in the direction the head would turn they would follow without turning as they moved,

12 along with their entire bodies, their backs, their hands, and their wings. The wheels of the four of them were full of eyes all around.

13 As for their wheels, they were called “the wheelwork” as I listened.

14 Each of the cherubim had four faces: The first was the face of a cherub, the second that of a man, the third that of a lion, and the fourth that of an eagle.

15 The cherubim rose up; these were the living beings I saw at the Kebar River.

16 When the cherubim moved, the wheels moved beside them; when the cherubim spread their wings to rise from the ground, the wheels did not move from their side.

17 When the cherubim stood still, the wheels stood still, and when they rose up, the wheels rose up with them, for the spirit of the living beings was in the wheels.

18 Then the glory of the LORD moved away from the threshold of the temple and stopped above the cherubim.

19 The cherubim spread their wings, and they rose up from the earth while I watched (when they went the wheels went alongside them). They stopped at the entrance to the east gate of the LORD’s temple as the glory of the God of Israel hovered above them.

20 These were the living creatures which I saw at the Kebar River underneath the God of Israel; I knew that they were cherubim.

21 Each had four faces; each had four wings and the form of human hands under the wings.

22 As for the form of their faces, they were the faces whose appearance I had seen at the Kebar River. Each one moved straight ahead.

The Wicked Advice of the Officials

11:1 A wind lifted me up and brought me to the east gate of the Lord’s temple that faces the east. There, at the entrance of the gate, I noticed twenty-five men. Among them I saw Jaazaniah son of Azzur and Pelatiah son of Benaiah, officials of the people.

2 The LORD said to me, “Son of man, these are the men who plot evil and give wicked advice in this city.

3 They say, ‘The time is not near to build houses; the city is a cooking pot and we are the meat in it.’

4 Therefore, prophesy against them! Prophesy, son of man!”

5 Then the Spirit of the LORD came upon me and said to me, “Say: This is what the LORD says: ‘This is what you are thinking, O house of Israel; I know what goes through your minds.

6 You have killed many people in this city; you have filled its streets with corpses.’

7 Therefore, this is what the sovereign LORD says: ‘The corpses you have dumped in the midst of the city are the meat, and this city is the cooking pot, but I will take you out of it.

8 You fear the sword, so the sword I will bring against you,' declares the sovereign LORD.

9 'But I will take you out of the city. And I will hand you over to foreigners. I will execute judgments on you.

10 You will die by the sword; I will judge you at the border of Israel. Then you will know that I am the LORD.

11 This city will not be a cooking pot for you, and you will not be meat within it; I will judge you at the border of Israel.

12 Then you will know that I am the LORD, whose statutes you have not followed and whose regulations you have not carried out. Instead you have behaved according to the regulations of the nations around you!"

13 Now, while I was prophesying, Pelatiah son of Benaiah died. Then I threw myself face down and cried out with a loud voice, "Alas, sovereign LORD! You are completely wiping out the remnant of Israel!"

A New Heart for the Regathered Remnant

14 Then the word of the LORD came to me:

15 "Son of man, your brothers, your relatives, and the whole house of Israel, all of them are those to whom the inhabitants of Jerusalem have said, 'They have gone far away from the LORD; to us this land has been given as a possession.'

16 "Therefore say: 'This is what the sovereign LORD says: Although I have removed them far away among the nations and have dispersed them among the countries, I have been a little sanctuary for them among the lands where they have gone.'

17 "Therefore say: 'This is what the sovereign LORD says: When I regather you from the peoples and assemble you from the lands where you have been dispersed, I will give you back the country of Israel.'

18 "When they return to it, they will remove from it all its detestable things and all its abominations.

19 I will give them one heart and I will put a new spirit within them; I will remove the hearts of stone from their bodies and I will give them tender hearts,

20 so that they may follow my statutes and observe my regulations and carry them out. Then they will be my people, and I will be their God.

21 But those whose hearts are devoted to detestable things and abominations, I hereby repay them for what they have done, says the sovereign LORD."

God's Glory Leaves Jerusalem

22 Then the cherubim spread their wings with their wheels alongside them while the glory of the God of Israel hovered above them.

23 The glory of the LORD rose up from within the city and stopped over the mountain east of it.

The End of the Visions

24 Then a wind lifted me up and carried me to the exiles in Babylonia, in the vision given to me by the Spirit of God. Then the vision I had seen went up from me.

25 So I told the exiles everything the LORD had shown me.

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Ezekiel's Prophecy to the Exiles—Ezekiel's Playacting (c. late 592 BC)

Ezekiel 12

Packed for Exile

- 1 The word of the LORD came to me:
 2 "Son of man, you are living in the midst of a rebellious house. They have eyes to see, but do not see, and ears to hear, but do not hear, because they are a rebellious house.
 3 "Therefore, son of man, pack up your belongings as if for exile. During the day, while they are watching, pretend to go into exile. Go from where you live to another place. Perhaps they will understand, although they are a rebellious house.
 4 Bring out your belongings packed for exile during the day while they are watching. And go out at evening, while they are watching, as if for exile.
 5 While they are watching, dig a hole in the wall and carry your belongings out through it.
 6 While they are watching, raise your baggage onto your shoulder and carry it out in the dark. You must cover your face so that you cannot see the ground because I have made you an object lesson to the house of Israel."
 7 So I did just as I was commanded. I carried out my belongings packed for exile during the day, and at evening I dug myself a hole through the wall with my hands. I went out in the darkness, carrying my baggage on my shoulder while they watched.
 8 The word of the LORD came to me in the morning:
 9 "Son of man, has not the house of Israel, that rebellious house, said to you, 'What are you doing?'
 10 Say to them, 'This is what the sovereign LORD says: The prince will raise this burden in Jerusalem, and all the house of Israel within it.'
 11 Say, 'I am an object lesson for you. Just as I have done, it will be done to them; they will go into exile and captivity.'
 12 "The prince who is among them will raise his belongings onto his shoulder in darkness, and will go out. He will dig a hole in the wall to leave through. He will cover his face so that he cannot see the land with his eyes. [cf. [2 Kgs 25:4](#); [Jer 39:4](#); [52:7](#)]
 13 But I will throw my net over him, and he will be caught in my snare. I will bring him to Babylon, the land of the Chaldeans (but he will not see it), and there he will die. [cf. [2 Kgs 25:5–7](#); [Jer 39:5](#); [52:7–8](#)]
 14 All his retinue—his attendants and his troops—I will scatter to every wind; I will unleash a sword behind them.
 15 "Then they will know that I am the LORD when I disperse them among the nations and scatter them among foreign countries.
 16 But I will let a small number of them survive the sword, famine, and pestilence, so that they can confess all their abominable practices to the nations where they go. Then they will know that I am the LORD."

Pantomime of Terror

- 17 The word of the LORD came to me:
 18 "Son of man, eat your bread with trembling, and drink your water with anxious shaking.
 19 Then say to the people of the land, 'This is what the sovereign LORD says about the inhabitants of Jerusalem and of the land of Israel: They will eat their bread with anxiety and drink their water in fright, for their land will be stripped bare of all it contains because of the violence of all who live in it.
 20 The inhabited towns will be left in ruins and the land will be devastated. Then you will know that I am the LORD.'"

God Ends a Proverb

- 21 The word of the LORD came to me:
 22 "Son of man, what is this proverb you have in the land of Israel, 'The days pass slowly, and every vision fails?'
 23 Therefore tell them, 'This is what the sovereign LORD says: I hereby end this proverb; they will not recite it in Israel any longer.' But say to them, 'The days are at hand when every vision will be fulfilled.
 24 For there will no longer be any false visions or flattering omens amidst the house of Israel.
 25 For I, the LORD, will speak. Whatever word I speak will be accomplished. It will not be delayed any longer. Indeed in your days, O rebellious house, I will speak the word and accomplish it, declares the sovereign LORD.'"

Ezekiel Confirms the Imminence of His Prophecies

- 26 The word of the LORD came to me:
 27 "Take note, son of man, the house of Israel is saying, 'The vision that he sees is for distant days; he is prophesying about the far future.'
 28 Therefore say to them, 'This is what the sovereign LORD says: None of my words will be delayed any longer! The word I speak will come to pass, declares the sovereign LORD.'"

Ezekiel's Prophecy to the Exiles—False Prophets (c. late 592 BC)

Ezekiel 13

Charges against False Prophets

- 1 Then the word of the LORD came to me:
 2 "Son of man, prophesy against the prophets of Israel who are now prophesying. Say to the prophets who prophesy from their

imagination: 'Hear the word of the LORD!

3 This is what the sovereign LORD says: Woe to the foolish prophets who follow their own spirit but have seen nothing!

4 Your prophets have become like jackals among the ruins, O Israel.

5 You have not gone up in the breaks in the wall, nor repaired a wall for the house of Israel that it would stand strong in the battle on the day of the LORD.

6 They see delusion and their omens are a lie. They say, "the LORD declares," though the LORD has not sent them; yet they expect their word to be confirmed.

7 Have you not seen a false vision and announced a lying omen when you say, "the LORD declares," although I myself never spoke?

Judgment on False Prophets

8 "Therefore, this is what the sovereign LORD says: Because you have spoken false words and forecast delusion, look, I am against you, declares the sovereign LORD.

9 My hand will be against the prophets who see delusion and announce lying omens. They will not be included in the council of my people, nor be written in the registry of the house of Israel, nor enter the land of Israel. Then you will know that I am the sovereign LORD.

10 "This is because they have led my people astray saying, "All is well," when things are not well. When anyone builds a wall without mortar, they coat it with whitewash.

11 Tell the ones who coat it with whitewash that it will fall. When there is a deluge of rain, hailstones will fall and a violent wind will break out.

12 When the wall has collapsed, people will ask you, "Where is the whitewash you coated it with?"

13 "Therefore this is what the sovereign LORD says: In my rage I will make a violent wind break out. In my anger there will be a deluge of rain and hailstones in destructive fury.

14 I will break down the wall you coated with whitewash and knock it to the ground so that its foundation is exposed. When it falls you will be destroyed beneath it, and you will know that I am the LORD.

15 I will vent my rage against the wall, and against those who coated it with whitewash. Then I will say to you, "The wall is no more and those who whitewashed it are no more—

16 those prophets of Israel who would prophesy about Jerusalem and would see visions of peace for it, when there was no peace," declares the sovereign LORD.' [cf. [Acts 23:3](#)]

Charges against False Prophetesses

17 "As for you, son of man, turn toward the daughters of your people who are prophesying from their imagination. Prophesy against them

18 and say 'This is what the sovereign LORD says: Woe to those who sew bands on all their wrists and make headbands for heads of every size to entrap people's lives! Will you entrap my people's lives, yet preserve your own lives?

19 You have profaned me among my people for handfuls of barley and scraps of bread. You have put to death people who should not die and kept alive those who should not live by your lies to my people, who listen to lies!

Judgment on False Prophetesses

20 "Therefore, this is what the sovereign LORD says: Take note that I am against your wristbands with which you entrap people's lives like birds. I will tear them from your arms and will release the people's lives, which you hunt like birds.

21 I will tear off your headbands and rescue my people from your power; they will no longer be prey in your hands. Then you will know that I am the LORD.

22 This is because you have disheartened the righteous person with lies (although I have not grieved him), and because you have encouraged the wicked person not to turn from his evil conduct and preserve his life.

23 Therefore you will no longer see false visions and practice divination. I will rescue my people from your power, and you will know that I am the LORD."

Ezekiel's Prophecy to the Exiles—Noah, Daniel and Job (c. late 592 BC)

Ezekiel 14

God Will Deal Personally with the Hypocrisy of the Elders

1 Then some men from Israel's elders came to me and sat down in front of me.

2 The word of the LORD came to me:

3 "Son of man, these men have erected their idols in their hearts and placed the obstacle leading to their iniquity right before their faces. Should I really allow them to seek me?

4 Therefore speak to them and say to them, 'This is what the sovereign LORD says: When any one from the house of Israel erects his idols in his heart and sets the obstacle leading to his iniquity before his face, and then consults a prophet, I the LORD am determined to answer him personally according to the enormity of his idolatry.

5 I will do this in order to capture the hearts of the house of Israel, who have alienated themselves from me on account of all their

idols.’

6 “Therefore say to the house of Israel, ‘This is what the sovereign LORD says: Return! Turn from your idols, and turn your faces away from your abominations.

7 For when anyone from the house of Israel, or the foreigner who lives in Israel, separates himself from me and erects his idols in his heart and sets the obstacle leading to his iniquity before his face, and then consults a prophet to seek something from me, I the LORD am determined to answer him personally.

8 I will set my face against that person and will make him an object lesson and a byword and will cut him off from among my people. Then you will know that I am the LORD.

9 “‘As for the prophet, if he is made a fool by being deceived into speaking a prophetic word—I, the LORD, have made a fool of that prophet, and I will stretch out my hand against him and destroy him from among my people Israel.

10 They will bear their punishment; the punishment of the one who sought an oracle will be the same as the punishment of the prophet who gave it

11 so that the house of Israel will no longer go astray from me, nor continue to defile themselves by all their sins. They will be my people and I will be their God, declares the sovereign LORD.”

Jerusalem’s Four Terrible Judgments

12 The word of the LORD came to me:

13 “Son of man, suppose a country sins against me by being unfaithful, and I stretch out my hand against it, cut off its bread supply, cause famine to come on it, and kill both people and animals.

14 Even if these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they would save only their own lives by their righteousness, declares the sovereign LORD.

15 “Suppose I were to send wild animals through the land and kill its children, leaving it desolate, without travelers due to the wild animals.

16 Even if these three men were in it, as surely as I live, declares the sovereign LORD, they could not save their own sons or daughters; they would save only their own lives, and the land would become desolate.

17 “Or suppose I were to bring a sword against that land and say, ‘Let a sword pass through the land,’ and I were to kill both people and animals.

18 Even if these three men were in it, as surely as I live, declares the sovereign LORD, they could not save their own sons or daughters—they would save only their own lives.

19 “Or suppose I were to send a plague into that land, and pour out my rage on it with bloodshed, killing both people and animals.

20 Even if Noah, Daniel, and Job were in it, as surely as I live, declares the sovereign LORD, they could not save their own son or daughter; they would save only their own lives by their righteousness.

21 “For this is what the sovereign LORD says: How much worse will it be when I send my four terrible judgments—sword, famine, wild animals, and plague—to Jerusalem to kill both people and animals!

22 Yet some survivors will be left in it, sons and daughters who will be brought out. They will come out to you, and when you see their behavior and their deeds, you will be consoled about the catastrophe I have brought on Jerusalem—for everything I brought on it.

23 They will console you when you see their behavior and their deeds, because you will know that it was not without reason that I have done everything which I have done in it, declares the sovereign LORD.”

Ezekiel’s Prophecy to the Exiles—The Useless Vine (c. late 592 BC)

Ezekiel 15

1 The word of the LORD came to me:

2 “Son of man, of all the woody branches among the trees of the forest, what happens to the wood of the vine?

3 Can wood be taken from it to make anything useful? Or can anyone make a peg from it to hang things on?

4 No! It is thrown in the fire for fuel; when the fire has burned up both ends of it and it is charred in the middle, will it be useful for anything?

5 Indeed! If it was not made into anything useful when it was whole, how much less can it be made into anything when the fire has burned it up and it is charred?

6 “Therefore, this is what the sovereign LORD says: Like the wood of the vine is among the trees of the forest which I have provided as fuel for the fire—so I will provide the residents of Jerusalem as fuel.

7 I will set my face against them—although they have escaped from the fire, the fire will still consume them! Then you will know that I am the LORD, when I set my face against them.

8 I will make the land desolate because they have acted unfaithfully, declares the sovereign LORD.”

Ezekiel's Prophecy to the Exiles—Jerusalem: The Adulterous Wife (c. late 592 BC)**Ezekiel 16****Jerusalem's Lowly Origins**

- 1 The word of the LORD came to me:
2 "Son of man, confront Jerusalem with her abominable practices
3 and say, 'This is what the sovereign LORD says to Jerusalem: Your origin and your birth were in the land of the Canaanites; your father was an Amorite and your mother a Hittite.
4 As for your birth, on the day you were born your umbilical cord was not cut, nor were you washed in water; you were certainly not rubbed down with salt, nor wrapped with blankets.
5 No eye took pity on you to do even one of these things for you to spare you; you were thrown out into the open field because you were detested on the day you were born.

Yahweh's Compassion

- 6 "'I passed by you and saw you kicking around helplessly in your blood. I said to you as you lay there in your blood, "Live!" I said to you as you lay there in your blood, "Live!"
7 I made you plentiful like sprouts in a field; you grew tall and came of age so that you could wear jewelry. Your breasts had formed and your hair had grown, but you were still naked and bare.
8 "'Then I passed by you and watched you, noticing that you had reached the age for love. I spread my cloak over you and covered your nakedness. I swore a solemn oath to you and entered into a marriage covenant with you, declares the sovereign LORD, and you became mine.
9 "'Then I bathed you in water, washed the blood off you, and anointed you with fragrant oil.
10 I dressed you in embroidered clothing and put fine leather sandals on your feet. I wrapped you with fine linen and covered you with silk.
11 I adorned you with jewelry. I put bracelets on your hands and a necklace around your neck.
12 I put a ring in your nose, earrings on your ears, and a beautiful crown on your head.
13 You were adorned with gold and silver, while your clothing was of fine linen, silk, and embroidery. You ate the finest flour, honey, and olive oil. You became extremely beautiful and attained the position of royalty.
14 Your fame spread among the nations because of your beauty; your beauty was perfect because of the splendor which I bestowed on you, declares the sovereign LORD.

Jerusalem's Religious Promiscuity

- 15 "'But you trusted in your beauty and capitalized on your fame by becoming a prostitute. You offered your sexual favors to every man who passed by so that your beauty became his.
16 You took some of your clothing and made for yourself decorated high places; you engaged in prostitution on them. You went to him to become his.
17 You also took your beautiful jewelry, made of my gold and my silver I had given to you, and made for yourself male images and engaged in prostitution with them.
18 You took your embroidered clothing and used it to cover them; you offered my olive oil and my incense to them.
19 As for my food that I gave you—the fine flour, olive oil, and honey I fed you—you placed it before them as a soothing aroma. That is exactly what happened, declares the sovereign LORD.
20 "'You took your sons and your daughters whom you bore to me and you sacrificed them as food for the idols to eat. As if your prostitution was not enough,
21 you slaughtered my children and sacrificed them to the idols.
22 And with all your abominable practices and prostitution you did not remember the days of your youth when you were naked and bare, kicking around in your blood.

Jerusalem's Political Promiscuity

- 23 "'After all of your evil—"Woe! Woe to you!" declares the sovereign LORD—
24 you built yourself a chamber and put up a pavilion in every public square.
25 At the head of every street you erected your pavilion and you disgraced your beauty when you spread your legs to every passerby and multiplied your promiscuity.
26 You engaged in prostitution with the Egyptians, your sexually aroused neighbors, multiplying your promiscuity and provoking me to anger.
27 So see here, I have stretched out my hand against you and cut off your rations. I have delivered you into the power of those who hate you, the daughters of the Philistines, who were ashamed by your obscene conduct.
28 You engaged in prostitution with the Assyrians because your sexual desires were insatiable; you prostituted yourself with them and yet you were still not satisfied.
29 Then you multiplied your promiscuity to the land of merchants, Babylonia, but you were not satisfied there either.

30 “How sick is your heart, declares the sovereign LORD, when you perform all of these acts, the deeds of a bold prostitute.
31 When you built your chamber at the head of every street and put up your pavilion in every public square, you were not like a prostitute, because you scoffed at payment.
32 “Adulterous wife, who prefers strangers instead of her own husband!
33 All prostitutes receive payment, but instead you give gifts to every one of your lovers. You bribe them to come to you from all around for your sexual favors!
34 You were different from other prostitutes because no one solicited you. When you gave payment and no payment was given to you, you became the opposite!

The Sentencing of Jerusalem

35 “Therefore O prostitute, hear the word of the LORD:
36 This is what the sovereign LORD says: Because your lust was poured out and your nakedness was uncovered in your prostitution with your lovers, and because of all your detestable idols, and because of the blood of your children you have given to them,
37 therefore, take note: I am about to gather all your lovers whom you enjoyed, both all those you loved and all those you hated. I will gather them against you from all around, and I will expose your nakedness to them, and they will see all your nakedness.
38 I will punish you as an adulteress and murderer deserves. I will avenge your bloody deeds with furious rage.
39 I will give you into their hands and they will destroy your chambers and tear down your pavilions. They will strip you of your clothing and take your beautiful jewelry and leave you naked and bare.
40 They will summon a mob who will stone you and hack you in pieces with their swords.
41 They will burn down your houses and execute judgments on you in front of many women. Thus I will put a stop to your prostitution, and you will no longer give gifts to your clients.
42 I will exhaust my rage on you, and then my fury will turn from you. I will calm down and no longer be angry.
43 “Because you did not remember the days of your youth and have enraged me with all these deeds, I hereby repay you for what you have done, declares the sovereign LORD. Have you not engaged in prostitution on top of all your other abominable practices?

Like Mother, Like Daughter

44 “Observe—everyone who quotes proverbs will quote this proverb about you: “Like mother, like daughter.”
45 You are the daughter of your mother, who detested her husband and her sons, and you are the sister of your sisters who detested their husbands and their sons. Your mother was a Hittite and your father an Amorite.
46 Your older sister was Samaria, who lived north of you with her daughters, and your younger sister, who lived south of you, was Sodom with her daughters.
47 Have you not copied their behavior and practiced their abominable deeds? In a short time you became even more depraved in all your conduct than they were!
48 As surely as I live, declares the sovereign LORD, your sister Sodom and her daughters never behaved as wickedly as you and your daughters have behaved.
49 “See here—this was the iniquity of your sister Sodom: She and her daughters had majesty, abundance of food, and enjoyed carefree ease, but they did not help the poor and needy.
50 They were haughty and practiced abominable deeds before me. Therefore when I saw it I removed them.
51 Samaria has not committed half the sins you have; you have done more abominable deeds than they did. You have made your sisters appear righteous with all the abominable things you have done.
52 So now, bear your disgrace, because you have given your sisters reason to justify their behavior. Because the sins you have committed were more abominable than those of your sisters; they have become more righteous than you. So now, be ashamed and bear the disgrace of making your sisters appear righteous.

The Double Ray of Hope

53 “I will restore their fortunes, the fortunes of Sodom and her daughters, and the fortunes of Samaria and her daughters (along with your fortunes among them),
54 so that you may bear your disgrace and be ashamed of all you have done in consoling them.
55 As for your sisters, Sodom and her daughters will be restored to their former status, Samaria and her daughters will be restored to their former status, and you and your daughters will be restored to your former status.
56 In your days of majesty, was not Sodom your sister a byword in your mouth,
57 before your evil was exposed? Now you have become an object of scorn to the daughters of Aram and all those around her and to the daughters of the Philistines—those all around you who despise you.
58 You must bear your punishment for your obscene conduct and your abominable practices, declares the LORD.

The Future New Covenant

59 “For this is what the sovereign LORD says: I will deal with you according to what you have done when you despised your oath by breaking your covenant.

60 Yet I will remember the covenant I made with you in the days of your youth, and I will establish a lasting covenant with you.
 61 Then you will remember your conduct, and be ashamed when you receive your older and younger sisters. I will give them to you as daughters, but not on account of my covenant with you.
 62 I will establish my covenant with you, and then you will know that I am the LORD.
 63 Then you will remember, be ashamed, and remain silent when I make atonement for all you have done, declares the sovereign LORD.”

Ezekiel's Prophecy to the Exiles—The Eagles and the Vine (c. late 592 BC)

Ezekiel 17

The Parable of the Two Eagles

1 The word of the LORD came to me:
 2 “Son of man, offer a riddle, and tell a parable to the house of Israel.
 3 Say to them: ‘This is what the sovereign LORD says:
 “A great eagle with broad wings, long feathers,
 with full plumage which was multi-hued,
 came to Lebanon and took the top of the cedar.
 4 He plucked off its topmost shoot;
 he brought it to a land of merchants
 and planted it in a city of traders.
 5 He took one of the seedlings of the land,
 placed it in a cultivated plot;
 a shoot by abundant water,
 like a willow he planted it.
 6 It sprouted and became a vine,
 spreading low to the ground;
 its branches turning toward him, its roots were under itself.
 So it became a vine; it produced shoots and sent out branches.
 7 “There was another great eagle
 with broad wings and thick plumage.
 Now this vine twisted its roots toward him
 and sent its branches toward him
 to be watered from the soil where it was planted.
 8 In a good field, by abundant waters, it was planted
 to grow branches, bear fruit, and become a beautiful vine.
 9 “Say to them: This is what the sovereign LORD says:

“Will it prosper?
 Will he not rip out its roots
 and cause its fruit to rot and wither?
 All its foliage will wither.
 No strong arm or large army
 will be needed to pull it out by its roots.
 10 Consider! It is planted, but will it prosper?
 Will it not wither completely when the east wind blows on it?
 Will it not wither in the soil where it sprouted?”

The Interpretation of the Parable

11 Then the word of the LORD came to me:
 12 “Say to the rebellious house of Israel: ‘Don’t you know what these things mean?’ Say: ‘See here, the king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and took her king and her officials prisoner and brought them to himself in Babylon.
 13 He took one from the royal family, made a treaty with him, and put him under oath. He then took the leaders of the land
 14 so it would be a lowly kingdom which could not rise on its own but must keep its treaty with him in order to stand.
 15 But this one from Israel’s royal family rebelled against the king of Babylon by sending his emissaries to Egypt to obtain horses and a large army. Will he prosper? Will the one doing these things escape? Can he break the covenant and escape?
 16 “As surely as I live, declares the sovereign LORD, surely in the city of the king who crowned him, whose oath he despised and

whose covenant he broke—in the middle of Babylon he will die!

17 Pharaoh with his great army and mighty horde will not help him in battle, when siege ramps are erected and siege-walls are built to kill many people.

18 He despised the oath by breaking the covenant. Take note—he gave his promise and did all these things—he will not escape!

19 “Therefore this is what the sovereign LORD says: As surely as I live, I will certainly repay him for despising my oath and breaking my covenant!

20 I will throw my net over him and he will be caught in my snare; I will bring him to Babylon and judge him there because of the unfaithfulness he committed against me.

21 All the choice men among his troops will die by the sword and the survivors will be scattered to every wind. Then you will know that I, the LORD, have spoken!

Epilogue—The New Cedar

22 “This is what the sovereign LORD says:

“I will take a sprig from the lofty top of the cedar and plant it.

I will pluck from the top one of its tender twigs;

I myself will plant it on a high and lofty mountain.

23 I will plant it on a high mountain of Israel,

and it will raise branches and produce fruit and become a beautiful cedar.

Every bird will live under it;

Every winged creature will live in the shade of its branches.

24 All the trees of the field will know that I am the LORD.

I make the high tree low; I raise up the low tree.

I make the green tree wither, and I make the dry tree sprout.

I, the LORD, have spoken, and I will do it!”

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Ezekiel's Prophecy to the Exiles—Individual Responsibility and Retribution (c. late 592 BC)

Ezekiel 18

Israel's Proverb

1 The word of the LORD came to me:

2 "What do you mean by quoting this proverb concerning the land of Israel,

"The fathers eat sour grapes

And the children's teeth become numb?"

3 "As surely as I live, declares the sovereign LORD, you will not quote this proverb in Israel anymore!

4 Indeed! All lives are mine—the life of the father as well as the life of the son is mine. The one who sins will die.

A Righteous Man's Wicked Son

5 "Suppose a man is righteous. He practices what is just and right,

6 does not eat pagan sacrifices on the mountains or pray to the idols of the house of Israel, does not defile his neighbor's wife, does not have sexual relations with a woman during her period,

7 does not oppress anyone, but gives the debtor back whatever was given in pledge, does not commit robbery, but gives his bread to the hungry and clothes the naked,

8 does not engage in usury or charge interest, but refrains from wrongdoing, promotes true justice between men,

9 and follows my statutes and observes my regulations by carrying them out. That man is righteous; he will certainly live, declares the sovereign LORD.

10 "Suppose such a man has a violent son who sheds blood and does any of these things mentioned previously

11 (though the father did not do any of them). He eats pagan sacrifices on the mountains, defiles his neighbor's wife,

12 oppresses the poor and the needy, commits robbery, does not give back what was given in pledge, prays to idols, performs abominable acts,

13 engages in usury and charges interest. Will he live? He will not! Because he has done all these abominable deeds he will certainly die. He will bear the responsibility for his own death.

A Wicked Man's Righteous Son

14 "But suppose he in turn has a son who notices all the sins his father commits, considers them, and does not follow his father's example.

15 He does not eat pagan sacrifices on the mountains, does not pray to the idols of the house of Israel, does not defile his neighbor's wife,

16 does not oppress anyone or keep what has been given in pledge, does not commit robbery, gives his food to the hungry, and clothes the naked,

17 refrains from wrongdoing, does not engage in usury or charge interest, carries out my regulations and follows my statutes. He will not die for his father's iniquity; he will surely live.

Each Individual Stands On Their Own

18 As for his father, because he practices extortion, robs his brother, and does what is not good among his people, he will die for his iniquity.

19 "Yet you say, 'Why should the son not suffer for his father's iniquity?' When the son does what is just and right, and observes all my statutes and carries them out, he will surely live.

20 The person who sins is the one who will die. A son will not suffer for his father's iniquity, and a father will not suffer for his son's iniquity; the righteous person will be judged according to his righteousness, and the wicked person according to his wickedness.

The Salvation of the Wicked Who Repent

21 "But if the wicked person turns from all the sin he has committed and observes all my statutes and does what is just and right, he will surely live; he will not die.

22 None of the sins he has committed will be held against him; because of the righteousness he has done, he will live.

23 Do I actually delight in the death of the wicked, declares the sovereign LORD? Do I not prefer that he turn from his wicked conduct and live?

The Destruction of the Righteous Who Rebel

24 "But if a righteous man turns away from his righteousness and practices wrongdoing according to all the abominable practices the wicked carry out, will he live? All his righteous acts will not be remembered; because of the unfaithful acts he has done and the sin he has committed, he will die.

25 "Yet you say, 'The Lord's conduct is unjust!' Hear, O house of Israel: Is my conduct unjust? Is it not your conduct that is unjust?

26 When a righteous person turns back from his righteousness and practices wrongdoing, he will die for it; because of the wrongdoing he has done, he will die.

27 When a wicked person turns from the wickedness he has committed and does what is just and right, he will preserve his life.

28 Because he considered and turned from all the sins he had done, he will surely live; he will not die.

29 Yet the house of Israel says, 'The Lord's conduct is unjust!' Is my conduct unjust, O house of Israel? Is it not your conduct that is unjust?

Repent!

30 "Therefore I will judge each person according to his conduct, O house of Israel, declares the sovereign LORD. Repent and turn from all your wickedness; then it will not be an obstacle leading to iniquity.

31 Throw away all your sins you have committed and fashion yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! Why should you die, O house of Israel?

32 For I take no delight in the death of anyone, declares the sovereign LORD. Repent and live!

Ezekiel's Prophecy to the Exiles—Lament for the Princes of Israel (c. late 592 BC)

Ezekiel 19

Dirge for the Lions of Judah

1 "And you, sing a lament for the princes of Israel,

2 and say:

"What a lioness was your mother among the lions!

She lay among young lions; she reared her cubs.

3 She reared one of her cubs; he became a young lion.

He learned to tear prey; he devoured people.

4 The nations heard about him; he was trapped in their pit.

They brought him with hooks to the land of Egypt. [cf. Jehohaz in [2 Kgs 23:31–33](#)]

5 "When she realized that she waited in vain, her hope was lost.

She took another of her cubs and made him a young lion.

6 He walked about among the lions; he became a young lion.

He learned to tear prey; he devoured people.

7 He broke down their strongholds and devastated their cities.

The land and everything in it was frightened at the sound of his roaring.

8 The nations—the surrounding regions—attacked him.

They threw their net over him; he was caught in their pit.

9 They put him in a collar with hooks;

they brought him to the king of Babylon; [cf. Jehoiachin in [2 Kgs 24:8–16](#)]

they brought him to prison

so that his voice would not be heard

any longer on the mountains of Israel.

Dirge for the Vine of Judah

10 "Your mother was like a vine in your vineyard, planted by water.

It was fruitful and full of branches because it was well-watered.

11 Its boughs were strong, fit for rulers' scepters; it reached up into the clouds.

It stood out because of its height and its many branches.

12 But it was plucked up in anger; it was thrown down to the ground.

The east wind dried up its fruit;

its strong branches broke off and withered—

a fire consumed them.

13 Now it is planted in the wilderness,

in a dry and thirsty land.

14 A fire has gone out from its branch; it has consumed its shoot and its fruit.

No strong branch was left in it, nor a scepter to rule.'

This is a lament song, and has become a lament song."

Ezekiel's Prophecy to the Exiles—The History of Israel's Rebellion (August 14, 591 BC)

Ezekiel 20:1–44

Call for Israel's Arraignment

1 In the seventh year, in the fifth month, on the tenth of the month, some of the elders of Israel came to seek the LORD, and they sat down in front of me.

2 The word of the LORD came to me:

3 "Son of man, speak to the elders of Israel, and tell them: 'This is what the sovereign LORD says: Are you coming to seek me? As surely as I live, I will not allow you to seek me, declares the sovereign LORD.'

4 "Are you willing to pronounce judgment? Are you willing to pronounce judgment, son of man? Then confront them with the abominable practices of their fathers,

Israel's Rebellion in Egypt

5 and say to them: "'This is what the sovereign LORD says: On the day I chose Israel I swore to the descendants of the house of Jacob and made myself known to them in the land of Egypt. I swore to them, 'I am the LORD your God.'

6 On that day I swore to bring them out of the land of Egypt to a land which I had picked out for them, a land flowing with milk and honey, the most beautiful of all lands.

7 I said to them, "Each of you must get rid of the detestable idols you keep before you, and do not defile yourselves with the idols of Egypt; I am the LORD your God."

8 But they rebelled against me, and refused to listen to me; no one got rid of their detestable idols, nor did they abandon the idols of Egypt. Then I decided to pour out my rage on them and fully vent my anger against them in the midst of the land of Egypt.

9 I acted for the sake of my reputation, so that I would not be profaned before the nations among whom they lived, before whom I revealed myself by bringing them out of the land of Egypt.

Israel's Rebellion in the Wilderness (Exodus generation)

10 "So I brought them out of the land of Egypt and led them to the wilderness.

11 I gave them my statutes and revealed my regulations to them. The one who carries them out will live by them! [\[Lev 18:5\]](#)

12 I also gave them my Sabbaths as a reminder of our relationship, so that they would know that I, the LORD, sanctify them.

13 But the house of Israel rebelled against me in the wilderness; they did not follow my statutes and they rejected my regulations (the one who obeys them will live by them), and they utterly desecrated my Sabbaths. So I decided to pour out my rage on them in the wilderness and destroy them.

14 I acted for the sake of my reputation, so that I would not be profaned before the nations in whose sight I had brought them out.

15 I also swore to them in the wilderness that I would not bring them to the land I had given them—a land flowing with milk and honey, the most beautiful of all lands.

16 I did this because they rejected my regulations, did not follow my statutes, and desecrated my Sabbaths; for their hearts followed their idols.

17 Yet I had pity on them and did not destroy them, so I did not make an end of them in the wilderness.

Israel's Rebellion in the Wilderness (Wandering generation)

18 "But I said to their children in the wilderness, "Do not follow the practices of your fathers; do not observe their regulations, nor defile yourselves with their idols.

19 I am the LORD your God; follow my statutes, observe my regulations, and carry them out.

20 Treat my Sabbaths as holy and they will be a reminder of our relationship, and then you will know that I am the LORD your God."

21 "But the children rebelled against me, did not follow my statutes, did not observe my regulations by carrying them out (the one who obeys them will live by them), and desecrated my Sabbaths. I decided to pour out my rage on them and fully vent my anger against them in the wilderness.

22 But I refrained from doing so, and acted instead for the sake of my reputation, so that I would not be profaned before the nations in whose sight I had brought them out.

23 I also swore to them in the wilderness that I would scatter them among the nations and disperse them throughout the lands.

24 I did this because they did not observe my regulations, they rejected my statutes, they desecrated my Sabbaths, and their eyes were fixed on their fathers' idols.

25 I also gave them decrees which were not good and regulations by which they could not live.

26 I declared them to be defiled because of their sacrifices—they caused all their first born to pass through the fire—so that I would devastate them, so that they will know that I am the LORD.'

Israel's Rebellion in the Recent Past

27 "Therefore, speak to the house of Israel, son of man, and tell them, 'This is what the sovereign LORD says: In this way too your fathers blasphemed me when they were unfaithful to me.

28 I brought them to the land which I swore to give them, but whenever they saw any high hill or leafy tree, they offered their

sacrifices there and presented the offerings that provoke me to anger. They offered their soothing aroma there and poured out their drink offerings.

29 So I said to them, What is this high place you go to?" (So it is called "High Place" to this day.)

30 "Therefore say to the house of Israel, 'This is what the sovereign LORD says: Will you defile yourselves like your fathers and engage in prostitution with detestable idols?

31 When you present your sacrifices—when you make your sons pass through the fire—you defile yourselves with all your idols to this very day. Will I allow you to seek me, O house of Israel? As surely as I live, declares the sovereign LORD, I will not allow you to seek me!

The Future Transformation of Israel—Israel in the Desert

32 "What you plan will never happen. You say, "We will be like the nations, like the clans of the lands, who serve gods of wood and stone."

33 As surely as I live, declares the sovereign LORD, with a powerful hand and an outstretched arm, and with an outpouring of rage, I will be king over you.

34 I will bring you out from the nations, and will gather you from the lands where you are scattered, with a powerful hand and an outstretched arm and with an outpouring of rage!

35 I will bring you into the wilderness of the nations, and there I will enter into judgment with you face to face.

36 Just as I entered into judgment with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so I will enter into judgment with you, declares the sovereign LORD.

37 I will make you pass under the shepherd's staff, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant.

38 I will eliminate from among you the rebels and those who revolt against me. I will bring them out from the land where they have been residing, but they will not come to the land of Israel. Then you will know that I am the LORD.

The Future Transformation of Israel—Israel on Yahweh's Holy Mountain

39 "As for you, O house of Israel, this is what the sovereign LORD says: Each of you go and serve your idols, if you will not listen to me. But my holy name will not be profaned again by your sacrifices and your idols.

40 For there on my holy mountain, the high mountain of Israel, declares the sovereign LORD, all the house of Israel will serve me, all of them in the land. I will accept them there, and there I will seek your contributions and your choice gifts, with all your holy things.

41 When I bring you out from the nations and gather you from the lands where you are scattered, I will accept you along with your soothing aroma. I will display my holiness among you in the sight of the nations.

42 Then you will know that I am the LORD when I bring you to the land of Israel, to the land I swore to give to your fathers.

43 And there you will remember your conduct and all your deeds by which you defiled yourselves. You will despise yourselves because of all the evil deeds you have done.

44 Then you will know that I am the LORD, when I deal with you for the sake of my reputation and not according to your wicked conduct and corrupt deeds, O house of Israel, declares the sovereign LORD."

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Ezekiel's Prophecy to the Exiles—Yahweh's Avenging Sword (August 14, 591 BC)

Ezekiel 20:45–21:32

The Riddle of the Sword

20:45 The word of the LORD came to me:

46 "Son of man, turn toward the south, and speak out against the south. Prophecy against the open scrub land of the Negev,
47 and say to the scrub land of the Negev, 'Hear the word of the LORD: This is what the sovereign LORD says: Look here, I am about to start a fire in you, and it will devour every green tree and every dry tree in you. The flaming fire will not be extinguished, and the whole surface of the ground from the Negev to the north will be scorched by it.

48 And everyone will see that I, the LORD, have burned it; it will not be extinguished."

49 Then I said, "O sovereign LORD! They are saying of me, 'Does he not simply speak in eloquent figures of speech?'"

The Meaning of the Riddle

21:1 The word of the LORD came to me:

2 "Son of man, turn toward Jerusalem and speak out against the sanctuaries. Prophecy against the land of Israel

3 and say to them, 'This is what the LORD says: Look, I am against you. I will draw my sword from its sheath and cut off from you both the righteous and the wicked.

4 Because I will cut off from you both the righteous and the wicked, my sword will go out from its sheath against everyone from the south to the north.

5 Then everyone will know that I am the LORD, who drew my sword from its sheath—it will not be sheathed again!"

6 "And you, son of man, groan with an aching heart and bitterness; groan before their eyes.

7 When they ask you, 'Why are you groaning?' you will reply, 'Because of the report that has come. Every heart will melt with fear and every hand will be limp; everyone will faint and every knee will be wet with urine.' Pay attention—it is coming and it will happen, declares the sovereign LORD."

The Song of the Sword

8 The word of the LORD came to me:

9 "Son of man, prophesy and say: 'This is what the Lord says:

"A sword, a sword is sharpened,
and also polished.

10 It is sharpened for slaughter,
it is polished to flash like lightning!

"Should we rejoice in the scepter of my son? No! The sword despises every tree!

11 "He gave it to be polished,
to be grasped in the hand—
the sword is sharpened, it is polished—
giving it into the hand of the executioner.

12 Cry out and moan, son of man,
for it is wielded against my people;
against all the princes of Israel.
They are delivered up to the sword, along with my people.
Therefore, strike your thigh.

13 "'For testing will come, and what will happen when the scepter, which the sword despises, is no more? declares the sovereign LORD.'

14 "And you, son of man, prophesy,
and clap your hands together.
Let the sword strike twice, even three times!
It is a sword for slaughter,
a sword for the great slaughter surrounding them.

15 So hearts melt with fear and many stumble.
At all their gates I have stationed the sword for slaughter.
Ah! It is made to flash, it is drawn for slaughter!

16 Cut sharply on the right!
Swing to the left,

wherever your edge is appointed to strike.

- 17 I too will clap my hands together,
I will exhaust my rage;
I the LORD have spoken.”

The Agent of the Sword

18 The word of the LORD came to me:

19 “You, son of man, mark out two routes for the king of Babylon’s sword to take; both of them will originate in a single land. Make a signpost and put it at the beginning of the road leading to the city.

20 Mark out the routes for the sword to take: “Rabbah of the Ammonites” and “Judah with Jerusalem in it.”

21 For the king of Babylon stands at the fork in the road at the head of the two routes. He looks for omens: He shakes arrows, he consults idols, he examines animal livers.

22 Into his right hand comes the portent for Jerusalem—to set up battering rams, to give the signal for slaughter, to shout out the battle cry, to set up battering rams against the gates, to erect a siege ramp, to build a siege wall.

23 But those in Jerusalem will view it as a false omen. They have sworn solemn oaths, but the king of Babylon will accuse them of violations in order to seize them.

24 “Therefore this is what the sovereign LORD says: ‘Because you have brought up your own guilt by uncovering your transgressions and revealing your sins through all your actions, for this reason you will be taken by force.

25 “As for you, profane and wicked prince of Israel,
whose day has come, the time of final punishment,

26 this is what the sovereign LORD says:

Tear off the turban,
take off the crown!
Things must change!
Exalt the lowly,
bring down the proud!

27 A total ruin I will make it!
It will come to an end
when the one arrives to whom I have assigned judgment.’

The Taunt of the Sword

28 “As for you, son of man, prophesy and say, ‘This is what the sovereign LORD says concerning the Ammonites and their coming humiliation; say:

“A sword, a sword drawn for slaughter,
polished to consume, to flash like lightning—

29 while seeing false visions for you
and reading lying omens for you—
to place that sword on the necks of the profane wicked,
whose day has come,
the time of final punishment.

30 Return it to its sheath!
In the place where you were created,
in your native land, I will judge you.

31 I will pour out my anger on you;
the fire of my fury I will blow on you.
I will hand you over to brutal men, who are skilled in destruction.

32 You will become fuel for the fire—
your blood will stain the middle of the land;
you will no longer be remembered,
for I, the LORD, have spoken.”

Ezekiel's Prophecy to the Exiles—Woe to the Bloody City! (August 14, 591 BC)**Ezekiel 22****Indictment of the Bloody City**

1 The word of the LORD came to me:

2 “As for you, son of man, are you willing to pronounce judgment, are you willing to pronounce judgment on the bloody city? Then confront her with all her abominable deeds!

3 Then say, ‘This is what the sovereign LORD says: O city, who spills blood within herself (which brings on her doom), and who makes herself idols (which results in impurity),

4 you are guilty because of the blood you shed and defiled by the idols you made. You have hastened the day of your doom; the end of your years has come. Therefore I will make you an object of scorn to the nations, an object to be mocked by all lands.

5 Those both near and far from you will mock you, you with your bad reputation, full of turmoil.

6 “‘See how each of the princes of Israel living within you has used his authority to shed blood.

7 They have treated father and mother with contempt within you; they have oppressed the foreigner among you; they have wronged the orphan and the widow within you.

8 You have despised my holy things and desecrated my Sabbaths!

9 Slandering men shed blood within you. Those who live within you eat pagan sacrifices on the mountains; they commit obscene acts among you.

10 They have sex with their father’s wife within you; they violate women during their menstrual period within you.

11 One commits an abominable act with his neighbor’s wife; another obscenely defiles his daughter-in-law; another violates his sister—his father’s daughter—within you.

12 They take bribes within you to shed blood. You engage in usury and charge interest; you extort money from your neighbors. You have forgotten me, declares the sovereign LORD.

13 “‘See, I strike my hands together at the dishonest profit you have made, and at the bloodshed they have done among you.

14 Can your heart endure, or can your hands be strong when I deal with you? I, the LORD, have spoken, and I will do it!

15 I will scatter you among the nations and disperse you among various countries; I will remove your impurity from you.

16 You will be profaned within yourself in the sight of the nations; then you will know that I am the LORD.”

In the Smelter of God’s Wrath

17 The word of the LORD came to me:

18 “Son of man, the house of Israel has become slag to me. All of them are like bronze, tin, iron, and lead in the furnace; they are the worthless slag of silver.

19 Therefore this is what the sovereign LORD says: ‘Because all of you have become slag, look out!—I am about to gather you in the middle of Jerusalem.

20 As silver, bronze, iron, lead, and tin are gathered in a furnace so that the fire can melt them, so I will gather you in my anger and in my rage. I will deposit you there and melt you.

21 I will gather you and blow on you with the fire of my fury, and you will be melted in it.

22 As silver is melted in a furnace, so you will be melted in it, and you will know that I, the LORD, have poured out my anger on you.”

The Unmanned Breach

23 The word of the LORD came to me:

24 “Son of man, say to her: ‘You are a land that receives no rain or showers in the day of my anger.’

25 Her princes within her are like a roaring lion tearing its prey; they have devoured lives. They take away riches and valuable things; they have made many women widows within it.

26 Her priests abuse my law and have desecrated my holy things. They do not distinguish between the holy and the profane, or recognize any distinction between the unclean and the clean. They ignore my Sabbaths and I am profaned in their midst.

27 Her officials are like wolves in her midst rending their prey—shedding blood and destroying lives—so they can get dishonest profit.

28 Her prophets coat their messages with whitewash. They see false visions and announce lying omens for them, saying, ‘This is what the sovereign LORD says,’ when the LORD has not spoken.

29 The people of the land have practiced extortion and committed robbery. They have wronged the poor and needy; they have oppressed the foreigner who lives among them and denied them justice.

30 “I looked for a man from among them who would repair the wall and stand in the gap before me on behalf of the land, so that I would not destroy it, but I found no one.

31 So I have poured my anger on them, and destroyed them with the fire of my fury. I hereby repay them for what they have done, declares the sovereign LORD.”

Ezekiel's Prophecy to the Exiles—A Tale of Two Sisters (August 14, 591 BC)**Ezekiel 23****Introduction of the Accused**

- 1 The word of the LORD came to me:
2 “Son of man, there were two women who were daughters of the same mother.
3 They engaged in prostitution in Egypt; in their youth they engaged in prostitution. Their breasts were squeezed there; lovers fondled their virgin nipples there.
4 Oholah was the name of the older and Oholibah the name of her younger sister. They became mine, and gave birth to sons and daughters. Oholah is Samaria and Oholibah is Jerusalem.

The Indictment of Oholah (Samaria)

- 5 “Oholah engaged in prostitution while she was mine. She lusted after her lovers, the Assyrians—warriors
6 clothed in blue, governors and officials, all of them desirable young men, horsemen riding on horses.
7 She bestowed her sexual favors on them; all of them were the choicest young men of Assyria. She defiled herself with all whom she desired—with all their idols.
8 She did not abandon the prostitution she had practiced in Egypt; for in her youth men had sex with her, fondled her virgin breasts, and ravished her.
9 Therefore I handed her over to her lovers, the Assyrians for whom she lusted.
10 They exposed her nakedness, seized her sons and daughters, and killed her with the sword. She became notorious among women, and they executed judgments against her.

The Indictment of Oholibah (Jerusalem)

- 11 “Her sister Oholibah watched this, but she became more corrupt in her lust than her sister had been, and her acts of prostitution were more numerous than those of her sister.
12 She lusted after the Assyrians—governors and officials, warriors in full armor, horsemen riding on horses, all of them desirable young men.
13 I saw that she was defiled; both of them followed the same path.
14 But she increased her prostitution. She saw men carved on the wall, images of the Chaldeans carved in bright red,
15 wearing belts on their waists and flowing turbans on their heads, all of them looking like officers, the image of Babylonians whose native land is Chaldea.
16 When she saw them, she lusted after them and sent messengers to them in Chaldea.
17 The Babylonians crawled into bed with her. They defiled her with their lust; after she was defiled by them, she became disgusted with them.
18 When she lustfully exposed her nakedness, I was disgusted with her, just as I had been disgusted with her sister.
19 Yet she increased her prostitution, remembering the days of her youth when she engaged in prostitution in the land of Egypt.
20 She lusted after their genitals—as large as those of donkeys, and their seminal emission was as strong as that of stallions.
21 This is how you assessed the obscene conduct of your youth, when the Egyptians fondled your nipples and squeezed your young breasts.

The Sentencing of Oholibah (Jerusalem)

- 22 “Therefore, Oholibah, this is what the sovereign LORD says: Look here, I am about to stir up against you the lovers with whom you were disgusted; I will bring them against you from every side:
23 the Babylonians and all the Chaldeans, Pekod, Shoa, and Koa, and all the Assyrians with them, desirable young men, all of them governors and officials, officers and nobles, all of them riding on horses.
24 They will attack you with weapons, chariots, wagons, and with a huge army; they will array themselves against you on every side with large shields, small shields, and helmets. I will assign them the task of judgment; they will punish you according to their laws.
25 I will direct my jealous anger against you, and they will deal with you in rage. They will cut off your nose and your ears, and your survivors will die by the sword. They will seize your sons and daughters, and your survivors will be consumed by fire.
26 They will strip your clothes off you and take away your beautiful jewelry.
27 So I will put an end to your obscene conduct and your prostitution which you have practiced in the land of Egypt. You will not seek their help or remember Egypt anymore.
28 “For this is what the sovereign LORD says: Look here, I am about to deliver you over to those whom you hate, to those with whom you were disgusted.
29 They will treat you with hatred, take away all you have labored for, and leave you naked and bare. Your nakedness will be exposed, just as when you engaged in prostitution and obscene conduct.
30 I will do these things to you because you engaged in prostitution with the nations, polluting yourself with their idols.
31 You have followed the ways of your sister, so I will place her cup of judgment in your hand.
32 “This is what the sovereign LORD says: “You will drink your sister’s deep and wide cup; you will be scorned and derided, for it

holds a great deal.

33 You will be overcome by drunkenness and sorrow. The cup of your sister Samaria is a cup of horror and desolation.

34 You will drain it dry, gnaw its pieces, and tear out your breasts, for I have spoken, declares the sovereign LORD.

35 “Therefore this is what the sovereign LORD says: Because you have forgotten me and completely disregarded me, you must bear now the punishment for your obscene conduct and prostitution.”

The Charges against Oholah (Samaria) and Oholibah (Jerusalem)

36 The LORD said to me: “Son of man, are you willing to pronounce judgment on Oholah and Oholibah? Then declare to them their abominable deeds!

37 For they have committed adultery and blood is on their hands. They have committed adultery with their idols, and their sons, whom they bore to me, they have passed through the fire as food to their idols.

38 Moreover, they have done this to me: In the very same day they desecrated my sanctuary and profaned my Sabbaths.

39 On the same day they slaughtered their sons for their idols, they came to my sanctuary to desecrate it. This is what they have done in the middle of my house.

40 “They even sent for men from far away; when the messenger arrived, those men set out. For them you bathed, painted your eyes, and decorated yourself with jewelry.

41 You sat on a magnificent couch, with a table arranged in front of it where you placed my incense and my olive oil.

42 The sound of a carefree crowd accompanied her, including all kinds of men; even Sabeans were brought from the desert. The sisters put bracelets on their wrists and beautiful crowns on their heads.

43 Then I said about the one worn out by adultery, ‘Now they will commit immoral acts with her.’

44 They had sex with her as one does with a prostitute. In this way they had sex with Oholah and Oholibah, promiscuous women.

45 But upright men will punish them appropriately for their adultery and bloodshed, because they are adulteresses and blood is on their hands.

The Sentencing of Oholah (Samaria) and Oholibah (Jerusalem)

46 “For this is what the sovereign LORD says: Bring up an army against them and subject them to terror and plunder.

47 That army will pelt them with stones and slash them with their swords; they will kill their sons and daughters and burn their houses.

48 I will put an end to the obscene conduct in the land; all the women will learn a lesson from this and not engage in obscene conduct.

49 They will repay you for your obscene conduct, and you will be punished for idol worship. Then you will know that I am the sovereign LORD.”

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Zedekiah Rebels Against Nebuchadnezzar (c. 590 BC)		
2 Kings 24:20	Jeremiah 52:3	2 Chronicles 36:13–16
<p>20 What follows is a record of what happened to Jerusalem and Judah because of the LORD’s anger; he finally threw them out of his presence.</p> <p>Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon.</p>	<p>3 What follows is a record of what happened to Jerusalem and Judah because of the LORD’s anger when he drove them out of his sight.</p> <p>Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon.</p>	<p>13b He [Zedekiah] was stubborn and obstinate, and refused to return to the LORD God of Israel.</p> <p>14 All the leaders of the priests and people became more unfaithful and committed the same horrible sins practiced by the nations. They defiled the LORD’s temple which he had consecrated in Jerusalem.</p> <p>15 The LORD God of their ancestors continually warned them through his messengers, for he felt compassion for his people and his dwelling place.</p> <p>16 But they mocked God’s messengers, despised his warnings, and ridiculed his prophets.</p> <p>Finally</p> <p>the LORD got very angry at his people</p> <p>and there was no one who could prevent his judgment.</p> <p>13a He also rebelled against King Nebuchadnezzar, who had made him vow allegiance in the name of God.</p>

Nebuchadnezzar’s Third and Final Siege of Jerusalem (January 27, 589 BC)			
2 Kings 25:1	Jeremiah 39:1	Jeremiah 52:4	2 Chronicles 36:17a
<p>1 So King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon came against Jerusalem with his whole army and set up camp outside it. They built siege ramps all around it. He arrived on the tenth day of the tenth month in the ninth year of Zedekiah’s reign.</p>	<p>1 King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon came against Jerusalem with his whole army and laid siege to it. The siege began in the tenth month of the ninth year that Zedekiah ruled over Judah.</p>	<p>4 King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon came against Jerusalem with his whole army and set up camp outside it. They built siege ramps all around it. He arrived on the tenth day of the tenth month in the ninth year that Zedekiah ruled over Judah.</p>	<p>17a He [God] brought against them the king of the Babylonians,</p>

Ezekiel’s Prophecy to the Exiles—Jerusalem’s Final Judgment (January 27, 589 BC)	
Ezekiel 24	
<p>The Boiling Pot</p> <p>1 The word of the LORD came to me in the ninth year, in the tenth month, on the tenth day of the month:</p> <p>2 “Son of man, write down the name of this day, this very day. The king of Babylon has laid siege to Jerusalem this very day.</p> <p>3 Recite a proverb to this rebellious house and say to them, ‘This is what the sovereign LORD says:</p> <p>“Set on the pot, set it on, pour water in it too;</p> <p>4 add the pieces of meat to it, every good piece,</p>	

the thigh and the shoulder;
fill it with choice bones.

5 Take the choice bone of the flock,
heap up bones under it;
boil rapidly,
and boil its bones in it.

6 “Therefore this is what the sovereign LORD says:
Woe to the city of bloodshed,
the pot whose rot is in it,
whose rot has not been removed from it!
Empty it piece by piece.
No lot has fallen on it.

7 For her blood was in it;
she poured it on an exposed rock;
she did not pour it on the ground to cover it up with dust.

8 To arouse anger, to take vengeance,
I have placed her blood on an exposed rock so that it cannot be covered up.

9 “Therefore this is what the sovereign LORD says:
Woe to the city of bloodshed!
I will also make the pile high.

10 Pile up the bones, kindle the fire;
cook the meat well, mix in the spices,
let the bones be charred.

11 Set the empty pot on the coals,
until it becomes hot and its copper glows,
until its uncleanness melts within it and its rot is consumed.

12 It has tried my patience;
yet its thick rot is not removed from it.
Subject its rot to the fire!

13 You mix uncleanness with obscene conduct.
I tried to cleanse you, but you are not clean.
You will not be cleansed from your uncleanness
until I have exhausted my anger on you.

14 “I the LORD have spoken; judgment is coming and I will act! I will not relent, or show pity, or be sorry! I will judge you according to your conduct and your deeds, declares the sovereign LORD.”

The Death of Ezekiel’s Wife

15 The word of LORD came to me:

16 “Son of man, realize that I am about to take the delight of your eyes away from you with a jolt, but you must not mourn or weep or shed tears.

17 Groan in silence for the dead, but do not perform mourning rites. Bind on your turban and put your sandals on your feet. Do not cover your lip and do not eat food brought by others.”

18 So I spoke to the people in the morning, and my wife died in the evening. In the morning I acted just as I was commanded.

19 Then the people said to me, “Will you not tell us what these things you are doing mean for us?”

20 So I said to them: “The word of the LORD came to me:

21 Say to the house of Israel, ‘This is what the sovereign LORD says: Realize I am about to desecrate my sanctuary—the source of your confident pride, the object in which your eyes delight, and your life’s passion. Your very own sons and daughters whom you have left behind will die by the sword.

22 Then you will do as I have done: You will not cover your lip or eat food brought by others.

23 Your turbans will be on your heads and your sandals on your feet; you will not mourn or weep, but you will rot for your iniquities and groan among yourselves.

24 Ezekiel will be an object lesson for you; you will do all that he has done. When it happens, then you will know that I am the sovereign LORD.’

A Fugitive Will Bring News of Jerusalem’s Fall to Ezekiel (fulfilled in Ezekiel 33:21)

25 “And you, son of man, this is what will happen on the day I take from them their stronghold—their beautiful source of joy, the object in which their eyes delight, and the main concern of their lives, as well as their sons and daughters:

26 On that day a fugitive will come to you to report the news.

27 On that day you will be able to speak again; you will talk with the fugitive and be silent no longer. You will be an object lesson for them, and they will know that I am the LORD.”

Ezekiel’s Prophecy to the Exiles—Concerning the Nations Around Judah (January 27, 589 BC)

Ezekiel 25

Ammon

1 The word of the LORD came to me:

2 “Son of man, turn toward the Ammonites and prophesy against them.

3 Say to the Ammonites, ‘Hear the word of the sovereign LORD: This is what the sovereign LORD says: You said “Aha!” about my sanctuary when it was desecrated, about the land of Israel when it was made desolate, and about the house of Judah when they went into exile.

4 So take note, I am about to make you slaves of the tribes of the east. They will make camps among you and pitch their tents among you. They will eat your fruit and drink your milk.

5 I will make Rabbah a pasture for camels and Ammon a resting place for sheep. Then you will know that I am the LORD.

6 For this is what the sovereign LORD says: Because you clapped your hands, stamped your feet, and rejoiced with intense scorn over the land of Israel,

7 take note, I have stretched out my hand against you, and I will hand you over as plunder to the nations. I will cut you off from the peoples and make you perish from the lands. I will destroy you; then you will know that I am the LORD.”

Moab

8 “This is what the sovereign LORD says: ‘Moab and Seir say, “Look, the house of Judah is like all the other nations.”

9 So look, I am about to open up Moab’s flank, eliminating the cities, including its frontier cities, the beauty of the land—Beth Jeshimoth, Baal Meon, and Kiriathaim.

10 I will hand it over, along with the Ammonites, to the tribes of the east, so that the Ammonites will no longer be remembered among the nations.

11 I will execute judgments against Moab. Then they will know that I am the LORD.”

Edom

12 “This is what the sovereign LORD says: ‘Edom has taken vengeance against the house of Judah; they have made themselves fully culpable by taking vengeance on them.

13 So this is what the sovereign LORD says: I will stretch out my hand against Edom, and I will kill the people and animals within her, and I will make her desolate; from Teman to Dedan they will die by the sword.

14 I will exact my vengeance upon Edom by the hand of my people Israel. They will carry out in Edom my anger and rage; they will experience my vengeance, declares the sovereign LORD.”

Philistia

15 “This is what the sovereign LORD says: ‘The Philistines have exacted merciless revenge, showing intense scorn in their effort to destroy Judah with unrelenting hostility.

16 So this is what the sovereign LORD says: Take note, I am about to stretch out my hand against the Philistines. I will kill the Cherethites and destroy those who remain on the seacoast.

17 I will exact great vengeance upon them with angry rebukes. Then they will know that I am the LORD, when I exact my vengeance upon them.”

Zedekiah Asks Jeremiah for Help (c. February 589 BC)

Jeremiah 21

Jeremiah’s Answer to Zedekiah

1 The LORD spoke to Jeremiah when King Zedekiah sent to him Pashhur son of Malkijah and the priest Zephaniah son of Maaseiah. Zedekiah sent them to Jeremiah to ask,

2 “Please ask the LORD to come and help us, because King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon is attacking us. Maybe the LORD will perform one of his miracles as in times past and make him stop attacking us and leave.”

3 Jeremiah answered them, “Tell Zedekiah

4 that the LORD, the God of Israel, says, ‘The forces at your disposal are now outside the walls fighting against King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon and the Babylonians who have you under siege. I will gather those forces back inside the city.

5 In anger, in fury, and in wrath I myself will fight against you with my mighty power and great strength!

6 I will kill everything living in Jerusalem, people and animals alike! They will die from terrible diseases.

7 Then I, the LORD, promise that I will hand over King Zedekiah of Judah, his officials, and any of the people who survive the war, starvation, and disease. I will hand them over to King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon and to their enemies who want to kill them. He will slaughter them with the sword. He will not show them any mercy, compassion, or pity.'

8 "But tell the people of Jerusalem that the LORD says, 'I will give you a choice between two courses of action. One will result in life; the other will result in death.

9 Those who stay in this city will die in battle or of starvation or disease. Those who leave the city and surrender to the Babylonians who are besieging it will live. They will escape with their lives.

10 For I, the LORD, say that I am determined not to deliver this city but to bring disaster on it. It will be handed over to the king of Babylon and he will destroy it with fire.'"

Warning to the House of David

11 The LORD told me to say to the royal court of Judah,

"Listen to what the LORD says,

12 O royal family descended from David.

The LORD says:

'See to it that people each day are judged fairly.

Deliver those who have been robbed from those who oppress them.

Otherwise, my wrath will blaze out against you.

It will burn like a fire that cannot be put out

because of the evil that you have done.

Warning to a Complacent City

13 Listen, you who sit enthroned above the valley on a rocky plateau.

I am opposed to you,' says the LORD.

'You boast, "No one can swoop down on us.

No one can penetrate into our places of refuge."

14 But I will punish you as your deeds deserve,'

says the LORD.

'I will set fire to your palace;

it will burn up everything around it.'"

Nebuchadnezzar Leaves Jerusalem to Deal with Pharaoh Hophra [Egypt] (589 BC)

Jeremiah 37:4–5

4 (Now Jeremiah had not yet been put in prison. So he was still free to come and go among the people as he pleased.

5 At that time the Babylonian forces had temporarily given up their siege against Jerusalem. They had had it under siege, but withdrew when they heard that the army of Pharaoh had set out from Egypt.)

Hophra's Intervention Gives Zedekiah False Hope (589 BC)

Jeremiah 37:3, 6–10

3 King Zedekiah sent Jehucal son of Shelemiah and the priest Zephaniah son of Maaseiah to the prophet Jeremiah. He told them to say, "Please pray to the LORD our God on our behalf."

6 The LORD gave the prophet Jeremiah a message for them. He told him to tell them,

7 "The LORD God of Israel says, 'Give a message to the king of Judah who sent you to ask me to help him. Tell him, "The army of Pharaoh that was on its way to help you will go back home to Egypt.

8 Then the Babylonian forces will return. They will attack the city and will capture it and burn it down.

9 Moreover, I, the LORD, warn you not to deceive yourselves into thinking that the Babylonian forces will go away and leave you alone. For they will not go away.

10 For even if you were to defeat all the Babylonian forces fighting against you so badly that only wounded men were left lying in their tents, they would get up and burn this city down.'"

Zedekiah and the Slaves (589 BC)

Jeremiah 34

Historical Summary

- 1 The LORD spoke to Jeremiah while King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon was attacking Jerusalem and the towns around it with a large army. This army consisted of troops from his own army and from the kingdoms and peoples of the lands under his dominion.
- 2 The LORD God of Israel told Jeremiah to go and give King Zedekiah of Judah a message. He told Jeremiah to tell him, "The LORD says, 'I am going to hand this city over to the king of Babylon and he will burn it down.
- 3 You yourself will not escape his clutches, but will certainly be captured and handed over to him. You must confront the king of Babylon face to face and answer to him personally. Then you must go to Babylon.
- 4 However, listen to what I, the LORD, promise you, King Zedekiah of Judah. I, the LORD, promise that you will not die in battle or be executed.
- 5 You will die a peaceful death. They will burn incense at your burial just as they did at the burial of your ancestors, the former kings who preceded you. They will mourn for you, saying, "Poor, poor master!" Indeed, you have my own word on this. I, the LORD, affirm it!"
- 6 The prophet Jeremiah told all this to King Zedekiah of Judah in Jerusalem.
- 7 He did this while the army of the king of Babylon was attacking Jerusalem and the cities of Lachish and Azekah. He was attacking these cities because they were the only fortified cities of Judah which were still holding out.

A Broken Promise of Freedom for the Slaves

- 8 The LORD spoke to Jeremiah after King Zedekiah had made a covenant with all the people in Jerusalem to grant their slaves their freedom.
- 9 Everyone was supposed to free their male and female Hebrew slaves. No one was supposed to keep a fellow Judean enslaved.
- 10 All the people and their leaders had agreed to this. They had agreed to free their male and female slaves and not keep them enslaved any longer. They originally complied with the covenant and freed them.
- 11 But later they had changed their minds. They had taken back their male and female slaves that they had freed and forced them to be slaves again.

God Denounces the Broken Promise

- 12 That was when the LORD spoke to Jeremiah,
- 13 "The LORD God of Israel has a message for you. 'I made a covenant with your ancestors when I brought them out of Egypt where they had been slaves. It stipulated,
- 14 "Every seven years each of you must free any fellow Hebrews who have sold themselves to you. After they have served you for six years, you shall set them free." [Exod 21:1-4; Deut 15:12-15] But your ancestors did not obey me or pay any attention to me.
- 15 Recently, however, you yourselves showed a change of heart and did what is pleasing to me. You granted your fellow countrymen their freedom and you made a covenant to that effect in my presence in the house that I have claimed for my own.
- 16 But then you turned right around and showed that you did not honor me. Each of you took back your male and female slaves whom you had freed as they desired, and you forced them to be your slaves again.

Punishment for the Broken Promise

- 17 So I, the LORD, say: "You have not really obeyed me and granted freedom to your neighbor and fellow countryman. Therefore, I will grant you freedom, the freedom to die in war, or by starvation or disease. I, the LORD, affirm it! I will make all the kingdoms of the earth horrified at what happens to you.
- 18 I will punish those people who have violated their covenant with me. I will make them like the calf they cut in two and passed between its pieces. I will do so because they did not keep the terms of the covenant they made in my presence.
- 19 I will punish the leaders of Judah and Jerusalem, the court officials, the priests, and all the other people of the land who passed between the pieces of the calf.
- 20 I will hand them over to their enemies who want to kill them. Their dead bodies will become food for the birds and the wild animals.
- 21 I will also hand King Zedekiah of Judah and his officials over to their enemies who want to kill them. I will hand them over to the army of the king of Babylon, even though they have temporarily withdrawn from attacking you.
- 22 For I, the LORD, affirm that I will soon give the order and bring them back to this city. They will fight against it and capture it and burn it down. I will also make the towns of Judah desolate so that there will be no one living in them."""

Jeremiah's Arrest and Imprisonment (589 BC)

Jeremiah 37:11–21

Jeremiah's Arrest

11 The following events also occurred while the Babylonian forces had temporarily withdrawn from Jerusalem because the army of Pharaoh was coming.

12 Jeremiah started to leave Jerusalem to go to the territory of Benjamin. He wanted to make sure he got his share of the property that was being divided up among his family there.

13 But he only got as far as the Benjamin Gate. There an officer in charge of the guards named Irijah, who was the son of Shelemiah and the grandson of Hananiah, stopped him. He seized Jeremiah and said, "You are deserting to the Babylonians!"

14 Jeremiah answered, "That's a lie! I am not deserting to the Babylonians." But Irijah would not listen to him. Irijah put Jeremiah under arrest and took him to the officials.

15 The officials were very angry at Jeremiah. They had him flogged and put in prison in the house of Jonathan, the royal secretary, which they had converted into a place for confining prisoners.

16 So Jeremiah was put in prison in a cell in the dungeon in Jonathan's house. He was kept there for a long time.

Jeremiah's Secret Meeting with Zedekiah

17 Then King Zedekiah had him brought to the palace. There he questioned him privately and asked him, "Is there any message from the LORD?" Jeremiah answered, "Yes, there is." Then he announced, "You will be handed over to the king of Babylon."

18 Then Jeremiah asked King Zedekiah, "What crime have I committed against you, or the officials who serve you, or the people of Judah? What have I done to make you people throw me into prison?"

19 Where now are the prophets who prophesied to you that the king of Babylon would not attack you or this land?

20 But now please listen, your royal Majesty, and grant my plea for mercy. Do not send me back to the house of Jonathan, the royal secretary. If you do, I will die there."

21 Then King Zedekiah ordered that Jeremiah be committed to the courtyard of the guardhouse. He also ordered that a loaf of bread be given to him every day from the baker's street until all the bread in the city was gone. So Jeremiah was kept in the courtyard of the guardhouse.

The Attempt on Jeremiah's Life (589 BC)

Jeremiah 38

The Demand for Jeremiah's Punishment

1 Now Shephatiah son of Mattan, Gedaliah son of Pashhur, Jehucal son of Shelemiah, and Pashhur son of Malkijah had heard the things that Jeremiah had been telling the people. They had heard him say,

2 "The LORD says, 'Those who stay in this city will die in battle or of starvation or disease. Those who leave the city and surrender to the Babylonians will live. They will escape with their lives.'"

3 They had also heard him say, "The LORD says, 'This city will certainly be handed over to the army of the king of Babylon. They will capture it.'"

4 So these officials said to the king, "This man must be put to death. For he is demoralizing the soldiers who are left in the city as well as all the other people there by these things he is saying. This man is not seeking to help these people but is trying to harm them."

5 King Zedekiah said to them, "Very well, you can do what you want with him. For I cannot do anything to stop you."

6 So the officials took Jeremiah and put him in the cistern of Malkijah, one of the royal princes, that was in the courtyard of the guardhouse. There was no water in the cistern, only mud. So when they lowered Jeremiah into the cistern with ropes he sank in the mud.

Jeremiah's Rescue by Ebed-Melech

7 An Ethiopian, Ebed Melech, a court official in the royal palace, heard that Jeremiah had been put in the cistern. While the king was holding court at the Benjamin Gate,

8 Ebed Melech departed the palace and went to speak to the king. He said to him,

9 "Your royal Majesty, those men have been very wicked in all that they have done to the prophet Jeremiah. They have thrown him into a cistern and he is sure to die of starvation there because there is no food left in the city.

10 Then the king gave Ebed Melech the Ethiopian the following order: "Take thirty men with you from here and go pull the prophet Jeremiah out of the cistern before he dies."

11 So Ebed Melech took the men with him and went to a room under the treasure room in the palace. He got some worn-out clothes and old rags from there and let them down by ropes to Jeremiah in the cistern.

12 Ebed Melech called down to Jeremiah, "Put these rags and worn-out clothes under your armpits to pad the ropes. Jeremiah did as Ebed Melech instructed.

13 So they pulled Jeremiah up from the cistern with ropes. Jeremiah, however, still remained confined to the courtyard of the

guardhouse.

A Second Secret Meeting With Zedekiah

14 Some time later Zedekiah sent and had Jeremiah brought to him at the third entrance of the LORD's temple. The king said to Jeremiah, "I would like to ask you a question. Do not hide anything from me when you answer."

15 Jeremiah said to Zedekiah, "If I answer you, you will certainly kill me. If I give you advice, you will not listen to me."

16 So King Zedekiah made a secret promise to Jeremiah and sealed it with an oath. He promised, "As surely as the LORD lives who has given us life and breath, I promise you this: I will not kill you or hand you over to those men who want to kill you."

17 Then Jeremiah said to Zedekiah, "The LORD, the God who rules over all, the God of Israel, says, 'You must surrender to the officers of the king of Babylon. If you do, your life will be spared and this city will not be burned down. Indeed, you and your whole family will be spared.'

18 But if you do not surrender to the officers of the king of Babylon, this city will be handed over to the Babylonians and they will burn it down. You yourself will not escape from them.'"

19 Then King Zedekiah said to Jeremiah, "I am afraid of the Judeans who have deserted to the Babylonians. The Babylonians might hand me over to them and they will torture me."

20 Then Jeremiah answered, "You will not be handed over to them. Please obey the LORD by doing what I have been telling you. Then all will go well with you and your life will be spared."

21 But if you refuse to surrender, the LORD has shown me a vision of what will happen. Here is what I saw:

22 All the women who are left in the royal palace of Judah will be led out to the officers of the king of Babylon. They will taunt you saying,

'Your trusted friends misled you;
they have gotten the best of you.
Now that your feet are stuck in the mud,
they have turned their backs on you.'

23 "All your wives and your children will be turned over to the Babylonians. You yourself will not escape from them but will be captured by the king of Babylon. This city will be burned down."

24 Then Zedekiah told Jeremiah, "Do not let anyone know about the conversation we have had. If you do, you will die."

25 The officials may hear that I have talked with you. They may come to you and say, 'Tell us what you said to the king and what the king said to you. Do not hide anything from us. If you do, we will kill you.'

26 If they do this, tell them, 'I was pleading with the king not to send me back to die in the dungeon of Jonathan's house.'"

Jeremiah is Questioned by the Officials

27 All the officials did indeed come and question Jeremiah. He told them exactly what the king had instructed him to say. They stopped questioning him any further because no one had actually heard their conversation.

28 So Jeremiah remained confined in the courtyard of the guardhouse until the day Jerusalem was captured.

God's Message to Jeremiah's Rescuer, Ebed-Melech (589 BC)

Jeremiah 39:15–18

15 Now the LORD had spoken to Jeremiah while he was still confined in the courtyard of the guardhouse,

16 "Go and tell Ebed-Melech the Ethiopian, 'The LORD God of Israel who rules over all says, "I will carry out against this city what I promised. It will mean disaster and not good fortune for it. When that disaster happens, you will be there to see it.

17 But I will rescue you when it happens. I, the LORD, affirm it! You will not be handed over to those whom you fear.

18 I will certainly save you. You will not fall victim to violence. You will escape with your life because you trust in me. I, the LORD, affirm it!'"

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Ezekiel's Prophecy to the Exiles—God's Message to Egypt (January 17, 588 BC)

Ezekiel 29:1–16

The Crocodile of the Nile

- 1 In the tenth year, in the tenth month, on the twelfth day of the month, the word of the LORD came to me:
 2 “Son of man, turn toward Pharaoh king of Egypt, and prophesy against him and against all Egypt.
 3 Tell them, ‘This is what the sovereign LORD says:

“Look, I am against you, Pharaoh king of Egypt,
 the great monster lying in the midst of its waterways,
 who has said, “My Nile is my own, I made it for myself.”

- 4 I will put hooks in your jaws
 and stick the fish of your waterways to your scales.
 I will haul you up from the midst of your waterways,
 and all the fish of your waterways will stick to your scales.
 5 I will leave you in the wilderness,
 you and all the fish of your waterways;
 you will fall in the open field and will not be gathered up or collected.
 I have given you as food to the beasts of the earth and the birds of the skies.
 6 Then all those living in Egypt will know that I am the LORD
 because they were a reed staff for the house of Israel;
 7 when they grasped you with their hand, you broke and tore their shoulders,
 and when they leaned on you, you splintered and caused their legs to be unsteady.

Judgment on Egypt

- 8 “Therefore, this is what the sovereign LORD says: Look, I am about to bring a sword against you, and I will kill every person and every animal.
 9 The land of Egypt will become a desolate ruin. Then they will know that I am the LORD. Because he said, “The Nile is mine and I made it,”
 10 I am against you and your waterways. I will turn the land of Egypt into an utter desolate ruin from Migdol to Syene, as far as the border with Ethiopia.
 11 No human foot will pass through it, and no animal's foot will pass through it; it will be uninhabited for forty years.
 12 I will turn the land of Egypt into a desolation in the midst of desolate lands; for forty years her cities will lie desolate in the midst of ruined cities. I will scatter Egypt among the nations and disperse them among foreign countries.

Future Restoration for Egypt

- 13 “For this is what the sovereign LORD says: At the end of forty years I will gather Egypt from the peoples where they were scattered.
 14 I will restore the fortunes of Egypt, and will bring them back to the land of Pathros, to the land of their origin; there they will be an insignificant kingdom.
 15 It will be the most insignificant of the kingdoms; it will never again exalt itself over the nations. I will make them so small that they will not rule over the nations.
 16 It will never again be Israel's source of confidence, but a reminder of how they sinned by turning to Egypt for help. Then they will know that I am the sovereign LORD.”

Jeremiah Buys a Field (c. 588 BC)

Jeremiah 32

Synopsis of Jeremiah's Current Condition

- 1 In the tenth year that Zedekiah was ruling over Judah the LORD spoke to Jeremiah. That was the same as the eighteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar.
 2 Now at that time, the armies of the king of Babylon were besieging Jerusalem. The prophet Jeremiah was confined in the courtyard of the guardhouse attached to the royal palace of Judah.
 3 For King Zedekiah had confined Jeremiah there after he had reproofed him for prophesying as he did. He had asked Jeremiah, “Why do you keep prophesying these things? Why do you keep saying that the LORD says, ‘I will hand this city over to the king of Babylon? I will let him capture it.’
 4 King Zedekiah of Judah will not escape from the Babylonians. He will certainly be handed over to the king of Babylon. He must answer personally to the king of Babylon and confront him face to face.
 5 Zedekiah will be carried off to Babylon and will remain there until I have fully dealt with him. I, the LORD, affirm it! Even if you

continue to fight against the Babylonians, you cannot win.”

Jeremiah Buys a Field at Anathoth from His Cousin Hanamel

6 So now, Jeremiah said, “The LORD told me,

7 ‘Hanamel, the son of your uncle Shallum, will come to you soon. He will say to you, “Buy my field at Anathoth because you are entitled as my closest relative to buy it.”’

8 Now it happened just as the LORD had said! My cousin Hanamel came to me in the courtyard of the guardhouse. He said to me, ‘Buy my field which is at Anathoth in the territory of the tribe of Benjamin. Buy it for yourself since you are entitled as my closest relative to take possession of it for yourself.’ When this happened, I recognized that the LORD had indeed spoken to me.

9 So I bought the field at Anathoth from my cousin Hanamel. I weighed out seven ounces of silver and gave it to him to pay for it.

10 I signed the deed of purchase, sealed it, and had some men serve as witnesses to the purchase. I weighed out the silver for him on a scale.

11 There were two copies of the deed of purchase. One was sealed and contained the order of transfer and the conditions of purchase. The other was left unsealed.

12 I took both copies of the deed of purchase and gave them to Baruch son of Neriah, the son of Mahseiah. I gave them to him in the presence of my cousin Hanamel, the witnesses who had signed the deed of purchase, and all the Judeans who were housed in the courtyard of the guardhouse.

13 In the presence of all these people I instructed Baruch,

14 ‘The LORD God of Israel who rules over all says, “Take these documents, both the sealed copy of the deed of purchase and the unsealed copy. Put them in a clay jar so that they may be preserved for a long time to come.”’

15 For the LORD God of Israel who rules over all says, “Houses, fields, and vineyards will again be bought in this land.”’

Jeremiah’s Prayer

16 “After I had given the copies of the deed of purchase to Baruch son of Neriah, I prayed to the LORD,

17 ‘Oh, Lord GOD, you did indeed make heaven and earth by your mighty power and great strength. Nothing is too hard for you!

18 You show unfailing love to thousands. But you also punish children for the sins of their parents. You are the great and powerful God who is known as the LORD who rules over all.

19 You plan great things and you do mighty deeds. You see everything people do. You reward each of them for the way they live and for the things they do.

20 You did miracles and amazing deeds in the land of Egypt which have had lasting effect. By this means you gained both in Israel and among humankind a renown that lasts to this day.

21 You used your mighty power and your great strength to perform miracles and amazing deeds and to bring great terror on the Egyptians. By this means you brought your people Israel out of the land of Egypt.

22 You kept the promise that you swore on oath to their ancestors. You gave them a land flowing with milk and honey.

23 But when they came in and took possession of it, they did not obey you or live as you had instructed them. They did not do anything that you commanded them to do. So you brought all this disaster on them.

24 Even now siege ramps have been built up around the city in order to capture it. War, starvation, and disease are sure to make the city fall into the hands of the Babylonians who are attacking it. LORD, you threatened that this would happen. Now you can see that it is already taking place.

25 The city is sure to fall into the hands of the Babylonians. Yet, in spite of this, you, Lord GOD, have said to me, “Buy that field with silver and have the transaction legally witnessed.”’

God’s Answer to Jeremiah’s Prayer

26 The LORD answered Jeremiah.

27 “I am the LORD, the God of all humankind. There is, indeed, nothing too difficult for me.

28 Therefore I, the LORD, say: ‘I will indeed hand this city over to King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon and the Babylonian army. They will capture it.

29 The Babylonian soldiers that are attacking this city will break into it and set it on fire. They will burn it down along with the houses where people have made me angry by offering sacrifices to the god Baal and by pouring out drink offerings to other gods on their rooftops.

30 This will happen because the people of Israel and Judah have repeatedly done what displeases me from their earliest history until now and because they have repeatedly made me angry by the things they have done. I, the LORD, affirm it!

31 This will happen because the people of this city have aroused my anger and my wrath since the time they built it until now. They have made me so angry that I am determined to remove it from my sight.

32 I am determined to do so because the people of Israel and Judah have made me angry with all their wickedness—they, their kings, their officials, their priests, their prophets, and especially the people of Judah and the citizens of Jerusalem have done this wickedness.

33 They have turned away from me instead of turning to me. I tried over and over again to instruct them, but they did not listen and

respond to correction.

34 They set up their disgusting idols in the temple which I have claimed for my own and defiled it.

35 They built places of worship for the god Baal in the Valley of Ben Hinnom so that they could sacrifice their sons and daughters to the god Molech. Such a disgusting practice was not something I commanded them to do! It never even entered my mind to command them to do such a thing! So Judah is certainly liable for punishment.'

The Promise of Future Restoration and a New Covenant

36 "You and your people are right in saying, 'War, starvation, and disease are sure to make this city fall into the hands of the king of Babylon.' But now I, the LORD God of Israel, have something further to say about this city:

37 'I will certainly regather my people from all the countries where I will have exiled them in my anger, fury, and great wrath. I will bring them back to this place and allow them to live here in safety.

38 They will be my people, and I will be their God.

39 I will give them a single-minded purpose to live in a way that always shows respect for me. They will want to do that for their own good and the good of the children who descend from them.

40 I will make a lasting covenant with them that I will never stop doing good to them. I will fill their hearts and minds with respect for me so that they will never again turn away from me.

41 I will take delight in doing good to them. I will faithfully and wholeheartedly plant them firmly in the land.'

42 "For I, the LORD, say: 'I will surely bring on these people all the good fortune that I am hereby promising them. I will be just as sure to do that as I have been in bringing all this great disaster on them.

43 You and your people are saying that this land will become desolate, uninhabited by either people or animals. You are saying that it will be handed over to the Babylonians. But fields will again be bought in this land.

44 Fields will again be bought with silver, and deeds of purchase signed, sealed, and witnessed. This will happen in the territory of Benjamin, the villages surrounding Jerusalem, the towns in Judah, the southern hill country, the western foothills, and southern Judah. For I will restore them to their land. I, the LORD, affirm it!"

Encouragement in the Guardhouse (c. 588/587 BC)

Jeremiah 33

The Rebuilding of Judah and Jerusalem

1 The LORD spoke to Jeremiah a second time while he was still confined in the courtyard of the guardhouse.

2 "I, the LORD, do these things. I, the LORD, form the plan to bring them about. I am known as the LORD. I say to you,

3 'Call on me in prayer and I will answer you. I will show you great and mysterious things which you still do not know about.'

4 For I, the LORD God of Israel, have something more to say about the houses in this city and the royal buildings which have been torn down for defenses against the siege ramps and military incursions of the Babylonians:

5 'The defenders of the city will go out and fight with the Babylonians. But they will only fill those houses and buildings with the dead bodies of the people that I will kill in my anger and my wrath. That will happen because I have decided to turn my back on this city on account of the wicked things they have done.

6 But I will most surely heal the wounds of this city and restore it and its people to health. I will show them abundant peace and security.

7 I will restore Judah and Israel and will rebuild them as they were in days of old.

8 I will purify them from all the sin that they committed against me. I will forgive all their sins which they committed in rebelling against me.

The Restoration of Joy and Thanks

9 All the nations will hear about all the good things which I will do to them. This city will bring me fame, honor, and praise before them for the joy that I bring it. The nations will tremble in awe at all the peace and prosperity that I will provide for it.'

10 "I, the LORD, say: 'You and your people are saying about this place, "It lies in ruins. There are no people or animals in it." That is true. The towns of Judah and the streets of Jerusalem will soon be desolate, uninhabited either by people or by animals. But happy sounds will again be heard in these places.

The Restoration of Pastures and Flocks

11 Once again there will be sounds of joy and gladness and the glad celebrations of brides and grooms. Once again people will bring their thank offerings to the temple of the LORD and will say, "Give thanks to the LORD who rules over all. For the LORD is good and his unfailing love lasts forever." For I, the LORD, affirm that I will restore the land to what it was in days of old.'

12 "I, the LORD who rules over all, say: 'This place will indeed lie in ruins. There will be no people or animals in it. But there will again be in it and in its towns sheepfolds where shepherds can rest their sheep.

13 I, the LORD, say that shepherds will once again count their sheep as they pass into the fold. They will do this in all the towns in the southern hill country, the western foothills, the southern hill country, the territory of Benjamin, the villages surrounding Jerusalem,

and the towns of Judah.’

The Restoration of the Davidic Dynasty and the Levitical Priesthood

14 “I, the LORD, affirm: ‘The time will certainly come when I will fulfill my gracious promise concerning the nations of Israel and Judah.

15 In those days and at that time I will raise up for them a righteous descendant of David. “‘He will do what is just and right in the land.

16 Under his rule Judah will enjoy safety and Jerusalem will live in security. At that time Jerusalem will be called “The LORD has provided us with justice.”

17 For I, the LORD, promise: “David will never lack a successor to occupy the throne over the nation of Israel.

18 Nor will the Levitical priests ever lack someone to stand before me and continually offer up burnt offerings, sacrifice cereal offerings, and offer the other sacrifices.””

19 The LORD spoke further to Jeremiah.

20 “I, LORD, make the following promise: ‘I have made a covenant with the day and with the night that they will always come at their proper times. Only if you people could break that covenant

21 could my covenant with my servant David and my covenant with the Levites ever be broken. So David will by all means always have a descendant to occupy his throne as king and the Levites will by all means always have priests who will minister before me.

22 I will make the children who follow one another in the line of my servant David very numerous. I will also make the Levites who minister before me very numerous. I will make them all as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sands which are on the seashore.”

23 The LORD spoke still further to Jeremiah.

24 “You have surely noticed what these people are saying, haven’t you? They are saying, ‘The LORD has rejected the two families of Israel and Judah that he chose.’ So they have little regard that my people will ever again be a nation.

25 But I, the LORD, make the following promise: I have made a covenant governing the coming of day and night. I have established the fixed laws governing heaven and earth.

26 Just as surely as I have done this, so surely will I never reject the descendants of Jacob. Nor will I ever refuse to choose one of my servant David’s descendants to rule over the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Indeed, I will restore them and show mercy to them.”

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Ezekiel's Prophecy to the Exiles—Egypt's Broken Arm (April 29, 587 BC)

Ezekiel 30:20–26

20 In the eleventh year, in the first month, on the seventh day of the month, the word of the LORD came to me:

21 “Son of man, I have broken the arm of Pharaoh king of Egypt. Look, it has not been bandaged for healing or set with a dressing so that it might become strong enough to grasp a sword.

22 Therefore this is what the sovereign LORD says: Look, I am against Pharaoh king of Egypt, and I will break his arms, the strong arm and the broken one, and I will make the sword drop from his hand.

23 I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations, and disperse them among foreign countries.

24 I will strengthen the arms of the king of Babylon, and I will place my sword in his hand, but I will break the arms of Pharaoh, and he will groan like the fatally wounded before the king of Babylon.

25 I will strengthen the arms of the king of Babylon, but the arms of Pharaoh will fall limp. Then they will know that I am the LORD when I place my sword in the hand of the king of Babylon and he extends it against the land of Egypt.

26 I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations and disperse them among foreign countries. Then they will know that I am the LORD.”

Ezekiel's Prophecy to the Exiles—Fall of the Great Tree (June 21, 587 BC)

Ezekiel 31

Description of the Great Tree

1 In the eleventh year, in the third month, on the first day of the month, the word of the LORD came to me:

2 “Son of man, say to Pharaoh king of Egypt and his hordes:

“Who are you like in your greatness?

3 [Behold a cypress], a cedar in Lebanon,
with beautiful branches, like a forest giving shade,
and extremely tall;
its top reached into the clouds.

4 The water made it grow;
underground springs made it grow tall.
Rivers flowed all around the place it was planted,
while smaller channels watered all the trees of the field.

5 Therefore it grew taller than all the trees of the field;
its boughs grew large and its branches grew long,
because of the plentiful water in its shoots.

6 All the birds of the sky nested in its boughs;
under its branches all the beasts of the field gave birth,
in its shade all the great nations lived.

7 It was beautiful in its loftiness, in the length of its branches;
for its roots went down deep to plentiful waters.

8 The cedars in the garden of God could not eclipse it,
nor could the fir trees match its boughs;
the plane trees were as nothing compared to its branches;
no tree in the garden of God could rival its beauty.

9 I made it beautiful with its many branches;
all the trees of Eden, in the garden of God, envied it.

Fall of the Great Tree

10 “Therefore this is what the sovereign LORD says: Because it was tall in stature, and its top reached into the clouds, and it was proud of its height,

11 I gave it over to the leader of the nations. He has judged it thoroughly, as its sinfulness deserves. I have thrown it out.

12 Foreigners from the most terrifying nations have cut it down and left it to lie there on the mountains. In all the valleys its branches have fallen, and its boughs lie broken in the ravines of the land. All the peoples of the land have departed from its shade and left it.

13 On its ruins all the birds of the sky will live, and all the wild animals will walk on its branches.

14 For this reason no watered trees will grow so tall; their tops will not reach into the clouds, nor will the well-watered ones grow that high. For all of them have been appointed to die in the lower parts of the earth; they will be among mere mortals, with those who descend to the pit.

15 “This is what the sovereign LORD says: On the day it went down to Sheol I caused observers to lament. I covered it with the deep

and held back its rivers; its plentiful water was restrained. I clothed Lebanon in black for it, and all the trees of the field wilted because of it.

16 I made the nations shake at the sound of its fall, when I threw it down to Sheol, along with those who descend to the pit. Then all the trees of Eden, the choicest and the best of Lebanon, all that were well-watered, were comforted in the earth below.

17 Those who lived in its shade, its allies among the nations, also went down with it to Sheol, to those killed by the sword.

18 Which of the trees of Eden was like you in majesty and loftiness? You will be brought down with the trees of Eden to the lower parts of the earth; you will lie among the uncircumcised, with those killed by the sword! This is what will happen to Pharaoh and all his hordes, declares the sovereign LORD.”

The Fall of Jerusalem (July 29, 587 BC)

2 Kings 25:2-7	Jeremiah 38:28b; 39:2-7	Jeremiah 52:5-11	2 Chronicles 36:17b
<p>2 The city remained under siege until</p> <p>King Zedekiah’s eleventh year.</p> <p>3 By the ninth day of the fourth month the famine in the city was so severe the residents had no food.</p> <p>4 The enemy broke through the city walls,</p> <p>and all the soldiers tried to escape. They left the city during the night. They went through the gate between the two walls that is near the king’s garden.</p> <p>(The Babylonians were all around the city.) Then they headed for the Jordan Valley.</p> <p>5 But the Babylonian army chased after the king. They caught up with him in the plains of Jericho,</p>	<p>38:28b The following events occurred when Jerusalem was captured.</p> <p>39:2 It lasted until the ninth day of the fourth month of Zedekiah’s eleventh year.</p> <p>On that day they broke through the city walls.</p> <p>3 Then Nergal-Sharezer of Samgar, Nebo-Sarsekim, who was a chief officer, Nergal-Sharezer, who was a high official, and all the other officers of the king of Babylon came and set up quarters in the Middle Gate.</p> <p>4 When King Zedekiah of Judah and all his soldiers saw them, they tried to escape. They departed from the city during the night. They took a path through the king’s garden and passed out through the gate between the two walls.</p> <p>Then they headed for the Jordan Valley.</p> <p>5 But the Babylonian army chased after them. They caught up with Zedekiah in the plains of Jericho</p>	<p>5 The city remained under siege until</p> <p>Zedekiah’s eleventh year.</p> <p>6 By the ninth day of the fourth month the famine in the city was so severe the residents had no food.</p> <p>7 They broke through the city walls,</p> <p>and all the soldiers tried to escape. They left the city during the night. They went through the gate between the two walls that is near the king’s garden.</p> <p>(The Babylonians had the city surrounded.) Then they headed for the Jordan Valley.</p> <p>8 But the Babylonian army chased after the king. They caught up with Zedekiah in the plains of Jericho,</p>	<p>17b who slaughtered their young men in their temple. He did not spare young men or women, or even the old and aging. God handed everyone over to him.</p>

<p>and his entire army deserted him. 6 They captured the king and brought him up to the king of Babylon at Riblah, where he passed sentence on him. 7 Zedekiah’s sons were executed while Zedekiah was forced to watch. The king of Babylon then had Zedekiah’s eyes put out, bound him in bronze chains, and carried him off to Babylon.</p>	<p>and captured him. They took him to King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon at Riblah in the territory of Hamath and Nebuchadnezzar passed sentence on him there. 6 There at Riblah the king of Babylon had Zedekiah’s sons put to death while Zedekiah was forced to watch. The king of Babylon also had all the nobles of Judah put to death. 7 Then he had Zedekiah’s eyes put out and had him bound in chains to be led off to Babylon.</p>	<p>and his entire army deserted him. 9 They captured him and brought him up to the king of Babylon at Riblah in the territory of Hamath and he passed sentence on him there. 10 The king of Babylon had Zedekiah’s sons put to death while Zedekiah was forced to watch. He also had all the nobles of Judah put to death there at Riblah. 11 He had Zedekiah’s eyes put out and had him bound in chains. Then the king of Babylon had him led off to Babylon and he was imprisoned there until the day he died.</p>	
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<p>Nebuzaradan Oversees the Pillaging and Destruction of Jerusalem (August 25–28, 587 BC)</p>			
<p>2 Kings 25:8–10, 13–17</p>	<p>Jeremiah 39:8</p>	<p>Jeremiah 52:12–14, 17–23</p>	<p>2 Chronicles 36:18–19</p>
<p>8 On the seventh day of the fifth month, in the nineteenth year of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, Nebuzaradan, the captain of the royal guard who served the king of Babylon, arrived in Jerusalem. 13 The Babylonians broke the two bronze pillars in the LORD’s temple, as well as the movable stands and the big bronze basin called the “The Sea.” They took the bronze to Babylon. 14 They also took the pots, shovels, trimming shears, pans, and all the bronze utensils used by the priests. 15 The captain of the royal guard took the golden and silver censers and basins.</p>		<p>12 On the tenth day of the fifth month, in the nineteenth year of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, Nebuzaradan, the captain of the royal guard who served the king of Babylon, arrived in Jerusalem. 17 The Babylonians broke the two bronze pillars in the temple of the LORD, as well as the movable stands and the large bronze basin called the “The Sea.” They took all the bronze to Babylon. 18 They also took the pots, shovels, trimming shears, basins, pans, and all the bronze utensils used by the priests. 19 The captain of the royal guard took the gold and silver bowls, censers, basins,</p>	<p>18 He carried away to Babylon all the items in God’s temple, whether large or small, as well as what was in the treasuries of the LORD’s temple and in the treasuries of the king and his officials.</p>

<p>16 The bronze of the items that King Solomon made for the LORD’s temple (including the two pillars, the big bronze basin called “The Sea,” the twelve bronze bulls under “The Sea,” and the movable stands) was too heavy to be weighed. 17 Each of the pillars was about 27 feet high.</p> <p>The bronze top of one pillar was about four and a half feet high and had bronze latticework and pomegranate-shaped ornaments all around it. The second pillar with its latticework was like it.</p> <p>9 He burned down the LORD’s temple, the royal palace, and all the houses in Jerusalem, including every large house. 10 The whole Babylonian army that came with the captain of the royal guard tore down the walls that surrounded Jerusalem.</p>	<p>8 The Babylonians burned down the royal palace, the temple of the LORD, and the people’s homes,</p> <p>and they tore down the wall of Jerusalem.</p>	<p>pots, lampstands, pans, and vessels. 20 The bronze of the items that King Solomon made for the LORD’s temple (including the two pillars, the large bronze basin called “The Sea,” the twelve bronze bulls under “The Sea,” and the movable stands) was too heavy to be weighed. 21 Each of the pillars was about 27 feet high, about 18 feet in circumference, three inches thick, and hollow. 22 The bronze top of one pillar was about seven and one-half feet high and had bronze latticework and pomegranate-shaped ornaments all around it. The second pillar with its pomegranate-shaped ornaments was like it. 23 There were ninety-six pomegranate-shaped ornaments on the sides; in all there were one hundred pomegranate-shaped ornaments over the latticework that went around it.</p> <p>13 He burned down the LORD’s temple, the royal palace, and all the houses in Jerusalem, including every large house. 14 The whole Babylonian army that came with the captain of the royal guard tore down the walls that surrounded Jerusalem.</p>	<p>19a They burned down the LORD’s temple</p> <p>19c They burned all its fortified buildings and destroyed all its valuable items.</p> <p>19b and tore down the wall of Jerusalem.</p>
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Jerusalem’s Leaders Executed and the City Exiled to Babylon (August 25–28, 587 BC)

2 Kings 25:11–12, 18–21	Jeremiah 39:9–10	Jer 52:15–16, 24–28a, 29	2 Chronicles 36:20a
<p>18 The captain of the royal guard took Seraiah the chief priest and Zephaniah, the priest who was second in rank, and the three doorkeepers. 19 From the city he took a eunuch who was in charge of the soldiers, five of the king’s advisers who were discovered in the city, an official army secretary who</p>		<p>24 The captain of the royal guard took Seraiah the chief priest, Zephaniah the priest who was second in rank, and the three doorkeepers. 25 From the city he took an official who was in charge of the soldiers, seven of the king’s advisers who were discovered in the city, an official army secretary who</p>	

<p>drafted citizens for military service, and sixty citizens from the people of the land who were discovered in the city.</p> <p>20 Nebuzaradan, captain of the royal guard, took them and brought them to the king of Babylon at Riblah.</p> <p>21a The king of Babylon ordered them to be executed at Riblah in the territory of Hamath.</p> <p>11 Nebuzaradan, the captain of the royal guard, deported</p> <p>the rest of the people who were left in the city, those who had deserted to the king of Babylon, and the rest of the craftsmen.</p> <p>12 But he left behind</p> <p>some of the poor of the land and gave them fields and vineyards.</p> <p>21b So Judah was deported from its land.</p>	<p>9 Then Nebuzaradan, the captain of the royal guard, took captive</p> <p>the rest of the people who were left in the city.</p> <p>He carried them off to Babylon along with the people who had deserted to him.</p> <p>10 But he left behind in the land of Judah some of the poor people who owned nothing. He gave them fields and vineyards at that time.</p>	<p>drafted citizens for military service, and sixty citizens</p> <p>who were discovered in the middle of the city.</p> <p>26 Nebuzaradan, the captain of the royal guard, took them and brought them to the king of Babylon at Riblah.</p> <p>27a The king of Babylon ordered them to be executed at Riblah in the territory of Hamath.</p> <p>15 Nebuzaradan, the captain of the royal guard, took into exile some of the poor, the rest of the people who remained in the city, those who had deserted to him, and the rest of the craftsmen.</p> <p>16 But he left behind</p> <p>some of the poor</p> <p>and gave them fields and vineyards.</p> <p>27b So Judah was taken into exile away from its land.</p> <p>28a Here is the official record of the number of people Nebuchadnezzar carried into exile:</p> <p>29 in Nebuchadnezzar's eighteenth year, 832 people from Jerusalem;</p>	<p>20a He deported to Babylon all who escaped the sword.</p>
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Chronological Notes

- 1) For the calculation of the date of the fall of Jerusalem, see the following definitive paper: Rodger C. Young, "When Did Jerusalem Fall?" *JETS* 47.1 (Mar 2004): 21–38.
- 2) From that article, the following paragraphs are important to understand today's reading: "The writings of Jeremiah end with chapter 51 (Jer 51:64), so his methods of dating are not automatically applicable to the contents of chapter 52. The contents of that chapter, except for verses 28 through 30, are all parallel to passages in the last two chapters of 2 Kings, so the methods already determined for these chapters in 2 Kings (Tishri, non-accession reckoning) can be applied to the corresponding verses in Jeremiah 52. Verses 28 through 30 are independent of the Book of Kings and are interesting enough to require special consideration. Jer 52:28–30 gives the number of captives taken by Nebuchadnezzar in his seventh, eighteenth, and twenty-third

years. There is one thing certain about the counting of captives—the captives themselves are in no position to do it. Every king and pharaoh must have had an official assigned to this task, so that the number of those vanquished could be recorded on a stela or in the annals glorifying the king's exploits. Thus the list of captives in Jer 52:28–30 could not have originated in a Judean record—it came from the official records of Nebuchadnezzar. The years of the monarch would therefore be the Nisan, accession years used in Babylon. This is an independent verification of the use of non-accession years when Jeremiah and the author of the last two chapters of 2 Kings referred to Nebuchadnezzar: the seventh (accession) year of Jer 52:28 corresponds to the eighth (non-accession) year of 2 Kgs 24:12, and the eighteenth (accession) year of Jer 52:29 corresponds to the nineteenth (non-accession) year of 2 Kgs 25:8. These are not mistakes, as some have assumed. They are a valuable clue that the synchronisms to Nebuchadnezzar in 2 Kings were to be taken in a non-accession sense, and this conclusion could have been reached from these texts alone without going through the more thorough analysis of the present article" (p. 36).

Gedaliah Appointed Governor of Judah (c. September 587 BC)

2 Kings 25:22

22 Now King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon appointed Gedaliah son of Ahikam, son of Shaphan, as governor over the people whom he allowed to remain in the land of Judah.

Jeremiah's Release (c. September 587 BC)

Jeremiah 39:11–14; 40:1–6

Jeremiah Released at Nebuchadnezzar's Personal Command

39:11 Now King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon had issued orders concerning Jeremiah. He had passed them on through Nebuzaradan, the captain of his royal guard,

12 "Find Jeremiah and look out for him. Do not do anything to harm him, but do with him whatever he tells you."

13 So Nebuzaradan, the captain of the royal guard, Nebushazban, who was a chief officer, Nergal-Sharezer, who was a high official, and all the other officers of the king of Babylon

14a sent and had Jeremiah brought from the courtyard of the guardhouse. They turned him over to Gedaliah, the son of Ahikam and the grandson of Shaphan, to take him home with him.

Jeremiah Mingles With the Deportees and Ends Up Being Taken With Them to Ramah

14b But Jeremiah stayed among the people.

40:1 The LORD spoke to Jeremiah after Nebuzaradan the captain of the royal guard had set him free at Ramah. He had taken him there in chains along with all the people from Jerusalem and Judah who were being carried off to exile to Babylon.

Nebuzaradan Personally Oversees Jeremiah's Release

2 The captain of the royal guard took Jeremiah aside and said to him, "The LORD your God threatened this place with this disaster.

3 Now he has brought it about. The LORD has done just as he threatened to do. This disaster has happened because you people sinned against the LORD and did not obey him.

4 But now, Jeremiah, today I will set you free from the chains on your wrists. If you would like to come to Babylon with me, come along and I will take care of you. But if you prefer not to come to Babylon with me, you are not required to do so. You are free to go anywhere in the land you want to go. Go wherever you choose."

5 Before Jeremiah could turn to leave, the captain of the guard added, "Go back to Gedaliah, the son of Ahikam and grandson of Shaphan, whom the king of Babylon appointed to govern the towns of Judah. Go back and live with him among the people. Or go wherever else you choose." Then the captain of the guard gave Jeremiah some food and a present and let him go.

6 So Jeremiah went to Gedaliah son of Ahikam at Mizpah and lived there with him. He stayed there to live among the people who had been left in the land of Judah.

Arise, O God, Defend Your Cause (c. September 587 BC)

Psalm 74

A well-written song by Asaph.

- 1 Why, O God, have you permanently rejected us?
Why does your anger burn against the sheep of your pasture?
- 2 Remember your people whom you acquired in ancient times,
whom you rescued so they could be your very own nation,
as well as Mount Zion, where you dwell!
- 3 Hurry and look at the permanent ruins,
and all the damage the enemy has done to the temple!
- 4 Your enemies roar in the middle of your sanctuary;
they set up their battle flags.
- 5 They invade like lumberjacks
swinging their axes in a thick forest.
- 6 And now they are tearing down all its engravings
with axes and crowbars.
- 7 They set your sanctuary on fire;
they desecrate your dwelling place by knocking it to the ground.
- 8 They say to themselves, "We will oppress all of them."
They burn down all the places where people worship God in the land.
- 9 We do not see any signs of God's presence;

- there are no longer any prophets
and we have no one to tell us how long this will last.
- 10 How long, O God, will the adversary hurl insults?
Will the enemy blaspheme your name forever?
- 11 Why do you remain inactive?
Intervene and destroy him!
- 12 But God has been my king from ancient times,
performing acts of deliverance on the earth.
- 13 You destroyed the sea by your strength;
you shattered the heads of the sea monster in the water.
- 14 You crushed the heads of Leviathan;
you fed him to the people who live along the coast.
- 15 You broke open the spring and the stream;
you dried up perpetually flowing rivers.
- 16 You established the cycle of day and night;
you put the moon and sun in place.
- 17 You set up all the boundaries of the earth;
you created the cycle of summer and winter.
- 18 Remember how the enemy hurls insults, O LORD,
and how a foolish nation blasphemes your name!
- 19 Do not hand the life of your dove over to a wild animal!
Do not continue to disregard the lives of your oppressed people!
- 20 Remember your covenant promises,
for the dark regions of the earth are full of places where violence rules.
- 21 Do not let the afflicted be turned back in shame!
Let the oppressed and poor praise your name!
- 22 Rise up, O God! Defend your honor!
Remember how fools insult you all day long!
- 23 Do not disregard what your enemies say,
or the unceasing shouts of those who defy you.

How Long, O Lord? (c. September 587 BC)

Psalm 79

A psalm of Asaph.

- 1 O God, foreigners have invaded your chosen land;
they have polluted your holy temple
and turned Jerusalem into a heap of ruins.
- 2 They have given the corpses of your servants
to the birds of the sky;
the flesh of your loyal followers
to the beasts of the earth.
- 3 They have made their blood flow like water
all around Jerusalem, and there is no one to bury them.
- 4 We have become an object of disdain to our neighbors;
those who live on our borders taunt and insult us.
- 5 How long will this go on, O LORD?
Will you stay angry forever?
How long will your rage burn like fire?
- 6 Pour out your anger on the nations that do not acknowledge you,
on the kingdoms that do not pray to you!
- 7 For they have devoured Jacob
and destroyed his home.
- 8 Do not hold us accountable for the sins of earlier generations!
Quickly send your compassion our way,
for we are in serious trouble!
- 9 Help us, O God, our deliverer!
For the sake of your glorious reputation, rescue us!

- Forgive our sins for the sake of your reputation!
- 10 Why should the nations say, “Where is their God?”
Before our very eyes may the shed blood of your servants
be avenged among the nations!
- 11 Listen to the painful cries of the prisoners!
Use your great strength to set free those condemned to die!
- 12 Pay back our neighbors in full!
May they be insulted the same way they insulted you, O Lord!
- 13 Then we, your people, the sheep of your pasture,
will continually thank you.
We will tell coming generations of your praiseworthy acts.

How Shall We Sing the Lord’s Song? (c. September 587 BC)

Psalm 137

- 1 By the rivers of Babylon
we sit down and weep
when we remember Zion.
- 2 On the poplars in her midst
we hang our harps,
3 for there our captors ask us to compose songs;
those who mock us demand that we be happy, saying:
“Sing for us a song about Zion!”
- 4 How can we sing a song to the LORD
in a foreign land?
- 5 If I forget you, O Jerusalem,
may my right hand be crippled!
- 6 May my tongue stick to the roof of my mouth,
if I do not remember you,
and do not give Jerusalem priority
over whatever gives me the most joy.
- 7 Remember, O LORD, what the Edomites did
on the day Jerusalem fell.
They said, “Tear it down, tear it down,
right to its very foundation!”
- 8 O daughter Babylon, soon to be devastated!
How blessed will be the one who repays you
for what you dished out to us!
- 9 How blessed will be the one who grabs your babies
and smashes them on a rock!

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A Lament for Jerusalem – Part 1 (c. September 587 BC)

Lamentations 1–2

The Prophet Speaks:*Aleph*

1:1 Alas! The city once full of people
now sits all alone!
The prominent lady among the nations
has become a widow!
The princess who once ruled the provinces
has become a forced laborer!

Beth

2 She weeps bitterly at night;
tears stream down her cheeks.
She has no one to comfort her
among all her lovers.
All her friends have betrayed her;
they have become her enemies.

Gimel

3 Judah has departed into exile
under affliction and harsh oppression.
She lives among the nations;
she has found no resting place.
All who pursued her
overtook her in narrow straits.

Daleth

4 The roads to Zion mourn
because no one travels to the festivals.
All her city gates are deserted;
her priests groan.
Her virgins grieve;
she is in bitter anguish!

He

5 Her foes subjugated her;
her enemies are at ease.
For the LORD afflicted her
because of her many acts of rebellion.
Her children went away
captive before the enemy.

Waw

6 All of Daughter Zion's splendor
has departed.
Her leaders became like deer;
they found no pasture,
so they were too exhausted to escape
from the hunter.

Zayin

7 Jerusalem remembers,
when she became a poor homeless person,
all her treasures
that she owned in days of old.
When her people fell into an enemy's grip,
none of her allies came to her rescue.

Her enemies gloated over her;
they sneered at her downfall.

Heth

8 Jerusalem committed terrible sin;
therefore she became an object of scorn.
All who admired her have despised her
because they have seen her nakedness.
She groans aloud
and turns away in shame.

Teth

9 Her menstrual flow has soiled her clothing;
she did not consider the consequences of her sin.
Her demise was astonishing,
and there was no one to comfort her.
She cried, “Look, O LORD, on my affliction
because my enemy boasts!”

Yod

10 An enemy grabbed
all her valuables.
Indeed she watched in horror as Gentiles
invaded her holy temple—
those whom you had commanded:
“They must not enter your assembly place.”

Kaph

11 All her people groaned
as they searched for a morsel of bread.
They exchanged their valuables
for just enough food to stay alive.

Jerusalem Speaks:

“Look, O LORD! Consider
that I have become worthless!”

Lamed

12 Is it nothing to you, all you who pass by on the road?
Look and see!
Is there any pain like mine?
The Lord has afflicted me,
he has inflicted it on me
when he burned with anger.

Mem

13 He sent down fire
into my bones, and it overcame them.
He spread out a trapper’s net for my feet;
he made me turn back.
He has made me desolate;
I am faint all day long.

Nun

14 My sins are bound around my neck like a yoke;
they are fastened together by his hand.
He has placed his yoke on my neck;
he has sapped my strength.

The Lord has handed me over
to those whom I cannot resist.

Samech

15 He rounded up all my mighty ones;
The Lord did this in my midst.
He summoned an assembly against me
to shatter my young men.
The Lord has stomped like grapes
the virgin daughter, Judah.

Ayin

16 I weep because of these things;
my eyes flow with tears.
For there is no one in sight who can comfort me
or encourage me.
My children are desolated
because an enemy has prevailed.

The Prophet Speaks:

Pe

17 Zion spread out her hands,
but there is no one to comfort her.
The LORD has issued a decree against Jacob;
his neighbors have become his enemies.
Jerusalem has become
like filthy garbage in their midst.

Jerusalem Speaks:

Tsade

18 The LORD is right to judge me!
Yes, I rebelled against his commands.
Please listen, all you nations,
and look at my suffering!
My young women and men
have gone into exile.

Qoph

19 I called for my lovers,
but they had deceived me.
My priests and my elders
perished in the city.
Truly they had searched for food
to keep themselves alive.

Resh

20 Look, O LORD! I am distressed;
my stomach is in knots!
My heart is pounding inside me.
Yes, I was terribly rebellious!
Out in the street the sword bereaves a mother of her children;
Inside the house death is present.

Shin

21 They have heard that I groan,
yet there is no one to comfort me.
All my enemies have heard of my trouble;
they are glad that you have brought it about.

Bring about the day of judgment that you promised
so that they may end up like me!

Taw

22 Let all their wickedness come before you;
afflict them
just as you have afflicted me
because of all my acts of rebellion.
For my groans are many,
and my heart is sick with sorrow.

The Prophet Speaks:

Aleph

2:1 Alas! The Lord has covered
Daughter Zion with his anger.
He has thrown down the splendor of Israel
from heaven to earth;
he did not protect his temple
when he displayed his anger.

Beth

2 The Lord destroyed mercilessly
all the homes of Jacob's descendants.
In his anger he tore down
the fortified cities of Daughter Judah.
He knocked to the ground and humiliated
the kingdom and its rulers.

Gimel

3 In fierce anger he destroyed
the whole army of Israel.
He withdrew his right hand
as the enemy attacked.
He was like a raging fire in the land of Jacob;
it consumed everything around it.

Daleth

4 He prepared his bow like an enemy;
his right hand was ready to shoot.
Like a foe he killed everyone,
even our strong young men;
he has poured out his anger like fire
on the tent of Daughter Zion.

He

5 The Lord, like an enemy,
destroyed Israel.
He destroyed all her palaces;
he ruined her fortified cities.
He made everyone in Daughter Judah
mourn and lament.

Waw

6 He destroyed his temple as if it were a vineyard;
he destroyed his appointed meeting place.
The LORD has made those in Zion forget
both the festivals and the Sabbaths.
In his fierce anger he has spurned
both king and priest.

Zayin

7 The Lord rejected his altar
and abhorred his temple.
He handed over to the enemy
her palace walls;
the enemy shouted in the LORD's temple
as if it were a feast day.

Heth

8 The LORD was determined to tear down
Daughter Zion's wall.
He prepared to knock it down;
he did not withdraw his hand from destroying.
He made the ramparts and fortified walls lament;
together they mourned their ruin.

Teth

9 Her city gates have fallen to the ground;
he smashed to bits the bars that lock her gates.
Her king and princes were taken into exile;
there is no more guidance available.
As for her prophets,
they no longer receive a vision from the LORD.

Yod

10 The elders of Daughter Zion
sit on the ground in silence.
They have thrown dirt on their heads;
They have dressed in sackcloth.
Jerusalem's young women stare down at the ground.

Kaph

11 My eyes are worn out from weeping;
my stomach is in knots.
My heart is poured out on the ground
due to the destruction of my helpless people;
children and infants faint
in the town squares.

Lamed

12 Children say to their mothers,
"Where are food and drink?"
They faint like a wounded warrior
in the city squares.
They die slowly
in their mothers' arms.

Mem

13 With what can I equate you?
To what can I compare you, O Daughter Jerusalem?
To what can I liken you
so that I might comfort you, O Virgin Daughter Zion?
Your wound is as deep as the sea.
Who can heal you?

Nun

14 Your prophets saw visions for you
that were worthless lies.

They failed to expose your sin
so as to restore your fortunes.
They saw oracles for you
that were worthless lies.

Samech

15 All who passed by on the road
clapped their hands to mock you.
They sneered and shook their heads
at Daughter Jerusalem.
“Ha! Is this the city they called
‘The perfection of beauty,
the source of joy of the whole earth!’?”

Pe

16 All your enemies
gloated over you.
They sneered and gnashed their teeth;
they said, “We have destroyed her!
Ha! We have waited a long time for this day.
We have lived to see it!”

Ayin

17 The LORD has done what he planned;
he has fulfilled his promise
that he threatened long ago:
He has overthrown you without mercy
and has enabled the enemy to gloat over you;
he has exalted your adversaries’ power.

Tsade

18 Cry out from your heart to the Lord,
O wall of Daughter Zion!
Make your tears flow like a river
all day and all night long!
Do not rest;
do not let your tears stop!

Qoph

19 Get up! Cry out in the night
when the night watches start!
Pour out your heart like water
before the face of the Lord!
Lift up your hands to him
for your children’s lives;
they are fainting
at every street corner.

Jerusalem Speaks:*Resh*

20 Look, O LORD! Consider!
Whom have you ever afflicted like this?
Should women eat their offspring,
their healthy infants?
Should priest and prophet
be killed in the Lord’s sanctuary?

Shin

21 The young boys and old men
lie dead on the ground in the streets.
My young women and my young men
have fallen by the sword.
You killed them when you were angry;
you slaughtered them without mercy.

Taw

22 As if it were a feast day, you call
enemies to terrify me on every side.
On the day of the Lord's anger
no one escaped or survived.
My enemy has finished off
those healthy infants whom I bore and raised.

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A Lament for Jerusalem – Part 2 (c. September 587 BC)

Lamentations 3

The Prophet Speaks:*Aleph*

- 1 I am the man who has experienced affliction
from the rod of his wrath.
- 2 He drove me into captivity and made me walk
in darkness and not light.
- 3 He repeatedly attacks me,
he turns his hand against me all day long.

Beth

- 4 He has made my mortal skin waste away;
he has broken my bones.
- 5 He has besieged and surrounded me
with bitter hardship.
- 6 He has made me reside in deepest darkness
like those who died long ago.

Gimel

- 7 He has walled me in so that I cannot get out;
he has weighted me down with heavy prison chains.
- 8 Also, when I cry out desperately for help,
he has shut out my prayer.
- 9 He has blocked every road I take with a wall of hewn stones;
he has made every path impassable.

Daleth

- 10 To me he is like a bear lying in ambush,
like a hidden lion stalking its prey.
- 11 He has obstructed my paths and torn me to pieces;
he has made me desolate.
- 12 He drew his bow and made me
the target for his arrow.

He

- 13 He shot his arrows
into my heart.
- 14 I have become the laughingstock of all people,
their mocking song all day long.
- 15 He has given me my fill of bitter herbs
and made me drunk with bitterness.

Waw

- 16 He ground my teeth in gravel;
he trampled me in the dust.
- 17 I am deprived of peace;
I have forgotten what happiness is.
- 18 So I said, "My endurance has expired;
I have lost all hope of deliverance from the Lord."

Zayin

- 19 Remember my impoverished and homeless condition,
which is a bitter poison.
- 20 I continually think about this,
and I am depressed.
- 21 But this I call to mind;
therefore I have hope:

Heth

- 22 The Lord's loyal kindness never ceases;
his compassions never end.
- 23 They are fresh every morning;
your faithfulness is abundant!
- 24 "My portion is the Lord," I have said to myself,
so I will put my hope in him.

Teth

- 25 The Lord is good to those who trust in him,
to the one who seeks him.
- 26 It is good to wait patiently
for deliverance from the Lord.
- 27 It is good for a man
to bear the yoke while he is young.

Yod

- 28 Let a person sit alone in silence,
when the Lord is disciplining him.
- 29 Let him bury his face in the dust;
perhaps there is hope.
- 30 Let him offer his cheek to the one who hits him;
let him have his fill of insults.

Kaph

- 31 For the Lord will not
reject us forever.
- 32 Though he causes us grief, he then has compassion on us
according to the abundance of his loyal kindness.
- 33 For he is not predisposed to afflict
or to grieve people.

Lamed

- 34 To crush underfoot
all the earth's prisoners,
- 35 to deprive a person of his rights
in the presence of the Most High,
- 36 to defraud a person in a lawsuit—
the Lord does not approve of such things!

Mem

- 37 Whose command was ever fulfilled
unless the Lord decreed it?
- 38 Is it not from the mouth of the Most High that everything comes—
both calamity and blessing?
- 39 Why should any living person complain
when punished for his sins?

Nun

- 40 Let us carefully examine our ways,
and let us return to the Lord.
- 41 Let us lift up our hearts and our hands
to God in heaven:
- 42 "We have blatantly rebelled;
you have not forgiven."

Samech

- 43 You shrouded yourself with anger and then pursued us;
you killed without mercy.
- 44 You shrouded yourself with a cloud
so that no prayer can get through.

45 You make us like filthy scum
in the estimation of the nations.

Pe

46 All our enemies have gloated over us;
47 Panic and pitfall have come upon us,
devastation and destruction.
48 Streams of tears flow from my eyes
because my people are destroyed.

Ayin

49 Tears flow from my eyes and will not stop;
there will be no break
50 until the Lord looks down from heaven
and sees what has happened.
51 What my eyes see grieves me—
all the suffering of the daughters in my city.

Tsade

52 For no good reason my enemies
hunted me down like a bird.
53 They shut me up in a pit
and threw stones at me.
54 The waters closed over my head;
I thought I was about to die.

Qoph

55 I have called on your name, O Lord,
from the deepest pit.
56 You heard my plea:
“Do not close your ears to my cry for relief!”
57 You came near on the day I called to you;
you said, “Do not fear!”

Resh

58 O Lord, you championed my cause,
you redeemed my life.
59 You have seen the wrong done to me, O Lord;
pronounce judgment on my behalf!
60 You have seen all their vengeance,
all their plots against me.

Shin

61 You have heard their taunts, O Lord,
all their plots against me.
62 My assailants revile and conspire
against me all day long.
63 Watch them from morning to evening;
I am the object of their mocking songs.

Taw

64 Pay them back what they deserve, O Lord,
according to what they have done.
65 Give them a distraught heart;
may your curse be on them!
66 Pursue them in anger and eradicate them
from under the Lord’s heaven.