

ENGAGING GOSPEL DOCTRINE 119.1

Lesson 42 (Core): [“I Will Write It in Their Hearts”](#)

Class Member Reading: Jeremiah 16; 23; 29; 31; Ezekiel 11:17-20; Ezekiel 36:24-28; 2 Corinthians 3:2-3

Jeremiah 16; 23; 29; 31

16: Symbolic action of celibacy, promise of both destruction and restoration (and yet another Scripture Mastery taken out of context)

23: Condemnation of leaders, promise of restoration, false prophets of hope

29: Flourish in Babylon (profound life application, adjusting to difficult and unexpected events)

31: Restoration and new covenant

Jeremiah 16; 23; 29; 31

Jeremiah’s Celibacy and Message

16The word of the LORD came to me: ²You shall not take a wife, nor shall you have sons or daughters in this place. (Symbolic action, and deeply unexpected culturally just as Jeremiah’s mission was unexpected. Did he later marry, following God’s commands in Jer. 29?) ³For thus says the LORD concerning the sons and daughters who are born in this place, and concerning the mothers who bear them and the fathers who beget them in this land: ⁴They shall die of deadly diseases. They shall not be lamented, nor shall they be buried; they shall become like dung on the surface of the ground. They shall perish by the sword and by famine, and their dead bodies shall become food for the birds of the air and for the wild animals of the earth. The death and suffering during the 2 ½ year siege before the destruction of Jerusalem was horrendous.

⁵ For thus says the LORD: Do not enter the house of mourning, or go to lament, or bemoan them; for I have taken away my peace from this people, says the LORD, my steadfast love and mercy ⁶Both great and small shall die in this land; they shall not be

buried, and no one shall lament for them; there shall be no gashing, no shaving of the head for them. ⁷No one shall break bread for the mourner, to offer comfort for the dead; nor shall anyone give them the cup of consolation to drink for their fathers or their mothers. ⁸You shall not go into the house of feasting to sit with them, to eat and drink. ⁹For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: I am going to banish from this place, in your days and before your eyes, the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride.

10 And when you tell this people all these words, and they say to you, ‘Why has the LORD pronounced all this great evil against us? What is our iniquity? What is the sin that we have committed against the LORD our God?’ ¹¹then you shall say to them: It is because your ancestors have forsaken me, says the LORD, and have gone after other gods and have served and worshipped them, and have forsaken me and have not kept my law; ¹²and because you have behaved worse than your ancestors, for here you are, every one of you, following your stubborn, evil will, refusing to listen to me. ¹³Therefore I will hurl you out of this land into a land that neither you nor your ancestors have known, and there you shall serve other gods day and night, for I will show you no favour.

God Will Restore Israel

14 Therefore, the days are surely coming, says the LORD, when it shall no longer be said, ‘As the LORD lives who brought the people of Israel up out of the land of Egypt’, ¹⁵but ‘As the LORD lives who brought the people of Israel up out of the land of the north and out of all the lands where he had driven them.’ For I will bring them back to their own land that I gave to their ancestors. [God’s miracles in the future \(bringing his people back from Babylon\) will be greater than the miracle par excellence of the Exodus.](#)

16 I am now sending for many fishermen, says the LORD, and they shall catch them; and afterwards I will send for many hunters, and they shall hunt them from every mountain and every hill, and out of the clefts of the rocks. [If you read this in context you realize that it does not line up with the scripture mastery interpretation of missionary work.](#) ¹⁷For my eyes are on all their ways; they are not hidden from my presence, nor is their iniquity concealed from my sight. ¹⁸And I will doubly repay their iniquity and their sin, because they have polluted my land with the carcasses of their detestable idols, and have filled my inheritance with their abominations.

¹⁹ O LORD, my strength and my stronghold,
my refuge on the day of trouble,
to you shall the nations come
from the ends of the earth and say:
Our ancestors have inherited nothing but lies,
worthless things in which there is no profit.
²⁰ Can mortals make for themselves gods?
Such are no gods!

²¹ 'Therefore I am surely going to teach them, this time I am going to teach them my power and my might, and **they shall know that my name is the LORD.**'

Restoration after Exile

23 Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! says the LORD. ²Therefore, thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, concerning the shepherds who shepherd my people: It is you who have scattered my flock, and have driven them away, and you have not attended to them. So **I will attend to you** for your evil doings, says the LORD. (God condemns leaders and holds them accountable) ³Then I myself will gather the remnant of my flock out of all the lands where I have driven them, and I will bring them back to their fold, and they shall be fruitful and multiply. ⁴**I will raise up shepherds over them who will shepherd them, and they shall not fear any longer, or be dismayed, nor shall any be missing,** says the LORD. Useful pattern 1) acknowledge mistakes/what is wrong currently, 2) hold accountable those responsible and 3) promise that things will be better (and make that happen)

The Righteous Branch of David

⁵ The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. ⁶In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. And this is the name by which he will be called: 'The LORD is our righteousness.'
Jeremiah describes the restoration of all Jewish hopes.

⁷ Therefore, the days are surely coming, says the LORD, when it shall no longer be said, 'As the LORD lives who brought the people of Israel up out of the land of

Egypt', ⁸ but 'As the LORD lives who brought out and led the offspring of the house of Israel out of the land of the north and out of all the lands where he had driven them.' Then they shall live in their own land. (Are we open to looking past the old to see the wonders God can accomplish in the present and future?)

False Prophets of Hope Denounced

9 Concerning the prophets:

My heart is crushed within me,

all my bones shake;

I have become like a drunkard,

like one overcome by wine,

because of the LORD

and because of his holy words.

¹⁰ For the land is full of adulterers;

because of the curse the land mourns,

and the pastures of the wilderness are dried up.

Their course has been evil,

and their might is not right.

¹¹ Both prophet and priest are ungodly;

even in my house I have found their wickedness,

says the LORD.

¹² Therefore their way shall be to them

like slippery paths in the darkness,

into which they shall be driven and fall;

for I will bring disaster upon them

in the year of their punishment,

says the LORD.

¹³ In the prophets of Samaria

I saw a disgusting thing:

they prophesied by Baal

and led my people Israel astray.

¹⁴ But in the prophets of Jerusalem

I have seen a more shocking thing:

they commit adultery and walk in lies;

they strengthen the hands of evildoers,

so that no one turns from wickedness;

all of them have become like Sodom to me,
and its inhabitants like Gomorrah.

¹⁵ Therefore thus says the LORD of hosts concerning the prophets:

‘I am going to make them eat wormwood,
and give them poisoned water to drink;
for from the prophets of Jerusalem
ungodliness has spread throughout the land.’

¹⁶ Thus says the LORD of hosts: Do not listen to the words of the prophets who prophesy to you; they are deluding you. They speak visions of their own minds, not from the mouth of the LORD. ¹⁷ **They keep saying to those who despise the word of the LORD, ‘It shall be well with you’; and to all who stubbornly follow their own stubborn hearts, they say, ‘No calamity shall come upon you.’** What voices do we listen to? Those who tell us what we want to hear, or those who speak what we need to hear? Makes me think of Samuel the Lamanite.

¹⁸ For **who has stood in the council of the LORD**

(an assembly of divine beings; as we discussed previously, prophets were understood to participate in these divine councils and thus learn God’s “secrets” (sod); see vs. 22 so as to see and to hear his word?

Who has given heed to his word so as to proclaim it?

¹⁹ Look, the storm of the LORD!

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

²⁰ The 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 it clearly.

²¹ I did not send the prophets,
yet they ran;

I did not speak to them,
yet they prophesied.

²² But **if they had stood in my council,**
then they would have proclaimed my words to my people,

and they would have turned them from their evil way,
and from the evil of their doings.

23 Am I a **God near by**, says the LORD, and not a God far off? ²⁴Who can hide in secret places so that I cannot see them? says the LORD. Do I not fill heaven and earth? says the LORD. ²⁵I have heard what the prophets have said who prophesy lies in my name, saying, 'I have dreamed, I have dreamed!' ²⁶How long? Will the hearts of the prophets ever turn back—those who prophesy lies, and who prophesy the deceit of their own heart?²⁷They plan to make my people forget my name by their dreams that they tell one another, just as their ancestors forgot my name for Baal. ²⁸Let the prophet who has a dream tell the dream, but let the one who has my word speak my word faithfully. What has straw in common with wheat? says the LORD. ²⁹**Is not my word like fire, says the LORD, and like a hammer that breaks a rock in pieces?** ³⁰See, therefore, I am against the prophets, says the LORD, who steal my words from one another. ³¹See, **I am against the prophets**, says the LORD, who use their own tongues and say, 'Says the LORD.' ³²See, I am against those who prophesy lying dreams, says the LORD, and who tell them, and who lead my people astray by their lies and their recklessness, when I did not send them or appoint them; so they do not profit this people at all, says the LORD. [Brings up the important question of how we can know whether a prophet or prophecy comes from God...](#)

33 When this people, or a prophet, or a priest asks you, 'What is the burden of the LORD?' ([This section takes up the technical expression "masa" " which means both a literal burden and a prophetic responsibility which must be borne. God is condemning those who falsely claim to the prophetic gift and responsibility. Ironically Jeremiah is a true prophet but resists his "burden"](#) you shall say to them, 'You are the burden, and I will cast you off, says the LORD.' ³⁴And as for the prophet, priest, or the people who say, 'The burden of the LORD', I will punish them and their households. ³⁵Thus shall you say to one another, among yourselves, 'What has the LORD answered?' or 'What has the LORD spoken?' ³⁶But 'the burden of the LORD' you shall mention no more, for the burden is everyone's own word, and so you pervert the words of the living God, the LORD of hosts, our God. ³⁷Thus you shall ask the prophet, 'What has the LORD answered you?' or 'What has the LORD spoken?' ³⁸But if you say, 'the burden of the LORD', thus says the LORD: Because you have said these words, 'the burden of the LORD', when I sent to you, saying, You shall not say, 'the burden of the LORD', ³⁹therefore, I will surely lift you up and cast you away from my presence, you and the city that I gave to you and your

ancestors. ⁴⁰ And I will bring upon you everlasting disgrace and perpetual shame, which shall not be forgotten.

Jeremiah's Letter to the Exiles in Babylon

29 These are the **words of the letter** that the prophet Jeremiah sent from Jerusalem **to the remaining elders among the exiles, and to the priests, the prophets, and all the people**, whom Nebuchadnezzar had taken into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon. ² This was after King Jeconiah, and the queen mother, the court officials, the leaders of Judah and Jerusalem, the artisans, and the smiths had departed from Jerusalem (so this was after 597 but before 586). ³ The letter was sent by the hand of Elasah son of Shaphan and Gemariah son of Hilkiah, whom King Zedekiah of Judah sent to Babylon to King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. It said: ⁴ Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom **I have sent into exile (God is taking responsibility for what is considered by others to be a complete incomprehensible disaster)** from Jerusalem to Babylon: ⁵ **Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat what they produce. ⁶ Take wives and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons, and give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply there, and do not decrease. ⁷ But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare. (Utterly radical. Powerful personal application here if you appreciate the historical context)** ⁸ For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Do not let the prophets and the diviners who are among you deceive you, and do not listen to the dreams that they dream, ⁹ for it is a lie that they are prophesying to you in my name; I did not send them, says the LORD.

10 For thus says the LORD: Only when Babylon's seventy years are completed will I visit you, and I will fulfil to you my promise and bring you back to this place. ¹¹ For surely **I know the plans I have for you, says the LORD, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope. ¹² Then when you call upon me and come and pray to me, I will hear you. ¹³ When you search for me, you will find me; if you seek me with all your heart, ¹⁴ I will let you find me,** says the LORD, and I will restore your fortunes and gather you from all the nations and all the places where I have driven you, says the LORD, and I will bring you back to the place from which I sent you into exile.

15 Because you have said, 'The LORD has raised up prophets for us in Babylon' — ¹⁶ thus says the LORD concerning the king who sits on the throne of David, and

concerning all the people who live in this city, your kinsfolk who did not go out with you into exile: ¹⁷Thus says the LORD of hosts, I am going to let loose on them sword, famine, and pestilence, and I will make them like rotten figs that are so bad they cannot be eaten. ¹⁸I will pursue them with the sword, with famine, and with pestilence, and will make them a horror to all the kingdoms of the earth, to be an object of cursing, and horror, and hissing, and a derision among all the nations where I have driven them, ¹⁹because they did not heed my words, says the LORD, when I persistently sent to you my servants the prophets, but they would not listen, says the LORD. ²⁰But now, all you exiles whom I sent away from Jerusalem to Babylon, hear the word of the LORD: ²¹Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, concerning Ahab son of Kolaiah and Zedekiah son of Maaseiah, who are prophesying a lie to you in my name: I am going to deliver them into the hand of King Nebuchadrezzar of Babylon, and he shall kill them before your eyes. ²²And on account of them this curse shall be used by all the exiles from Judah in Babylon: 'The LORD make you like Zedekiah and Ahab, whom the king of Babylon roasted in the fire', ²³because they have perpetrated outrage in Israel and have committed adultery with their neighbours' wives, and have spoken in my name lying words that I did not command them; I am the one who knows and bears witness, says the LORD.

The Letter of Shemaiah

24 To Shemaiah of Nehelam you shall say: ²⁵Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: In your own name you sent a letter to all the people who are in Jerusalem, and to the priest Zephaniah son of Maaseiah, and to all the priests, saying, ²⁶The LORD himself has made you priest instead of the priest Jehoiada, so that there may be officers in the house of the LORD to control any madman who plays the prophet, to put him in the stocks and the collar. ²⁷So now why have you not rebuked Jeremiah of Anathoth who plays the prophet for you? ²⁸For he has actually sent to us in Babylon, saying, 'It will be a long time; build houses and live in them, and plant gardens and eat what they produce.'

29 The priest Zephaniah read this letter in the hearing of the prophet Jeremiah. ³⁰Then the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah: ³¹Send to all the exiles, saying, Thus says the LORD concerning Shemaiah of Nehelam: Because Shemaiah has prophesied to you, though I did not send him, and has led you to trust in a lie, ³²therefore thus says the LORD: I am going to punish Shemaiah of Nehelam and his descendants; he shall not have anyone living among this people to see the good

that I am going to do to my people, says the LORD, for he has spoken rebellion against the LORD.

The Joyful Return of the Exiles

31 At that time, says the LORD, **I will be the God of all the families of Israel**, and they shall be my people.

² Thus says the LORD:

The people who survived the sword
found grace in the wilderness;
when Israel sought for rest,

³ the LORD appeared to him from far away.

I have loved you with an everlasting love;
therefore I have continued my faithfulness to you.

⁴ **Again I will build you**, and you shall be built,
O virgin Israel!

Again you shall take your tambourines,
and go forth in the dance of the merrymakers.

⁵ Again you shall plant vineyards
on the mountains of Samaria;
the planters shall plant,
and shall enjoy the fruit.

⁶ For there shall be a day when sentinels will call
in the hill country of Ephraim:
'Come, let us go up to Zion,
to the LORD our God.'

⁷ For thus says the LORD:

Sing aloud with gladness for Jacob,
and raise shouts for the chief of the nations;
proclaim, give praise, and say,
'Save, O LORD, your people,
the remnant of Israel.'

⁸ See, I am going to bring them from the land of the north,
and gather them from the farthest parts of the earth,
among them the blind and the lame,

those with child and those in labour, together;
a great company, they shall return here.

⁹ **With weeping they shall come,
and with consolations I will lead them back,**
I will let them walk by brooks of water,
in a straight path in which they shall not stumble;
for I have become a father to Israel,
and Ephraim is my firstborn. [Touching love and intimacy expressed by God.](#)

¹⁰ Hear the word of the LORD, O nations,
and declare it in the coastlands far away;
say, 'He who scattered Israel will gather him,
and will keep him as a shepherd a flock.'

¹¹ For the **LORD has ransomed Jacob,**
and has **redeemed him from hands too strong for him.**

¹² They shall come and sing aloud on the height of Zion,
and they shall be radiant over the goodness of the LORD,
over the grain, the wine, and the oil,
and over the young of the flock and the herd;
their life shall become like a watered garden,
and they shall never languish again. [Such beautiful imagery.](#)

¹³ Then shall the young women rejoice in the dance,
and the young men and the old shall be merry.
I will turn their mourning into joy,
I will comfort them, and give them gladness for sorrow.

¹⁴ I will give the priests their fill of fatness,
and my people shall be satisfied with my bounty,

says the LORD.

¹⁵ Thus says the LORD:
A voice is heard in Ramah,
lamentation and bitter weeping.
Rachel is weeping for her children;
she refuses to be comforted for her children,
because they are no more.

¹⁶ Thus says the LORD:

Keep your voice from weeping,
and your eyes from tears;
for there is a reward for your work,

says the LORD:

they shall come back from the land of the enemy;
¹⁷ **there is hope for your future,**

says the LORD:

your children shall come back to their own country.

¹⁸ Indeed I heard Ephraim pleading:

‘You disciplined me, and I took the discipline;
I was like a calf untrained.

**Bring me back, let me come back,
for you are the LORD my God.**

¹⁹ For after I had turned away I repented;
and after I was discovered, I struck my thigh;
I was ashamed, and I was dismayed
because I bore the disgrace of my youth.’

²⁰ Is Ephraim my dear son?
Is he the child I delight in?

As often as I speak against him,
I still remember him.

Therefore **I am deeply moved for him**; The JPS has the touching “My heart yearns for
him; I will receive him back in love”

I will surely have mercy on him,

says the LORD. Not only touching language we can apply to ourselves,
but striking given that these verses apply to the *Northern* kingdom of
Israel that had been destroyed for well over a century.

²¹ Set up road markers for yourself,
make yourself signposts;
consider well the highway,
the road by which you went.

Return, O virgin Israel,

return to these your cities.

²² How long will you waver,
O faithless daughter?

For the LORD has created a new thing on the earth:
a woman encompasses a man.

²³ Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Once more they shall use these words in the land of Judah and in its towns when I restore their fortunes:

‘The LORD bless you, O abode of righteousness,
O holy hill!’

²⁴ And Judah and all its towns shall live there together, and the farmers and those who wander with their flocks.

²⁵ **I will satisfy the weary,
and all who are faint I will replenish.**

²⁶ Thereupon I awoke and looked, and my sleep was pleasant to me.

Individual Retribution

²⁷ The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will sow the house of Israel and the house of Judah with the seed of humans and the seed of animals. ²⁸ And just as I have watched over them to pluck up and break down, to overthrow, destroy, and bring evil, so I will watch over them to build and to plant, says the LORD. ²⁹ In those days they shall no longer say:

‘The parents have eaten sour grapes,
and the children’s teeth are set on edge.’

³⁰ But all shall die for their own sins; the teeth of everyone who eats sour grapes shall be set on edge. (Ezekiel 18:2-4 cites the same proverb but indicates it is already true)

A New Covenant

³¹ The days are coming, says the LORD, when **I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah.** ³² It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when **I took them by the hand** to bring them out of the land of Egypt—a **covenant that they broke, though I was their husband,** says the LORD. ³³ But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: **I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.** ³⁴ No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, ‘Know the LORD’, for **they shall all know me,**

from the least of them to the greatest, says the LORD; for **I will forgive their iniquity**, and remember their sin no more. This is the heart of the reading and is worth starting here. Touching intimacy and powerful promises. A goal worth reflecting on and striving for.

³⁵ Thus says the LORD,
who gives the sun for light by day
and the fixed order of the moon and the stars for light by night,
who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar—
the LORD of hosts is his name:

³⁶ If this fixed order were ever to cease
from my presence, says the LORD,
then also the offspring of Israel would cease
to be a nation before me for ever.

³⁷ Thus says the LORD:
If the heavens above can be measured,
and the foundations of the earth below can be explored,
then I will reject all the offspring of Israel
because of all they have done,

says the LORD.

Jerusalem to Be Enlarged

³⁸ The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when the **city shall be rebuilt** for the LORD from the tower of Hananel to the Corner Gate. ³⁹ And the measuring line shall go out farther, straight to the hill Gareb, and shall then turn to Goah. ⁴⁰ The whole valley of the dead bodies and the ashes, and all the fields as far as the Wadi Kidron, to the corner of the Horse Gate towards the east, shall be sacred to the LORD. It shall never again be uprooted or overthrown.

Ezekiel 11:17-20

¹⁷Therefore say: Thus says the Lord GOD: **I will gather you** from the peoples, and assemble you out of the countries where you have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel. ¹⁸When they come there, they will remove from it all its detestable things and all its abominations. ¹⁹**I will give them one heart, and put a new spirit within them; I will remove the heart of stone from their flesh and give them a heart of flesh,** ²⁰so that they may follow my statutes and keep my ordinances and obey them. Then **they shall be my people, and I will be their God.** *Spiritual (re)adoption... Such a powerful narrative of family (pre-existence), estrangement (coming to earth), and then reconciliation. That is the goal.*

Ezekiel 36:24-28

²⁴I will take you from the nations, and gather you from all the countries, and bring you into your own land. ²⁵I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. ²⁶**A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will remove from your body the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.** ²⁷**I will put my spirit within you,** and make you follow my statutes and be careful to observe my ordinances. ²⁸Then you shall live in the land that I gave to your ancestors; and you shall be my people, and I will be your God. *I really love this metaphor. This is the promise of transformation the gospel provides.*

2 Corinthians 3:2-3

2 Corinthians 3:2-3

²You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts, to be known and read by all; ³and you show that you are a letter of Christ, prepared by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.

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;

Jeremiah 3; 9; 13; 30

Unfaithful Israel

3 If 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.

² Look 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.

³ Therefore the showers have been withheld,

and the spring rain has not come;

yet you have the forehead of a whore,

you refuse to be ashamed.

⁴ Have you not just now called to me,
‘My Father, you are the friend of my youth—
⁵ will he be angry for ever,
will he be indignant to the end?’
This is how you have spoken,
but you have done all the evil that you could.

A Call to Repentance

⁶ The LORD said to me in the days of King Josiah: Have you seen what she did, that faithless one, Israel, how she went up on every high hill and under every green tree, and 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 pretence, says the LORD.

¹¹ Then the LORD said to me: Faithless Israel has shown herself less guilty than false Judah. ¹²Go, and proclaim these words towards 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 for ever.

¹³ Only acknowledge your guilt,
that you have rebelled against the LORD your God,
and scattered your favours among strangers under every green tree,
and have not obeyed my voice,

says the LORD.

¹⁴ Return, 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.

15 I will give you shepherds after my own heart, who will feed you with knowledge and understanding. ¹⁶ And 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. ¹⁷ At that time Jerusalem shall be called the throne of the LORD, and all nations shall gather to it, to the presence of the LORD in Jerusalem, and they shall no longer stubbornly follow their own evil will. ¹⁸ In those days the house of Judah shall join the house of Israel, and together they shall come from the land of the north to the land that I gave your ancestors for a heritage.

¹⁹ I 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.
²⁰ Instead, as a faithless wife leaves her husband,
so you have been faithless to me, O house of Israel,

says the LORD.

²¹ A 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:
²² Return, O faithless children,
I will heal your faithlessness.

'Here we come to you;
for you are the LORD our God.
²³ Truly 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 laboured, their flocks and their herds, their sons and their daughters. ²⁵Let us lie down in our shame, and let our dishonour 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!

² O 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.

³ They 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.

⁴ Beware of your neighbours,
and put no trust in any of your kin;
for all your kin are supplanters,
and every neighbour goes around like a slanderer.

⁵ They all deceive their neighbours,
and no one speaks the truth;
they have taught their tongues to speak lies;
they commit iniquity and are too weary to repent.

⁶ Oppression upon oppression, deceit upon deceit!
They refuse to know me, says the LORD.

⁷ Therefore, thus says the LORD of hosts:

I will now refine and test them,
for what else can I do with my sinful people?

⁸ Their tongue is a deadly arrow;
it speaks deceit through the mouth.

They all speak friendly words to their neighbours,
but inwardly are planning to lay an ambush.

⁹ Shall I not punish them for these things? says the LORD;
and shall I not bring retribution
on a nation such as this?

¹⁰ Take up weeping and wailing for the mountains,
and a lamentation for the pastures of the wilderness,
because they are laid waste so that no one passes through,
and the lowing of cattle is not heard;
both the birds of the air and the animals
have fled and are gone.

¹¹ I will make Jerusalem a heap of ruins,
a lair of jackals;
and I will make the towns of Judah a desolation
without inhabitant.

¹² Who 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? ¹³ And 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, ¹⁴ but have stubbornly followed their own hearts and
have gone after the Baals, as their ancestors taught them. ¹⁵ Therefore, thus says
the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: I am feeding this people with wormwood, and
giving them poisonous water to drink. ¹⁶ I 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.

The People Mourn in Judgement

¹⁷ Thus says the LORD of hosts:
Consider, and call for the mourning-women to come;
send for the skilled women to come;

¹⁸ let them quickly raise a dirge over us,
so that our eyes may run down with tears,
and our eyelids flow with water.

¹⁹ For a sound of wailing is heard from Zion:
'How we are ruined!
We are utterly shamed,
because we have left the land,
because they have cast down our dwellings.'

²⁰ Hear, 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 neighbour 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.'

²² Speak! 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.'

²³ Thus 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.

²⁵ The 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.

The Linen Loincloth

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.’² So I bought a loincloth according to the word of the LORD, and put it on my loins.³ And 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.’⁵ So I went, and hid it by the Euphrates, as the LORD commanded me.⁶ And 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.’⁷ Then 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.

8 Then the word of the LORD came to me:⁹ Thus says the LORD: Just so I will ruin the pride of Judah and the great pride of Jerusalem.¹⁰ This 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.¹¹ For 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.

Symbol of the Wine-Jars

12 You 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?’¹³ Then 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.¹⁴ And 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.

Exile Threatened

¹⁵ Hear and give ear; do not be haughty,
for the LORD has spoken.

¹⁶ Give 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.

¹⁷ But if you will not listen,
my soul will weep in secret for your pride;
my eyes will weep bitterly and run down with tears,
because the LORD's flock has been taken captive.

¹⁸ Say to the king and the queen mother:
'Take a lowly seat,
for your beautiful crown
has come down from your head.'

¹⁹ The towns of the Negeb are shut up
with no one to open them;
all Judah is taken into exile,
wholly taken into exile.

²⁰ Lift up your eyes and see
those who come from the north.
Where is the flock that was given you,
your beautiful flock?

²¹ What 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 labour?

²² And if you say in your heart,
'Why have these things come upon me?'
it is for the greatness of your iniquity
that your skirts are lifted up,
and you are violated.

²³ Can Ethiopians change their skin
or leopards their spots?

Then also you can do good
who are accustomed to do evil.

²⁴ I will scatter you like chaff
driven by the wind from the desert.

²⁵ This is your lot,
the portion I have measured out to you, says the LORD,
because you have forgotten me
and trusted in lies.

²⁶ I myself will lift up your skirts over your face,
and your shame will be seen.

²⁷ I 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?

Restoration Promised for Israel and Judah

30 The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD: ² Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: Write in a book all the words that I have spoken to you. ³ For 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.

⁴ These are the words that the LORD spoke concerning Israel and Judah:

⁵ Thus says the LORD:
We have heard a cry of panic,
of terror, and no peace.

⁶ Ask 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 labour?
Why has every face turned pale?

⁷ Alas! 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.

8 On that day, says the LORD of hosts, I will break the yoke from off hisneck, 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.

¹⁰ But 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.

¹¹ For 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.

¹² For thus says the LORD:
Your hurt is incurable,
your wound is grievous.

¹³ There is no one to uphold your cause,
no medicine for your wound,
no healing for you.

¹⁴ All 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.

¹⁵ Why 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.

¹⁶ Therefore all who devour you shall be devoured,
and all your foes, every one of them, shall go into captivity;
those who plunder you shall be plundered,
and all who prey on you I will make a prey.

¹⁷ For 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!'

¹⁸ Thus 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.

¹⁹ Out 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 honoured, and they shall not be disdained.

²⁰ Their children shall be as of old,
their congregation shall be established before me;
and I will punish all who oppress them.

²¹ Their 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.

²² And you shall be my people,
and I will be your God.

²³ Look, the storm of the LORD!
Wrath has gone forth,
a whirling tempest;
it will burst upon the head of the wicked.

²⁴ The 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.

32:37-42; 33; 35

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.

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, ¹⁸and 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: ²⁰Thus 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, ²¹only 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. ²²Just 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: ²⁴Have 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? ²⁵Thus says the LORD: Only if I had not established my covenant with day and night and the ordinances of heaven and earth, ²⁶would 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

35The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD in the days of King Jehoiakim son of Josiah of Judah: ²Go 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. ³So I took Jaazaniah son of Jeremiah son of Habazziniah, and his brothers, and all his sons, and the whole house of the Rechabites. ⁴I 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. ⁵Then I set before the Rechabites pitchers full of wine, and cups; and I said to them, 'Have some wine.' ⁶But 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; ⁷nor 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." ⁸We 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, ⁹and not to build houses to live in. We have no vineyard or field or seed; ¹⁰but we have lived in tents, and have obeyed and done all that our ancestor Jonadab commanded us. ¹¹But 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, ¹⁹ therefore 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:
