

ENGAGING GOSPEL DOCTRINE 118.2

Lesson 41 (Study Notes): [“Enlarge the Place of Thy Tent”](#)

Class Member Reading: Jeremiah 1; 2; 15; 20; 26; 36; 37; 38

- 1: Call of Jeremiah; “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you”
- 2: Calling Israel to repentance
- 15: Punishment on Jerusalem inevitable; Jeremiah complains/is reassured
- 20: Jeremiah is punished; his ambivalence toward his calling, “fire in my bones”
- 26: Jeremiah prophesies Babylon will conquer Jerusalem (being on the right and wrong side of history)
- 36: Make backup copies (Baruch writes scroll, reads in temple, reads in palace, king has scroll burned, Jeremiah dictates another)
- 37: Zedekiah asks Jeremiah to talk to God then puts him in prison (Jeremiah, not God)
- 38: Officials put Jeremiah in a cistern, king has him rescued, Jeremiah schools Zedekiah (Jerusalem falls in 39)

Jeremiah 1; 2; 15; 20; 26; 36; 37; 38

¹The words of Jeremiah son of Hilkiah, of the priests who were in Anathoth ([Descendant of Abiathar, priest of David \[Solomon kicked him out leaving only Zadok as priest, as well as Eli\]](#)) in the land of Benjamin, ²to whom the word of the Lord came in the days of King Josiah son of Amon of Judah, in the thirteenth year of his reign. ³It came also in the days of King Jehoiakim son of Josiah of Judah, and until the end of the eleventh year of King Zedekiah son of Josiah of Judah, until the captivity of Jerusalem in the fifth month. [\(627-586\)](#)

⁴Now the word of the Lord came to me saying, ⁵**“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations.”**

⁶Then I said, “Ah, Lord God! Truly I do not know how to speak, for I am only a boy.” ⁷But the Lord said to me, “Do not say, ‘I am only a boy’; for you shall go to all to whom I send you, and you shall speak whatever I command you, ⁸Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you, says the Lord.” ⁹Then the Lord put out his hand and touched my mouth; and the Lord said to me, “Now I have put my words in your mouth. ¹⁰See, today I appoint you over nations and over kingdoms, to pluck up and to pull down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant.” [Note the similarities between Jeremiah’s call and Moses’. The parts of the call are: divine confrontation \(v. 4\), introductory word \(v. 5a\), commission \(v. 5b\), objection \(v. 6\), reassurance \(vv. 7-8\), sign \(vv. 9-10\). Note that there are twice as many destroy terms as rebuild terms, foreshadowing the tone of Jeremiah’s ministry.](#)

¹¹The word of the Lord came to me, saying, “Jeremiah, what do you see?” And I said, “I see a branch of an almond tree.” ¹²Then the Lord said to me, “You have seen well, for I am watching over my word to perform it.” ¹³The word of the Lord came to me a second time, saying, “What do you see?” And I said, “I see a boiling pot, tilted away from the north.” (Both the almond branch and pot are priestly objects; the Levitical staff was associated with almond blossoms and the pot was to prepare sacrificial meat) ¹⁴Then the Lord said to me: Out of the north disaster shall break out on all the inhabitants of the land. ¹⁵For now I am calling all the tribes of the kingdoms of the north, says the Lord; and they shall come and all of them shall set their thrones at the entrance of the gates of Jerusalem, against all its surrounding walls and against all the cities of Judah. ¹⁶And I will utter my judgments against them, for all their wickedness in forsaking me; they have made offerings to other gods, and worshiped the works of their own hands. ¹⁷But you, gird up your loins; stand up and tell them everything that I command you. **Do not break down before them**, or I will break you before them. ¹⁸And **I for my part have made you today a fortified city, an iron pillar, and a bronze wall, against the whole land**—against the kings of Judah, its princes, its priests, and the people of the land. ¹⁹They will fight against you; but they shall not prevail against you, for I am with you, says the Lord, to deliver you. **What a poignant, difficult calling. To be set against his own people.**

2The word of the Lord came to me, saying: ²Go and proclaim in the hearing of Jerusalem, Thus says the Lord: I remember the devotion of your youth, your love as a bride, how you followed me in the wilderness, in a land not sown. ³Israel was holy to the Lord, the first fruits of his harvest. All who ate of it were held guilty; disaster came upon them, says the Lord. ⁴Hear the word of the Lord, O house of Jacob, and all the families of the house of Israel. ⁵Thus says the Lord: What wrong did your ancestors find in me that they went far from me, and went after worthless things, and became worthless themselves? ⁶They did not say, “Where is the Lord who brought us up from the land of Egypt, who led us in the wilderness, in a land of deserts and pits, in a land of drought and deep darkness, in a land that no one passes through, where no one lives?” ⁷I brought you into a plentiful land to eat its fruits and its good things. But when you entered you defiled my land, and made my heritage an abomination. ⁸The priests did not say, “Where is the Lord?” Those who handle the law did not know me; the rulers transgressed against me; the prophets prophesied by Baal, and went after things that do not profit.

⁹Therefore once more **I accuse you, (Divorce court)** says the Lord, and I accuse your children’s children. ¹⁰Cross to the coasts of Cyprus and look, send to Kedar and examine with care; see if there has ever been such a thing. ¹¹Has a nation changed its gods, even though they are no gods? But my people have changed their glory for something that does not profit. ¹²Be appalled, O heavens, at this, be shocked, be utterly desolate, says the Lord, ¹³for my people have committed two evils: **they have forsaken me, the fountain of living water, and dug out cisterns for themselves, cracked cisterns that can hold no water.**

¹⁴Is Israel a slave? Is he a homeborn servant? Why then has he become plunder? ¹⁵The lions have roared against him, they have roared loudly. They have made his land a waste; his cities are in ruins, without inhabitant. ¹⁶Moreover, the people of Memphis and Tahpanhes have

broken the crown of your head. ¹⁷**Have you not brought this upon yourself by forsaking the Lord your God**, while he led you in the way? (Deuteronomistic theology) ¹⁸What then do you gain by going to Egypt, to drink the waters of the Nile? Or what do you gain by going to Assyria, to drink the waters of the Euphrates? ¹⁹Your wickedness will punish you, and your apostasies will convict you. Know and see that it is evil and bitter for you to **forsake the Lord your God**; the fear of me is not in you, says the Lord God of hosts.

²⁰For long ago you broke your yoke and burst your bonds, and you said, “I will not serve!” On every high hill and under every green tree you sprawled and played the whore. ²¹Yet I planted you as a choice vine, from the purest stock. How then did you turn degenerate and become a wild vine? ²²Though you wash yourself with lye and use much soap, the stain of your guilt is still before me, says the Lord God. ²³How can you say, “I am not defiled, I have not gone after the Baals”? Look at your way in the valley; know what you have done— a restive young camel interlacing her tracks, ²⁴a wild ass at home in the wilderness, in her heat sniffing the wind! Who can restrain her lust? None who seek her need weary themselves; in her month they will find her (Jeremiah uses graphic wording, calling Israel an animal in heat, unable to control desire to go after other gods). ²⁵Keep your feet from going unshod and your throat from thirst. But you said, “It is hopeless, for I have loved strangers, and after them I will go.” ²⁶As a thief is shamed when caught, so the house of Israel shall be shamed— they, their kings, their officials, their priests, and their prophets, ²⁷who say to a tree, “You are my father,” and to a stone, “You gave me birth.” For they have turned their backs to me, and not their faces. But **in the time of their trouble they say, “Come and save us!”** ²⁸But where are your gods that you made for yourself? Let them come, if they can save you, in your time of trouble; for you have as many gods as you have towns, O Judah.

²⁹Why do you complain against me? You have all rebelled against me, says the Lord. ³⁰In vain I have struck down your children; they accepted no correction. Your own sword devoured your prophets like a ravaging lion. ³¹And you, O generation, behold the word of the Lord! Have I been a wilderness to Israel, or a land of thick darkness? Why then do my people say, “We are free, we will come to you no more”? ³²Can a girl forget her ornaments, or a bride her attire? Yet my people have forgotten me, days without number. ³³How well you direct your course to seek lovers! So that even to wicked women you have taught your ways. ³⁴Also **on your skirts is found the lifeblood of the innocent poor**, though you did not catch them breaking in. Yet in spite of all these things ³⁵you say, “I am innocent; surely his anger has turned from me.” Now I am bringing you to judgment for saying, “I have not sinned.” (This is deeply important—God is condemning Israel not just for their sins, but the hypocrisy. There is nothing more damning, literally, than the inability to see our failings, weaknesses, shortcomings and sins. Facing them is the beginning of redemption) ³⁶How lightly you gad about, changing your ways! You shall be put to shame by Egypt as you were put to shame by Assyria. ³⁷From there also you will come away with your hands on your head; for the Lord has rejected those in whom you trust, and you will not prosper through them.

15 Then the Lord said to me: **Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet my heart would not turn toward this people.** (Tradition of prophetic intercession, but God says even that would not work) Send them out of my sight, and let them go! ²And when they say to you, “Where shall we go?” you shall say to them: Thus says the Lord: Those destined for pestilence, to pestilence, and those destined for the sword, to the sword; those destined for famine, to famine, and those destined for captivity, to captivity. ³And I will appoint over them four kinds of destroyers, says the Lord: the sword to kill, the dogs to drag away, and the birds of the air and the wild animals of the earth to devour and destroy. ⁴I will make them a horror to all the kingdoms of the earth **because of what King Manasseh son of Hezekiah of Judah did in Jerusalem.** (This is the answer the Deuteronomists gave for the destruction of Jerusalem and the exile) ⁵Who will have pity on you, O Jerusalem, or who will bemoan you? Who will turn aside to ask about your welfare? ⁶You have rejected me, says the Lord, you are going backward; so I have stretched out my hand against you and destroyed you— I am weary of relenting (striking imagery). ⁷I have winnowed them with a winnowing fork in the gates of the land; I have bereaved them, I have destroyed my people; they did not turn from their ways. ⁸Their widows became more numerous than the sand of the seas (This is especially poignant, since this alludes to and reverses the Abrahamic covenant); I have brought against the mothers of youths a destroyer at noonday; I have made anguish and terror fall upon her suddenly. ⁹She who bore seven has languished; she has swooned away; her sun went down while it was yet day; she has been shamed and disgraced. And the rest of them I will give to the sword before their enemies, says the Lord.

¹⁰ (Jeremiah now speaks, and laments the difficulty of his calling) Woe is me, my mother, that you ever bore me, **a man of strife and contention to the whole land!** I have not lent, nor have I borrowed, yet all of them curse me. ¹¹The Lord said: Surely I have intervened in your life for good, surely I have imposed enemies on you in a time of trouble and in a time of distress. ¹²Can iron and bronze break iron from the north? ¹³Your wealth and your treasures I will give as plunder, without price, for all your sins, throughout all your territory. ¹⁴I will make you serve your enemies in a land that you do not know, for in my anger a fire is kindled that shall burn forever.

¹⁵O Lord, you know; **remember me and visit me**, and bring down retribution for me on my persecutors. In your forbearance do not take me away; know that **on your account I suffer insult.** ¹⁶**Your words were found** (Possibly an allusion to the book of the law found in the Jerusalem temple in the time of Josiah, which would be really cool), **and I ate them, and your words became to me a joy and the delight of my heart;** for **I am called by your name**, O Lord, God of hosts. ¹⁷I did not sit in the company of merry-makers, nor did I rejoice; **under the weight of your hand I sat alone, for you had filled me with indignation.** ¹⁸**Why is my pain unceasing, my wound incurable, refusing to be healed?** Truly, **you are to me like a deceitful brook, like waters that fail.** Staggeringly bold words. Jeremiah is accusing God of failing him (it gets worse in a bit) ¹⁹Therefore thus says the Lord: If you turn back, I will take you back, and you shall stand before me. If you **utter what is precious**, and not what is worthless, you shall serve as my mouth. It is they who will turn to you, not you who will turn to them. ²⁰**And I will make you to**

this people a fortified wall of bronze; they will fight against you, but they shall not prevail over you, for I am with you to save you and deliver you, says the Lord. ²¹I will deliver you out of the hand of the wicked, and redeem you from the grasp of the ruthless.

20Now the priest Pashhur son of Immer, who was chief officer in the house of the Lord, heard Jeremiah prophesying these things. ²Then Pashhur struck the prophet Jeremiah, and put him in the stocks that were in the upper Benjamin Gate of the house of the Lord. ³The next morning when Pashhur released Jeremiah from the stocks, Jeremiah said to him, The Lord has named you not Pashhur but "Terror-all-around." ⁴For thus says the Lord: I am making you a terror to yourself and to all your friends; and they shall fall by the sword of their enemies while you look on. And I will give all Judah into the hand of the king of Babylon; he shall carry them captive to Babylon, and shall kill them with the sword. ⁵I will give all the wealth of this city, all its gains, all its prized belongings, and all the treasures of the kings of Judah into the hand of their enemies, who shall plunder them, and seize them, and carry them to Babylon. [\(This happened in 597\)](#) ⁶And you, Pashhur, and all who live in your house, shall go into captivity, and to Babylon you shall go; there you shall die, and there you shall be buried, you and all your friends, to whom you have prophesied falsely.

⁷O Lord, you have enticed me, and I was enticed; you have overpowered me, and you have prevailed. [\(The Hebrew words selected here make it clear Jeremiah is accusing God of seducing him and worse\)](#) I have become a laughingstock all day long; everyone mocks me. ⁸For **whenever I speak, I must cry out, I must shout, "Violence and destruction!" For the word of the Lord has become for me a reproach and derision all day long.** ⁹If I say, "I will not mention him, or speak any more in his name," then within me there is something like a burning fire shut up in my bones; I am weary with holding it in, and I cannot. [This is a central passage worth discussing.](#) ¹⁰For I hear many whispering: "Terror is all around! Denounce him! Let us denounce him!" All **my close friends are watching for me to stumble.** "Perhaps he can be enticed, and we can prevail against him, and take our revenge on him." ¹¹But **the Lord is with me like a dread warrior; therefore my persecutors will stumble, and they will not prevail.** They will be greatly shamed, for they will not succeed. Their eternal dishonor will never be forgotten. ¹²O Lord of hosts, you test the righteous, you see the heart and the mind; let me see your retribution upon them, for to you I have committed my cause. ¹³Sing to the Lord; praise the Lord! For he has delivered the life of the needy from the hands of evildoers. [Note Jeremiah's wrenching ambivalence.](#)

¹⁴**Cursed be the day on which I was born!** The day when my mother bore me, let it not be blessed! ¹⁵Cursed be the man who brought the news to my father, saying, "A child is born to you, a son," making him very glad. ¹⁶Let that man be like the cities that the Lord overthrew without pity; let him hear a cry in the morning and an alarm at noon, ¹⁷because he did not kill me in the womb; so my mother would have been my grave, and her womb forever great. ¹⁸Why did I come forth from the womb to see toil and sorrow, and spend my days in shame?

26At the beginning of the reign of King Jehoiakim son of Josiah of Judah, this word came from the Lord: ²Thus says the Lord: Stand in the court of the Lord's house, and speak to all the cities of Judah that come to worship in the house of the Lord; speak to them all the words that I command you; **do not hold back a word.** ³It may be that they will listen, all of them, and will turn from their evil way, that I may change my mind about the disaster that I intend to bring on them because of their evil doings. ⁴You shall say to them: Thus says the Lord: If you will not listen to me, to walk in my law that I have set before you, ⁵and to heed the words of my servants the prophets whom I send to you urgently—though you have not heeded— ⁶then I will make this house like Shiloh, and I will make this city a curse for all the nations of the earth.
[Jeremiah is a prophet of last resort.](#)

⁷The priests and the prophets and all the people heard Jeremiah speaking these words in the house of the Lord. ⁸And when Jeremiah had finished speaking all that the Lord had commanded him to speak to all the people, then the priests and the prophets and all the people laid hold of him, saying, "You shall die!" ⁹Why have you prophesied in the name of the Lord, saying, 'This house shall be like Shiloh, and this city shall be desolate, without inhabitant'?" And all the people gathered around Jeremiah in the house of the Lord. ¹⁰When the officials of Judah heard these things, they came up from the king's house to the house of the Lord and took their seat in the entry of the New Gate of the house of the Lord. ¹¹Then the priests and the prophets said to the officials and to all the people, "This man deserves the sentence of death because he has prophesied against this city, as you have heard with your own ears." ¹²Then Jeremiah spoke to all the officials and all the people, saying, "It is the Lord who sent me to prophesy against this house and this city all the words you have heard. ¹³Now therefore amend your ways and your doings, and obey the voice of the Lord your God, and the Lord will change his mind about the disaster that he has pronounced against you. ¹⁴But as for me, here I am in your hands. Do with me as seems good and right to you. ¹⁵Only know for certain that if you put me to death, you will be bringing innocent blood upon yourselves and upon this city and its inhabitants, for in truth the Lord sent me to you to speak all these words in your ears." [The similarities between Jesus and Jeremiah are striking; both were threatened for speaking against the temple, and Jesus explicitly quotes Jeremiah in that action \(Mark 11:17-18\).](#)

¹⁶Then the officials and all the people said to the priests and the prophets, "This man does not deserve the sentence of death, for he has spoken to us in the name of the Lord our God." ¹⁷And some of the elders of the land arose and said to all the assembled people, ¹⁸"Micah of Moresheth ([the prophet of the book of Micah](#)), who prophesied during the days of King Hezekiah of Judah, said to all the people of Judah: 'Thus says the Lord of hosts, Zion shall be plowed as a field; Jerusalem shall become a heap of ruins, and the mountain of the house a wooded height.' ¹⁹Did King Hezekiah of Judah and all Judah actually put him to death? Did he not fear the Lord and entreat the favor of the Lord, and did not the Lord change his mind about the disaster that he had pronounced against them? But we are about to bring great disaster on ourselves!" ²⁰There was another man prophesying in the name of the Lord, Uriah son of Shemaiah from Kiriath-jearim. He prophesied against this city and against this land in words exactly like those of Jeremiah. ²¹And when King Jehoiakim, with all his warriors and all the

officials, heard his words, the king sought to put him to death; but when Uriah heard of it, he was afraid and fled and escaped to Egypt. ²²Then King Jehoiakim sent Elnathan son of Achbor and men with him to Egypt, ²³and they took Uriah from Egypt and brought him to King Jehoiakim, who struck him down with the sword and threw his dead body into the burial place of the common people. ²⁴But the **hand of Ahikam son of Shaphan was with Jeremiah** so that he was not given over into the hands of the people to be put to death. *Jeremiah provides a fascinating window into this key time in Judah's history. Shaphan was one of the main scribes involved in Josiah's reform, and Hilkiah was the name of the priest who found the book, and that is the same name as Jeremiah's father!! (makes for a cool story, though we can't be sure it was the same person)*

36In the fourth year of King Jehoiakim son of Josiah of Judah, this word came to Jeremiah from the Lord: ²**Take a scroll and write on it** (*Jeremiah is the most transparent book as far as composition and development goes*) all the words that I have spoken to you against Israel and Judah and all the nations, from the day I spoke to you, from the days of Josiah until today. ³**It may be** that when the house of Judah hears of all the disasters that I intend to do to them, all of them **may turn from their evil ways, so that I may forgive their iniquity and their sin.** (*This is hope expressed by the weeping God of Moses 7*) ⁴Then Jeremiah called **Baruch son of Neriah,** and **Baruch wrote on a scroll at Jeremiah's dictation** all the words of the Lord that he had spoken to him. ⁵And Jeremiah ordered Baruch, saying, **"I am prevented from entering the house of the Lord;** ⁶so you go yourself, and on a fast day in the hearing of the people in the Lord's house you shall read the words of the Lord from the scroll that you have written at my dictation. You shall read them also in the hearing of all the people of Judah who come up from their towns. ⁷It may be that their plea will come before the Lord, and that all of them will turn from their evil ways, for great is the anger and wrath that the Lord has pronounced against this people." ⁸And Baruch son of Neriah did all that the prophet Jeremiah ordered him about reading from the scroll the words of the Lord in the Lord's house.

⁹In the fifth year of King Jehoiakim son of Josiah of Judah, in the ninth month, all the people in Jerusalem and all the people who came from the towns of Judah to Jerusalem proclaimed a fast before the Lord. ¹⁰Then, in the hearing of all the people, Baruch read the words of Jeremiah from the scroll, in the house of the Lord, in the chamber of Gemariah son of Shaphan the secretary, which was in the upper court, at the entry of the New Gate of the Lord's house. ¹¹When Micaiah son of Gemariah son of Shaphan heard all the words of the Lord from the scroll, ¹²he went down to the king's house, into the secretary's chamber; and all the officials were sitting there: Elishama the secretary, Delaiah son of Shemaiah, Elnathan son of Achbor, Gemariah son of Shaphan, Zedekiah son of Hananiah, and all the officials. ¹³And Micaiah told them all the words that he had heard, when Baruch read the scroll in the hearing of the people. ¹⁴Then all the officials sent Jehudi son of Nethaniah son of Shelemiah son of Cushi to say to Baruch, "Bring the scroll that you read in the hearing of the people, and come." So Baruch son of Neriah took the scroll in his hand and came to them. ¹⁵And they said to him, "Sit down and read it to us." So Baruch read it to them. ¹⁶When they heard all the words, they turned to one another in alarm, and said to Baruch, "We certainly must report all these words to the king."

(the scribes and family of Shaphan seem to have been important allies of Jeremiah) ¹⁷Then they questioned Baruch, “Tell us now, how did you write all these words? Was it at his dictation?” ¹⁸Baruch answered them, “He dictated all these words to me, and I wrote them with ink on the scroll.” ¹⁹Then the officials said to Baruch, “Go and hide, you and Jeremiah, and let no one know where you are.”

²⁰Leaving the scroll in the chamber of Elishama the secretary, they went to the court of the king; and they reported all the words to the king. ²¹Then the king sent Jehudi to get the scroll, and he took it from the chamber of Elishama the secretary; and Jehudi read it to the king and all the officials who stood beside the king. ²²Now the king was sitting in his winter apartment (it was the ninth month), and there was a fire burning in the brazier before him. ²³**As Jehudi read three or four columns, the king would cut them off with a penknife and throw them into the fire in the brazier, until the entire scroll was consumed in the fire that was in the brazier.** ²⁴Yet neither the king, nor any of his servants who heard all these words, was alarmed, nor did they tear their garments. ²⁵Even when Elnathan and Delaiah and Gemariah urged the king not to burn the scroll, he would not listen to them. ²⁶And the king commanded Jerahmeel the king’s son and Seraiah son of Azriel and Shelemiah son of Abdeel to arrest the secretary Baruch and the prophet Jeremiah. But the Lord hid them. ²⁷Now, after the king had burned the scroll with the words that Baruch wrote at Jeremiah’s dictation, the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah: ²⁸**Take another scroll and write on it all the former words that were in the first scroll,** which King Jehoiakim of Judah has burned. ²⁹And concerning King Jehoiakim of Judah you shall say: Thus says the Lord, You have dared to burn this scroll, saying, Why have you written in it that the king of Babylon will certainly come and destroy this land, and will cut off from it human beings and animals? ³⁰Therefore thus says the Lord concerning King Jehoiakim of Judah: He shall have no one to sit upon the throne of David, and his dead body shall be cast out to the heat by day and the frost by night. ³¹And I will punish him and his offspring and his servants for their iniquity; I will bring on them, and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and on the people of Judah, all the disasters with which I have threatened them—but they would not listen. ³²Then Jeremiah took another scroll and gave it to the secretary Baruch son of Neriah, who wrote on it at Jeremiah’s dictation all the words of the scroll that King Jehoiakim of Judah had burned in the fire; and many similar words were added to them. (Serious bravery)

37 Zedekiah son of Josiah, whom King Nebuchadrezzar of Babylon made king (Note that Zedekiah is a puppet king, put on the throne after all the upper class was taken into Babylon in 597) in the land of Judah, succeeded Coniah son of Jehoiakim. ²But neither he nor his servants nor the people of the land listened to the words of the Lord that he spoke through the prophet Jeremiah. ³King Zedekiah sent Jehucal son of Shelemiah and the priest Zephaniah son of Maaseiah to the prophet Jeremiah saying, “**Please pray for us** to the Lord our God.” ⁴Now Jeremiah was still going in and out among the people, for **he had not yet been put in prison.** ⁵Meanwhile, the army of Pharaoh had come out of Egypt; and when the Chaldeans who were besieging Jerusalem heard news of them, they withdrew from Jerusalem. ⁶Then the word of the Lord came to the prophet Jeremiah: ⁷Thus says the Lord, God of Israel: This is what the two of you shall say to the king of Judah, who sent you to me to inquire of me, Pharaoh’s army, which

set out to help you, is going to return to its own land, to Egypt. ⁸And the Chaldeans shall return and fight against this city; they shall take it and burn it with fire. ⁹Thus says the Lord: Do not deceive yourselves, saying, "The Chaldeans will surely go away from us," for they will not go away. ¹⁰Even if you defeated the whole army of Chaldeans who are fighting against you, and there remained of them only wounded men in their tents, they would rise up and burn this city with fire. [Such a heavy message to bear.](#)

¹¹Now when the Chaldean army had withdrawn from Jerusalem at the approach of Pharaoh's army, ¹²Jeremiah set out from Jerusalem to go to the land of Benjamin to receive his share of property among the people there. ¹³When he reached the Benjamin Gate, a sentinel there named Irijah son of Shelemiah son of Hananiah arrested the prophet Jeremiah saying, "You are deserting to the Chaldeans." ¹⁴And Jeremiah said, "That is a lie; I am not deserting to the Chaldeans." But Irijah would not listen to him, and arrested Jeremiah and brought him to the officials. ¹⁵The officials were enraged at Jeremiah, and they **beat him and imprisoned him** in the house of the secretary Jonathan, for it had been made a prison. ¹⁶Thus Jeremiah was put in the cistern house, in the cells, and remained there many days. ¹⁷Then King Zedekiah sent for him, and received him. The king questioned him secretly in his house, and said, "Is there any word from the Lord?" Jeremiah said, "There is!" Then he said, "You shall be handed over to the king of Babylon." ¹⁸Jeremiah also said to King Zedekiah, "What wrong have I done to you or your servants or this people, that you have put me in prison? ¹⁹Where are your prophets who prophesied to you, saying, 'The king of Babylon will not come against you and against this land'? ²⁰Now please hear me, my lord king: be good enough to listen to my plea, and do not send me back to the house of the secretary Jonathan to die there." ²¹So King Zedekiah gave orders, and they committed Jeremiah to the court of the guard; and a loaf of bread was given him daily from the bakers' street, **until all the bread of the city was gone.** So Jeremiah remained in the court of the guard. [The destruction of Jerusalem was prefaced by a horrific siege. Lamentations describes it in terrible detail.](#)

38Now Shephatiah son of Mattan, Gedaliah son of Pashhur, Jucal son of Shelemiah, and Pashhur son of Malchiah heard the words that Jeremiah was saying to all the people, ²Thus says the Lord, Those who stay in this city shall die by the sword, by famine, and by pestilence; but **those who go out to the Chaldeans shall live; And yet Jeremiah himself does not.** they shall have their lives as a prize of war, and live. ³Thus says the Lord, This city shall surely be handed over to the army of the king of Babylon and be taken. ⁴Then the officials said to the king, "This man ought to be put to death, because he is discouraging the soldiers who are left in this city, and all the people, by speaking such words to them. For this man is not seeking the welfare of this people, but their harm." [\(Ironic, since he is seeking precisely their welfare. This is a crucial point for discussion—are there figures or voices in our life trying to tell us what is truly best for us, but we are so stuck in our way of thinking that we can't benefit?\)](#) ⁵King Zedekiah said, "Here he is; he is in your hands; for the king is powerless against you." ⁶So they took Jeremiah and **threw him into the cistern of Malchiah, the king's son,** which was in the court of the guard, letting Jeremiah down by ropes. Now there was no water in the cistern, but only mud, and **Jeremiah sank in the mud.** ⁷Ebed-melech the Ethiopian, a eunuch in the king's house, heard

that they had put Jeremiah into the cistern. The king happened to be sitting at the Benjamin Gate, ⁸So Ebed-melech left the king's house and spoke to the king, ⁹"My lord king, these men have acted wickedly in all they did to the prophet Jeremiah by throwing him into the cistern to die there of hunger, for **there is no bread left in the city.**" ¹⁰Then the king commanded Ebed-melech the Ethiopian, "Take three men with you from here, and **pull the prophet Jeremiah up from the cistern before he dies.**" ¹¹So Ebed-melech took the men with him and went to the house of the king, to a wardrobe of the storehouse, and took from there old rags and worn-out clothes, which he let down to Jeremiah in the cistern by ropes. ¹²Then Ebed-melech the Ethiopian said to Jeremiah, "Just put the rags and clothes between your armpits and the ropes."
(Quite the little detail that makes us feel the reality of Jeremiah's situation) Jeremiah did so. ¹³Then they drew Jeremiah up by the ropes and pulled him out of the cistern. And Jeremiah remained in the court of the guard.

¹⁴King Zedekiah sent for the prophet Jeremiah and received him at the third entrance of the temple of the Lord. The king said to Jeremiah, "I have something to ask you; do not hide anything from me." ¹⁵Jeremiah said to Zedekiah, "If I tell you, you will put me to death, will you not? And if **I give you advice, you will not listen to me.**" (Jeremiah has learned to be diplomatic and take care. Preparation and presentation matter) ¹⁶So King Zedekiah swore an oath in secret to Jeremiah, "As the Lord lives, who gave us our lives, I will not put you to death or hand you over to these men who seek your life." ¹⁷Then Jeremiah said to Zedekiah, "Thus says the Lord, the God of hosts, the God of Israel, If you will only surrender to the officials of the king of Babylon, then your life shall be spared, and this city shall not be burned with fire, and you and your house shall live. ¹⁸But if you do not surrender to the officials of the king of Babylon, then this city shall be handed over to the Chaldeans, and they shall burn it with fire, and you yourself shall not escape from their hand." ¹⁹King Zedekiah said to Jeremiah, "I am afraid of the Judeans who have deserted to the Chaldeans, for I might be handed over to them and they would abuse me." ²⁰Jeremiah said, "That will not happen. **Just obey the voice of the Lord** in what I say to you, and **it shall go well with you, and your life shall be spared.**" ²¹But if you are determined not to surrender, this is what the Lord has shown me— ²²a vision of all the women remaining in the house of the king of Judah being led out to the officials of the king of Babylon and saying, 'Your trusted friends have seduced you and have overcome you; Now that your feet are stuck in the mud, they desert you.' ²³All your wives and your children shall be led out to the Chaldeans, and you yourself shall not escape from their hand, but shall be seized by the king of Babylon; and this city shall be burned with fire." ²⁴Then Zedekiah said to Jeremiah, "Do not let anyone else know of this conversation, or you will die. ²⁵If the officials should hear that I have spoken with you, and they should come and say to you, 'Just tell us what you said to the king; do not conceal it from us, or we will put you to death. What did the king say to you?' ²⁶then you shall say to them, 'I was presenting my plea to the king not to send me back to the house of Jonathan to die there.'" ²⁷All the officials did come to Jeremiah and questioned him; and **he answered them in the very words the king had commanded.** So they stopped questioning him, for the conversation had not been overheard. ²⁸And Jeremiah remained in the court of the guard until the day that Jerusalem was taken.

Additional Reading: Jeremiah 3; 9; 13; 30; 32:37-42; 33; 35

3: God condemns Israel and calls her to repentance

9: Jeremiah weeps for the people; God says everyone else should join in

13: The undies object lesson (which is assigned... why??), symbol of wine jars, Exile threatened/predicted

30: Tough love but promise of restoration

32:37-42: Promise of gathering/restoration

33: More restoration promises (is this later Dtr editing?)

35: Rechabites follow the Word of Wisdom?

Jeremiah 3; 9; 13; 30; 32:37-42; 33; 35

3If a man divorces his wife and she goes from him and becomes another man's wife, will he return to her? Would not such a land be greatly polluted? You have played the whore with many lovers; and would you return to me? says the Lord. ²Look up to the bare heights, and see! Where have you not been lain with? By the waysides you have sat waiting for lovers, like a nomad in the wilderness. You have polluted the land with your whoring and wickedness. ³Therefore the showers have been withheld, and the spring rain has not come; yet you have the forehead of a whore, you refuse to be ashamed. ⁴Have you not just now called to me, "My Father, you are the friend of my youth— ⁵will he be angry forever, will he be indignant to the end?" This is how you have spoken, but you have done all the evil that you could.

⁶The Lord said to me in the days of King Josiah: Have you seen what she did, that faithless one, Israel, how she went up on every high hill and under every green tree, and played the whore there? ⁷And I thought, "After she has done all this she will return to me"; but she did not return, and her false sister Judah saw it. ⁸She saw that for all the adulteries of that faithless one, Israel, I had sent her away with a decree of divorce; yet her false sister Judah did not fear, but she too went and played the whore. ⁹Because she took her whoredom so lightly, she polluted the land, committing adultery with stone and tree. ¹⁰Yet for all this her false sister Judah did not return to me with her whole heart, but only in pretense, says the Lord. ¹¹Then the Lord said to me: Faithless Israel has shown herself less guilty than false Judah.

¹²Go, and proclaim these words toward the north, and say: Return, faithless Israel, says the Lord. I will not look on you in anger, for I am merciful, says the Lord; I will not be angry forever.

¹³Only acknowledge your guilt, that you have rebelled against the Lord your God, and scattered your favors among strangers under every green tree, and have not obeyed my voice, says the Lord. ¹⁴Return, O faithless children, says the Lord, for I am your master; I will take you, one from a city and two from a family, and I will bring you to Zion. ¹⁵I will give you shepherds after my own heart, who will feed you with knowledge and understanding. ¹⁶And when you have multiplied and increased in the land, in those days, says the Lord, they shall no longer say, "The ark of the covenant of the Lord." It shall not come to mind, or be remembered, or missed; nor

shall another one be made. ¹⁷At that time Jerusalem shall be called the throne of the Lord, and all nations shall gather to it, to the presence of the Lord in Jerusalem, and they shall no longer stubbornly follow their own evil will. ¹⁸In those days the house of Judah shall join the house of Israel, and together they shall come from the land of the north to the land that I gave your ancestors for a heritage. ¹⁹I thought how I would set you among my children, and give you a pleasant land, the most beautiful heritage of all the nations. And I thought you would call me, My Father, and would not turn from following me.

²⁰Instead, as a faithless wife leaves her husband, so you have been faithless to me, O house of Israel, says the Lord. ²¹A voice on the bare heights is heard, the plaintive weeping of Israel's children, because they have perverted their way, they have forgotten the Lord their God: ²²Return, O faithless children, I will heal your faithlessness. "Here we come to you; for you are the Lord our God. ²³Truly the hills are a delusion, the orgies on the mountains. Truly in the Lord our God is the salvation of Israel. ²⁴"But from our youth the shameful thing has devoured all for which our ancestors had labored, their flocks and their herds, their sons and their daughters. ²⁵Let us lie down in our shame, and let our dishonor cover us; for we have sinned against the Lord our God, we and our ancestors, from our youth even to this day; and we have not obeyed the voice of the Lord our God."

9O that my head were a spring of water, and my eyes a fountain of tears, so that I might weep day and night for the slain of my poor people! ²O that I had in the desert a traveler's lodging place, that I might leave my people and go away from them! For they are all adulterers, a band of traitors. ³They bend their tongues like bows; they have grown strong in the land for falsehood, and not for truth; for they proceed from evil to evil, and they do not know me, says the Lord. ⁴Beware of your neighbors, and put no trust in any of your kin; for all your kin are supplanters, and every neighbor goes around like a slanderer. ⁵They all deceive their neighbors, and no one speaks the truth; they have taught their tongues to speak lies; they commit iniquity and are too weary to repent. ⁶Oppression upon oppression, deceit upon deceit! They refuse to know me, says the Lord. ⁷Therefore thus says the Lord of hosts: I will now refine and test them, for what else can I do with my sinful people? ⁸Their tongue is a deadly arrow; it speaks deceit through the mouth. They all speak friendly words to their neighbors, but inwardly are planning to lay an ambush. ⁹Shall I not punish them for these things? says the Lord; and shall I not bring retribution on a nation such as this? ¹⁰Take up weeping and wailing for the mountains, and a lamentation for the pastures of the wilderness, because they are laid waste so that no one passes through, and the lowing of cattle is not heard; both the birds of the air and the animals have fled and are gone. ¹¹I will make Jerusalem a heap of ruins, a lair of jackals; and I will make the towns of Judah a desolation, without inhabitant.

¹²Who is wise enough to understand this? To whom has the mouth of the Lord spoken, so that they may declare it? Why is the land ruined and laid waste like a wilderness, so that no one passes through? ¹³And the Lord says: Because they have forsaken my law that I set before them, and have not obeyed my voice, or walked in accordance with it, ¹⁴but have stubbornly followed their own hearts and have gone after the Baals, as their ancestors taught them.

¹⁵Therefore thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: I am feeding this people with wormwood, and giving them poisonous water to drink. ¹⁶I will scatter them among nations that neither they nor their ancestors have known; and I will send the sword after them, until I have consumed them. ¹⁷Thus says the Lord of hosts: Consider, and call for the mourning women to come; send for the skilled women to come; ¹⁸let them quickly raise a dirge over us, so that our eyes may run down with tears, and our eyelids flow with water. ¹⁹For a sound of wailing is heard from Zion: "How we are ruined! We are utterly shamed, because we have left the land, because they have cast down our dwellings." ²⁰Hear, O women, the word of the Lord, and let your ears receive the word of his mouth; teach to your daughters a dirge, and each to her neighbor a lament. ²¹"Death has come up into our windows, it has entered our palaces, to cut off the children from the streets and the young men from the squares." ²²Speak! Thus says the Lord: "Human corpses shall fall like dung upon the open field, like sheaves behind the reaper, and no one shall gather them."

²³Thus says the Lord: Do not let the wise boast in their wisdom, do not let the mighty boast in their might, do not let the wealthy boast in their wealth; ²⁴but let those who boast boast in this, that they understand and know me, that I am the Lord; I act with steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth, for in these things I delight, says the Lord. ²⁵The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will attend to all those who are circumcised only in the foreskin: ²⁶Egypt, Judah, Edom, the Ammonites, Moab, and all those with shaven temples who live in the desert. For all these nations are uncircumcised, and all the house of Israel is uncircumcised in heart.

13 Thus said the Lord to me, "Go and buy yourself a linen loincloth, and put it on your loins, but do not dip it in water." ²So I bought a loincloth according to the word of the Lord, and put it on my loins. ³And the word of the Lord came to me a second time, saying, ⁴"Take the loincloth that you bought and are wearing, and go now to the Euphrates, and hide it there in a cleft of the rock." ⁵So I went, and hid it by the Euphrates, as the Lord commanded me. ⁶And after many days the Lord said to me, "Go now to the Euphrates, and take from there the loincloth that I commanded you to hide there." ⁷Then I went to the Euphrates, and dug, and I took the loincloth from the place where I had hidden it. But now the loincloth was ruined; it was good for nothing. ⁸Then the word of the Lord came to me: ⁹Thus says the Lord: Just so I will ruin the pride of Judah and the great pride of Jerusalem. ¹⁰This evil people, who refuse to hear my words, who stubbornly follow their own will and have gone after other gods to serve them and worship them, shall be like this loincloth, which is good for nothing. ¹¹For as the loincloth clings to one's loins, so I made the whole house of Israel and the whole house of Judah cling to me, says the Lord, in order that they might be for me a people, a name, a praise, and a glory. But they would not listen.

¹²You shall speak to them this word: Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: Every wine-jar should be filled with wine. And they will say to you, "Do you think we do not know that every wine-jar should be filled with wine?" ¹³Then you shall say to them: Thus says the Lord: I am about to fill all the inhabitants of this land—the kings who sit on David's throne, the priests, the prophets,

and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem—with drunkenness. ¹⁴And I will dash them one against another, parents and children together, says the Lord. I will not pity or spare or have compassion when I destroy them. ¹⁵Hear and give ear; do not be haughty, for the Lord has spoken. ¹⁶Give glory to the Lord your God before he brings darkness, and before your feet stumble on the mountains at twilight; while you look for light, he turns it into gloom and makes it deep darkness. ¹⁷But if you will not listen, my soul will weep in secret for your pride; my eyes will weep bitterly and run down with tears, because the Lord's flock has been taken captive. ¹⁸Say to the king and the queen mother; "Take a lowly seat, for your beautiful crown has come down from your head." ¹⁹The towns of the Negeb are shut up with no one to open them; all Judah is taken into exile, wholly taken into exile. ²⁰Lift up your eyes and see those who come from the north. Where is the flock that was given you, your beautiful flock? ²¹What will you say when they set as head over you those whom you have trained to be your allies? Will not pangs take hold of you, like those of a woman in labor?

²²And if you say in your heart, "Why have these things come upon me?" it is for the greatness of your iniquity that your skirts are lifted up, and you are violated. ²³Can Ethiopians change their skin or leopards their spots? Then also you can do good who are accustomed to do evil. ²⁴I will scatter you like chaff driven by the wind from the desert. ²⁵This is your lot, the portion I have measured out to you, says the Lord, because you have forgotten me and trusted in lies. ²⁶I myself will lift up your skirts over your face, and your shame will be seen. ²⁷I have seen your abominations, your adulteries and neighings, your shameless prostitutions on the hills of the countryside. Woe to you, O Jerusalem! How long will it be before you are made clean?

30The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord: ²Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: Write in a book all the words that I have spoken to you. ³For the days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will restore the fortunes of my people, Israel and Judah, says the Lord, and I will bring them back to the land that I gave to their ancestors and they shall take possession of it. ⁴These are the words that the Lord spoke concerning Israel and Judah: ⁵Thus says the Lord: We have heard a cry of panic, of terror, and no peace. ⁶Ask now, and see, can a man bear a child? Why then do I see every man with his hands on his loins like a woman in labor? Why has every face turned pale? ⁷Alas! that day is so great there is none like it; it is a time of distress for Jacob; yet he shall be rescued from it. ⁸On that day, says the Lord of hosts, I will break the yoke from off his neck, and I will burst his bonds, and strangers shall no more make a servant of him. ⁹But they shall serve the Lord their God and David their king, whom I will raise up for them.

¹⁰But as for you, have no fear, my servant Jacob, says the Lord, and do not be dismayed, O Israel; for I am going to save you from far away, and your offspring from the land of their captivity. Jacob shall return and have quiet and ease, and no one shall make him afraid. ¹¹For I am with you, says the Lord, to save you; I will make an end of all the nations among which I scattered you, but of you I will not make an end. I will chastise you in just measure, and I will by no means leave you unpunished. ¹²For thus says the Lord: Your hurt is incurable, your wound is grievous. ¹³There is no one to uphold your cause, no medicine for your wound, no healing for you. ¹⁴All your lovers have forgotten you; they care nothing for you; for I have dealt you the

blow of an enemy, the punishment of a merciless foe, because your guilt is great, because your sins are so numerous. ¹⁵Why do you cry out over your hurt? Your pain is incurable. Because your guilt is great, because your sins are so numerous, I have done these things to you.

¹⁶Therefore all who devour you shall be devoured, and all your foes, everyone of them, shall go into captivity; those who plunder you shall be plundered, and all who prey on you I will make a prey. ¹⁷For I will restore health to you, and your wounds I will heal, says the Lord, because they have called you an outcast: "It is Zion; no one cares for her!"

¹⁸Thus says the Lord: I am going to restore the fortunes of the tents of Jacob, and have compassion on his dwellings; the city shall be rebuilt upon its mound, and the citadel set on its rightful site. ¹⁹Out of them shall come thanksgiving, and the sound of merrymakers. I will make them many, and they shall not be few; I will make them honored, and they shall not be disdained. ²⁰Their children shall be as of old, their congregation shall be established before me; and I will punish all who oppress them. ²¹Their prince shall be one of their own, their ruler shall come from their midst; I will bring him near, and he shall approach me, for who would otherwise dare to approach me? says the Lord. ²²And you shall be my people, and I will be your God. ²³Look, the storm of the Lord! Wrath has gone forth, a whirling tempest; it will burst upon the head of the wicked. ²⁴The fierce anger of the Lord will not turn back until he has executed and accomplished the intents of his mind. In the latter days you will understand this. ²⁵See, I am going to gather them from all the lands to which I drove them in my anger and my wrath and in great indignation; I will bring them back to this place, and I will settle them in safety. ²⁶They shall be my people, and I will be their God. ²⁷I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me for all time, for their own good and the good of their children after them. ²⁸I will make an everlasting covenant with them, never to draw back from doing good to them; and I will put the fear of me in their hearts, so that they may not turn from me. ²⁹I will rejoice in doing good to them, and I will plant them in this land in faithfulness, with all my heart and all my soul. ³⁰For thus says the Lord: Just as I have brought all this great disaster upon this people, so I will bring upon them all the good fortune that I now promise them. ³¹They have turned their backs to me, not their faces; though I have taught them persistently, they would not listen and accept correction. ³²They built the high places of Baal in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to offer up their sons and daughters to Molech, though I did not command them, nor did it enter my mind that they should do this abomination, causing Judah to sin.

Jer 32:37-42

³⁷See, I am going to gather them from all the lands to which I drove them in my anger and my wrath and in great indignation; I will bring them back to this place, and I will settle them in safety. ³⁸They shall be my people, and I will be their God. ³⁹I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me for all time, for their own good and the good of their children after them. ⁴⁰I will make an everlasting covenant with them, never to draw back from doing good to them; and I will put the fear of me in their hearts, so that they may not turn from me. ⁴¹I will rejoice in doing good to them, and I will plant them in this land in faithfulness, with all my heart and all my soul.

42 For thus says the Lord: Just as I have brought all this great disaster upon this people, so I will bring upon them all the good fortune that I now promise them.

Jer 33; 35

Healing after Punishment

33The word of the Lord came to Jeremiah a second time, while he was still confined in the court of the guard: ²Thus says the Lord who made the earth, the Lord who formed it to establish it—the Lord is his name: ³Call to me and I will answer you, and will tell you great and hidden things that you have not known. ⁴For thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, concerning the houses of this city and the houses of the kings of Judah that were torn down to make a defence against the siege-ramps and before the sword: ⁵The Chaldeans are coming in to fight and to fill them with the dead bodies of those whom I shall strike down in my anger and my wrath, for I have hidden my face from this city because of all their wickedness. ⁶I am going to bring it recovery and healing; I will heal them and reveal to them abundance of prosperity and security. ⁷I will restore the fortunes of Judah and the fortunes of Israel, and rebuild them as they were at first. ⁸I will cleanse them from all the guilt of their sin against me, and I will forgive all the guilt of their sin and rebellion against me. ⁹And this city shall be to me a name of joy, a praise and a glory before all the nations of the earth who shall hear of all the good that I do for them; they shall fear and tremble because of all the good and all the prosperity I provide for it.

10 Thus says the Lord: In this place of which you say, ‘It is a waste without human beings or animals’, in the towns of Judah and the streets of Jerusalem that are desolate, without inhabitants, human or animal, there shall once more be heard ¹¹the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the voices of those who sing, as they bring thank-offerings to the house of the Lord:
‘Give thanks to the Lord of hosts,
for the Lord is good,
for his steadfast love endures for ever!’
For I will restore the fortunes of the land as at first, says the Lord.

12 Thus says the Lord of hosts: In this place that is waste, without human beings or animals, and in all its towns there shall again be pasture for shepherds resting their flocks. ¹³In the towns of the hill country, of the Shephelah, and of the Negeb, in the land of Benjamin, the places around Jerusalem, and in the towns of Judah, flocks shall again pass under the hands of the one who counts them, says the Lord.

The Righteous Branch and the Covenant with David

14 The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will fulfil the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. ¹⁵In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David; and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. ¹⁶In those

days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live in safety. And this is the name by which it will be called: 'The Lord is our righteousness.'

17 For thus says the Lord: David shall never lack a man to sit on the throne of the house of Israel,¹⁸ and the levitical priests shall never lack a man in my presence to offer burnt-offerings, to make grain-offerings, and to make sacrifices for all time.

19 The word of the Lord came to Jeremiah:²⁰ Thus says the Lord: If any of you could break my covenant with the day and my covenant with the night, so that day and night would not come at their appointed time,²¹ only then could my covenant with my servant David be broken, so that he would not have a son to reign on his throne, and my covenant with my ministers the Levites.²² Just as the host of heaven cannot be numbered and the sands of the sea cannot be measured, so I will increase the offspring of my servant David, and the Levites who minister to me.

23 The word of the Lord came to Jeremiah:²⁴ Have you not observed how these people say, 'The two families that the Lord chose have been rejected by him', and how they hold my people in such contempt that they no longer regard them as a nation?²⁵ Thus says the Lord: Only if I had not established my covenant with day and night and the ordinances of heaven and earth,²⁶ would I reject the offspring of Jacob and of my servant David and not choose any of his descendants as rulers over the offspring of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. For I will restore their fortunes, and will have mercy upon them.

The Rechabites Commended

35 The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord in the days of King Jehoiakim son of Josiah of Judah:² Go to the house of the Rechabites, and speak with them, and bring them to the house of the Lord, into one of the chambers; then offer them wine to drink.³ So I took Jaazaniah son of Jeremiah son of Habazziniah, and his brothers, and all his sons, and the whole house of the Rechabites.⁴ I brought them to the house of the Lord into the chamber of the sons of Hanan son of Igdaliah, the man of God, which was near the chamber of the officials, above the chamber of Maaseiah son of Shallum, keeper of the threshold.⁵ Then I set before the Rechabites pitchers full of wine, and cups; and I said to them, 'Have some wine.'⁶ But they answered, 'We will drink no wine, for our ancestor Jonadab son of Rechab commanded us, "You shall never drink wine, neither you nor your children;⁷ nor shall you ever build a house, or sow seed; nor shall you plant a vineyard, or even own one; but you shall live in tents all your days, that you may live many days in the land where you reside."⁸ We have obeyed the charge of our ancestor Jonadab son of Rechab in all that he commanded us, to drink no wine all our days, ourselves, our wives, our sons, and our daughters,⁹ and not to build houses to live in. We have no vineyard or field or seed;¹⁰ but we have lived in tents, and have obeyed and done all that our ancestor Jonadab commanded us.¹¹ But when King Nebuchadrezzar of Babylon came up against the land, we said, "Come, and let us go to Jerusalem for fear of the army of the Chaldeans and the army of the Arameans." That is why we are living in Jerusalem.'

12 Then the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah: ¹³Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Go and say to the people of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, Can you not learn a lesson and obey my words? says the Lord. ¹⁴The command has been carried out that Jonadab son of Rechab gave to his descendants to drink no wine; and they drink none to this day, for they have obeyed their ancestor's command. But I myself have spoken to you persistently, and you have not obeyed me. ¹⁵I have sent to you all my servants the prophets, sending them persistently, saying, 'Turn now everyone of you from your evil way, and amend your doings, and do not go after other gods to serve them, and then you shall live in the land that I gave to you and your ancestors.' But you did not incline your ear or obey me. ¹⁶The descendants of Jonadab son of Rechab have carried out the command that their ancestor gave them, but this people has not obeyed me. ¹⁷Therefore, thus says the Lord, the God of hosts, the God of Israel: I am going to bring on Judah and on all the inhabitants of Jerusalem every disaster that I have pronounced against them; because I have spoken to them and they have not listened, I have called to them and they have not answered.

18 But to the house of the Rechabites Jeremiah said: Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Because you have obeyed the command of your ancestor Jonadab, and kept all his precepts, and done all that he commanded you, ¹⁹therefore thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Jonadab son of Rechab shall not lack a descendant to stand before me for all time.

Other Reading: Lamentations